

Veterans Day is an official United States holiday that honors people who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, also known as veterans. It is a federal holiday that is observed on November 11. It coincides with other holidays such as Armistice Day and Remembrance Day, which are celebrated in other parts of the world and also mark the anniversary of the end of World War I. *Wikipedia*

In the 1970’s, articles ran in several newspapers across the country about the five Krum boys who were all serving in the army in the same Vietnam base Long Binh. Articles ran in the Denton Record Chronicle, another in the Bonham Daily Favorite “*11 Per Cent of Krum in Vietnam*,” one in the Erie PA Times “*Krum, Tex Has Five Boys in Viet Nam*,” one from The Press (could not find where this was from), and even a blip in the Chicago Tribune “*Krum Reunion Held in Viet Nam*.” The article below is the one from The Press dated October 25, 1970.

“What’s This...Viet-Krum?”

By Bill Collier

Mayor F.W. Fowler rested in his chair, lit up a smoke, stared out through the plate glass window at Krum’s main thoroughfare and spoke:

“This is a slower moving town, a good place to raise kids and a good place to retire. We’re just average people. All law abiding, God fearing citizens-like they used to be.”

While he talked, a grey haired farmer in a pickup towing a trailer full of cattle stopped in the middle of the street in front of the window. He turned off the ignition, got out and walked up to the door of the mayor’s hardware store.

“Come on in,” the mayor called, greeting the man by name. Fowler-a slight, middle aged man-got up to help the farmer find the lengths of pipe he needed.

When their business was through, the two stood on the concrete walkway in front of the store and conversed catching up on all the news about each other’s families and friends. A third man strolled up and joined the talk. Soon the mayor came back inside, picking up where he left off. “We’ve got a nice town. For a small town I would say it’s about average. There are no real rich or no real poor people here.”

Krum is a farming community, Fowler said. It lies on the crest of a slight hill several miles west of Denton. It is surrounded by fields of wheat, oats, cotton, maze and cattle-dotted pastureland.

The town got its name when the Santa Fe Railroad came through about 1890. “The men that were surveyors named the towns after themselves,” the mayor said. “A man by the name of C.O. Krum surveyed Krum and named it.”

As the larger cities near Krum-Denton, Dallas and Fort Worth-grew outward, the town got its share of newcomers, mostly commuters. “But most everyone here knows everyone else.” Fowler says.

This is entirely possible, since Krum has only 519 residents. It once swelled to a peak of 700, then dropped to 300 after World War II. The mayor said it just recently begun to grow again.

“We’ve got real good schools and low taxes,” he said. Krum has had no problem with women’s liberation, student unrest, drugs or rising crime.

Fowler has spent all of his 55 years right in Krum, He was first elected when the Denton County town incorporated in 1954 and has been mayor since.

He was probably right when he said that Krum was “just an average town.” But there is one aspect about the town that bests the averages:

Krum has five native sons in the Army in Vietnam at the same time-roughly one per cent of the total population, probably one of the highest percentages in the nation.

Fowler knows them all. “They’re all fine boys,” he said. “I knew them all when they were working around here summers.”

The five are Sp/5 Marshall Ray Mckinney, Sp/5 Ray Wilburn Corbin,Jr, Sp/4 Anthony A. Shurbet, Sp/4 Larry Ray Read and Sp/4 Max B. Marrs.

All five graduated from Krum High School and –with the exception of Corbin, who enlisted-came out on the wrong end of Uncle Sam’s draft.”

Makin the odds even longer is the fact that all five are stationed on the same Vietnam bas-Long Binh, some 17 miles north of Saigon.

McKinney was the first to learn that there were some of his home town buddies at the same base. The more he looked, the more he found.

“Everyone had been kidding me about being from Krum,” McKinney told a UPI correspondent. “Every time I found out about a new one, they said, ‘Oh no, not another Krum.’ Now they just walk around saying ‘I can’t believe it, Five Krums. All right here at Long Bingham.’ ”

The five hold their own little reunions every chance possible at Long Bin’s Loon Foon Restaurant.

Krum townfolk know enough about their home town boys to put together a brief history of each:

Marrs, 25 is single and a North Texas State graduate. His father used to operate the weed and feed mill in Krum before going to work for the state, and Max helped out in the summers. He’s the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marrs.

Read, 20, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Padgett. Married with no children, he drove farm machinery and trucks before going into the service-taking after his father, who is a trucker on the Alaska run.

McKinney, 23 traveled each fall with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. E.E. McKinney, operated combines during harvest time. He attended North Texas State before being drafted and is best remembered for his active role in sports and student government at Krum High School.

Shurbet, 22, attended Cook County Junior College before being drafted. A former dairy hand, he is married and the son of Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Shurbet.

Corbin, 23, a graduate of Texas Tech, is single and the only one of the five boys to enlist. His father, Ray W. Corbin Sr., ran a dairy in Krum before taking over an auto dealership in Denton.

The backgrounds are varied, but the roots are the same. The local draft board in Denton claimed they’re not picking on Krum. “I have no idea how they all wound up at the same place,” said Mrs. Lois ___ executive secretary at the board.



Back: Marshall McKinney, Max Marrs, Ray Corbin
Larry Read, Tony Shurbet