

CHARLES "CHUCK" CARLSON

WWII VETERAN AND RMOC MEMBER FOR OVER THREE DECADES

Chuck grew up on the family homestead near Moose, Wyoming in the early 1920s. That homestead is now part of the Grand Teton National Park. If you zoom in on a map of the area and follow the Snake River up to Cottonwood Creek, you can almost find the spot where he was born.

When Chuck graduated from high school in 1941, he bought a 1933 Desoto and went to Rock Springs, Wyoming where he worked as a body and paint man for a Chevrolet/Oldsmobile/Cadillac dealer. Chuck's father had served in World War I; he grew up in a patriotic family. So, when World War II started, Chuck didn't wait to be drafted. He followed in his father's footsteps and *enlisted* in the U.S. Navy. He went to boot camp at Farragut Naval Training Station in Idaho.

The Navy trained Chuck to be an aviation mechanic and he was sent overseas to Samar, the third largest island in the Philippines, near Leyte Gulf, the site of one of the most decisive naval battles of the war. Chuck was part of the team that helped maintain and repair the Lockheed PV-2 Harpoon aircraft and other planes that fought in that area of the Pacific theater. He received the following awards for service: WWII Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal and Good Conduct Medal.

Chuck was discharged from the service in March 1946 with the rank of Petty Officer Second Class (Sergeant) and went to work for the State of Wyoming's Apprentice Training Service, designed to provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities for WWII veterans. His job required him to travel around the western part of the state, including Cheyenne, where he later met Jan. They were married in 1954 and have been together ever since. They have two daughters, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Through the years, Chuck owned *ten* Oldsmobiles, which he bought brand new. His first Olds was a 1950 88 2-door sedan, painted Marol Gray. He had become interested in Oldsmobiles because of the "Rocket" V-8 engines and felt they were superior cars. His favorite Oldsmobile was a 1952 Super 88 Club Coupe, painted Pearl Gray with a Swan White top. The picture below is Chuck and Jan on their wedding day in that '52 Oldsmobile.

Chuck had a long and interesting career with state and federal government, working with employment and training programs. He retired as a Federal Representative with the U.S. Department of Labor in 1986. (Federal Representatives serve as liaisons between the federal government and local federally-funded programs). He said his first full day of retirement was July 4 to be exact – very appropriate, given his service to our country.

It was about that time that Chuck and Jan joined RMOC. They attended a car show at the Adams County Fairgrounds. Long-time RMOC member, Glenn Malory was there and happened to notice that Chuck was wearing a fancy Oldsmobile belt buckle. Glen encouraged them to join the club; they have been members since then.

Chuck's last two Oldsmobiles were a 1999 4-door Intrigue GLS colors (Bronze Mist Metallic) and a 1992 Oldsmobile, model 98, painted Dark Green Gray Metallic (upper) and Silver Metallic along the bottom (see picture below). The 98 received a First Place award at the RMOC Show and Shine event in Northglenn in 2003. (See if you recognize other RMOC cars in the picture).

In 2010, on the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II, it was recommended by then President, Joe Peifer, that Chuck (along with RMOc member, Wilber Harr) receive special awards from the club for their service in WWII. They were presented with U.S. flags that had been flown over the USS Arizona (supplied by RMOc Treasurer, Gary Smith).

Chuck and Jan have enjoyed RMOc for over 30 years because "it has been family oriented and not just an 'old boys' club," to quote Chuck. They have participated in the club's activities and appreciate how there has always been someone to help them with their cars, pick them up to take them to various events and be a source of fun and friendship

Chuck turned 97 years of age in November. We thank Chuck for his service to our country and his (and Jan's) active participation in the RMOc for decades.

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