

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Best Friends for Life

One is drafted, the other joins to support his buddy.

By Janet Larreau

With members of American Legion Post 130 and the V.F.W., John Phillips and Ed Tullis will stand together to honor the American flag and all veterans who have served in the military at the November 11 Veterans Day program in Arnold. What sets these two apart is a life-long friendship that goes back to high school, their tour of duty in Vietnam, and their continued friendship to this day.

“Ed was my classmate in high school and best friend. We both had low draft numbers and when I was drafted, Ed volunteered for the draft. We went at the same time, along with Darrell Pinkston. I had just turned 19. It was a sinking feeling when I received my notice. By 1971, the Vietnam War was very unpopular and men coming home from the war were being harassed to the extent of being spit on and called ‘baby killers.’ It was a lot easier when Ed volunteered and went at the same time,” said John.

Both John and Ed received their basic training in Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. With both having close to the same aptitudes and background, they were sent to the same training. The first was a General Machine Operator’s Course and the second was a Water Well Drilling course. John was in third platoon and Ed was in fourth platoon.

“We were in the same companies throughout training. In fact, we were the top two in our AIT courses and battled back and forth for the lead!” said John.

After completing the courses, John received his orders for Vietnam and was placed in a Combat Engineer Company.

“Ed and I received orders for the same unit in Vietnam, but Ed’s older brother Alan was serving there. Ed’s folks had already suffered the anguish of having two sons in combat as



Both just teenagers at the time, John Phillips (left) and Ed Tullis (right) served their country during the Vietnam War in the early 70s.

Alan was deployed while Gene was still serving there. (The Tullis boys’ father) Charlie said, ‘When Alan steps off the plane, Ed can step on, but not until!’ If you knew Charles Tullis, you didn’t cross him and he was right, so Ed stayed behind at Ft. Wood.”

John’s unit was tasked with building Fire Support Bases for the Artillery. These were small forward operating bases placed strategically throughout the country, so mainly infantry units could call in fire support on the enemy – the North Vietnamese Army, NVA or Viet Cong, VC or Victor Charlie.

John served from February 1971 to February 1972 – just one year and 12 days. In his last days in Vietnam, he was offered an ‘Early Out’ specifically for those with one year in active service and six months in Vietnam. As the America’s role was being reduced during a phase called Vietnamization, troops with less than six months in country were being sent to Korea and Germany and those with over six months, but less than a year in the Army were redeployed stateside.

“Of course, this was a massive move of personnel and overcrowded all the bases on the re-

aged to take it. It was a great surprise to my family!” said John.

John was free as a bird, but after being home a few months, he almost re-enlisted.

“It was great to be home, but it was so sudden that the adjustment was very difficult for a while and I really felt I should have served out my full tour and that I had abandoned my unit. I went to work for Gene Tullis doing roofing and carpentry. It was great because he had been in Vietnam in artillery and I had someone to relate to,” said John.

Ed stayed statewide for his full two years of active duty. Both men chose to make their home in Arnold, worked and raised their families. They are still best friends.

“We had a saying while in Vietnam: ‘We are the unwilling doing the unnecessary for the

It was a lot easier when Ed volunteered at the same time.

- John Phillips on receiving his draft notice to serve in Vietnam

ungrateful led by the unqualified.’ Well, that is the mindset of most kids anywhere and most of us grow out of that philosophy, which I certainly did. Many years later, maybe in the 80s, PBS did a great documentary on the war that really changed my mind and heart. It was a terrible shame all around. It would take columns to explain it all. As we have seen just recently in Afghanistan, one lame decision from the top can be devastating to our troops and our trusted allies and destroy an entire nation for generations.”



(From left) Vietnam veterans Ed Tullis, John Phillips, and Gene Tullis pictured together at a recent Veterans Day program. All three men have been active members of Arnold’s Legion and V.F.W. posts through the decades since the war. “Most veterans continue to serve in some capacity. We took an oath to serve our country and it never expires,” said John.

Chamber Is Offering Businesses Free Advertising on Huskeradio

Arnold Chamber is offering businesses the opportunity to be part of a live remote on Huskeradio during Christmas Around Town, scheduled for December 8.

This free promotional and advertising opportunity is only available to businesses that are Chamber members and that attend the November 22 Chamber meeting.

Vets Day Program Is Today

A reminder that the American Legion Post 130 and V.F.W. members will host a Veterans Day program Thursday, November 11, starting at 9:00 a.m., in the school’s auditorium. This year’s speaker will be former Marine and Lincoln County Sheriff Duane Deterding. Students and their teachers will be involved in honoring our veterans. The public is invited to attend.

Veterans will meet at the Veterans Hall at 8:30 a.m.

One-Act Community Night

Both Arnold and Callaway High Schools will present their one-act plays at community night, November 12, in the Arnold School auditorium. Callaway will present their play at 7:00 p.m., and Arnold’s presentation will follow.



Future farmer...

“Anyone who knows Reese knows this kiddo loves all farming equipment, tractors, semis, combines, forklifts... you name it, he loves it!

- Reese’s mom, Heather Hagler

Harvest looks to wrap up ahead of schedule

Carrying his lunch box, 4-year-old Reese Hagler heads across a field to start the day with his dad, Zach, cutting soybeans with a 40 foot draper head on a Case 8250 combine. Conditions have been good for harvesting for the Haglers and other area farmers.

“It’s gone real well. It’s been a quick harvest with nice weather,” said Scott Hillius, vice-president of Grain for Country Partners Cooperative. “There’s been a couple of delays, but most people needed a break. They’re going to finish ahead of schedule this season, wrapping up before Thanksgiving, which is a good thing. I’ve heard a lot of people say soybean yields are the best ever and corn yields have definitely exceeded expectations. There’s good prices to boot, which is a win, win for the farmer.”

On a side note, Country Partners is currently holding a harvest photo contest called Grow It. Own It. Show It. on Facebook. Visit their FB page to view lots of great photos like the one pictured above and vote for your favorite.