

November 11

Service Among Celebrities, by Jim Kenaston

If you were growing up in the 1960s and 70s, you may not have known that many of the entertainers and sports figures who were famous during that time had served in the military.

I never would have guessed, for instance, that during World War II, Don Adams of *Get Smart* fame had served with the U.S. Marines at Guadalcanal, that *Star Trek*'s "Scotty" survived multiple gunshot wounds while serving with Canadian forces during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, or that Russell Johnson of *Gilligan's Island* had flown 44 combat missions in the Pacific Theater. Johnson received a Purple Heart medal for injuries sustained when his bomber ditched at sea.

These and many other veterans rarely talked about their military service, even after they became celebrities. Instead, they were quiet, knowing that their emotional, psychological, or physical wounds were not unique to them. They were mindful of many others who were fighting the same personal battles in obscurity.

As celebrities, their post-war service was about helping society to heal and move forward.

Meritorious Service

One such celebrity was Audie Murphy, a Medal of Honor recipient. He was also awarded two Silver Stars and two Bronze Stars for courageous service in combat, as well as three Purple Hearts, among many other honors.

Fellow WWII Purple Heart recipients include Art Carney, Charles Bronson, James Arness, Lee Marvin, and Neville Brand. James Garner later received a Purple Heart for injuries sustained during the Korean War, as did Oliver Stone and Rocky Bleier for combat injuries sustained in Vietnam.

Other Bronze Star recipients include Eddie Albert, George Kennedy, Henry Fonda, James Arness, Oliver Stone, Rocky Bleier, and Ted Knight.

Women who served the U.S. or our allies during WWII include a young Audrey Hepburn, who raised money and smuggled messages for the Dutch Resistance Movement.

Rightly Honored

In recent years, short videos and articles have been produced that highlight the military service of those who returned to pursue or resume acting careers, or who applied their skills toward athletic pursuits or coaching. Some served during multiple wars. (*U.S. military Purple Heart recipients.)

World War II veterans who have been so honored include: [Alan Hale](#), *[Art Carney](#), *[Audie Murphy](#), [Bob Feller](#), [Brian Keith](#), [Buddy Ebsen](#), [Cesar Romero](#), [Charles M. Schulz](#), [Charles Bronson](#), [Chuck Norris](#), [Clark Gable](#), [Don Adams](#), [Don Knotts](#), [Ed McMahon](#), [Eddie Albert](#), [Ernest Borgnine](#), [Fred Gwynne](#), [George Gobel](#), [George Kennedy](#), [Gino Marchetti](#), [Henry Fonda](#), [Jackie Robinson](#), *[James Arness](#), [James Doohan](#), [James Garner](#), [Jerry Coleman](#), [Jimmy Stewart](#), [Joe Lewis](#), [Jonathan Winters](#), [Kirk Douglas](#), *[Lee Marvin](#), *[Neville Brand](#), [Norman Lear](#), [Paul Newman](#), [Peter Graves](#), *[Rod Serling](#), *[Russell Johnson](#), [Steve McQueen](#), [Soupy Sales](#), [Ted Knight](#), [Ted Williams](#), [Tom Landry](#), [Tony Bennett](#), [Tyrone Power](#), [Walter Matthau](#), and [Yogi Berra](#).

Women similarly honored for their service during **World War II** include: [Audrey Hepburn](#), [Bea Arthur](#), [Betty White](#), [Eva Gardner](#), [Hedy Lamarr](#), [Julia Child](#), [Marilyn Monroe](#), and [Veronica Lake](#).

Korean War veterans whose service has been honored in this way include: [Clint Eastwood](#), *[Dan Blocker](#), [Michael Caine](#), and [Sorrell Boone](#), with [Ed McMahon](#), *[James Garner](#), and [Ted Williams](#) each having served in both World War II and in Korea. (Ed McMahon's military service extended into the early years of the Vietnam War.)

Vietnam War veterans so honored include: [Larry Wilcox](#), [Roger Staubach](#), *[Oliver Stone](#), and *[Rocky Bleier](#).

As we celebrate Veteran's Day, we have much for which to thank our Lord. We can also pause to thank those who humbly set aside their plans to serve for the benefit of others. Some went on to celebrity careers in entertainment. Most did not.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” -

Philippians 4:8