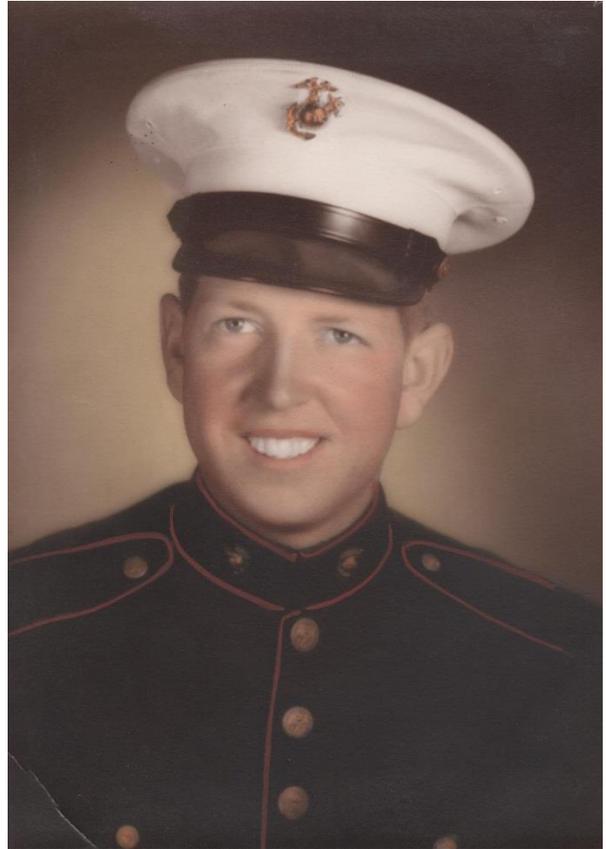


# Charles William Adams

Interviewed by Judy Hansen  
October 2015

My parents were James Leslie Adams and Florence Ethel Wilde Adams. I was born in Orem, Utah when the doctors would come to the house and deliver the babies at home. I was raised on a 30 acre fruit farm that was located right above (east) where the Utah Valley University is today. Now there is a church on where part of our property was; a big Stake Center. We used to have a house over there but it burned down. My older brother saved my younger sister. She was in a high chair and he carried her out of the house saving her from the fire. Then they built another house across the street. It wasn't completely finished. Dad was so busy doing stuff for other people that he never got his house finished. I had seven sisters and two brothers. My dad was an iron worker, a plumber, and jack of all trades.



I went to school at Lincoln High School in Orem and graduated in 1949. I then spent time working with dad on the farm helping him and other people. I helped Paul Taylor, he was a dairyman down on Geneva Road and I would ride my horse down there and help him haul hay. At that time, we all had to register for the draft. I registered and quite a while later got my call to report to Fort Douglas. I went up to Fort Douglas in 1951. I was drafted when the Korean War broke out. I guess it was partially over when I went in. My cousin, Earl Wilde got drafted the same time I did so he went up there with me. He was my mother's twin brother's son from Provo. My mother was a twin and I have a picture of her and her twin brother. I don't know how old they were but they both had long braided hair. You couldn't tell them apart. The last time I seen my Uncle Pete he was as bald headed as a coot (he laughs).

Anyway – when we got to Fort Douglas they needed fourteen volunteers to go into the Marine Corp. I liked the looks of that big Sargent that had his dress blue uniform on so I volunteer to go into the Marine Corp. I knew I would go to San Diego if I got into the Marine Corp. In the Army I wouldn't know where I would go because they sent those guys all over. My cousin was a little upset with me when I volunteered for the Marine Corp. He went in the Army. I remember we left Salt Lake. We got on a train and were just having a ball (he laughs) on that

train. When we got to San Diego everything changed. All those drill Sargent's; they started crackin' the whip and had us scrubbin' the floors the first night we got in there.

I think the training there at that time was nine weeks but I'm not sure. It could have been six. I went through boot camp then I got a two week leave and came home and went deer hunting with my dad and brothers-in-law. My dad asked if I wanted the horse. I said, "No, I don't need the horse my legs have toughened up."

After I got through boot camp I went to Camp Pendleton for 30 days infantry training. Every marine has to go through infantry training to learn how to shoot the rifle and learn how to be an infantryman because you never know when you will be called to be an infantryman. I went to the rifle range and learned how to shoot the M-1, machine gun, and all the weapons.

Then I went to Camp Delmar for artillery training. Camp Delmar used to be at Oceanside but it is not there anymore; it is out in Palm Springs now. We would do most of our training on the 105's. We were scheduled to go out on a shoot one day but it was raining so hard it washed out the bridge to where we were going. So we went X number of miles out around to get to where we were to go to shoot the guns. When we got back, we all knew we would get an inspection first thing the next morning. One of the guys got home from shooting and he just threw his rifle in the locker. It was covered with mud and was all wet. The next morning they came in and yelled, "Junk on the Bunk!" So you'd put all your stuff on the bunk for inspection of the rifles and everything else. Well, there his rifle was muddy and wet and dirty. He got thirty days of restriction because he didn't clean up his rifle. That is what you're supposed to do. You got to take care of your weapons. If you ever need them, you need to make sure you know they work. I think he was the one that went home on a thirty day emergency leave. After his thirty days was up he called for an extension and they wouldn't give it to him. When he came back they found him one morning hanging from a chandelier. He had committed suicide.

After my artillery training we boarded ship and headed for Korea. Every private in the Marine Corp serves thirty days a year on mess duty; that's feeding the troops. I served part of my mess duty on the ship going over. I wasn't assigned to a unit until I got over to Korea.

We went to Kobe, Japan then we got into a LST and went up to Korea. They dropped the gate of the LST and we would march off there. They handed us a bandolier of ammunition and a bayonet. They said, "You might need this before you get to where you are going" (He laughs). Just to scare us to death I guess. The guy I used to chase around with, William Boston he was from Souix City, Iowa. I spent a lot of time with him. On Sunday we would go out and sunbath on the hillsides when we were in training. When we got to Korea he would just load his rifle right up. They'd throw that ammunition at us and he would just load it right up. He went into the 1<sup>st</sup> Sargent's tent and they told us to stack our rifles in the tent. They checked his and it was loaded. They made us turn in all our ammunition, our bayonets; we couldn't have any of that

and that is when they assigned us to a unit. I was in the King Battery, 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division.

We landed on the East coast, I think it was Inchon. On the east coast the mountains are high like they are here. On the west coast they are just the low hills of Korea. There were rice paddies, muddy fields, and everything. When we were on the east coast they told us it was rumored that we were gonna move but not to believe anything you hear because there was usually nothing to it. Well, we could see there was something to it, because over on the east coast you had to have strong baggies in the tent to keep the snow from mashin' down on you. They had taken all that strong bagging out of the tents and had it in a pile. Within two weeks we loaded all them logs and poles that they used for strong backing in the fence. We loaded them on the trucks and all of our gear and then we had to ride on top of the trucks for 185 miles for the trip over to the west coast. I got in Korea sometime in February 1952. The trucks were called 6 X's.

They had done a week's cold training up in Bishop, California during training. When we got to Korea we were supposed to get our cold weather boots but they said, "The weather is fine you don't need your cold weather boots."

They gave us some c-rations to eat on the way over there. About halfway the galley was going to stop and fix us a hot meal. As we'd go along that 185 mile road there would be all these little kids along the road begging for food. As we'd go along we'd break the c-rations apart; they were just individually wrapped, and throw them off to the kids begging for food along the side. We just got started and the galley truck broke down so we never seen them again. We never needed the food anyway (he laughs). Those poor little kids were starving. We got over there and got in the rice paddies and got the trucks stuck. We had to get the cables and pull them out of the mud. It was quite the chore.

We were in direct support of the Korean Marine Corp most of the time I was over there. They decided they would give us a break and put Love Battery in there. There was King, Love, and another battery I can't remember but there were three batteries in a regiment. We were in King Battery and Love Battery took our place. We got out of that. They moved us and took Love Battery and put them where we were at and then we went and supported the Army. We never fired a round for two weeks but those Koreans were calling for fire all night long. We broke up our gun crews so well they'd have to get up all night long. We had one crew that would stay up the first half of the night and the other crew would get up the second half.

I was a gunner on the 155 howitzer for one of the crews. I would set the quadrant and plangent on the sights and line them up on the M-Stakes and holler, "Ready" then the #1 man would throw the bridge block closed. They would load the projectile into the gun first and holler, "Set, Ready", then he'd slam the door shut. It's a big round interrupted step-threaded bridge block and it goes in and makes a half a turn and that locks it into place. Then when you fire it, it's about eight inches round and they are a hundred pounds. The range is 9 miles so we weren't by any

infantry. One time we had no infantry in front of us and the A O's; that is the air observers, that would call down to you giving the coordinates to go on the gun for the target to hit. We were firing in against Panmunjom. The A O's were giving us targets to shoot that were real close to the no-fire zone. Panmunjom was where they were doing the peace talks. They said we got some hits inside that no fire line. All this came out in the Orem newspaper when it happened and my mother wrote me a letter that said, "Are you the one that started the third world war?" (He laughs) No, we didn't start a war.

When I was on mess duty in Korea, I had two little Korean boys that I had to make sure they got the pots and pans clean. They would go around and wash clothes for all the guys. They had little places out in the creek that they'd take the clothes, put a little soap on them, and beat them. The clothes really came out clean. They got paid to do it and that one kid, he had a huge wad of money; of course the Korean money was big. I left all my money on the books. I took \$10 or \$15 a month and then left everything on the books. I think they paid me \$85 a month. When I got home they paid me out all in cash.

In Oct 1952 we just finished a fire mission and one of the guys on gun 4 got his hand in that bridge block. They ram the projectile up in the gun, then they put the powder bag in, and as he put the powder bag in the #1 man shut the door. There were eleven men on a crew; the gunner, #1 man, powder man, projectile man, etc. We'd just had a fire mission; having a target to shoot at, one of the guys on gun 4 when he put the powder in; you can cut the powder bags down to different sizes for different charges for distance; he glances back and could see the powder bag sticking out and he had already hollered "cut" but he went back to shove that powder bag further in. The guy had already closed the bridge block and when you start that there is a counter-balance and it goes shut and it took his hand off.

One other time when we were in Korea, they had what they called a variable time fuse. That is what we would use for troops in the open. It would screw on the end of those projectiles, you'd fire it, and when it gets so close to the ground it goes off. It doesn't have to make contact and there is a shower of shrapnel up in the air for troops in the open. We were firing on one target and A O's came back and said, "Oh you got a direct hit on that bunker. The gooks are running all over with their pants on fire." I guess we got a direct hit on them. We done mostly random shooting. When I got over there things were pretty much settled down. They'd name a battle after a hill but I never heard any names for the shooting we done.

Me and one other guy was the only two LDS servicemen in the area where I was at. When I went into San Diego the Chaplain was LDS and he told us if our dog tags didn't come back with Latter-Day Saint on them to send them back and make them do it right. They would put protestant or something else on them.

We had to fire the variable time fuses at 2 second intervals so they would set each other off before they would get to the target. It had been raining and one guy wanted to pull the lanyard.

It was the first time he had ever pulled the lanyard on one of those rounds. Like I said, it had been raining and we fired one of those variable time fuses. We had six guns so we would start at gun one and go down to gun six then back to gun one to fire again. This guy was on gun one and we got back to gun one and he was leaning over those trails and lost the lanyard. The lanyard is a rope and they pull it and it would flip and hit the primer to explode. When you do that it recoils six feet. Well, he slipped in the mud and it hit him on the side of the head. His head swelled up like a balloon. Killed in action!

One time we were firing in one place where it was really soggy and wet. The more we fired, the more the gun would sink in the mud (he laughs). When we got through we had a big ol' pile of dirt around the front of us (he continues to laugh). We always wanted to put a parapet around the front to protect the guns in case we got incoming. I only remember once that we got incoming.

They never furnished us with ear plugs or anything. I'd just sit on the right side of the right trail, get everything ready, and then I'd hold this ear that was the closest to the gun. We had one batch of powered over there that really had a whiplash to it. I don't know what was wrong with it but it would really shake you up. We really hated to fire it.

The next thing that came down on the phones was, "Will Corporal Charles Adams please report to Battery Commanders!" I thought, "What did I do? What did I do wrong?" I got in there and they asked where I lived. I told them Orem, Utah. They said they just got a wire that my dad had died and if I wanted to go home I could. I said, "I would sure like to." They said, "Get your things ready I'll take you back to Battalion and get you on your way." He took me back to the Battalion and couldn't find the Battalion Commander so I had to go back into my area. I'd sent a wire home that I was on my way. We went to get on the plane and the radio wouldn't work so we had a delay in that. Then something else happened when I landed in San Francisco. I couldn't get a flight out of there until the next morning so I waited and got a flight into Salt Lake. I got home and they had already had the funeral but they hadn't closed the casket.

Before I got home my mother went to the Red Cross to see if she could get me out of there and come home to run the farm without asking me about it. When I got home I had a 30 day leave and they sent me back to Treasure Island, the marine base between San Francisco and Oakland. The Sargent-Major said, "You're going to be here for a long time. I've got a job for you. You're going to be my runner. All you have to do is sit here in my office and any errands that I need run why you're going to do them." So Ok, I got him his coffee one day and just as I sit his coffee on his desk he got called into Major's Office. Master Sargent Hill, boy he was a rough talking old guy. There was a lot of rough talkin' Officers in the Marine Corp. You heard a lot of things in there that wasn't legitimate.

One day he asked me, "Where is all your clothes?" I said, "I left them in Korea. I had left in such a hurry I left everything over there." So he made out a clothing request and took me down to clothing and got me some clothes and fixed me all up. Well, that one day when I got him his

coffee, when he got back out his coffee was cold. He chewed me out up one side and down the other, “Don’t you ever leave my coffee sitting there that long again.” (he laughs)

While I was there we had a replacement draft; the seventeenth, I was in the eighteenth replacement draft going to Korea. I was there on Treasure Island when this replacement draft came through, it must have been Christmas time 1952. When the guys come in from Korea they had cash money and these bar maids are just sitting in the bars waiting for these soldiers to come back from Korea because they knew they had a wad of money. The next day we had a line up clear down around the building waiting to try to get in to see the Sargent Major to get a special money request to get enough money to get home on. They had got rolled before they got off the Island. Those bar maids would wait until they’d get drunk and then they would just roll them and take their money. They’d make a lot of money like that.

I learned that the best part of war was no good. I can’t see what they gain by doing it. They go in an’ blow up a place and then they’d have to go in and repair it. It’s just like these wars going on in Europe now – it’s all useless. I don’t know what they are thinking about; the urge for power or something. It’s a crazy situation. I heard on the radio last week the Russian’s hit a U.S. target. It wasn’t a Syrian target it was U.S.

On Treasure Island we had liberty every night. I just had to be in the office in the morning. I probably spent six weeks there. I was in the service for eighteen months when I was discharged. They said I was needed at home. I didn’t sign up for any specific amount of time. It was just for the duration of the war.

I spent three years on the farm and tried to make a go of it. Cliff Jenkins was my neighbor down off the hill. He bought a piece of ground from my dad and built him a house on it. He was a senior melder out in the open hearth at Geneva. He said, “I’ll get you a job over there.” He came back the next day and said there were too many men coming back from the war and that they didn’t have any openings. He said, “Ernie Lions, Chief Inspector at the roller mills is going to hire two guys tomorrow and told me to send you out.” Well, I went out and was hired and went to work that night at midnight in rolling mill inspection (he laughs). I worked there thirty-four and a half years. I went in the inspection department and started out as a test provider, then to hedge inspector, hot sheet inspector, line inspector, slab yard inspector, structural mill inspector, and I reached the top of final inspector they eliminated the inspectors. They combined us with the job we were on and called us plate conditioners. We were there and done the final inspection. Any plates that were damaged and needed to be repaired from off the line, they would send down to the grind bed; if there was a defect in the surface or something. There was a lot of steel that would require two side inspection where you would take them down and turn them over to make sure two sides were good.

I never dated before I went into the Marine Corp. I don’t know of a date that I ever went on. I dated a little bit afterwards. I met my first wife Shirley Waisner out cruisin’ town in Provo with

my cousin. She was with her girlfriend. Her dad was from Germany. We got married and had four children: Randy Adams, Darla Pendelton who now has four kids, Debbie Carr who has two boys in Salt Lake, and Bradley Adams in California with one daughter and then they adopted a little boy.

We were having marital problems and my wife decided she wanted out so we got divorced. We were having problems one time. I was working two jobs and she got up screaming and hollering at me, "Get up you lazy bum, help me with these dishes." So I got up and went to help her with the dishes and she came at me with a handful of knives. I got a cut on my cheek. She grabbed the phone and called the cops. They come and got me and put me in jail (he laughs). The cop said, "You have more grounds than she has. You have a cut on your chin." Anyway, I called my mother over in Orem. The County Jailer lived next-door to mother so she called him and he bailed me out of jail. I went over and lived with mother for six months and when I went back home. It lasted a little while longer. I went to a mental health evaluation to get her to go. When they evaluated me they said, "Well, you're a little selfish but aren't we all." They diagnosed her as schizophrenic and paranoid. She just had the feeling that everyone was against her. They told me the people who do the most will be the most hated by a person with that condition. They said if she would stay on her medication they could help her but if she wouldn't they couldn't do anything for her. I gave her the house and the kids and got myself an apartment in lower Lindon.

I had a corral up in the foothills of Pleasant Grove where I kept my horses I went up there one morning to feed the horses and found my oldest daughter. She had spent the night up there. I went in to feed the horses and there she was with her dog. She said, "I'm going home with you." So she come with me. I was the assistant Scout Master at the time. She was with me for a while but then she said, "I just got to go back and give her a chance." So she went back. I had went up there one time and found Debbie and my youngest boy home there all by themselves. I asked, "Where is your mother?" I asked if they had supper. They hadn't so I said, "Let's go get something to eat."

I was single for four years after I got divorced. I started going to those LDS Special Interest dances and they put me on the committee right away. I was conducting one night. I think it was in Springville. I guess I must have interviewed a lot of women when I was over there. There were always six women to every man that came to those dances. At intermission, Cleo Barbieri came up and asked me to dance. I took her home that night and we were married six months later. I moved to Lehi after that into her home; that was 1973 and I have been here ever since.

Note: Charles passed away in his sleep November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 as we were in the process of proofreading this history. This was a surprise to everyone as he seemed healthy and was out mowing the lawn just before his death.