

Eugene Shaw Monologue Script

My name's Eugene Shaw but everybody calls me Gene. I was born on May 21 in Cleveland, Ohio. I am 87 years old and live with my wife Nancy. We have a son, Robert Shaw, who is 57. He lives about 500 miles away with his wife and they come to visit us fairly often. He went to college and got some fancy job selling chemicals. We have no family living close by except for my cousin Arthur and his family. We see them sometimes, but Nancy doesn't seem to be too social these days, so I don't push her too much. I try to get out with my buddy Jim. We served together, but Nancy yells that we drink too much when we are together, and it gets my sugar high. Who cares at my age? I'm not going to be around forever. I like my beer and a little nip of whiskey at night to help me sleep.

I am a Veteran. I proudly enlisted and served for 2 years in the Marines. I was a private in the Medina County Marine Corps League Detachment 569, Medina VFW Post 5137. A great group of guys and we lost quite a few. I didn't know what I was getting myself into when I signed up. It was so cold that first winter. It was a land of weather extremes--all bad. It went from 30 below zero in the winter to over 100 degrees in the summer. During the cold winter months, we wore long johns, utility trousers, waterproof cold weather trousers, a utility jacket, a sweater, a parka and thermal boots. The enemy wore heavy quilted coats and pants and, for the most part, sneaker-like shoes. From what I understand, they weren't very warm. In between summer and winter was the monsoon season that turned the country into a flooded swamp. Aside from the war, the bad weather was a morale factor more than anything. The cold and heat were unbearable and during monsoon season, no one was ever dry. That's where my troubles started with my feet. Wow wees, my darn feet were always wet, stinking wet in the summer and cold and frozen in the winter. Those boots didn't protect at all; in fact, I think that they made things worse because they leaked so much. Probably can't blame anyone but the soggy wet soil. You ever hear of trench-foot? I had it and still got some of it. That's what I got to take home with me from Korea but it's better than the alternative. Yeah, that is war or at least it was in my time. I bet they have made some progress in getting those troops better equipment than in my day.

I came home from the Marines, and I had a hard time walkin. I went to the VA and they told me – “Boy, it's off with those toes,” and off they went. You didn't ask questions in those times. They took three off my right foot and left the others. Sometime after, one just got black and fell off. My poor Nancy, she washed my feet and tried to keep them circulating but it was too late.

I go to the doctor sporadically, never can remember those dates. I've had several visits in the last year or so. I keep getting sores on my right lower leg that don't go away. My heel had a big

ulcer not too long ago and I needed a lot of antibiotics to get that one to go away. Now look, it's back again and it looks so blue. My foot is always so cold.

I came here today because my leg is really bothering me for about a week. I was getting into my car, and I hit my foot on the car door. Since then, I started to have these pains and my heel is getting bad again. My right calf has some awful pains and burning down the sides. I couldn't hardly sleep at all last night cause of the pain, and it got worse during the day. Nancy has been nagging me to have my leg checked out all week. She really got worried today when she saw how bad the pain was and the color of my leg and foot. She insisted that I come here to see what's up, so here I am.