



Gary K. Warner

Korean War
U.S. Army
Homefront
Chicago, Niles, Skokie

49th Anti-Aircraft Artillery
Gun Battalion
PFC

Gary K. Warner

Veterans
History
Project
Transcript

Interview conducted
November 18, 2015

Niles Public Library
Niles Public Library District
Niles, Illinois



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Veterans History Project Transcript

Veteran: **Gary K. Warner** Rank: **Private First Class**

Branch of Service: **U.S. Army** Theater: **Korean War – Homefront (Niles, IL)**

Unit: **49th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion**

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Interviewer: Neil O’Shea
Videographer: Suzy Wulf

This Veterans History Project interview is being conducted on November 18 in the year 2015 here at the Niles Public Library. My name is Neil O’Shea and I serve here on the library’s Reference Staff as the Veterans History Project Coordinator. I have the privilege of speaking with Mr. Gary K. Warner. Mr. Warner was born on November 12th in the year 1933 and now live in Park Ridge. Mr. Warner learned of the Veterans History Project through the Annual Veterans History Project Breakfast which he recently attended here at the Niles Library. He has kindly consented to be interviewed for this project. Here is his story as we follow the questions suggested by the Library of Congress for this national project.

May I call you Gary? (Interviewer’s words)

Gary is fine. Someone called me Mr. Warner and I said, “My dad was Mr. Warner. I am Gary.”

(Veteran’s words)

Thanks, Gary. Do you recall when you entered the service?

Yes. The reason I volunteered for the draft was that my friends were getting drafted, but they were a year older than me so I wasn’t drafted yet. So I figured I’m going in so then we can be together. But that’s not what happens. When you go in, they go one way and you go another.

Where were you living at the time?

Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, right on the Canadian border

So you volunteered for the service in 1952.

In 1952 in July, I was just 18.

So it wasn’t too long since you were out of high school...

I graduated high school June, 1951 and I went in the Army in July of 1952.

And you joined because

It is called volunteering for the draft. When you’re in the service, this guy is “RA, Regular Army” but I’m “US.” but if you’re drafted you are US Army 55266310. People that joined were RA; people who were drafted were “US.” Don’t ask me why.

You chose the Army. Was it ever an issue to choose the Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard?

No. In Sault Sainte Marie, we did have the Coast Guard because of the St. Mary's River where iron ore ships from Superior bring iron ore down to Gary to get made in to steel. We had Coast Guard there. We had Air Force there. We had Army there. In the little town of Sault Sainte Marie we probably had about 15,000 people.

So you could sign-up in Sault Sainte Marie?

Oh yes. And I get on the bus, the same bus that the draftees got on so we went together. I think from there we went to Milwaukee, from Milwaukee to Ft. Sheridan.

Was there a tradition of military service in your family?

An uncle was in the Navy and that is the only one, my one uncle was in the Navy – my dad's brother.

So how did you find your first days in the military, a big adjustment?

Yes, but I was a joiner. I joined the Boy Scouts. I played hockey so I joined a hockey league. When you join things like that, you're just joining something else. But now they're going to give you clothes and everything else and 3 square meals.

Was that your first time being away from home for any length of time?

Oh yes, absolutely.

Did you find that you had to make a lot of adjustments?

I guess it is planned so well that you had something to do all the time. So there wasn't really an adjustment. Oh yes, we gotta do this. You had to do this and then you had to go for shots. You gotta do this; you gotta do that. It was very well run. It's like when you join the Boy Scouts; you gotta to do this and it is all planned. Everything is planned ahead.

Living conditions were okay?

Oh yes.

No complaints about the food

No, you know they used to talk "SOS" – "crap" on a shingle that would be maybe once a month. It wasn't really that great but it was food.

What did that refer to?

The worst- it was just chunks of beef and gravy and a piece of bread. It's food. They wanted to give you something different all the time. And you had mess kits and sometimes you had to eat out of them. You have to wash them. In fact I still have my mess kit, knife, fork and spoon.

Was that your first time in the Greater Chicago area?

Oh yes. When I come to Chicago and I walk down State Street – that one picture with my Class A uniform. Because we were in Artillery we could wear red and a red scarf instead of a tie. When I walked down State Street, Oh my God, I thought I died and went to heaven. I come from a tiny town. You drive through, there, that was Sault Sainte Marie. I still love Chicago today.

Were there any drill instructors or Sergeants that were memorable?

No, thinking back the majority were Sergeants, First Sergeants, Master Sergeants that I went through. And for Basic I went to Fort Bliss, Texas.

So were you six weeks at Fort Sheridan?

No, not even that long just long enough to get orientated. You get your uniforms, you get your clothes and then you ship out.

On a train, bus?

On a troop train. At Fort Bliss, Texas, my first 8-16 weeks was Infantry. One of our walks, we had to walk 12 miles out in the desert to see how many people were going to drop out and then walk back so we did that. Then that's we had all of our stuff: you have to crawl down underneath, and they're shooting bullets over your head, and you're going into where the poison gas is and you gotta put your mask on. This was all infantry. And after you passed, we had fired rifles; we did everything, just the normal thing. And then after that, we went to anti-aircraft which was 90 mm and how to set up a cone, (a shell?). If the plane you are shooting at is 2 or 3,0000 feet, you got to set it to go off at that, you shove it in and then a blast – It's like a hand grenade to take out 3 or 4 planes. Where a hand grenade takes out soldiers, veterans. Anti-aircraft, it's like a hand grenade to take out planes. You've probably seen them bursting in the sky

That anti-aircraft training, would that have been considered advanced training?

Oh yes, when you first go in you're like a Private E 1. Then you do the Infantry, now you are a Private E2. And then when you start doing the Anti-Aircraft. I didn't get to be Private First Class until I got with Headquarters Battery 49th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion.

Why were you given anti-aircraft training? That was a step beyond regular infantry training.

Yes, that was a step up. Everybody's Infantry. You have to know how to dig a fox hole, shoot, put your helmet on. Some people would choose maybe to be a Captain – go to school. And this was anti-aircraft and I see these big guns – my God were they huge and also a quad 50 – did you ever see a quad 50? 4 50 caliber machine guns and you've got the firing pin right here in your hand and you fire 4 of them all at one time. That's also part of anti-aircraft.

You must have demonstrated some kind of skill or aptitude that they put into Anti-Aircraft.

I hope so. Sure because I jump into things like that. I said, "Wow" that's what I want to do."

So you didn't volunteer for it"

They said, "How would you like to" And I said "OK"

I'll try anything. I lucked in because I always say, "In life timing is everything. I mean I could have gone to Korea - 50 below zero – cold. By the time I got through with my training, now you're talking 1952 and then I go to Ft. Sheridan I think in 1953 so now they are bringing them back from Korea already which is a good thing. All of a sudden there are no more promotions. I got to be my Private First Class. They didn't promote then because nothing is going on. We're just preparing to take care of Chicago, just in case.

So from Fort Bliss where you had the basic training and then anti-aircraft training, then you were sent back to Ft. Sheridan?

Came right back to Ft Sheridan.

So instead of being sent overseas, it must have been interesting to hear of that assignment.

This is what I'm saying. "Can't I leave the country and go somewhere?" "No, we need you somewhere else." "Where' that?" "Fort Sheridan in Illinois." "OK that's fine wherever you need me."

And all your buddies that were drafted

I never saw them again.

I am guessing that some of them went to Korea.

No, a couple went to Alaska. One of them went to Hawaii. They went to different places. Germany

Was it hard to stay in touch with your family while you were down in Texas?

Everyday I'd write letter or cards. One time I wrote "I thought I would drop you a line," and I would draw a line and sign it, "Love you. I miss you Gary." And my mother knew that I liked fruitcake so she managed once a month to send me a fruitcake. It was all crushed together but it was still good.

When you were off duty was there any particular way the soldiers entertained themselves?

Let's go back to Ft. Bliss. "What religion are you? What you like to attend a church on Sunday?" "Yes." Before I went in when I was 17, I think I got baptized - my mom said they forgot to baptize me or something so I got baptized in the Church of Christ because my best friend that I hung out with Carl Vert – a boxer on the same team, we fought Golden Gloves together. That's what he belonged to. You had to wear blue jeans and a white shirt and then they dumped you underwater. "I baptize you..." So when I went to Ft Bliss, I said, "Yes, I belong to the Church of Christ." So the minister would come over and pick you up on Sunday morning. You would go to Sunday School and then "would like to go to a class that night" sure then then you are with these people at night - girls and guys.

You won't believe this, (Gary shows pictures from his folder)

There I was in Battery D, Training Battalion, Triple A. This was August of '52, Army. This a pass-out. When you leave a base, you have to have a pass or else you can't go. So if you get stopped somewhere, you can show it. I save everything. And this a driver's license (Colored copies of Gary's passes and Army-related cards can be seen in the Appendix.)

Do you recall any humorous or particularly unusual events?

In Texas, you meet some pretty girls and stuff like that, but you never know how long you're going to be around. I can give you a particular, we were planning to go to Juarez, Mexico. When you go to Juarez, make sure you take somebody with you. Because when you go to Juarez. I think all the guys, they had knives. And if you get drunk, the police will arrest you. And take your money. Then they are going to call the Captain and then they're going to come and pick you up. Don't get drunk in the street. That was an experience. And all the girls, "Hay, you want to go in the back room? One dollar." We don't want to talk about that.

So you are away from home, you're down there in Texas away from home with people from all over the country. Did you find that you mixed well with everybody?

Yes, I always had one or two friends. In other words, you have to have someone you can chum with. And he was a Protestant. That doesn't matter, I'll go to your church. Even today, I had to go to a party, the Night of the Roses in Niles. What did I do, because my wife is not going this year —because I'm kind of a busybody. So I said, I know 3 or 4 policemen, "Put me with the policemen; put me with the firemen; put with me the politicians. I know them all." It doesn't matter who I sit with — I can mix. I never have to worry about mixing. I do mix.

So you complete your training in Texas and your advanced training in anti-aircraft and then you get the letter or order that you're going back to Chicago.

And that was nice. Because when I first got there, they said, "Tell you what, can you type?" "I said, "No." "We're going to send to typing school; we need a battalion clerk." So I went to typing school. So when we got out and if we went to Chicago, no matter what time it was, I had to have my morning reports for the following day and it was always 3 o'clock in the morning and you can't make mistakes. After about two months of that, I went to the 1st Lieutenant and I said, "I don't want to be a clerk." I said, "Can you send me down to the motor pool?" "Well, you want motor pool?" "Yeah." So one of the days in motor pool, he comes walking in "Hey Warner," he kicks my foot and I got gloves on. "Whatta you doin' with gloves, you're a mechanic." Well, I didn't like to get my hands dirty. "You said you wanted to be a mechanic!"

What I did when I said was in headquarters battery. There were four gun sites. Ok, I was kind of in charge of all four of them. On Mondays I would go to Montrose Beach just to make sure. See, in the military we do preventative maintenance. You do all the maintenance whether they need it or not. You have to be prepared to make sure that it everything is working. So I could spend three or four hours at Montrose Beach. On Tuesday I would go to Niles. On Wednesday I would go to Schiller Park. You go to Dog Battery on Thursday. Then on Friday I would make my reports out, fill it out. Then next week I have to do it all over again. And then on Saturdays we use to fire them. That was interesting because I would even take a generator with me, a 440 cycle generator, they're huge because we make our own electricity and we had our own radar. So we would go to Camp Haven, Wisconsin. It is right outside of Sheboygan right on the lake. I would make a phone call. "OK, we're ready." The plane flies over Lake Michigan towing a sleeve and then the radar would pick up the sleeve. Say the sleeve is at 2,000 feet, we set the cones for 2,000 feet; we put in and then we fire over Lake Michigan. We did that for years. We could never do it today — all that flak in Lake Michigan.

So the four locations in the Chicago area were

Able Battery was Montrose Beach down in Chicago, Baker Battery was here in Niles. Then Charlie Battery was in Schiller Park right off of River Road and Irving Park, over in that area and then on Thursday was Dog Battery down in Skokie which was Skokie Highway and Dempster, just two blocks north.

Where exactly was the Baker battery in Niles located?

Where the cemetery is located, almost the same entrance where you drove in, but it was way to the back.

Which cemetery?

Maryville. Before we got there it was Dempster Golf Course. They had to close that up because we had a five-year lease on that property, the government did, so we were locked in from 1950 to 1955.

And is that when they started having these batteries in 1950 or were they there prior to 1950?

I would say they started in '51. When I got there, I was right into it.

The military purpose in doing was they wanted to be prepared in case of ...?

They thought that, like right now. New York because they are afraid of what happened like over in Paris. When something happens, Chicago is another live spot. They could come over and blast a couple of buildings.

They were afraid of Korean, Chinese or Russian

Use the word communists. The Chinese were communists, the North Koreans were communists, and the Russian were communists. And our 5th Army Headquarters was down on 55th Street and the Lake. That was the big 5th Army Headquarters. When I say 5th Army, because when I was in Texas, I was in the 4th Army. I guess they kind of divided the states up.

When you were in anti-aircraft duty in Chicago with the four batteries and then on Saturdays you go up to Sheboygan

Yes, that's where we fired for accuracy and to make sure everything was working right.

Did you have your own living quarters at that time or was there a base?

If I wasn't staying in Ft. Sheridan – ok, like even when I was Dog Battery – they have hutments and there's always beds where I could stay for a couple of days. Dog Battery was in Skokie

And there were quarters there for army personnel?

Oh yes. We had personnel everywhere. And housing for them and showers, place to eat. Oh yes. We had everything there.

Is there any evidence today of those places?

Five or ten years ago I drove over there. There's nothing now even Ft. Sheridan. Oh my God there's that big building. It's all valuable property; it's lakefront now. They can build mansions on there now.

So if you spend a lot of time at the hutment, were you staying in Skokie?

Beginning in 1954 we moved because we had more property, come to think of it we moved our little headquarters south also into Dog Battery. And that time I even had my car from home Sault Sainte Marie. Headquarters was with Dog Battery in Skokie at that time.

So if you were sleeping overnight in Skokie and then the alarm came in. Was there ever a false alarm?

I really didn't really document that part of it. There was only one time but it was during the day where we lock and load because the plane didn't identify himself and then they sent up a really fast plane to go up and intercept him. And they did identify and left the area.

So what is it lock and load and all four batteries?

Oh yes, this what I am saying. This why you got to be prepared. "Well you've got the gun. Didn't you do anything?" No, you always have to be prepared.

These four batteries, do they all stay in touch with another by telephone?

We had military phones.

So when you enlisted, you volunteered for the Army, how long of a commitment did you have to fulfill?

When you're drafted or when you volunteer for the draft, you have to serve at least two years active duty and six years in the reserves. So I got discharged in October of 1960. I got 8 years in.

So between 1954 and 1960 you were still wearing your Army uniform every day, right?

No, not after I got out in August, 1954. I mean I kept them.

You didn't think of making a career of the Army?

No, because in 1953 I met my wife, '54 I got engaged and '55 I got married. It was great because she had a lot of uncles, and all of a sudden: "OK, you're in the service, you're going to come and work for me." So then I had to go down to Cicero Avenue and Lake Street, a metal boxing cabinet corporation. One of her uncles wanted me to work for him. But then I wanted to live out near Niles because I had a house built in Niles so then she had another uncle that was at Oakton and Lehigh, H.M. Harper. "Gary, why don't you come up here? How much you making down there." "A buck and a half." "We'll give you a buck seventy-five an hour." OK!

When you met your wife, were you wearing your uniform?

Oh yeah.

Where did you meet her, if I may ask?

I could say this truthfully she picked me up at the corner of State and Randolph.

No wonder you liked downtown.

She told me. They used to go downtown all the time. They go to Riverview and then go downtown, looking for sailors and evidently there were no sailors around. There was just me and my buddy and he had a car parked underneath so we spent a little time, must have had a soda or something

So where do you girls live? We'll take you home. They had to help us push to get the car started. That was the start of my life.

So then when I got to where she lived on Latrobe. "You can park back here." "Can I walk you to the door? "Can I kiss you good night?" "OK."

Was that the west side, Latrobe, where she lived?

On Elston Avenue there.

That's a good distance from downtown.

A Stop and Sock was there then. Right where the Driver's Licensing Facility is now. We used to go there, the Stop and Sock.

That night you had to make back to Fort Sheridan.

It was just a great life. Things just fell in place. I had a couple of other girlfriends I know. One time there was this girlfriend's birthday. I stopped at the PX. I bought her a bracelet. Her name was Pat. I knocked on her door. I think I hitched hiked in from somewhere because my car stalled. She says, "I can't see you anymore." "What do you mean, you can't see any more." "Well my boyfriend is going to spread rumors

About..." Ok so then I went downtown and when I got downtown I threw the bracelet in the Chicago River. I mean, the funny thing was, what am I going to do with it? It's got "Pat, love you, Gary." I never told my wife that.

After the Korean War, was the GI Bill still in existence?

Oh yes.

So you could have...?

Oh yes. I could have.

But you didn't have any problem getting a job?

No. I lived in a YMCA right on Irving Park Road because I had to go south. And even when I bought my house in Niles, I got a GI Loan.

So we're in Niles today. Where did you live in Niles?

Do you know where the Lone Tree Inn is on Milwaukee Avenue? Right across the street is Octavia. I lived at 7750 Octavia. And that was the first house there. And when he finished, he was a little Polish guy, he built one next door and then he built another one next door. I was there from 1956 to 1969, 13 years in Niles. I moved to Park Ridge, a mile away. So I am still in contact with the people who are alive.

So did you stay in contact with any of your buddies from the service?

Well my parents still lived up there so I had to go up there a couple of times. But if they weren't there, one went to Arizona. There were three of us on the boxing team. One of them is in Mesa, and the other one is California. Bob, he went into the Navy.

Was this the high-school boxing team?

Yes. Golden Gloves. And at that time we had Army up there so we had to fight the guys in the Army. I was only 16, 17 years old.

Were you a middleweight?

No, I was Bantam, 119, but I weighed 124 so I had to dry out. I couldn't drink water for a week to get down to 119. We would win in the Salut, and then we'd go to Escanaba. We'd fight somebody there. I won in Escanaba and then we went to Milwaukee.

Did you join a Veterans Organization?

Yes, and here again. They guy who got me the job here in Niles, Oakton and Lehigh. He belonged to the, at Bryn Mawr and Milwaukee, it was Norwood Zurich Post 36. Norwood Zurich was one of the pilots from the Second World War. I don't know whether he got killed, but the post was named after him. Norwood Post 36 I sat in the back row for a while and then I moved and I'm finally in the front row and now I'm going to be Commander. I was Commander. I still have the Commander's hat, pin and all that.

That was American Legion?

No, that was AMVETS. That was kind of a new group. I knew there was American Legion across. But a lot of my relatives were in AMVETS and I met a lot of nice people there. I became a national commander. And then every month you have to write a little program about what is going on. Yes, I enjoyed it. I was with them for years. In fact, when I got married, the AMVET Hall, that's where we had our wedding at the AMVET Post 36 Hall.

And that was at Milwaukee and Bryn Mawr?

Yes.

Is it still there?

I don't know. It changed hands; it's something else now. My AMVETS Post kind of went by the wayside. That's why 10 years ago I joined the American Legion, Post 247, out of Park Ridge. We don't have a building; buildings costs money. So we meet the first Tuesday of the month at the Elks Club. 6 o'clock is social. We'll get a glass of wine. We sit around and talk. We have a little meeting. We went from, I've been there 10 years, we went from 15, 16 up to 30 members. I just brought a guy in there two months ago, Joe De Prisio. He made 31 hits from '43 to '46 in six months. He said, "Gary, I shouldn't tell everybody this. We didn't have time to change clothes, or take a shower, sometimes we'd get in the ocean just to get our clothes refreshed." And he does have four stars on his banner, four major battles.

So he was Pacific.

Yes, in the Army but he was on a Landing Craft. He just amazed me. We have been friends for years. I didn't realize his background. His wife and my wife playing golf for 30 years now. He had no post; his post folded. I said, "You're coming with me." I brought him over to my post. I gotta pick him up. He lives over on Vine, a mile or so from me so I drive him every meeting.

So you spent your Army days in the 49th Anti-Aircraft Artillery. So was that a big unit?

Well, ok, if we had four batteries, and if we 30 guys on each battery so that's a good size.

Did you ever have any reunions then or get-togethers?

Not that I know of. That's a good point though. I think I still have their names if I wanted to instrument it I could probably get some guys together, but they are scattered all over the United States.

I sense that we are coming to the end of the interview. There's always two questions that we ask the veterans. You can take your time in forming your thoughts or maybe the answer will come right away.

How do you think your service and your experiences in the service affected your life?

Everything I did; it came together. I'm a believer that I can do anything and that I can excel at anything. Yes, I know maybe I am bragging but I can excel at anything. I am not afraid to try it. I don't care if it is playing horseshoes, playing pool, ping-pong, or joining a club. I've joined a lot of clubs. I used to be a scuba-diver, too. And the Illinois Divers Association, I was president of that, too. And I am 150 feet in the winter time below the ice up in Wisconsin.

So the Army was a time in your life when

it brought the best in me out. What can I say? When I played hockey, I always played either left wing or center. And I thought I was a decent hockey player. And I fought Golden Gloves, and snow skiing – Northern Michigan is a good place. We had to ski cross-country to get to a hill.

I think you must have been blessed with a great constitution!

Thank you, Dad! Probably, yes.

And the second question is, has your military experience influenced your thinking about war or the military in general?

I really think that we should have a draft because it's good for kids to learn military courtesy and this modern drill. It's to teach people to be a follower because you have to be a good follower before you can be a leader. Because when you're following, you realize there is something to being a leader. But you have to be a good follower to be a leader. And then if you're good at that, where else do you want to go? Yes, I think it is very important and that we should have a draft.

There are always exceptions to a rule. OK like even In Northern Michigan, if you were an oiler on one of these carriers that brings iron ore, you could be exempted from the draft because that was an important job for military purposes. There are exceptions to everything, "Yeah, but I want to go to college." Well, do your two years first and then go to college. I think a draft would work. And I'm talking even about the gangs down there on the South Side, kids who don't know what they're doing. Wouldn't it be nice if they were in the service? All you're doing is setting them up and telling them what life is supposed to be like. I think Army life is good.

When you were in the Army, was there an opportunity to box?

When I first went in, I had a couple of fights in the beginning, down in Texas. "What would you like to do?" "Would you see if anybody else is boxing" I'd like to go and train with somebody, where you could go and spar with somebody. But I didn't have any contests where I got any trophies or anything. Even up north in the Golden Gloves, they don't give you money but they give you trophies and jackets, those are nice, even hockey jackets.

Gary, is there anything that you would like to add that we not have covered in the interview?

I just love life in general. I love people and I am very dedicated to the Honor Flight Chicago. I'm so happy. I still have the list. I signed up 30 veterans, 14 have already been to DC and back. And a lot of stories they have. One guy said, "When we landed in Okinawa, and I saw this little boat and I pushed it out in the water and I threw a hand grenade in the water, and fish came to the top and we had fresh fish. It was really great." There's a lot of stories. I couldn't do it today because I had this with you. Normally there is a senior luncheon today and I make sure that I go there to do the Pledge. I ask, "How many veterans do we have?" And they raise their hand. We applaud them and I do a little dissertation on the Honor Flight. "And I have applications. When I come by, put your hand up." And that's how I sign them up. I get them all signed up by going to places. Then I am in the parade. I go to all the parades. As I walk by, "Hey Gary, you don't remember, but thanks for sending me on Honor Flight." I can't remember all their names.

So Gary you are still serving your country.

Yes, it is really great. These guys are just so tickled. I think it was the beginning of October, our flight, always on a Wednesday, I call him up Tuesday night and I am on the phone. "OK, John, we're going to pick you in the morning. It'll probably be about 3:30am and we'll have a wheel chair," and he yells out, "I don't need no wheelchair." I know but we need wheelchairs to keep them together. We don't want to lose anybody at anytime. I didn't see him until a month after, he said, "I didn't man to yell at you." But he understood why because even when they get off the plane, they don't just go this way. They go meet this

group; they meet that group. And we have a Mail Call on the plane. In the Army, you don't get mail on Sunday, but you always look for mail.

Gary, you're responsible for contributions to the Honor Flight.

Yes, OK, you have to realize something. I'm with Maine Township but I can't donate money because you're donating people's money. "You can't do that." OK, but I bring in \$15, 16,000 every year for passports. I don't have to do passports but I took it upon myself. And the first year I wanted to do it I had a couple of the trustees say, "You can't donate money!" I said, "I'm not going take it and donate it. I'd like to take it and designate it. I'm bringing it in; I should be able to say, "Well this goes to our food pantry and I think we should to give a \$1,000 every year to Honor Flight. And one of the girls says, "Gary, that's good. My father went, and he didn't pay at all." All of a sudden, they don't stop me anymore. So it's a \$1,000 a year. And they come over to the office, and we give them a check. But then we take a picture because we're all in favor of it now. All you have to do is a sway people a little bit, talk to them.

I didn't tell you, but when I went to a funeral up in Northern Michigan, last year it was now. Up in Michigan, we're near the Canadian border so a lot of the girls are marrying Canadians. And my one favorite niece, Bonnie, she marries this guy, John, from Canada. And he's got this black shirt on. I said, "Can you put this flag on?" He says, "Gary, I am not American; I'm Canadian." I said, "Have you looked at a map?" "What do you mean?" You're in North America." "Yes, I am." "This is an American flag" "All right put it on." I talked him into it!

Gary, have you been in sales or politics?

No, I carry six flag pins in my pocket wherever I go. Saturday night we go to Dover Straits. Did you ever hear of Dover Straits? It's out in Mundelein off of 45. It is owned by 7 brothers – Metropulos – I love that name. You walk in there and he grabs your hand and he hugs you; they are huggers. "I got your flag, Gary." And then you go to the bar. "Hey, I got your flag." You don't have to. You go into the bar, "Hey where's your flag?" So I have to pin him again.

Today I'm wearing the pin you gave me. You've had an effect on me! Thank you.

I might be repeating myself, but you know who Mark Kirk is?

Yes

In the beginning of this year, I think it was in February. We had him as a guest speaker at the Park Ridge Country Club and the Chair asked me to do the pledge. But before I did the pledge, here comes Mark Kirk down the aisle in a wheelchair. And I got this tag on ("Army, Gary"), and he says, "Gary, couldn't you pass the Navy exam?" I said, "I'm sure I could have passed it. Do you mind if an Army guy puts a flag on your lapel? You don't even have a flag on your lapel" "Oh, my God, would you put a flag on?" He just wanted to be a nice guy, one of us. I don't knock him because I do like him.

That's Senator Kirk and he's a veteran.

And then he said to his aide, "How come you didn't tell me?"

Well, Gary, I want to thank you for coming in today.

No, I don't mind talking. This is my life. I am happy with my life and where I've come. I come from a small town and my dad worked at a tannery. And when that closed down and he wasn't old enough to retire yet. "Oh, my God where am I going to work now?" They didn't know what to do because that tannery employed, you see, when they built a tannery, they had to build houses for all the people who are going to work at the tannery. And then you have to build a school. That was the law in the old days, that the way it was. There was also a company store for the tannery. My dad worked there for like 28 years. But now it got too expensive to send skins up from the South by train up to Sault Sainte Marie because the tannery turns the skins into leather. And so they had to close it down, and he didn't know what to do. He went out to see my aunt in Seattle. He thought he could he work in the Boeing plant out there. And finally he came back to the Sault and he worked at a gas station for a dollar an hour .Then finally he took the gas station over – Lyle's Standard Service Station. That, "And I'm still giving away your flags." He's little 3 by 5 flags" When we pass, I got a stack of them usually. I have some of those in my car.
American flags, Lyle's Standard Service Station

Gary, having listened to you, you are an American success story and part of that is the military service.

Seriously, they made me what I am as well as my father and father-in-law. Because when I worked for the one cousin and the other uncle and all of a sudden my father-in-law says, "You know what, you shouldn't be working those factories. I lost my fingers in the factory." Ok, so he made me a pipe-fitter, 597. I was a pipe-fitter for 40 years, I did Zion nuclear power house, and I lived there three years. I never missed a day of work, never collected one day of employment ever, for over 40 years – to me that's being a success.

Gary, thanks for fitting us in today and for a wonderful interview.

My pleasure.

Reader's Note:

You are encouraged to continue through the following six pages for scans of photographs and documents that amplify and provide context for Gary's remarks. A typed statement of Gary's prepared remarks for the interview follows immediately.

Age 21

ARMED FORCES LIBERTY PASS	SERVICE Army	DATE ISSUED AUG 30 1952
LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL Warner Gary K	CARD NO. 192	
SERVICE NO. [REDACTED]	GRADE—RATE Pvt-1	
ORGANIZATION—INSTALLATION—BASE Btry D 7th Tng Bn Basic AAA RIC		
TIME LIMITS Normal		
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF ISSUING OFFICER <i>Edward W. Lawler</i> 1st Lt Arty		
DD FORM 345 1 ADR 50 GPO 16-62331-1 REPLACES WD AGO FORMS 7 AND 8, NAVFERS FORM 50 AND CG FORMS 251A AND 2702 WHICH MAY BE USED.		

ARMED FORCES LIBERTY PASS	SERVICE US ARMY	DATE ISSUED 19 Jan 53
LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL Warner, Gary K	CARD NO. 380	
SERVICE NO. [REDACTED]	GRADE—RATE Pvt-2	
ORGANIZATION—INSTALLATION—BASE Hq Btry 49th AAA Gun Bn Ft Sheridan		
TIME LIMITS	NORMAL OFF DUTY HOURS	
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF ISSUING OFFICER <i>Raymond C. Southard</i> 2nd Lt, Arty		
DD FORM 345 1 Apr 50 GPO 16-62331-1 REPLACES WD AGO FORMS 7 AND 8, NAVFERS FORM 50 AND CG FORMS 251A AND 2702 WHICH MAY BE USED.		

III

U. S. GOVERNMENT OPERATOR'S PERMIT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE						PERMIT NO.
NAME OF OPERATOR WARNER, GARY K		DATE ISSUED 5 June 53	EXPIRATION DATE 5 Dec 53			
SEX M	RACE CAU	AGE 20	HEIGHT 5'10"	WEIGHT 154	COLOR OF HAIR Brown	COLOR OF EYES Blue
The holder of this permit is qualified to operate U. S. Government vehicles and/or equipment specified subject to the restrictions set forth on the reverse hereof.						
SIGNATURE OF ISSUING OFFICIAL <i>Warren G. Steverson</i> 2nd Lt Arty MTO						TITLE
NAME AND LOCATION OF ISSUING UNIT Hq 49th AAA Gun Battalion, Ft Sheridan, IL						SIGNATURE OF OPERATOR (Not valid until signed)
NOT TRANSFERABLE Permit must be carried at all times when operating Government vehicles						DD FORM 313, 1 AUG 50 REPLACES WD FORM 9-54, 1 AUG 50, WHICH MAY BE USED.

Age 20

ARMED FORCES LIBERTY PASS	SERVICE Army	DATE ISSUED 18 Oct 52
LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL Warner, Gary K	CARD NO. 192	
SERVICE NO. [REDACTED]	GRADE—RATE Pvt	
ORGANIZATION—INSTALLATION—BASE Btry A 6th Tng Bn AACB Ft Bliss		
TIME LIMITS Normal		
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF ISSUING OFFICER <i>James J. McAllister</i> 2nd Lt		
DD FORM 345 1 Apr 50 GPO 16-62331-1 REPLACES WD AGO FORMS 7 AND 8, NAVFERS FORM 50 AND CG FORMS 251A AND 2702 WHICH MAY BE USED.		

ARMED FORCES LIBERTY PASS	SERVICE US ARMY	DATE ISSUED 22 Apr 53
LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL Warner, Gary K	CARD NO. 55	
SERVICE NO. [REDACTED]	GRADE—RATE Pfc	
ORGANIZATION—INSTALLATION—BASE Hq Btry 49th AAA Gun Bn Ft Sheridan		
TIME LIMITS	NORMAL OFF DUTY HOURS	
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF ISSUING OFFICER <i>Raymond C. Southard</i> 2nd Lt, Arty		
DD FORM 345 1 Apr 50 GPO 16-62331-1 REPLACES WD AGO FORMS 7 AND 8, NAVFERS FORM 50 AND CG FORMS 251A AND 2702 WHICH MAY BE USED.		

III

U. S. GOVERNMENT OPERATOR'S PERMIT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE						PERMIT NO. B-28
NAME OF OPERATOR Warner, Gary		DATE ISSUED 17 Nov 53	EXPIRATION DATE 16 May 54			
SEX M	RACE CAU	AGE 22	HEIGHT 5' 11"	WEIGHT 148	COLOR OF HAIR Brown	COLOR OF EYES Blue
The holder of this permit is qualified to operate U. S. Government vehicles and/or equipment specified subject to the restrictions set forth on the reverse hereof.						
SIGNATURE OF ISSUING OFFICIAL <i>Alfred T. McCay</i> CAPT ARTY PREVENTIVE OFFICER						TITLE
NAME AND LOCATION OF ISSUING UNIT Hq. 2nd AAA Group						SIGNATURE OF OPERATOR (Not valid until signed)
NOT TRANSFERABLE Permit must be carried at all times when operating Government vehicles						DD FORM 313, 1 AUG 50 REPLACES WD FORM 9-54, 1 AUG 50, WHICH MAY BE USED.

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS

+

THIS CERTIFIES THAT
Gary Keith Warner

HAS COMPLETED THE **STANDARD** COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN FIRST AID TO THE INJURED AT

Hq Btry 49th AAA Bn (Gun)
Skokie, Illinois

Refugee Committee
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, SAFETY SERVICES

8 April 1954



III

U. S. GOVERNMENT OPERATOR'S PERMIT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE						PERMIT NO. B-28
NAME OF OPERATOR Warner, Gary K		DATE ISSUED 20 May 54	EXPIRATION DATE 20 Nov 54			
SEX M	RACE CAU	AGE 21	HEIGHT 5'10"	WEIGHT 156	COLOR OF HAIR Brown	COLOR OF EYES Blue
The holder of this permit is qualified to operate U. S. Government vehicles and/or equipment specified subject to the restrictions set forth on the reverse hereof.						
SIGNATURE OF ISSUING OFFICIAL <i>Raymond C. Southard</i> 2nd Lt Arty						TITLE
NAME AND LOCATION OF ISSUING UNIT Hq. 22d AAA Group, Chicago 37, Illinois						SIGNATURE OF OPERATOR (Not valid until signed)
NOT TRANSFERABLE Permit must be carried at all times when operating Government vehicles						DD FORM 313, 1 AUG 50 REPLACES WD FORM 9-54, 1 AUG 50, WHICH MAY BE USED.



Gary Warner stands to the right at a Spirit of '45 event on Saturday, August 15, 2015 in Park Ridge. World War II Army veteran, Joe Deprizio, and Marine vet Jake Gallagher appear on the left.

"POSTING COLORS"

Park Ridge



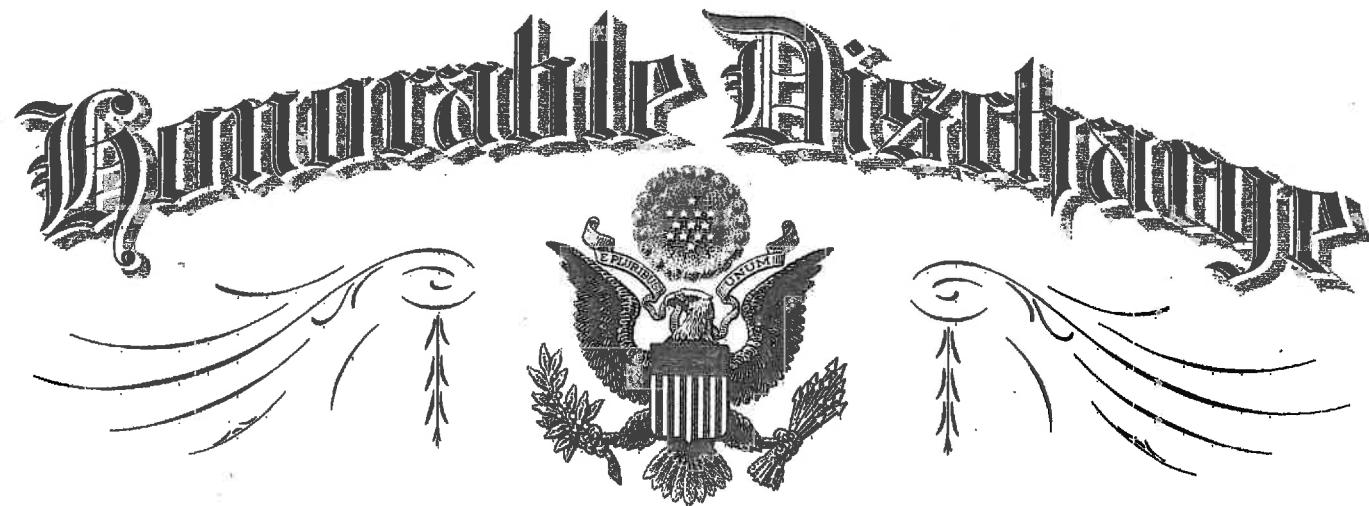
The above photograph depicts display of military memorabilia in Gary's home. He often mounts exhibits in area libraries and at community events.



Gary sports the red, dress scarf of the US Army signifying Artillery in this portrait.



Gary's picture was taken with the Legacy Girls after their performance at the Niles Public Library on Wednesday, November 4, 2015. It marked the 9th Annual Veterans History Project Breakfast.



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

PFC WARNER GARY K

AT-USAR

was Honorably Discharged from the

Army of the United States

on the 1 day of OCT 1960 This certificate is awarded
as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

R. J. Harju

R. J. HARJU
2D LT AGC

CHARACTER OF SEPARATION B. D. H. S.		REPORT OF SEPARATION FROM THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES							
C. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE NAME Kerner Gary Keith		D. SERVICE NUMBER [REDACTED]		E. DATE OF SEPARATION 1953 (7) 23 Nov 53			F. GOVERNMENT AND DEPARTMENT 203 Army		
G. QUALIFICATIONS SPECIALTY NUMBER OR SYMBOL CREATED CIVILIAN OCCUPATION END AT U. S. MILITARY		H. EFFECTIVE DATE OF SEPARATION DAY MONTH YEAR 4 Aug 53			I. TIME OF SEPARATION Rel fr act mil ser				
J. REASONS AND MOTIVES FOR SEPARATION AR 625-36 ETS & SN 61-36-5		K. PLACE OF SEPARATION Fort Shafter, Hawaii							
L. DATE OF BIRTH DAY MONTH YEAR 12 Nov 33		M. PLACE OF BIRTH (City and State) Sault Ste. Marie Mich		N. DESCRIPTION RANK GRADE Sgt Gau			O. EYES Right Left Blue		
P. REGISTERED YES NO		Q. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL REGISTRATION NUMBER (City, County, State) 20 17 33 152			R. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL REGISTRATION NUMBER (City, County, State) #17 Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Mich			S. MARITAL STATUS Married Single	
T. ENLISTED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A RESERVE COMPANY YES NO		U. COUNTRY AND BRANCH OR CLASS USAR AFSC			V. PRIMARY DISTRICT OR AREA COMMAND Trans Atty Kee 3 Illinois Mil Dist			W. PLACE OF BIRTH AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE NA	
X. MEANS OF ENTRY OTHER THAN BY INDUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> ENLISTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REENLISTED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONED <input type="checkbox"/> CALLED FROM INACTIVE SERV		Y. DATE AND PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE DAY MONTH YEAR PLACE OF ENTRY 5 Aug 52 Milwaukee Wisconsin			Z. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE (St., R.F.D., City, County and State) 2211 - 3rd Ave. Sault Ste Marie Michigan			AA. LENGTH OF SERVICE DAY MONTH YEAR NA	
STATEMENT OF SERVICE FOR PAY PURPOSES									
BB. NET (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES EXCLUDING THIS PERIOD		CC. YEARS 2		DD. MONTH 0		EE. DAYS 0		FF. LENGTH OF SERVICE DAY MONTH YEAR NA	
GG. NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES THIS PERIOD		HH. YEARS 0		II. MONTH 0		JJ. DAYS 0		KK. LENGTH OF SERVICE YEAR MONTH DAY NA	
LL. OTHER SERVICE (not of 16 June 1942 or onward) COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES		MM. YEARS 0		NN. MONTH 0		OO. DAYS 0		PP. LENGTH OF SERVICE YEAR MONTH DAY NA	
QQ. TOTAL NET SERVICE COMPLETED FOR PAY PURPOSES		RR. YEARS 2		SS. MONTH 0		TT. DAYS 0		UU. LENGTH OF SERVICE YEAR MONTH DAY NA	
27. DECORATIONS, MEDALS, BADGES, CONDECATIONS, CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED National Defense Service Medal/									
28. MOST SIGNIFICANT DUTY ASSIGNMENT Hq Etry 49th AAA Div En		29. CLOUDS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF ACTION WITH ENEMY FORCES (Plane and Gun, Mortars)							
30. SERVICE SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES, COLLEGE TRAINING COURSES AND/OR FIRST-GRAD. COURSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED		31. DATES (From-To)		32. MAJOR COURSES		33. CERTIFICATION THAT COURSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED			
Generator Operation & Maint		15-19 Jun 53		Generators		NA			
GOVERNMENT INSURANCE INFORMATION: (A) Permanent plan premium must continue to be paid when due, or within 31 days thereafter, or insurance will lapse. (B) Term Insurance will be paid under same as (A) above. (C) Term Insurance under waiver premium payment must be resumed within 120 days after separation. Forward premiums on NSLI to Veterans Administration (District Office having jurisdiction over the area shown in Item 47). Forward premiums on USGLI to Veterans Administration, Washington 25, D. C. (See VA Pamphlet 9-3). When paying premiums give full name, Service Number, Policy Number(s), Branch of Service, date of separation. Contact nearest VA office for information concerning Government Life Insurance.									
34. KIND & AMT. OF INSURANCE & MTHLY PREMIUM None Indemnity		35. ACTIVE SERVICE PRIOR TO 26 APRIL 1951 <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN		36. MONTH ALLOTMENT DISCONTINUED NA		37. MONTH NEXT PRECEDING END Within 120 days			
38. TOTAL PAYMENT UPON SEPARATION		39. TRAVEL OR MILEAGE ALLOWANCE INCLUDED IN TOTAL PAYMENT NA		40. DISBURSING OFFICER'S NAME AND SYMBOL NUMBER NA		41. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO SIGN Robert Hair			
42. REMARKS (Continued on reverse)		43. NAME, GRADE AND TITLE (typed) ROBERT HAIR WOJO USA							
Blood Group <u>NAB</u> No Govt Inst under Sec. 6 (a) App. 2d MCW 1981 Rel fr act AFIT Svc & Trfd to USAR to complete(8)Yrs Svc Under LMT & SVC ACT		44. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO SIGN Robert Hair							
45. V. A. BENEFITS PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR (Specify type) COMPENSATION, PENSION, INSURANCE BENEFITS, ETC.		46. GRADE AND ADDRESS OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYER Printing Co Sault Ste. Marie Mich							
47. DATES OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT FROM 1952 TO 1952		48. MAIN CIVILIAN OCCUPATION Stock Clerk		49. GRADE AND ADDRESS OF LAST CIVILIAN EMPLOYER Printing Co Sault Ste. Marie Mich					
50. UNITED STATES CITIZEN <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		51. MARITAL STATUS Single		52. NON-SERVICE EDUCATION (Years successfully completed) GRADE HIGH SCHOOL COL-LEGE DEGREES 8 4 0 NA		53. MAJOR COURSE OR FIELD Academic			
54. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES AFTER SEPARATION (St., R.F.D., City, County and State) 5339 No. Latrobe Chicago 30 Cook Illinois		55. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED [REDACTED]							