

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors



RICHARD P. KNAPP
UNITED STATES ARMY
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS (E-7)
OCTOBER 1948 – OCTOBER 1968
WOUNDED IN ACTION – JULY 1950



as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT
JUNE 2025

Honoring His Service and Sacrifice

Sponsored by: Sarah Lewis Boone Chapter, NSDAR



As a boy, I was interested in having a military career after seeing pictures of them in magazines. So, I joined the Army in October 1948 at Fort Devens in Massachusetts and retired in October 1968. The 3rd Division was assigned to Puerto Rico for training. I was then moved to a different company to be in Hawaii for three months. In July of 1950, I was in Southeastern Korea above Pusan. By then, the Korean Conflict had begun.

I was a corporal over a squad of seven men. It was in a foxhole where I received my injury. While I don't remember what happened, one of my men jumped in it and screamed for a medic. There was no pain after being hit in my left jaw. The force of the projectile traveled up to my left eye. The bottom bone of my eye socket was broken in three places my upper eye socket

bone was blown out. I never experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

I was taken to Japan on a hospital ship but learned that my injuries could not be treated in Japan or Korea. So, I was given the choice as to which military hospital in the States I would like to treat me. I requested the Chelsea MA Naval Hospital as it was located near Boston. I stayed two years in this hospital. Three to five operations were required. My lower jaw was wired shut and a titanium mesh was wired to the bones. A crown of plaster of Paris was placed on the top of my head and stayed there for one to two months. My eye was connected by a stick to the mesh that is still in my head.

The first artificial eye that I received moved by way of a magnet in the prosthesis. In later operations, the magnet was removed. As my socket changed, a new eye of a different size needed to be used. All seven eyes that were eventually implanted were just for appearance. They never were intended to help me see. As a result, I have no depth perception. I can drive a car and an electric motorized vehicle with large side mirrors. It took a couple of years to get used to this way of seeing. I received my Purple Heart Award from an army general in a hospital ceremony on January 4, 1951.

I was told that I could not return to my unit. So, I was given a choice of other military positions I could have. I chose supply work. I decided that I did not want to do that for the long term. I moved to Arizona and became interested in working with radar. So, I took the course "Over the Horizon Communication" for a year. Later I took one related to the Nike Hercules Missile System. I was asked to be an instructor of this course and did so at Fort Bliss, Texas, for 14 years.