

SEDALIA DEMOCRAT
"THE LAST SIGNAL Receives An Emmy"
By Faith Bemiss



It's often said some things are written in the stars and winning an Emmy may be one of those things, especially for a local World War II veteran.

The documentary film "The Last Signal," which recorded the reunion of World War II Navy veteran John Heimsoth, of Stover, and his fellow shipmate, the late Raymond "DeVere" Johnson, of Illinois, received an Emmy for Best Historical Documentary Oct. 5.

Heimsoth, 95, along with Los Angeles producer Kyle Olson, Johnson's daughter Cheryl Johnson Brown, her husband Tom and her daughters attended the Mid-America Emmys in Branson last Saturday.

In October 2015, after seven decades, the two U.S. Navy veterans were reunited in Stover.

Johnson, who was 92 at the time, believed he was the last survivor of the USS LST-218 until his daughter placed his photo on Facebook.

The photo went viral within a week with more than 1 million shares and 74,494 likes. It eventually led them to Heimsoth, 91, who served with Johnson decades ago. The viral Facebook post also caught the attention of Olson, who decided to make a documentary about the men.


Since meeting the men, Olson said it seemed like the heavens have smiled down on all involved, bringing them to the very moment of the award.

"Obviously when you work on something like this you get excited about the opportunity for winning an award as prestigious as the Emmy," Olson said by phone in Los Angeles Tuesday. "But what is incredible, is that this entire journey, especially these last few weeks leading up to the Emmy win, has been nothing but all the stars aligning right."

Olson said this past Saturday was four years to the day when he met Heimsoth for the first time.

"It was little details like that, that kind of came together so seamlessly and so unexpectedly," he added. "They put us at table No. 41. 1941 was when the U.S. got involved in World War II. These little details that were coming out ... and we were just like 'wow!'"

"The signs that we were seeing was almost too good to ignore," Olson continued. "We all found some sort of hidden meanings, there was a lot of stars that had to align just right to get us where we were and where we ended up at the Emmys. This was a testament to all of that coming together."



Olson said Heimsoth was "excited" and "quite tickled" with the win.

"It was funny because we had to sweet talk him into coming," Olson said. "He's so humble and he's very much not a braggart. Once we won he said, 'wow that was really worth the trip.'"

Olson noted that when they received the Emmy it was the only moment in the evening when there was a standing ovation.

"It was for John, for his service during World War II," Olson said. "So, that was a really special moment. That meant a lot obviously to John. But, I think it was truly just kind of a collective moment that meant a lot to everybody."

"It was a chance for all of us to see how this entire journey has come full circle since we started filming quite literally four years ago to the day," he continued. "This was the perfect way to put the bow on top of an incredible journey we've had the last few years. We couldn't have asked for a better ending, really."

For more information, visit www.lastsignalmovie.com.

MORE INFORMATION



WWII veterans meet again 70 years later

Faith Bemiss

Arts & Entertainment Reporter

Faith Bemiss is a reporter for the Sedalia Democrat, covering general assignment, arts, food and entertainment stories. She can be reached at 660-530-0289.