

30 DAYS OF HONOR ★ *A Salute to Local Vets*

Brothers in arms

Plover's Jerome Dobbe served in footsteps of siblings

By Dan Richter

For Gannett Central Wisconsin Media

PLOVER — When Jerome Dobbe joined the Navy at age 19, he was simply following in his brothers' footsteps.

Dobbe's oldest brothers, Herbert and Eugene, both served in World War II while his other brother, Edward, served in the Korean War.

"I just followed the trend because all my brothers were already in the Na-

vy. All us boys serving ... our parents thought that was pretty cool," said Dobbe.

Born and raised in the town of Alban near Rosholt, Dobbe joined the Navy at the tail end of the Korean War and served until 1958.

Now, his brothers have followed in his footsteps; he went on a Never Forgotten Honor Flight with them in tow.

Q: What did you do in the service and where were you stationed?

Answer: I was in the commissary working as a baker and was stationed in a destroyer. I've been from the Mediterranean to the north Atlantic because we steamed all over the world. We spent a lot of time along the 54th parallel, to keep the Russian ships on their side, and in the Mediterranean because of the crisis in Lebanon that was happening at the time.

Q: What is your most enduring memory from your time in the service?

A: I spent so much time on that ship that one day blurred into the next. You'd go to sleep and wake up somewhere completely different. I did a lot of traveling and saw a lot of things I never would have seen. Taking in Athens, Greece and seeing the old remains and pillars like that had been there for thousands of years, that was incredible.

Q: What do you most want people to know about the conflict in which you served?

A: I felt very lucky and fortunate that I didn't have to go to Korea. My cousin Duane and my brother Edward went through that whole conflict, but I joined at the tail end, being the youngest, so I ended up getting stationed in the Mediterranean. There was a political crisis in Lebanon at the time and we evacuated a lot of Americans, going in at night and getting them out of the country.

Q: Tell us about your life after the service and how your time in the military affected your civilian life.

A: I've been in the food business most of my life. I was a meat-cutter before I went into the service, so when I got out I did that again for awhile and then opened a small grocery store and a meat-packing plant in Rosholt. The store was called Dobbe's Grocers, but a lot of people knew it as Shurfine Grocers. Later on we sold the store and moved to Plover.

Q: What did going on the Honor Flight mean to you?

A: It was a trip of a lifetime. The highlight of the whole thing was going on the trip with my brothers. My two oldest brothers served in World War II and another brother served in Korea. We saw the whole works up there and it's hard to explain what it was like. Seeing those memorials makes you think about things you've knocked out of your mind, that maybe you didn't want to remember. You think about the friends that never came home. There were a lot of laughs and a lot of tears.

ABOUT JEROME DOBBE

Name: Jerome Dobbe
Age: 79
Residence: Plover
Conflict involved in: Korean War
Military branch: United States Navy
Years of service: 1953 to 1958
Rank upon discharge: Petty officer, third class



MEGAN MCCORMICK/GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA
 A photo of the boat on which veteran Jerome Dobbe served.



PHOTOS BY MEGAN MCCORMICK/GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA

Jerome Dobbe of Plover joined the military at the tail end of the Korean War and served in the Mediterranean.



A FLIGHT TO NEVER FORGET

» The Central Wisconsin chapter of Never Forgotten Honor Flight celebrates its fifth anniversary this spring. Since April 2010, the Honor Flight program has flown to Washington, D.C. with more than 800 local World War II veterans, as well as dozens more who served in Korea and Vietnam, to allow them to view the memorials built for those wars.

» 30 Days of Honor is a project of Gannett Central Wisconsin Media to profile veterans who have taken an Honor Flight, or are scheduled, and to encourage more veterans to do so. Profiles will appear each day April 26 through Memorial Day.

» Veterans may apply for a free Honor Flight (or loved ones may apply for them) by filling out an application. The only qualification for a veteran to take an Honor Flight is to have served in any branch of the U.S. military during the periods of World War II, the Korean War or Vietnam War. Veterans do not have to have been in combat. The applications and more information are available at <http://www.neverforgottenhonorflight.org>

SPONSORED BY

