

## STORY OF SGT. DENNIS (MUTT) MERRIMAN

### HIS STORY SO FAR:

I joined the U. S. Army in July of 1948. I took my basic training at Ft. Knox, KY and was sent to Japan to take my jump training with the 11th Airborne Div. which was what I had originally signed up for in the first place at enlistment. I completed my jump training in December, 1948 in Yamoto, Japan.

I was then sent to and joined up with the 187th. Parachute/Glider, AIRBORNE regiment stationed at Camp Crawford, Sapporo, Japan. That regiment then was returned to the U.S. in 1950 to be stationed at Camp Campbell, KY. In September of that year (1950), the Regiment was sent to KOREA to join the U.N. forces then fighting the North Koreans. About 8 months of that stuff later, I returned to the U.S. of A. in May, 1951 and was honorably discharged in June of 1951.

While in the "service" of my country, I received the following decorations and awards: (all while serving in the 187th Rgt. AIRBORNE COMBAT TEAM.)

In the order of rank: Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation (Army) Presidential (Navy), the C.I.B. (Combat Infantry Badge, Parachute Badge (wings)..with one Combat Star., Korean Campaign with 3 battle stars..the United Nations Commendation, the United Nations Commendation, the U.S. Occupation (Japan) ribbon.

### THE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN--

Memories vary between the most conceivable extremes. Because of this, I will include a classic example..worthy of a new day William Shakespear..Another Hamlet, another real world experienced by Sgt. Dennis Merriman..It is not at all unusual for those who have been in combat. (Eds. note)

### MY VERY BEST DAY IN SERVICE--

In the summer of 1949, while stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY, Post of the 101st. AIRBORNE DIVISION, my good friend and buddy, one Pvt. Bobby G. Martin, somehow qualified for a pass. It was a weekend long pass and worth spending in the best way we could dream up. I had a similar pass and the combo was irresistible.

Pvt. Martin and I were in the same platoon and so we decided that since this was the first time in a long month that we both had passes, we should take maximum advantage of it.

The time of year being summer, and Pvt. Martin having a valid PILOTS LICENSE for single engine aircraft, able to carry one pilot and one passenger, we decided to visit the local airport and

rent a plane for the day. Since all the other men of the outfit on pass were hell bent for Nashville and the “Grand Ole Opre”, and other fun things which they had been cruelly denied for varying, unbearable lengths of time, we “higher class” fellows would do something different.

Upon our arrival at the airport, Bobby showed his valid license to the airport manager and we were off into the wild blue yonder. Ten minutes into the flight we elected to try some “aerobatics” for which the plane was safety rated and designed to handle. After several spins and other maneuvers, I was asked if I would like to “drive”. Why not? After all, I was “Airborne” wasn’t I? RIGHT!!! After about one minute of my alternately exploring the open sky and then staring in rapt disbelief at the rapidly approaching ground, Bobby took the controls away from me.

Thankfully, this kept us both “AIRBORNE” for real. I do believe I could fly a “chute” far better than a plane. We finally landed without untoward or negative incident and being met upon taxing up to the flight line, we were abruptly met by the manager. He promptly advised us that NEVER were we to return to his airport again.

We then proceeded to Nashville where we met up with the rest of K Company in one of the local watering holes. About midnight, the “MP’s” decided we had done enough damage to the various locals and environs and we were summarily escorted back to the confines of Ft. Campbell. We had had a great day.

Corporal Bobby G. Martin and I shipped out to Korea with our unit, the 187th Airborne Combat Team in September, 1950. I returned after about 10 months of varied combat experiences, (the nature of which all combat vets understand only too well.) to the United States..(or the “real world” as we called it).. In May of 1952, by way of “Air-Evacuation”.

My friend and buddy, Corporal Bobby G. Martin was killed in action in August, 1952. I have to believe that Bobby is up there in the clouds where he can watch us.

“BEAT IT JUNIOR.  
I KETCHED IT.  
I’LL SEARCH IT.”

KOREA, 1950 - 5 1



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