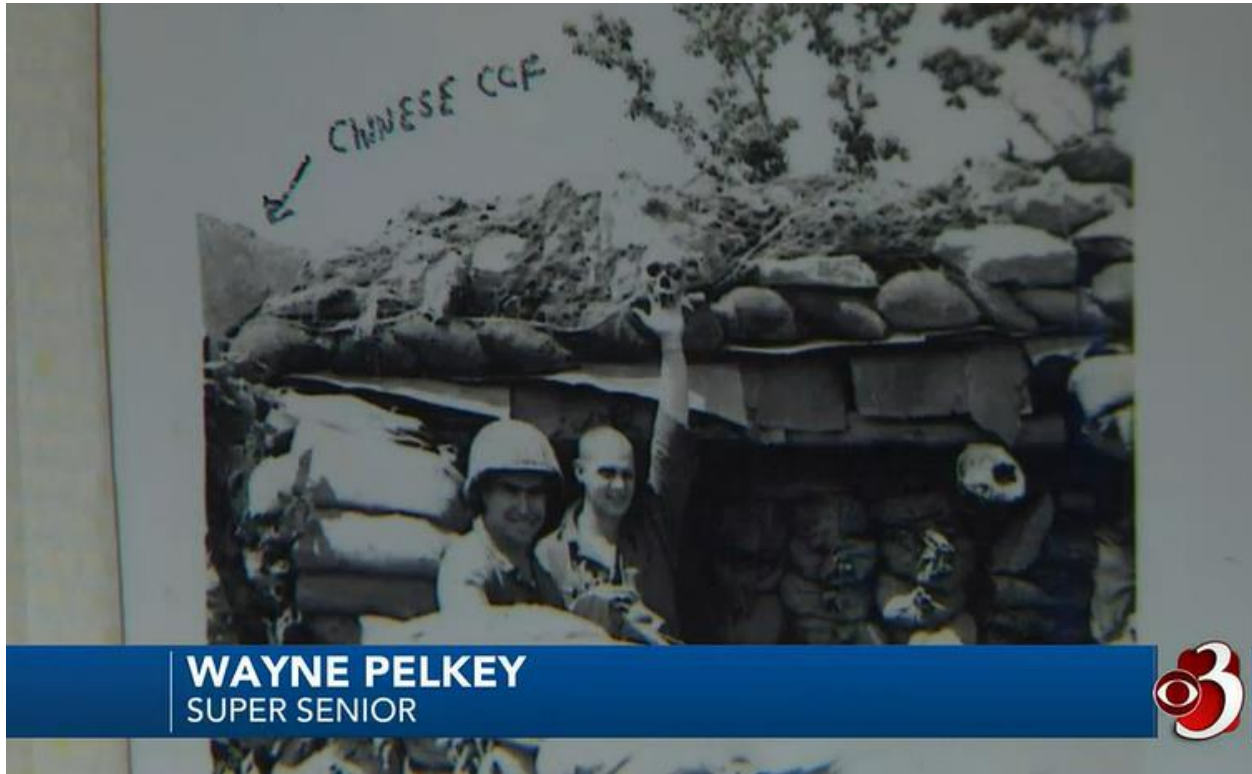


By [Joe Carroll](#)

Published: Nov. 11, 2021 at 2:08 PM EST

Link to WCAX video: [Super Senior: Wayne Pelkey \(wcax.com\)](#)



BARRE TOWN, Vt. (WCAX) - In his basement in Barre Town, Wayne Pelkey has a time capsule -- photo albums from nearly 70 years ago.

At just 21, Pelkey was drafted into the Army on Armistice Day, now called Veterans Day. He went off to "the Korean conflict," but for Pelkey, there was no doubt it was war. "One-hundred and eighty men and we had casualties of over half," Pelkey said.



The Americans were not only battling the North Koreans but the Chinese, sometimes just an earshot away. One day, Pelkey was out on patrol with four of his men when “all hell broke out,” he said. “A mortar round came in and killed two of them instantly.” Another soldier was near death. “I had him hold a gauze on his throat and he looked up at me and said, ‘Daddy,’ and I kissed him on the forehead. He had a big smile and his eyes went glassy, so...”



Pelkey says it all happened at a place called Christmas Hill. “You can see the trenches here,” he pointed out. ))

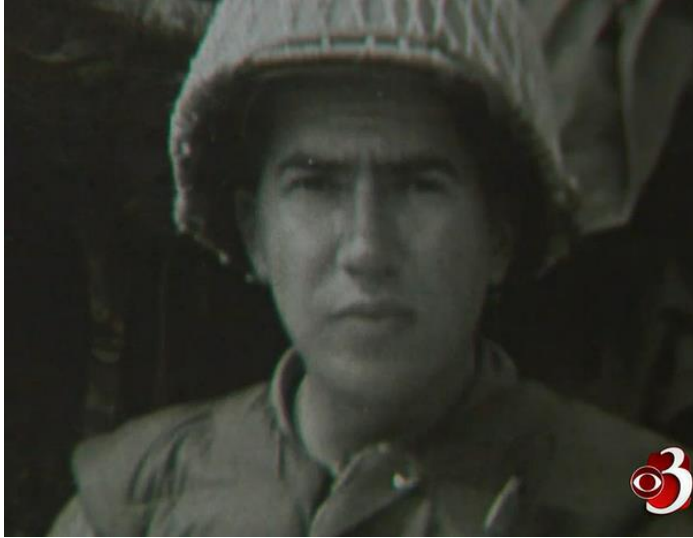
Reporter Joe Carroll: The name sounds so beautiful and peaceful, but it wasn’t.

Wayne Pelkey: No, no.

The troops named it Christmas Hill because the artillery lit up the darkness like a Christmas tree. “I think it’s something you’re never prepared for,” Pelkey said.



It was near the time of the official ceasefire when both sides set a truce. And then on July 27, 1953, the guns went silent. “I mean, it was just like in a middle of a severe thunderstorm, then suddenly silence,” Pelkey said. “I walked up to one Chinese soldier and he didn’t have any look of hate and I just looked at his eyes and he looked at mine and we laughed at each other.”



Reporter Joe Carroll: So let me get this straight, an hour beforehand, you would have shot him, he would have shot you. Wayne Pelkey: Yeah, yeah.

Pelkey helped write a book on those experiences, aptly named “The Battle of Christmas Hill.”

Reporter Joe Carroll: Why did you want to write this book?

Wayne Pelkey: I just felt a need that I had to do it... They call the Korean War the forgotten war, so I wanted to make damn sure it’s not forgotten.



Now, at the age of 90, Pelkey has some advice on this Veterans Day. “I want to tell the young people, appreciate your family and love them like you would like to be loved yourself. Because that’s the only thing you can really do that gives you peace on this earth,” he said.



*Copyright 2021 WCAX. All rights reserved.*