

Lloyd please give me the opportunity to explain my statement concerning the importance of biographies for NWSA members. After retiring from 35 years government service in 2003 I became active in the American Legion holding a large range of positions. As a Jacksonville, FL Post Commander with approximately 1,700 Legion members, 1100 Auxiliary members, 400 Sons of the Legion members, and a large number of active duty personnel and veterans that are not members of the American Legion.

Our population consisted of veterans from WWII to the present wars and conflicts. These veterans are loaded with stories that relate to their days on active duty. Conversations concerning life after their discharge seem to go into a neutral position and the conversation fades to what medical problems and medical testing they have had in the past six months.

Most of our members are aware of each other's service affiliation, rank, and nick name. Newspaper articles and obituaries that mention a veteran's real name are sometimes overlooked because of the name confusion. As proper identification of an individual is made relationships are discussed by those that have known him/her for a number of years often reverting to where the person sat within the building or some other repetitious action the person was known for.

As most family members do not understand the active duty portion of a veteran's life unless they actually lived that period together, they seem to be unable to discuss issues with a family member as they can with another veterans or group of veterans. The veterans find commonality with other veterans and seem to develop a need to be part of that organization. In doing so the Veteran spends less time with their families and more time with their extended families at the Legion, VFW, or FRA.

A veteran's true worth is sometimes not realized until after he/she has had an incapacitating illness or has passed. Sometimes it is immediate and sometimes well after the passing that family members or friends decide to get involved and find out who that person was. In most cases it is found that they (family members or friends) have lost the opportunity to know a truly remarkable individual. Then they begin the time consuming and disappointing task of trying to reassemble information by any means possible to restore the memory of the family member they did not understand before.

Please bear in mind...when you go so does your official records. Make sure you leave important documents in a safe place for your family members and explain to them what they mean. After you have gone no one will be able to piece you back together for those that determine a need to know all about you, or need your information to qualify for programs or associations.

So, while you can, write that biography and let everyone know what is important to you and what you want those left behind to remember. If you leave it to guess work and rumors, that is how you will be remembered. This is your horn to toot make it good, you are authorized to embellish a little but only a little. Your bio can become part of you important papers such as will, power of attorney, and other estate planning documents.

Thanks Lloyd this is a good program turn in your bio before our next meeting.