



Lyle Damon Phillips Class of 2025

Lyle graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1944, played varsity football, but didn't finish the season as he decided to join the Marine Corps. His coach begged him to finish the season, as he was a stellar player, but his recruiter did not agree.

He did not have time for school activities, as he worked after school and on weekends at Purity Grocery store for thirty-five cents an hour. He worked in the butcher shop, cleaning up and working until the store closed for the day.

Lyle's best friend at OHS was classmate Sammy Broadnax, who left school early and became a member of the famed WWII fighter pilot unit, The Tuskegee Airmen. They were lifelong friends.

Pam Mark Hall Foremaster, Lyle's stepdaughter, shared that Lyle rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant due to his positive attitude and his ability to fix almost anything. He built a walk-in refrigerator from junk parts discarded by the Navy and then became the head cook. His goal was to become a pilot, but poor eyesight negated his wish.

On Guadalcanal, he was sent up a mountain to collect a pilot from a crash, and upon arriving at the scene, found the pilot dead. He put the deceased pilot over his shoulder and carried him down the hill only to face a Japanese soldier coming out of a cave, who, on seeing Lyle, put his hands and rifle in the air.

Lyle's primary duty on Guadalcanal was, after pilots had landed from combat, pulling them from their planes and cleaning up the blood and mess for the next crew to take off. He saved numerous lives.

Upon receiving his honorable discharge from the Marines, Lyle returned to Oroville and went to work at Williams TV, repairing and servicing television sets and radios and installing antennas throughout the community.

After a few years, he left the TV business and was hired by Currier Brothers as Manager of the Repair Department, working there for 26 years, until the store was sold to Raley's. He then assumed duties as Director of Maintenance for the Oroville Elementary School District, serving until his retirement in 1991.

Throughout his working years, Lyle was a volunteer fireman with the Oroville Fire Department, serving there for 50 years. Three years before his retirement, Lyle went to Malibu to serve as assistant strike team leader during those devastating fires. In 1996, he was called to the Oroville Mercury-Register site in North Oroville, where a U2 Spy Plane crashed into the building.

In 1997, he was officially honored by the City of Oroville receiving a proclamation for significantly contributing to and assisting the fire department. He also received a personal letter from then United States Vice President Al Gore, citing his dedication and service to his community.

Other honors bestowed on Lyle were from the Breakfast Exchange Club of Chico as Fireman of the Year and being named Grand Marshal of the Veterans' Day Parade and celebration.

During his busy life, Lyle always found time to serve his community in other ways, among them as a YMCA board member, volunteering for the Oroville Sing Out, serving as secretary of the vestry at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, and selling fireworks for his church.

Retired Oroville Fire Department Battalion Chief, Bob Damon, states in his letter of support, *Lyle has been a tremendous asset to our community, from serving his country to bringing TV to our town, repairing all of our appliances, to doing school flag presentations with the Sons of the American Revolution, selling fireworks for Saint Paul's church for the 4th of July celebration, kept the schools clean and safe, serving as a volunteer foreman for 50 years and Grand Marshall of our Veterans Day Parade.*

Lyle, born in Oroville on July 24, 1925, makes his home in Oroville with a part-time caregiver.