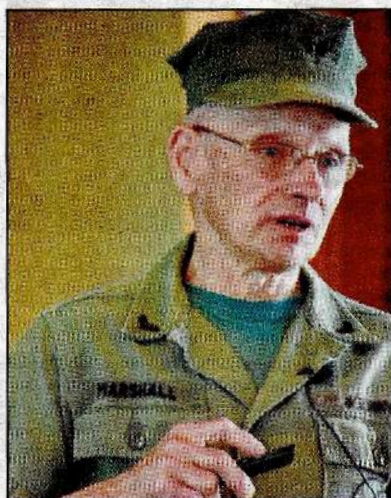


Vietnam War Veteran Craig Marshall on recognizing courage, sacrifices

by Bill Jeffway
Dutchess County Historical Society

Craig Marshall of the Town of Clinton is a Vietnam Veteran who shares his own experiences in Vietnam as a Navy Seabee through presentations and talks. He is a Vice President of the Clinton Historical Society.



Clinton resident Craig Marshall is a veteran of the Vietnam War and helps veterans share their experiences through the "I served ..." program of the Dutchess County Historical Society. Right: Seabee Craig Marshall with patrol dog Freckles in Da Nang, Vietnam, 1967
Courtesy photo

Additionally, among other responsibilities as the Chair of the Dutchess County Historical Society's Local Vice President collaborative network, Marshall supports programs to help other veterans share their experiences through the DCHS "I served..." program and others.

Here he answers frequently asked questions about his work.

Why is it important to hear veterans' stories?

As a Vietnam veteran, I believe veterans' stories are important to keep us and future generations mindful of the sacrifices, courage and difficult experiences they made in serving their country, especially in times of war. Without these first-hand stories, we are left with history written by those who did not participate in these actions, thereby missing how these experiences personally affected our veterans and their families, and how they felt about their service and the war. We also learn about the support from the home front. For non-war experiences, we need to be reminded of the important and continuing military service contributions that keep our nation free.

What are the challenges?

Many war veterans experienced horrific battle conditions, including loss of friends and fellow comrades, and possibly personal physical and mental injuries and illness. Attempting to remember and convey these experiences, sometimes pushed into the subconscious, can be a difficult challenge, often not

wanting to be remembered.

Another challenge is time, where memories of World War II and other wars have faded from memory. Time also plays an important role in conducting interviews before those senior citizen veterans pass on, carrying their stories with them. And many veterans do not see the value in telling their stories.

What your hopes and ambitions for the telling of veterans' stories?

By recording veterans' stories, we can learn more about the impact on their personal lives with the hope that future wars will have less negative impact. For instance, the return of Vietnam veterans to an unwelcome and unappreciative populace in many cases, should be acknowledged and understood for the unfair practice it was to prevent future re-occurrence.

Also, the continuing need for post-war medical and educational services for our vets can be better revealed. Family histories can be added to with these documented interviews. And, most important, the telling of tragic experiences can help lead to an

end of war as people, especially those in power (government and military) better understand the human toll that future wars would bring.

What might a listener learn?

Veterans' interviews can reveal the strong patriotism and love of country that might not be heard otherwise. Courage, sacrifice, brotherhood and service to country and others are qualities that need to be continually reinforced if we are to continue to be the free country we want to be. Listening to veterans and their personal accounts can provide that reinforcement.

How is it relevant today?

In our times of relative peace today, it is very easy for young and those generations who have not experienced war to be unaware of its effects and serious impacts, particularly as history in schools is not taught as it once was. Many are unaware of the death, injury and suffering of literally millions of people of past wars. We need to be reminded that this can happen again in the future if we are not "ever vigilant."

Veterans help remind us.

