

## Old Veterans

Mike and Joyce are friends we found down here in Arizona. About a month ago, Mike who is a trumpet player asked if I could help him with an upcoming musical event. No, not as a singer! Each year, he and a few of his friends put on a fundraiser tribute to past musical composer. It is actually a sing-along and in the past they printed the words to the songs in the sign-along. Mike asked if there was any way the words could be put on a screen. Well, I knew the auditorium they were planning on using had a large screen, ceiling mounted projector and good sound system, so I said 'No problem'. He then asked it was possible to include three video clips of the composers. Again, it was no problem. The event went off very well. Prior to the performance, I was talking with one of the over musicians and we talked about Veterans. Joey told me that his oldest brother saw action in Europe during WWI and as Joey said 'He came home.' His second oldest brother saw action in Korean during the Korean War and 'He came home.' Joey missed Vietnam and claimed that he was lucky. Both brothers returned to civilian life and became productive members of their community. As with most war Veterans neither talked about their experiences.

At the local Legion's ceremony on Veterans Day, the Adjutant read the poem 'What is a Veteran'. I've heard him do the reading three times and each time he becomes very emotional and has to stop several times during the reading. The poem is about people who served in the military, came home and became your banker, you plumber and your preacher. It is about the common members of our society who served to defend and protect our liberty, way of life and our country. It is an emotional reading and reminds all of us what a Veteran really is.

On 1 October 2019, a 1946 graduate of the US Naval Academy celebrated his 95th birthday. He served as a submariner in both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. This year Jimmy Carter became the longest living President of the US, surpassing George H.W. Bush who died at age 94 years 171 days. He was elected President 200 years after our Declaration of Independence, 1976. Although many people think his term of office was less than spectacular, his service to his community and our nation following his term is to be admired. He is still a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. Not bad for an old Veteran.

In 2019, we lost a couple well-known Veterans. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens joined the US Navy on 6 December 1941 and served as an intelligence officer in the Pacific. Alfred Newman, US Marine Corps also died in 2019. Newman served as a Navajo code talker in the Pacific during WWII.