



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

The five Grand Marshals chosen to lead the Chase County Fair parade this August are a living example of the theme "Spirit of America." All five are Chase County residents and veterans, each representing a different war or campaign.

On Saturday, Aug. 17, the following will be riding in restored vintage vehicles: Vincent Marvin, representing World War II; Robert Fanning, representing the Korean War; David Oxford, representing the Vietnam War; Pastor David Kahle, representing Desert Storm; and Kerry Shinn, representing Iraqi Freedom.

"We take pride in recognizing those who have served and sacrificed to defend our freedom," the Fair Parade Committee stated. "We extend a big hand to these Grand Marshals and to those they represent who have served within our community."

Marvin was a 21-year-old when he joined the Army Signal Corps as a T5 Technician. During World War II he served as a high speed radio operator behind the front lines at Normandy.

"We were trying to fool the enemy," he explained. "They weren't real messages" he and his fellow soldiers were sending.

"I never fired a rifle, never saw a dead soldier, didn't do anything heroic," he added.

Marvin was also a company barber for B Company 3103 Battalion for a year during his service from August 1942 to November 1945.

He was also sent to Cornell University by the Army to study engineering for a year.

Robert Fanning was 18 years old when he joined the Navy in 1951. As a Ship Serviceman SH3 he ran a ship store on the USS Okanagen APA 220, traveling to Japan, China, Okinawa and North and South Korea. His ship transported troops to both North and South Korea during that war.

During his service from 1951-55, Fanning also cooked hamburgers at a beer garden in Hawaii. He noted that of the 13 young men from the Imperial area who served during the Korean War, he spent the entire four years and two days with the late Gail Rowley, also of Imperial.

Fanning said he liked serving in the Navy.

David Oxford was 19 years old when he joined the Army 9th Division as an infantryman, or "ground pounder" during the Vietnam War.

"You grew up over there real fast," he noted, hiking, riding helicopters and taking boats to different locations for fighting.

Oxford and wife Linda were married three weeks after they graduated from high school, and he turned 20 one month after he landed in Vietnam. So, after he returned from service (1968-70) the couple spent their third anniversary finally together, trying to eat the top of the wedding cake that they had saved. "It wasn't very good," he laughed.

Pastor David Kahle served in the Army twice, with a stint in ROTC and Army National Guard in between.

From July 1987 to July 1991 he was a Cavalry Scout for the 1st Squadron 2nd Cavalry Regiment out of Germany, participating in Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia.

He was a gunner on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, leading the Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf "punch" in Saudi Arabia.

Kahle then was in the National Guard in Kearney for a year before serving in ROTC from 1993-96 while attending school to become a Registered Nurse.

He then reenlisted as a Nurse Corps Officer from March 1996-2000 with the Army Medical Division, stationed in Fort Knox, Ky., and Seoul, South Korea, serving at base hospitals.

Kahle was 21 when he first enlisted. "I had a lot of growing up to do and needed motivation, so that was a huge maturity boost," he said.

When he got out of the Army the first time, Kahle said he knew he didn't want to be a cavalry officer for the rest of his life. But when the Army called again, he was ready, this time as a Registered Nurse.

Kerry Shinn graduated from Chase County High School May 26, 2002, enlisted in the Army as a SPC E4 June 11 of that year, and was in Iraq that same fall. He was 18 years old.

Shinn served with the Big Red One 15th Field Artillery in the infantry out of Fort Riley, Kan. from 2002-2005, and in 2003-04 was in Iraq with Iraqi Freedom.

He was also stationed in Korea and Germany.

"The experience changed me, some for the good, some for the bad," he said. As an 18-year-old he said he didn't feel young. He grew up fast and was put in charge of a number of important actions and decisions.

Parade details

The Chase County Fair Parade will begin at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 17, running a route from the Imperial Manor east on 10th Street to Broadway, then south to the end of Broadway.

The lineup will begin at 8:30 a.m., with judging at 9 a.m.

Categories include organizations, open class, religious, business/professional and equestrian.

Entry forms for "Spirit of America" may be found in this week's newspaper or at The Imperial Republican office. They may be returned to the newspaper office or mailed to Parade Committee, PO Box 727, Imperial, NE 69033, (308) 882-4453.