

EDITORIAL RESEARCH FOR BIO DEDICATION

Sgt. Charles Laurin Phinney | Book, ®The Fading of America | Dr. Stephen R. Phinney & Judge Mark T. Boonstra

US Military Career of Sgt. Charles Laurin Phinney

Service Overview

- **Full Name:** Charles **Laurin** Phinney
 - **Born:** August 17, 1923
 - **Died:** March 3, 2000
 - **Branch:** United States Army → later U.S. Air Force
 - **Service Duration:** 22 years
 - **Final Rank:** Staff Sergeant (E-5)
 - **Service Era:** World War II, post-war occupation, and early Cold War
 - **Honorable Discharge:** January 1, 1965
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Combat Record & Decorations

Sgt. Charles Laurin Phinney served with exceptional bravery. His record includes:

Silver Star

Awarded for gallantry in action during **World War II** while serving in the **11th Airborne Division**.

The Silver Star is the **third-highest U.S. military combat decoration**.

Two Purple Hearts

He earned **two Purple Hearts**, each tied to a documented combat incident:

1. **Missing in Action – Guam (December 1944)**
 - He was officially listed as **MIA** during the liberation of Guam.
 - Later recovered and returned to duty.
2. **Wounded in Action – Luzon, Philippines (February 1945)**
 - Injured during the Luzon campaign, one of the most intense battles of the Pacific theater.

These decorations confirm he saw **front-line combat** in some of the most dangerous operations of the Pacific war.

Service Transition

- Entered the **U.S. Army** in September (year consistent with WWII enlistment).
 - Later transitioned into the **U.S. Air Force**, where he completed his 22-year career.
 - Honorably discharged on **January 1, 1965**.
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Life After Service

After retiring from the military, Sgt. Phinney enjoyed:

- Inventing and tinkering
 - Gardening and outdoor work
 - Time with his wife Lelah and their six children
 - A quiet life in the Midwest until his passing in Sioux Falls, SD
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Burial

- **Barnes Township Cemetery**, Linn Grove, Iowa
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Family Line

- Son of **Rev. Lauren A. Phinney** and **Bertha McCargar Phinney**
- Husband of **Lelah Margaret Rumbolt Phinney**
- Father of **Sheila, Michael, Patrick, Stephen, Donna (deceased), and Lucinda**