

# A VETERAN'S STORY

## Donald "Don" Simon

ARMY 1945 - 1946

Donald (Don) Simon was born on September 26, 1926 in Stanley, WI. Don grew up in the Stanley area with two brothers. His father worked at the feed store in Stanley.

Don held jobs at the dairy plant in town, attended local schools and graduated from Stanley High School in 1945. He attempted to join the Army while he was in high school - but the recruiters told him he was too young. They told him to come back when he was 17 and a half.

Don enlisted in the Army when he turned 18. He spent his basic training at Fort McClellan, in the city of Anniston, Alabama. During World War II, Fort McClellan was one of the largest U.S. Army installations, training an estimated half-million troops. Recruits received eight weeks of basic training, and were then sent elsewhere for combat training or specialized schools.

During the war, Fort McClellan became the temporary home for many captured enemy soldiers; a 3,000-capacity Prison Internment Camp for prisoners of war (POWs) was built in 1943. The camp also served to receive prisoners who would go on to three other POW camps in Alabama.

After his training, Don took a ship to the Philippines.

He remembers living in a barracks and being part of the forces that were sent to Japan and South Korea. After the defeat of Japan in World War II, the United States led the Allies in the occupation and rehabilitation of the Japanese state and other parts of the South East Asian region.

The occupation involved a total of nearly 1 million Allied soldiers (including over 450,000 Americans) and was overseen by American General Douglas MacArthur, who was appointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers by U.S. President Harry Truman.

Don remembers there were no cars or paved roads where he was stationed in Japan. He communicated by letters to family and friends back home.

He said there wasn't much access to telephones like we have today.

In 1946, Don was discharged from the Army. He returned home to the Stanley area and resumed his work at the dairy plant. Soon after returning home, he married a local Stanley girl (Marion). Don left the dairy plant to work for the Post Office in 1962. He worked there until he retired in 1989.

Don and Marion had five children (a boy and four girls) and were married for 67 years.



*Today, Don lives in an apartment at Chippewa Manor Residential Living in Chippewa Falls, WI*

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