Joseph R. Hems served in the Army during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. Hems, who is from North Brunswick, New Jersey was wounded in action while in Korea.

On September 14, just weeks after his assignment as an automatic rifleman with an attacking infantry unit, he suffered multiple head and shrapnel wounds from enemy mortar fire. He was wounded in the Battle of Pusan Perimeter and received a Purple Heart. He served until February 1952.

Joseph reorganized the Military Order of the Purple Heart Organization in New Jersey and received numerous awards for recruitment, growth and development within the organization. He served as Chapter and State Commander and was elected as National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart for the year 1991-1992. Order of the Purple Heart for the year 1991-1992.

Joseph and his wife, Harriet and their family have been residents of North Brunswick for 51 years. He has participated in many community activities, including Pop Warner Football and the North Brunswick High School Booster Club.