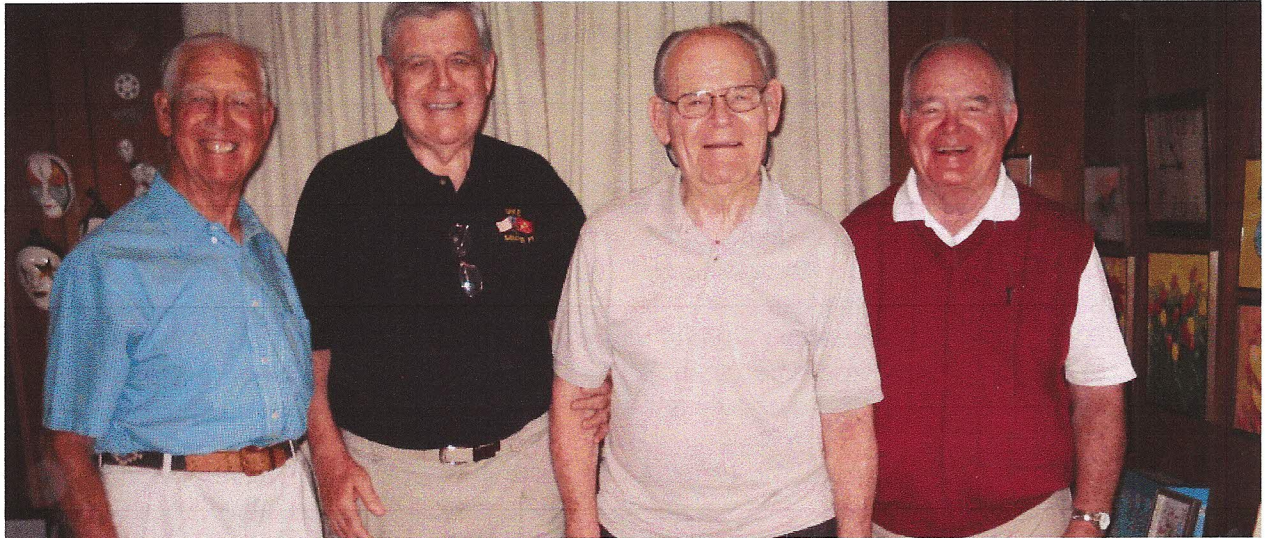

PLAIN BROWN RAPPER

News for the Grace and Tandy Brown Family

August, 2010



A gathering of brothers at Franks House on August 5th resulted in lots of laughs, memories, and story telling. Pictured here l to r: Charles, Mike, Frank and Dick.

Worth noting, all of these men are Marines. Frank, fought in World War II in the Pacific. Was seriously wounded at the Battle of Bougainville and returned to fight in the battles of Guam and Iwo Jima. Frank received the Purple Heart. He returned home and went to college with the V-12 program. He attended school in Colorado Springs at Colorado College and then to Colorado A&M (now Colorado State University) graduating in Engineering.

Charles joined the Marines as World War II was winding down and served in China. He too returned home and used the GI Bill to attend Colorado A&M (now CSU) and graduated in Engineering.

Dick joined the Marines after graduation and served in Korea. He received the Bronze Star for bravery (pulling a Colonel out of a Burning Cat House – well --- that's what he said) and the Purple Heart for a wound he suffered. He returned home, used the G I Bill and went to school at the University of Wyoming. He was elected Student Body President and graduated with a Business Degree.

Mike joined the Marines upon graduation and served in Japan. He returned home, used the G I Bill to attend the University of Wyoming and graduated with a Business Degree.

These are just thumbnail sketches of these wonderful men who served their country as very young teenage boys and returned home mature men. Their individual accomplishments are many and they have contributed a great deal to their families, their country and their communities. They are family men; Frank and Marilyn have been married for over 60 years, Charles and LaVena are approaching 50 years, Dick and Marty reached the 50 year mark just before she passed away and Mike and Nan are also nearing 50 years. They are fathers and grandfathers who have a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of their children and enjoy the perks which go along with being grandfathers. I am proud to know them, each and everyone!!!

The following is a narrative sent to me by Mike following the trip to Frank and Marilyn's home in Belleville, Illinois.

A GATHERING OF BROTHERS

By Mike Brown

On August 4, 2010, Charles, Dick and I traveled to Belleville, Illinois to visit our brother Frank and his wife, Marilyn. All four of us brothers had served in the Marine Corps and are the surviving males in our family. We had never before gathered as a group to share stories and reconnect. I think I speak for all of us in saying that the trip exceeded our expectations.

Frank, the oldest began the Marine Corps tradition when he enlisted shortly after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He served in the Pacific and was part of campaigns on Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima. He was followed in the Corps by Charles who enlisted near the end of WW II and served in China during the communist revolution. Dick then joined in the late 1940s and served during the Korean War. I came along several years later, going on active duty in early 1959 to early 1963. My overseas duty was in Japan in 1960 – 61. One of reasons for our visit was to learn what each of us did during our tours of duty and what differences/similarities we found.

Our trip began when Dick, Charles and I met at the parking lot at the Denver Airport. Dick had driven to Cheyenne, picked me up, and we drove down together. Charles drove from Colorado Springs to meet us. We flew to St. Louis, rented a car and drove to Illinois. After we checked into our hotel we drove to Frank and Marilyn's house to pick them up and go to dinner. The next morning (Thursday) we returned to their house and continued our visit. We gathered in their sun room and began telling stories. After a few hours we took a break and then gathered again mid-afternoon for more stories. Finally, we went to dinner and back to the hotel. Friday, before we left for the airport we made one last stop at Frank and Marilyn's for a brief visit and good byes.

There were too many stories to tell in this article, but I audio recorded our Thursday morning and afternoon visits and plan to copy them to a single DVD or a couple of CDs (if I am smart enough to figure out how). If anyone would like a copy, let me know. I had hoped to be able to attach them to emails for distribution, but the files are too large. I also have copies of the photos that I can email or, hopefully, add to the CDs/DVD.

However, there were a few stories that I can share:

When Frank was 12 or so, he and some of our siblings (June, Betty, Leah, Leonard, Stuart and Charles) were moving their horse and colt across a gully. Frank decided that the colt could help him climb up the side of the gully so he grabbed its tail for a tow. The colt was not nearly as keen on the idea as Frank, and commenced to kick him in the face. The jolt knocked out Frank's eye and left it flopping around his cheek. The kids all took off for the car and drove him to Dr. Johnson (our long time family doctor) who "popped it back in". The eye continues to work today except for a small dark spot in his vision. Frank said that he often had great ideas that did not quite pan out – most resulting in a spanking by Mom.

Spankings by Mom, and the dreaded ones by Dad, were the topic of several stories. I'm sure all of us remember having to cut a switch from the willow tree to be used for our punishment. Charles said he learned not to tell Mom the spanking did not hurt, and all of us learned not to try to cheat on the size of the willow branch we cut. Mom and Dad were firm believers in the adage: Spare the rod and spoil the child. I don't think any of us were scarred by the corporal punishment doled out by the folks or our teachers.

Frank also recounted his service during WW II and corrected one misunderstanding that many of us have. He fought on Guam, not Okinawa. His travels took him to New Zealand and Guadalcanal (after it had been taken from the Japanese) for preparation for assaults on Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima. Frank was seriously wounded on Bougainville when an anti-tank missile passed through the tank where he was manning the radio. He was taken for treatment and returned to his old outfit prior to their going to Guam. Because of his injury he was unable to serve inside the tank so he became a forward observer for his unit. While on point for a patrol on Guam he approached a stand of trees that had some Japanese soldiers in hiding. As the patrol approached, Frank sang out "Come out, come out, whoever you are". They did come out with their hands up and Frank's catch phrase followed him for the rest of his tour. On Iwo Jima he witnessed the raising of the American Flag on Mt. Suribachi.

Charles told us about his time in China. He began in Tientsin (now named Tianjin). The communist rebels were across the river and would take shots at the sentries guarding warehouses at night when the floodlights came on. He began carrying a shotgun to shoot out the lights when they came on. After the rebel presence became too strong in Tientsin he was moved south to the city of Xingtao. Soon after, the Marines were moved out of China and Charles returned to the States.

Dick's memories of Korea dealt more with the cold and hard work trying to dig foxholes. He was attached to the Marine unit that had fought their way out of the Chosen Reservoir and was part of Operation Killer that pushed the Chinese and North Koreans out of South Korea. He also told of being in the hospital with hepatitis in Yokosuka, Japan when some high school friends in the Navy called him to meet them for a few beers. The doctors allowed him to go but warned him not to drink any alcohol. The wives of the Brown brothers can attest that we are not good at following instructions.

My military career was very drab compared to the others, so my contributions were minimal – but being a good Marine I was able to throw in a bit of BS.

We had a great time, and learned a lot about each other and our family's history. We hope the recording we did will be of value to our siblings and our families. We also hope it serves as a reminder to all of us to keep a record of our past so our future generations can learn about their ancestors. I sure wish I had something like this about Mom's and Dad's early years. Thanks to Dolfe and the Plain Brown Rapper we know much of our history, but there are still many holes.

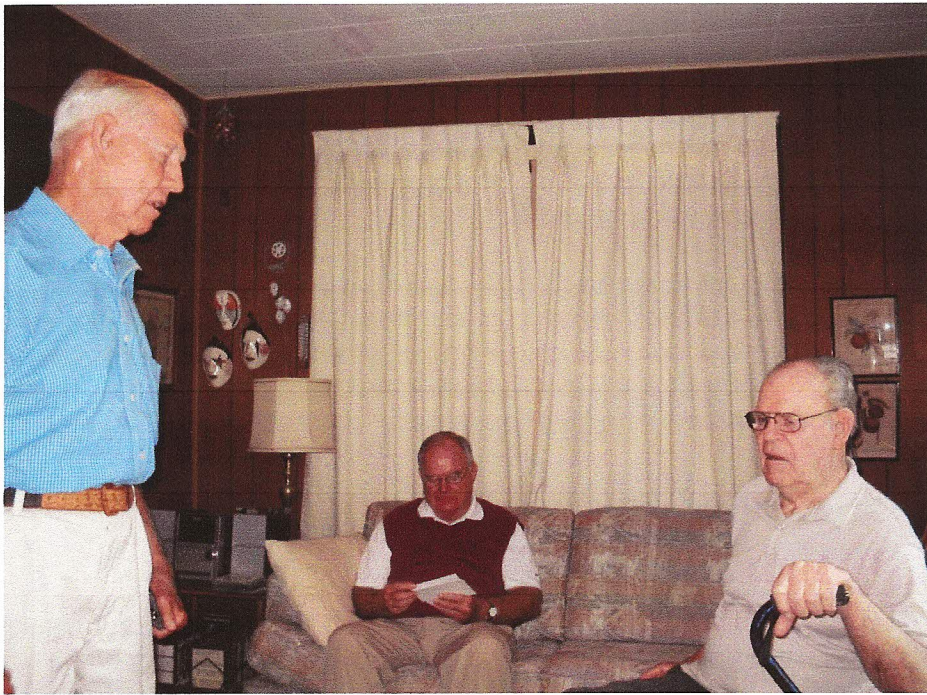
Semper Fi!!!!

Many thanks to Mike for sending along this narrative. His statement about how important our past is for our future is so important. We can learn so much and enjoy so much knowing how it was in the "Olden Days."

In the morning paper there was an article about the graduating class of 2014. These college graduates are going to college never having dealt with phones with cords attached, thinking e-mail is sooooo slow and numerous other things. Think about it, having to wait for the Saturday news reels at the movies or the newspaper would probably drive them crazy. In the past 100 years when mom and dad came to Cheyenne to make their lives so much has changed and life is very exciting. The thought of Dad riding the train from Omaha, Nebraska to San Francisco, California when he was 17, the first time he had ever been away from his tiny home town. Think about how far we've progressed from there.



from l to r: Mike, Frank, Marilyn, Charles and Dick



Remembering the "Olden Days" – Charles, Dick and Frank

Send your news, thoughts and ideas anytime to: dolfe96@aol.com