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Help Those Who Fought For Our Freedom



13th ANNUAL OCT. 5th, 2014

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National POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 19, 2014

Missing... Seeking Answers

www.dtic.mil/Upmo

Illinois Soldiers Still Wait

Illinois POW/MIAs

WWII	1510
Korean War	417
Vietnam War	60

Rolling Thunder® Mission Statement
 "To Correct The Past and Protect The Future"

Rolling Thunder Inc.'s major function is to publicize the POW/MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars. To help correct the past and to protect future Veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners of War/Missing in Action. We are committed to helping Disabled Veterans from All Wars.

I KNEW I COULD FIGHT,
 I HOPED I WOULDN'T DIE,
 I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD STILL
 BE HERE AFTER EVERYONE ELSE
 HAS GONE HOME

Above from a plaque at the National Vietnam Veterans
 Art Museum, Chicago, IL.

Rolling Thunder® Charities

COURAGE

PATRIOTISM * HONOR * SACRIFICE

Rolling Thunder®

POW/MIA

Illinois Chapter

Thank you for visiting Rolling Thunder®, Illinois Chapter #1

Chapter One, from Warrenville, Illinois (west suburban Chicago).

The major function of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is to publicize POW-MIA issues: To educate the public that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all previous wars and to help correct the past and to protect future veterans from being left behind should they become prisoners of war-missing in action.



My name is Bill Sharpness, President of our chapter.

I would like to thank everyone in the United States and other countries that helped in the release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, a live prisoner of war from Afghanistan. This mission is over but the POW issue is not. Chapter 1 Illinois at this time does not know of any live American POW's but that does not mean there are none. There are thousands of missing and some of those could very well be alive and being held. Our chapter will now look into the accountability of the missing in action. This is an American duty and something our politicians don't seem to care about. Their families deserve an answer. If anyone knows of, or has information on any missing service member, please let us know. We will take on the issue and won't quit. We will get results. Our chapter thanks all for their support. Ninety seven cents of every dollar we raise goes to the POW/MIA issue or helping veterans in need. No one gets paid here. We welcome you to join us. You do not have to be a veteran, or own a motorcycle or even a car. We are just a group of guys and gals, young and old trying to do the right thing. Regarding Bowe, we all heard of questions and even allegations regarding Bowe's capture. Our attitude was the questions didn't matter, get him home first and then let the military handle it. We have every confidence that our military knows how to resolve these circumstances.

Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is a non-profit organization. Members donate their time because they believe in the issues we are working on.

RollingThunderIL1@gmail.com

Bill "Hawk" Sharpness
President

630-669-1317

!!! REMEMBER !!!

**"IT'S AN AMERICAN DUTY TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL
PRISONERS AND THOSE MISSING"**

Gold Star Pin

Just a tiny gold pin. A token from this country in return for the life given for our freedom. This pin is sent to the widow, parents and other next of kin of a military person killed in action or serving during a military conflict.



Gold Star Pin

It began with WWI, from April 6, 1917 to March 3, 1921; WWII, from September 8, 1939 to July 25, 1947; Korea, from June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954; military conflict from June 30, 1958 'till the Vietnam War July 1, 1958 to the present.

What is a Gold Star Mother?

What is a Gold Star Mother?

A Mother whose grieving heart reaches out to comfort another.

A Mother who feels compassion when casualty lists are read.

A Mother who suffered the heartache of hearing her son was dead.

A Mother whose dreams were shattered on a battlefield afar.

A Mother who has the privilege of wearing the little gold star.

A Mother who walks so bravely to a fallen hero's grave.

A Mother who loves the nation her son gave his life to save.

This is a Gold Star Mother —

A Mother with courage and pride, whose son went forth to battle and in line of duty died.

Author unknown



Who is Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter One?

	Our fundraising efficiency is 97 1/2%, that is, we spend 97 1/2 cents out of each fundraising dollar on Veterans and the POW/MIA cause
	Our local Chapter does not have administrative expenses such as salaries, perks, bonuses, fees or offices. We are all volunteers who believe in our mission.
	We are registered as a tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code.
	Our tax deductible, 501 (c) (3), charitable arm, is Rolling Thunder Charities.
	Our chapter, Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter One, is a 501 (C) (4) non-profit organization.
	Our Federal EIN # can be supplied upon request.
	We are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State as a non-profit organization.
	We are registered with Illinois Attorney General as an Illinois Charity Organization.
	We file Illinois Form AG990-IL annually with the Illinois Attorney General.
	We file Federal Form 990 annually with the Internal Revenue Service.

One wall, four decades, 74 names

Bill seeks to honor Vietnam-era sailors killed in ship collision outside war zone

By RICHARD SIMON
Tribune Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The ship's bow sank in a few minutes.

The battle to add its deceased crew members' names to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has lasted more than a decade.

But it could soon be coming to an end. A House-approved bill could clear the way for the names of 74 sailors to be added to the memorial more than four decades after their Long Beach, Calif.-based ship was cut in half in a collision with an aircraft carrier in the South China Sea.

The legislation is among a spate of measures in Congress aimed at healing lingering wounds from the Vietnam War era. In this case, family members of sailors who died aboard the Navy destroyer Frank E. Evans on June 3, 1969, call it painful to visit the black granite wall and not see the names of their loved ones.

"We're just trying to get recognition for our brothers. It's long overdue," said Roy "Pete" Peters, who was a 22-year-old machinist's mate in the ship's engine room when the vessels col-

lided.

The names of the "Lost 74" have never been etched into one of Washington's most visited memorials because their ship was outside the official war zone.

"That's an arbitrary line that was drawn in the water," Peters said. The sailors' families and surviving shipmates say the destroyer provided gunfire for U.S. troops in Vietnam before it was dispatched to the South China Sea for a training exercise and would have returned to the combat zone afterward.

"If it wasn't for Vietnam, we wouldn't have been there," said 90-year-old Larry Reilly, a master chief gunner's mate who survived the collision. His 20-year-old son, Larry Jr., did not. The family, then living in Orange County, Calif., was featured in a 1969 Los Angeles Times article headlined: "Tragedy at Sea: Joy, Sorrow of Two Wives Who Waited."

Much of the crew was asleep when the Evans and the Australian aircraft carrier Melbourne collided before dawn about 650 miles southwest of the Philippine capital of Manila.

"As soon as it got hit, it rolled over on its side,"

recalled Reilly, who lives in Syracuse, N.Y.

Peters added, "I've never been so close to death." Peters, 67, and living in Redondo Beach, Calif., still has nightmares about it.

Three brothers from a small Nebraska town were among the dead. Nearly 200 crew members on the Evans survived. No lives were lost on the Melbourne.

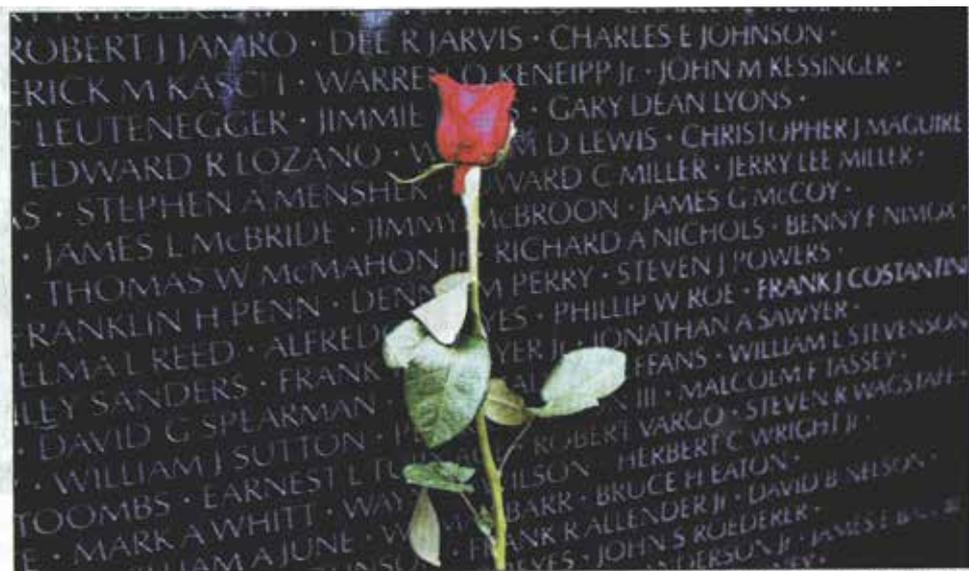
A joint Australian-U.S. naval board of inquiry found the Evans primarily responsible for the collision but said that the Melbourne shared some of the blame.

Buried in a thick defense bill are a few lines that would call on Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to add the sailors' names to the wall.

The wall bears the names of 58,300 men and women killed or missing in action. Since 1982, when the memorial was dedicated, 361 names have been added.

Efforts to add the names began after families traveled to Washington and were surprised, confused and ultimately disappointed not to see the names of their family members on the memorial.

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SPENCER PLATT/GETTY PHOTO 2005

A House bill would add the names of those who died aboard the Frank E. Evans to Washington's Vietnam memorial. The Navy destroyer was cut in half in a collision in 1969.

"Our ship was very much a part of the Vietnam War," Peters said. "We fired over 5,000 rounds of 5-inch 38s on various targets over a 10-day barrage shortly before we were called off the gun line."

He added: "The reason that this is so important to me is that our country looks at the wall as verification that a person was involved in the war. ... My brothers' names belong up there with all the others."

Legislation to recognize the sailors has been introduced at least since 2001, but

it never got far. During a 2003 hearing, a National Park Service representative expressed concern that "adding a large number of new names to the memorial wall would detract from the power and beauty of the simple black granite wall that evokes such a strong emotional response."

Those seeking to add the sailors' names point out that the Pentagon has expanded eligibility for the memorial before.

The names of 58 Marines killed when their C-130 transport plane crashed outside Hong Kong were added to the wall in 1983. Though they were outside the war zone, their plane was returning them to Vietnam after three days of rest and relaxation.

Although Hagel's two predecessors declined to add the sailors' names to the wall, Rep. Adam B. Schiff, D-Calif., who sought the language in the defense bill, could fare better. Hagel is a Vietnam veteran and former senator from Nebraska, home of the three Sage brothers who died in the accident.

Schiff has spoken with Hagel and is working on winning Senate support for adding the sailors' names to the wall.

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In Iraq, echoes of Vietnam



STEVE CHAPMAN

A corrupt government that has alienated many of its people finds itself unable to overcome a growing insurgency in an endless civil war and expects a superpower on the other side of the globe to come to its rescue. That's the story in Iraq today — which carries eerie echoes of the not-so-distant past.

In June 1964, as conditions deteriorated in South Vietnam, President Lyndon Johnson assured a journalist he was not about to get too far in or stay too far out.

"We won't abandon Saigon, and we don't intend to send in U.S. troops," he insisted. He was betting that U.S. military advisers would be enough to head off defeat.

Half a century later, President Barack Obama has adopted a similar policy, dispatching some 300 advisers to Iraq in an effort to keep its military from being routed. Once again, the fervent hope in the White House is that a small commitment will suffice.

The difference is that Obama's decision comes in the aftermath of a catastrophic American intervention, following our departure, rather than at the beginning of one, as we're about to plunge in. It's an epilogue, not a foreword.

But the parallels between the two wars are more conspicuous than ever. And there are clear morals to be drawn from them. Some of the big ones:

■ **Military power is overrated.** The United States had huge advantages in technology, resources and manpower over the North Vietnamese and their Viet Cong confederates. Our soldiers

prevailed again and again in combat. But victory eluded us.

Same in Iraq. We smashed Saddam Hussein's army with devastating speed. But we were unprepared for the subsequent guerrilla war, fought with improvised explosive devices and suicide bombs. The insurgents had little chance of defeating American units in conventional battles. But they didn't need to.

■ **Motivation is critical, and we can't supply it to our allies.** The U.S. spent some eight years and \$25 billion training the Iraqi military, which greatly outnumbered the fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. But when ISIL, also known as ISIS, launched an offensive this month, the government forces dissolved like sugar cubes.

The militants have succeeded despite many disadvantages. They have one big advantage, as an Iraqi commander told *The New York Times*: "ISIS fighters have a will to die, so they don't show fear."

The same was true of the enemy in Vietnam. Our South Vietnamese allies were notoriously unreliable, while communist soldiers fought doggedly despite horrendous conditions. "I wish they were on our side" was a comment commonly uttered by American officers," wrote Stanley Karnow in "Vietnam: A History."

Once American forces were gone, the North Vietnamese mounted a campaign aimed at winning the war in two years. It took less than two months.

■ **You can't implant democracy in barren soil during wartime.** We tried in both places, and in both places, what emerged was an autocratic regime far more intent on holding on to power by force than building broad popular support.

South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu's regime fell

partly because it had shallow roots among the people. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Shiite government fostered fear and loathing among the Sunni minority. The military debacles were the fruit of their political failures.

■ **You can't outlast a home-grown opponent.** The problem with overseas wars is that the enemies are in their own country. They don't have to search for reasons to fight; they fight because their land has been invaded.

They also don't have to win — they only have to hold on. Eventually Americans will leave because they can. Leaving is not an option for those we are fighting.

The lessons of Vietnam were seared into the minds of many Americans, but by 2003, they had faded. Iraq, not to mention Afghanistan, proved their lasting applicability.

"The United States spent more on the Iraq war in real terms than it did on the Vietnam War," notes MIT defense scholar Barry Posen in his formidable new book, "Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy." "Though military analysts believe that the (communist) Vietnamese were much more competent militarily than the Iraqi insurgents, the Iraqi insurgents appear to be twice as efficient killers."

Maybe the Iraq debacle will inoculate future presidents against large land wars on foreign continents. So far, though, it has confirmed the adage that the only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.

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Cross-Border Comrades Take to the Ice



USA WARRIORS
ICE HOCKEY



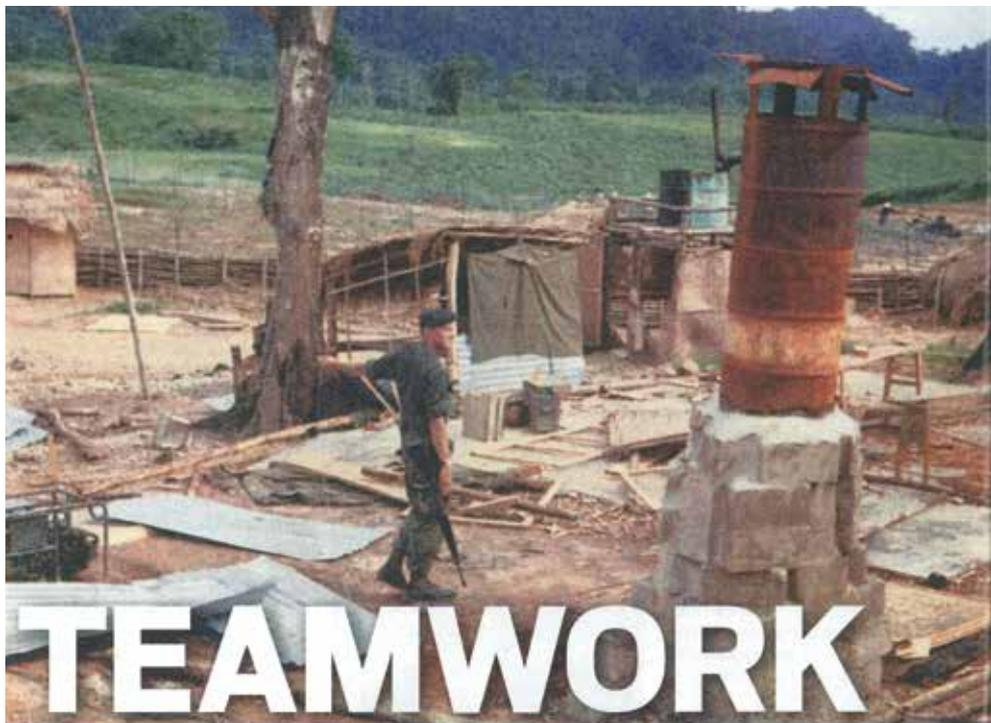
DAV and partner USA Warriors invited the Canadian Soldier On team to Detroit for the first-ever Veterans Winter Classic, giving many of those who had served together and been injured overseas the chance to reunite and play together, side by side.



U.S. and Canadian brothers-in-arms Mark Little, left, and Grant Greenall, right, took to the ice at the outdoor rink at Detroit's Comerica Park. The DAV-partnered USA Warriors faced off against their Canadian counterparts, Soldier On, as part of the lead up to the 2014 NHL Winter Classic.



Rachel Francis, left, and brother Zachary Francis, members of the Chapter 114 DAV Junior Auxiliary in Livonia, Mich., braved single-digit temperatures to help support the American and Canadian veteran athletes.



TEAMWORK

SAVES THE DAY AT NAM DONG

VIETNAM
WAR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY

In the first major attack against an American-led base in South Vietnam, a heroic stand by a Special Forces A-Team and its allies in July 1964 defeated a Viet Cong force three times its size.

BY TIM DYHOUSE

The ground war in Vietnam hadn't officially started for the United States on July 6, 1964, but for a Special Forces A-Team manning a camp early that morning in Vietnam's Central Highlands, a battle was imminent.

Detachment A-726, 7th Special Forces Group, was a 12-man Green Beret team assigned to train and advise 311 South Vietnamese soldiers and 60 Nung (ethnic Chinese) mercenaries at Camp Nam Dong.

Attached to the team was Australian army Warrant Officer Kevin Conway and Gerald Hickey, an American anthropologist studying Vietnam's indigenous tribes.

Located some 30 miles west of Da Nang and 15 miles east of the Laotian border, the 5-acre camp, nicknamed "Five Cents," sat on a rise in a valley. In the middle of the camp was an inner perimeter about the size of half a football field manned by

the A-Team and the Nungs. The outer perimeter was surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence defended by the South Vietnamese.

POKING HO CHI MINH IN THE EYE

Camp Nam Dong was an obstacle the Viet Cong (VC) wanted to remove from one of the communists' main infiltration routes into the South. The camp was a "finger in the eye of Ho Chi Minh," said

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NAM DONG HEROES

LEFT: Capt. Roger Donlon surveys the wreckage of the Special Forces camp at Nam Dong following the Viet Cong attack on July 6, 1964.



Army Special Forces Capt. Roger Donlon earned the Medal of Honor for his heroism at Nam Dong.

Army Master Sgt. Gabriel Alamo and Sgt. John L. Houston were awarded posthumous Distinguished Service Crosses for Nam Dong.

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY PHOTO

Roger Donlon, then the A-Team's commanding officer.

"Our camp sat near the first spur off the Ho Chi Minh Trail out of Laos," Donlon explains. "It was one of the reasons we were targeted. Our presence meant the VC had less freedom to conduct recruiting and terrorizing campaigns."

Then a 30-year-old captain, Donlon had reason for concern. Following a three-day patrol in the area surrounding the camp, one of his team's medics, Sgt. Terry Terrin, reported that VC had executed two village chiefs friendly to the Americans. The villagers were nervous and reluctant to offer any more information.

On the evening of July 5, Donlon also had to quell a fight among his South Vietnamese soldiers and Nungs inside the camp. Donlon believes this incident was most likely started by VC who had infiltrated the South Vietnamese contingent.

"It was worse than we ever knew," Donlon told *Military History* magazine in December 2003. "According to the intelligence we had received, we had about 19 VC sympathizers. Years later, it was confirmed that we probably had 100 VC among the 300 Vietnamese we were training."

Donlon said both the South Vietnamese camp commander and intelligence officer were "turncoats."

"The intel officer was last seen heading out of camp," he said recently at his home in Leavenworth, Kan. "Our nurses told me later that many [of the dead South Vietnamese soldiers] had their throats slit."

Donlon believes that once the battle started, VC infiltrators were ordered to immediately kill the ARVN soldiers, many while they were still asleep.

'UNDER INTENSE MORTAR ATTACK'

A foreboding aura enveloped the camp. One of the Green Berets, Staff Sgt. Mervin Woods, summed up the feeling of all the defenders when he wrote to his wife that



TEAMWORK by Chet Jezierski. On July 6, 1964, Special Forces Team A-726, led by Capt. Roger Donlon, and its Vietnamese and Nung allies, waged a five-hour battle against a reinforced Viet Cong battalion. Donlon, as a result of his efforts, was the first to receive the Medal of Honor for the Vietnam War.

"all hell is going to break loose here."

Woods' prediction came true around 2:30 a.m., July 6. As Donlon was completing his night rounds checking the camp's defenses, he opened the door to the mess hall, which promptly exploded from a mortar round. Another round set the command post on fire.

"They had superb planning," Donlon says.

For example, he said the thatch roofs of the command post and mess hall were hit first with white phosphorus grenades, so the resulting fires would illuminate the inner perimeter.

Immediately after the mess hall exploded, enemy tracers, hand grenades, and small-arms and machine-gun fire from a reinforced VC battalion of some 800 men ripped through the camp. It was the opening salvo of what would be a five-hour battle.

Donlon and Master Sgt. Gabriel "Pop" Alamo, a 45-year-old WWII and Korean War vet, began dousing the fires while removing weapons and ammunition from the command post. Meanwhile, radio operator Staff Sgt. Keith Daniels was able to send out only a partial distress signal.

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"Under intense mortar attack" was all he could transmit to Da Nang before a mortar round destroyed his communications shack.

COURAGE IN THE 'DEATH PIT'

After helping Donlon, a badly burned Alamo joined Staff Sgt. Ray Whitsell and Sgt. Michael Disser at their 81mm mortar pit near the main gate. It was one of three, along with two 60mm mortar pits, ringing the inner perimeter. Disser's illuminating rounds revealed hundreds of VC swarming through the outer perimeter.

"It was the most frightening sight of my life," Disser told Edward F. Murphy in the book *Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes*.

It was at that mortar pit, which Donlon says they called "the death pit," that Conway was shot nearly between the eyes, becoming the first Australian to die in the Vietnam War.

"He was just coming down the stairs of the bunker, saying something like, 'It's going to be a bloody good one tonight,' when he got hit," Donlon recalls.

Nearby, Sgt. John Houston spotted VC inside the inner perimeter and shouted a warning, "They're over here by the ammo bunker."

While reacting to help Houston, Donlon was hit by shrapnel from a third mortar round and lost all his equipment except for his AR-15 rifle. Bleeding from multiple wounds, he moved to Disser's position and killed three VC preparing to blow up the main gate.

"By then, my boots had been blown off," Donlon said. "So I borrowed Disser's, which I had no problem getting on because he had the biggest feet on the team."

Meanwhile, Houston was peppered "with an intense grenade assault on his position," according to the Florida native's Distinguished Service Cross citation.

"Although his ammunition was running out, he refused to take cover," it reads. "[Houston] called out to a fellow soldier to throw additional rounds to him and reloaded the magazine while exposed to the heavy enemy gunfire."

Houston fought in this "dangerous position," behind a berm of dirt that had

been excavated for a new command post overlooking the ammo bunker, according to Donlon, for more than two hours until mortally wounded by the enemy.

"I remember thinking, 'What a shitty deal,'" Donlon said. "He was one of my youngest guys."

'SUPERHUMAN' EFFORT HOLDS THE GATE

Donlon then moved to the rear of the camp to help. First, he checked on Sgt. 1st Class Thurman R. Brown, who would become a technical advisor for the 1968

"WE ALL RESOLVED

during our training that we would never be taken prisoner. We would go down fighting."

—CAPT. ROGER DONLON

John Wayne film *The Green Berets*, in a mortar pit. Then, after declining treatment from the other team medic, Sgt. Thomas Gregg, Donlon attempted to check on Sgt. 1st Class Vernon Beeson in a bunker 40 yards away. But a hail of mortar rounds and small-arms fire prevented it. Instead, Donlon made his way back toward the death pit.

There, he found Disser rapidly dropping rounds into a "glowing" mortar barrel, a badly wounded Alamo firing an AR-15 rifle and 1st Lt. Jay Olejniczak launching grenades with an M-79. They were taking aim at VC who were lobbing a constant barrage of grenades on the Americans and Nungs from just outside the inner perimeter's gate.

Alamo's actions at the death pit were crucial, according to his Distinguished Service Cross citation.

"As he noticed the enemy attempting to breach the main gate, he again dashed through a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire to abort the hostile action," it reads. "Although he sustained a serious wound in this courageous action, he demonstrated superhuman effort, reached the gate and prevented entry of enemy troops."

With their position becoming indefensible, Donlon ordered the group to move to a safer area. He and, by now, a grievously wounded Alamo covered the withdrawal.

At last, Donlon helped Alamo to his feet. But as they attempted to move, a VC mortar round landed at the entrance to the pit. The blast killed Alamo and wounded Donlon for a fourth time.

"Pop had no quit in him," Donlon said. "I remember him during our training runs. He never came in first, but he always came in. He provided maturity and stability for our team."

Dazed but determined, Donlon continued on as he had the entire battle. Seemingly everywhere at once, the captain administered basic first aid, rallied spirits, hauled weapons and ammunition, and fought with every weapon he could get his hands on.

"Teamwork and resolve is what got us through the battle," he recalled earlier this year. "We were outnumbered, but determined. We all resolved during our training that we would never be taken prisoner. We would go down fighting."

MORTAR ROUND DOWN A MEGAPHONE

After helping some Nungs re-establish a mortar position and then assisting Woods at his 81mm mortar pit, Donlon checked on Gregg's makeshift aid station, where the medic was working furiously. Refusing treatment once again, the captain moved toward the main gate, where he expected a final VC assault.

About then, just after 4:30 a.m., the sky erupted with a brilliant flash, courtesy of a flare from a U.S. plane. Air cover from Da Nang had finally arrived, but the battle would rage for another three hours.

As the flare burned out, the enemy taunted the defenders with a loudspeaker, ordering them to surrender. A well-placed mortar round from Brown silenced the harassment



PHOTO COURTESY VIETNAMGEAR.COM

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AMBUSH NEAR PHU TUC, 1964



'BLOODIEST 60 MINUTES OF FIGHTING IN SOUTH VIETNAM'

It was the deadliest single firefight of Vietnam's advisory war for Americans. Yet its story was totally lost in the hoopla over events in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964. BY RICHARD FOURNIER

All four of them were professionals. They were made of the stuff that makes men heroes. In a thing like this, with their training, they just had to stand and fight, and I guess they had to die." So said a senior American adviser of Americans killed in August 1964.

Three months earlier, a Gallup poll had found that nearly two-thirds of the American public was paying "little or no attention" to the war being waged between North and South Vietnam. After all, as 1964 opened, President Lyndon Johnson declared: "American military personnel in South Vietnam can be progressively withdrawn" as the South deals with "terrorist aggression perpetrated by Communist insurgents from the North."

Johnson apparently was unaware that Hanoi had fully committed to the gradual annihilation of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). "Resolution 9 [promulgated by the Communist Vietnamese Worker's Party in early 1964] amounted to a declaration of war on the Saigon regime, and the United States by extension," wrote Pierre Asselin, author of *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954-1965*.

Indeed, by the end of 1964, 17,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) cadres were already operating in "Zone B," as they called the South. They infused into the Viet Cong (VC) ranks, numbering 51,300 main and local force troops, an even greater spirit of aggression. Pitted against them were 23,310 American aviators and ground advisers. While Army Special Forces (Green Berets) gained fame early on, that was not the case with Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) personnel.

Unheralded MACV special detachment officers and NCOs, however, often bore the brunt of VC attacks while advising ARVN units in the field. In fact they, not Green Berets, sustained the highest number of killed in action (KIA) in a single firefight during the official years of America's advisory campaign in Vietnam.



The village of Phu Tuc was located near Ben Tre in Kien Hoa province in the Mekong Delta. On Aug. 20, 1964, it was the site of a heroic last stand by four American advisers. The 7th ARVN Division had its HQ in My Tho.

STANDING THEIR GROUND TO THE END

MACV Advisory Group 93 was based in Ben Tre, 45 miles south of Saigon, in Kien Hoa province. This was the heart of the Mekong Delta, long a VC stronghold. It also was where the 7th ARVN Division and 41st ARVN Ranger Battalion operated, especially in the Ham Long District.

On Aug. 20, 1964, a mud-walled outpost at Phu Tuc was defended by 36 South Vietnamese when the VC struck. Seven defenders were KIA, 15 wounded and all the survivors captured. It was

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Sgt. 1st Class Tom Ward



1st Lt. James Coyle



1st Lt. William Ragin



Capt. Byron Stone



burned to the ground and another village also assaulted. ARVN units marched seven miles over rough terrain to reach the torched village. Then later in the afternoon, two under-strength Ranger companies and two regular infantry companies were ordered to survey the damage at the second village.

They made the fatal error of using a main highway to reach their objective. Accompanying the units that day were four Americans of MACV Special Detachment 5891. Sgt. 1st Class Tom Ward and 1st Lt. William Ragin went with 110 men of the 41st Rangers; Capt. Byron Stone and 1st Lt. James Coyle were with a 250-man infantry company.

What happened next was graphically described by New Zealand and veteran Vietnam War AP correspondent Peter Arnett as "probably the bloodiest 60 minutes of fighting in South Vietnam [so far] this year." In reality, the intense combat lasted one hour and 40 minutes that Thursday evening.

"The ambush was characterized by constant bugle-and-bayonet charges by the VC," the Okinawa edition of the *Pacific Stars & Stripes* reported. VC

made four major assaults on the Ranger position. South Vietnamese ranks eventually collapsed, with every man reportedly fighting for himself. As a result, they were cut to pieces: 81 KIA, 64 WIA and 61 MIA (how many later turned up dead or accounted for was not reported).

Outnumbered at least 2 to 1 (one account cited 800 VC present), ARVN troops had put themselves in an exposed position. American advisers had consistently warned against such tactics, knowing the VC penchant for cleverly springing ambushes.

Yet despite their untenable situation, the four Americans stood firm. They refused the order to retreat, fighting until mortally wounded. For their heroism, all four would receive the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) posthumously in February and March 1965.

Ragin "was last seen alive firing his machine gun into the fourth and last assault," according to a letter written by Brig. Gen. William J. McCaffrey (his father-in-law) to his mother. "His action killed more than 30 enemy soldiers." Ragin's body, shot in the cheek and neck, was found near a stream.

Ward's DSC citation says it all: "After sustaining a severe wound, he voluntarily proceeded to the location of the battalion adviser to support the defensive operation. ... He unhesitatingly placed himself in a dangerous position, ... operating a machine gun, ... covering the Ranger withdrawal until succumbing to his wounds." Those wounds included not only bullets to the upper and lower chest but bayonet stabs.

Stone "remained in an exposed posi-

tion to defend the friendly units and repel the enemy," his citation reads, "and holding his position and covering the withdrawal of the friendly forces ... until mortally wounded." Stone was shot in the head.

Coyle's citation says: "Although a severe wound forced him to take cover in a ditch temporarily, he ignored his own wound, climbed back up the bank and continued to annihilate a great number of enemy troops." His body, with a lethal shot to the upper chest, was found next to Stone's. Reportedly, both were riddled with bullets.

AFTERMATH OF THE AMBUSH

Retired Army colonel and VFW life member Ben Hord III is one of the few Americans with firsthand knowledge of the ambush's aftermath. In August 1964, he was the provincial intelligence adviser to the Vietnamese province chief. He was assigned to Advisory Group 93 in Ben Tre and knew all four men personally.

"After we lost contact with the American advisers during the firefight," he recalls, "I flew the rest of the night over the area, attempting to make contact. We sent a small tactical unit into the area at first light to secure it, assess the damage and determine the number of casualties.

"Later that morning, we took a pair of Huey helicopters into the area to retrieve the bodies of the American advisers. I brought the bodies of 'Chico' Stone and Sgt. Ward aboard the helicopter that I was on. The other helicopter brought the bodies of Coyle and Ragin back to Ben

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Nam Dong

"In my mind's eye, I see Brownie's mortar round dropping directly down that megaphone," Donlon recalled with a smile.

With air cover arriving, the VC began retreating. As the sun rose, it revealed a devastated landscape. An estimated 154 enemy were killed, with many of their bodies still littering the battlefield.

Donlon says that Hickey, the team's anthropologist, told him after inspecting some of the enemy dead that many were not locals, indicating North Vietnamese had been infused into the ranks.

More than 50 South Vietnamese and Nungs were killed, along with two Americans and the Australian Conway. Some 65 of the defenders were wounded.

All of the Green Berets earned decorations. Donlon became the first to receive the Medal of Honor for the war. Alamo and Houston received posthumous Distinguished Service Crosses. Olejniczak, Brown, Disser and Terrin received Silver Stars. Beeson, Daniels, Gregg, Woods and Whitsell each were awarded a Bronze Star for valor. Seven of the Green Berets rated a Purple Heart for wounds.

Unfortunately, tragedy was not confined to the battlefield. The wives of both Alamo and Houston were pregnant when the men were killed. In the aftermath, Alamo's wife miscarried, and Houston's wife lost one of the twins she was carrying. Donlon says he stays in touch with Houston's surviving son.

Donlon and the other four remaining survivors—Brown, Disser, Olejniczak and Whitsell—gathered in June at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida to observe the 50th anniversary of the battle.

After receiving his Medal of Honor at the White House in November 1964, Donlon humbly said he thought everyone on his team deserved the same award. Years later, he feels the same way.

"I back away from personal accolades because it can too easily be regarded as boastful," said the 80-year-old Donlon at his house overlooking the Missouri River, which he shares with his wife, Norma. "Hopefully, our actions at Nam Dong can be inspirational. We must honor and respect those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

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'Bloodiest 60 Minutes'

Tre."

On Aug. 25, a memorial service for the four Americans was held in the U.S. Air Force Chapel at Tan Son Nhut. Commanding Gen. William Westmoreland attended. Their bodies were then shipped home for burial.

A WAR WITH HEROES

So who were these men? They were the best and brightest America had to offer. Their backgrounds and comments by friends and family can only give us a glimpse into their all-too-brief lives.

Ward was born in Knoxville, Tenn. At age 38, he had 15 years of service, enlisting in 1949. A Protestant, married and a father, he had a wife and son waiting for him at home. A birthday letter mailed to his 2-year-old son arrived at his house the very day he died. It said, in part, "I pray to God that He brings us together again soon." Ward is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Knoxville.

Coyle was an "Army Brat" born at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga. At 25, he had three years of service. Catholic and married, he was the father of two children. Graduating from West Point in 1961, the airborne- and Ranger-qualified infantry officer volunteered for Vietnam, leaving for there May 20. Just eight days before his death, his second child was born. Coyle is buried in West Point Cemetery.

Ragin grew up in Palatka, Fla., attending the Baptist church. A member of the Class of 1961 at The Citadel in South Carolina, he was on active duty for three years. Married and 25, he was the father of two daughters. Tragically, one died before reaching the age of 1. His Purple Heart was with oak leaf cluster, indicating he had been wounded in a separate action. A fellow officer from SD-5891 and high school classmate escorted his body home for burial in Arlington. Capt. Henry Deutsch was KIA in Vietnam less than a year later.

A personal friend, John Householder, told *VFW* magazine that when he saw the *Pacific Stars & Stripes* article on Okinawa, "It hit me like ton of bricks." Then a Special Forces officer, Householder had gone through various Army schools with

Ragin in 1961. "Ragin pulled strings to get himself assigned to a Ranger Battalion in Vietnam," he said. "He thought some of the ARVN in the unit were VC. Many years later, Ragin's death was my inspiration for helping erect the Waco Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Texas."

Stone was born in Somerset, Ky., lived in Houston and raised a Methodist. Single and 26, he had been a member of the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, graduating in 1960 (and entering the Army on May 20). An Army Ranger, he had already completed one tour (March 1963-March 1964) in Vietnam where he was awarded a Bronze Star for valor. Stone told his parents that he "liked the Vietnamese people and had an important job to do" there. That's why he volunteered for another six months.

"In August 1964, I was an assistant professor of military science at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala.," relates Jack E. Hembree. "As an additional duty, I was a survivor assistance officer for Capt. Stone's parents, Warren and Jan Stone. Stone was on his second volunteer tour with the same 41st ARVN Ranger Battalion." Stone is buried in Section 35 of Arlington National Cemetery.

Stone's close friend, Len Layne, noted, "When taps sounded, Captain Stone's burial would bring the total number to 185 American soldiers killed in action in Vietnam."

Perhaps the greatest—and most insulting—irony was that before 1965 all of their deaths were classified under *Casualty Status* as "non-battle," yet under *Remarks* on the same *Casualty Report* designated "hostile death." Only in the logic of a bureaucratic maze could a soldier killed in combat by enemy bullets and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism have his death categorized as "non-battle."

Although some would have us believe otherwise, Vietnam was a war with heroes. They died for the noblest of all causes: They sacrificed their lives for the men next to them. Coyle, Ragin, Stone and Ward were just among the first in a long line to do so in an advisory war that transformed into a full-fledged American war in 1965. ❖

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A 'PIERCING ARROW' STRIKES NORTH VIETNAM

Consisting of 64 strike sorties, the first offensive U.S. operation against North Vietnam targeted four patrol-boat bases and an oil storage depot. Reportedly, 25 PT boats were taken out and 90% of the facility destroyed. As one veteran said, America was now "locked into the Vietnam War." BY DAVID SEARS

VIETNAM
WAR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY

"Reprisal for what?" Jim Stockdale asked the young man who had woken him before dawn Aug. 5, 1964.

"For last night's attack on the destroyers, sir," responded the junior officer, an emissary from aircraft carrier *Ticonderoga's* commanding officer.

Stockdale, the 40-year-old skipper of Fighter Squadron (VF) 51, felt like he had just been doused with ice water.

"Tico" and "Connie" (sister carrier *Constellation*) were to launch air strikes on North Vietnam. Stockdale was to lead the "big one," a bombing attack on oil-storage facilities in Vinh City.

Stockdale rose and dressed. As he recalled a decade later, "I was one of the few men in the world who really understood the enormity of what was going to happen."

At 10 a.m. that same morning, a phone call awoke Lt. (j.g.—junior grade) Everett Alvarez, 26, a Skyhawk aviator in *Constellation's* Attack Squadron (VA) 144.

"Alvie, they want you in AI [Aviation Intelligence]," the duty officer said. "You're going to fly a mission."

Impatient to learn what was up, Alvarez put on the same flight suit he had worn the night before and hurried to AI.

GULF OF TONKIN INCIDENTS

The momentous events of Aug. 2-7, 1964—the Tonkin Gulf Incident—embroiled America in a controversial, lengthy and costly armed conflict. America's direct involvement began with daylight assaults by the North's torpedo boats

on U.S. destroyer *Maddox*.

It culminated in passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizing use of military force in Southeast Asia. But it was *Operation Pierce Arrow*, the Aug. 5 aerial strikes by dozens of Navy aircraft, that set the stage for all that followed.

Both Stockdale (who died in 2005) and Alvarez understood Tonkin Gulf's full implications. On the afternoon of Aug. 2, Stockdale led a flight of supersonic Crusader fighters that pounced on three of the North's patrol torpedo (PT) boats as they fled shoreward after firing torpedoes at *Maddox*. The destroyer swerved just in time to avoid being hit. Meanwhile, her gunners damaged at least one PT, and Lt. Cmdr. Ev Southwick, part of Stockdale's flight, left another sinking.

Then, on Aug. 4, a night of fierce thunderstorms during which *Maddox*, accompanied by destroyer *Turner Joy*, reported new attacks, both Stockdale and Alvarez rushed to the scene.



Cmdr. James Stockdale led one of the jet strikes on North Vietnam on Aug. 5.



ABOVE: *Operation Pierce Arrow* by R.G. Smith. Following the two August incidents involving U.S. warships in Tonkin Gulf, President Lyndon B. Johnson approved airstrikes against North Vietnam. Cmdr. James B. Stockdale led the first retaliatory attack, which hit the oil storage at Vinh on Aug. 5. **RIGHT:** Fuel storage tanks, gun emplacements and PT boat facilities were the target of retaliatory airstrikes against North Vietnam.

Stockdale "had the best seat in the house," flying solo just a thousand feet above the ships. Meanwhile, Alvarez swooped low to drop illumination flares while two fellow VA-144 aviators, Lt. Cmdr. John Nicholson and Lt. (j.g.) Ron Boch, scoured the sea for Communist targets—and came dangerously close to firing on friendly ships.

Despite the U.S. destroyers' insistent reports, wild maneuvering and relentless gunfire, none of the aviators could confirm enemy activity.

In effect, while a measured military response might have been in order, predicating the Aug. 5 reprisal airstrikes on the murky events of Aug. 4 was questionable.

'WE WILL SEEK NO WIDER WAR'

Stockdale's Crusader, one of a dozen *Tico* strike jets, catapulted just after noon Aug. 5. A half hour before (what was 11:46 p.m. U.S. East Coast time, Aug. 4) President Lyndon B. Johnson, on the strength of what was considered "unim-

peachable" evidence, addressed the nation: "Air action is now in execution against ... North Vietnam. ... Our response, for the present, will be limited and fitting ... We still seek no wider war. ..."

The only aircraft already aloft as Johnson spoke were four bomb-laden, propeller-powered Skyraiders—called "Spads." It was close to two hours later before all 16 *Tico* planes finally rendezvoused off Vinh City.

On three separate but parallel northwest-bound tracks (six Skyhawks to the west, six Crusaders along the Tonkin Gulf shore, the Spads midway between), Stockdale's forces bore down on Vinh City's 14 fuel storage tanks and their surrounding defenses.

"Play ball," the signal from the first Skyhawk pilot over target, initiated the attack. As Stockdale's contingent banked and circled in from the north to pummel



anti-aircraft emplacements, he watched the ponderous Spads dive straight down, "just like four silver bags of cement," to drop bombs on the tanks.

After launching wing rockets and triggering 20mm cannon fire into the ground guns, Stockdale peeked again toward the main target. Towering red fires engulfed the entire 4-square-mile storage facil-

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"I'M ON FIRE AND OUT CONTROL!"

—LT. (J.G.) EVERETT ALVAREZ'S LAST TRANSMISSION AFTER BEING HIT BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE



Lt. (j.g.) Everett Alvarez was shot down during Operation Pierce Arrow on Aug. 5, 1964. Captured, he was the longest-held American POW in North Vietnam, surviving eight years in Communist prison camps.



Jet fighter strikes were launched from both *USS Ticonderoga* and *USS Constellation* against targets along North Vietnam's coast in August 1964 in the first U.S. offensive operation of the war.



ity; the attack had lasted 90 seconds. Returning to *Ticonderoga*, all aircraft in tow, Stockdale realized "America had just been locked into the Vietnam War."

HITTING THE PT BOATS

Alvarez's aircraft launched at 2:30 p.m.—now three hours after Johnson's public announcement—the first of 10 VA-144 Skyhawks bound for the North's PT boat facilities at Hon Gai.

After a 70-minute flight to the coast,

the Skyhawk formation, one flight led by VA-144's executive officer (XO), Cmdr. Bob Nottingham, another by John Nicholson, spread out and descended toward Hon Gai's bay. "Go get 'em, tigers," encouraged the pilot of a lone F-4 Phantom providing fighter cover.

"Good God! Shoot!" Nottingham shouted. The pilots expected to see the North's PTs docked to the east. Instead, four of them were moored alongside a bigger vessel to the west. Nottingham

missed his chance to shoot, and Alvarez, flying on the XO's wing and trailing by just 70 feet, nearly did—launching rockets on a path he couldn't confirm.

"Look out! They're shooting at you," warned the Phantom pilot as Alvarez pulled away sharply to the right. He had just a few more minutes to be airborne—and free.

It was after their second firing pass, as the two Skyhawks zoomed east just 100 feet above water, trees and red-tiled rooftops, that Alvarez heard an ominous POOM, saw a big, yellow flash and felt the aircraft shudder.

Alvarez keyed his radio: "I'm on fire and out control!"—then, amidst the confusion, heard Nicholson say: "You know what to do Alvie!"

FIRST NAVY AVIATOR CASUALTIES

The Aug. 5 *Pierce Arrow* strikes were tactical successes but not without cost. Alvarez ejected just seconds before his crippled plane crashed near Hon Gai, parachuting into captivity.

Meanwhile, Lt. (j.g.) Richard C. Sather, a Spad pilot from *Constellation's* VA-145, was downed in the vicinity of Lach Truong. His body was finally returned in 1985. Sather became the first of 377 American naval aviators lost during the war and Alvarez the first of 179 Navy flier POWs. Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Joe Lee Williams also died, accidentally, aboard the *Ticonderoga*.

Both Stockdale (on Sept. 9, 1965) and Southwick (on May 14, 1967) would join Alvarez as POWs.

For his part, 24-year-old Nicholson, who was considering leaving the Navy, decided to stay. Over the course of five Western Pacific wartime deployments, he would log 120 combat missions.

Meanwhile, President Johnson's public approval rating of his handling of Vietnam soared to 72%. 

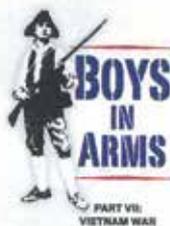
DAVID SEARS is a New Jersey-based author and historian. A U.S. Navy veteran, he served as gunnery officer aboard a destroyer off the East Coast and later as an advisor assigned to Commander Naval Forces Vietnam during 1971-72.



Richard Sather

MAKING SOMETHING OF THEMSELVES:

BOYS IN THE VIETNAM WAR



BY ROBERT WIDENER

Despite the social upheaval of the 1960s, a number of underage recruits saw service in Vietnam as their only escape from a troubled home life.



Marine Pfc. Dan Bullock, 15, was the youngest GI to die in the Vietnam War. He was killed during a firefight at An Hoa Combat Base in 1969.

A fierce firefight at An Hoa Combat Base on June 7, 1969, claimed the lives of five Marines. Among the dead was a young recruit from the streets of New York City—Pfc. Dan Bullock. His death was unceremoniously added to the toll of 70 Americans who died that day in the Vietnam War. But his sacrifice had one small distinction—Bullock was only 15 years old, the youngest American to die in the war.

By the time of the Vietnam War, the number of underage recruits had dropped dramatically from WWII levels. Yet, overall, the age requirements of all services had not changed that much from the Korean War. What had changed was the dramatic swing in the social climate in America during the late '60s.

It was then in vogue, primarily among college students, to participate in anti-war demonstrations. The "movement" infused campuses, nationally gaining momentum as the war escalated and casualties mounted. Hippies preached love and cried out against war in general. Draft dodgers burned their draft cards and fled to Canada.

Young men joining the military later in the war were stripped of much public support, particularly from their peers—in stark contrast to what occurred in past wars.

Some underage teens who did volunteer saw the military, for the most part, as a last resort to escaping broken homes. They feared running afoul of the law or saw little future as a result of their undesirable surroundings. For them, entering the service was an attractive alternative.

'ONE OF THE FINEST MARINES'

Bullock lived in Goldsboro, N.C., until his mother died when he was 11. His father remarried shortly thereafter and moved the family to Brooklyn, N.Y. To the young teen, the streets offered nothing but trouble.

"My brother didn't like New York," Gloria Bullock-Burroughs

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told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "He wanted to get an education, to make something of himself, and saw the Marines as a way to get there."

Bullock altered his birth certificate without objections from his family and easily enlisted. He reported to Marine Corps boot camp Sept. 18, 1968.

Although big for his age, his 14-year-old (born Dec. 21, 1953) body lacked the stamina required for the rigors of basic training at Parris Island, S.C. But one recruit took a liking to Bullock and took him under his wing.

"I got a group together, and we decided to carry him when he fell back," said Franklin MacArthur, who was 19 when he met Bullock. "I looked out for him."

On May 18, 1969, Bullock arrived in Vietnam. He was assigned to F Co., 2nd Bn., 5th Marines. Bullock kept his age a secret, keeping mostly to himself.

"Everybody who met him either wanted to protect him or push him around," Lance Cpl. Steve Piscitelli told *The Daily Beast*. The two were stationed together at An Hoa Combat Base and quickly became friends.

Piscitelli took on an "older brother" role, engaging him in playful sparring at times. On June 6, 1969, though, Piscitelli dislocated a thumb during one of their boxing sessions. He was unable to operate

a weapon—a problem because he was slated for base perimeter guard duty that night. Bullock, who had been assigned to cleaning duties, ended up taking his place.

A little after midnight, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) mounted a rocket and mortar attack on the base. During a firefight, Bullock was killed by small-arms fire.

Capt. Robert Kingery, in a letter to Bullock's parents, wrote: "He constantly exposed himself to enemy fire in order to keep the company supplied with the ammunition needed to hold off the attack. ... Dan was one of the finest Marines I have ever known."

Bullock was interred in Elmwood Cemetery in Goldsboro, N.C., with little fanfare. There was no ceremony or even a headstone for his grave to memorialize

his sacrifice.

It took another 21 years before this injustice was rectified. In 2000, a former Marine approached his boss, talk-show host Sally Jesse Raphael, with Bullock's story. She needed little persuasion and donated the money for a headstone, which included a color etching of Bullock.

A ceremony was organized in October of that year. Chapters of the Rolling Thunder motorcycle club from New York to North Carolina escorted Bullock's family to the cemetery, where a proper memorial was held.

On June 7, 2003, another honor was bestowed when a section of the street in Brooklyn where Bullock lived was renamed Pfc. Dan Bullock Way.

Also, a photo engraving of Bullock is part of the New York City Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza near Manhattan's Financial District.

'RIGHT WHERE I SHOULD BE'

Another New York City native, Overille Thompson, enlisted when he was 15. Thompson was in one scrape after another growing up on the streets of Brooklyn. With no father at home, he had little guidance to avoid a troubled future. His mother was not supportive and was more than happy to see him leave.

"EVERYBODY WHO MET HIM

either wanted to protect him or push him around"

—LANCE CPL. STEVE PISCITELLI, WHO SERVED WITH PFC. DAN BULLOCK

"She did nothing to stop me from enlisting because she had a new boyfriend," Thompson said. "I would be out of the way."

Thompson used a forged birth certificate and signed up at the Marine Corps recruiting station in Brooklyn on Sept. 2, 1964. "I was a young kid," he said. "I just wanted to fight—just go to war."

In early 1966 after jockeying some assignments, he landed in Vietnam just short of his 17th birthday. A truck driver at Da Nang Air Base, he was assigned to Marine Air Base Squadron 11, 1st Marine Air Wing.

Thompson ended up doing back-to-back tours. During that time, no one ever knew his true age. His desire to get into a



Ken Asbury joined the Army in 1968 at 16, after pushing through a crowd of war protesters at the induction center. He served as a Cobra helicopter crew chief in Pliniku in 1968.

firefight always eluded him despite tagging along on patrols at every opportunity.

Ken Asbury, a member of Post 6605 in Warner Robins, Ga., had a different experience getting into the military. When he reported to the induction center in Oakland, Calif., in April 1968, he had to wade through a crowd of war protesters blocking his path.

"They were telling me 'They haven't got you yet. ... You don't have to go,'" Asbury recalled.

The 16-year-old had talked his way past Army recruiters two months earlier. Coming from a broken home, too, he also had quit school. The military, as he saw it, was his only option.

During basic training at Fort Lewis, Wash., his age was called into question one day by a colonel who demanded to know how old he was. After hearing Asbury's story, the colonel asked one more question: Did he want out?

"I told him that if I was going to be treated differently from the other recruits now that my age was known, then 'Yes,'" Asbury said. "Otherwise, I felt like I was right where I should be."

For the rest of his time in the Army, questions about his age never came up.

17-Year-Olds Killed in Vietnam: Who Were They?

NAME	SERVICE	MOS	UNIT	CAUSE	DATE
Pvt. Lugene Jackie Clark	Marine Corps	Rifleman	K Co., 3rd Bn., 9th Marines, 3rd Div.	Hostile	9-27-65
Pfc. Robert Warren Allen	Marine Corps	Field Radio Operator	H&S Co., 3rd Bn., 9th Marines, 3rd Div.	Hostile	10-3-65
Pfc. Terry Tim Wright	Army	Infantryman	D Co., 1st Bn., 12th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	10-10-65
Pfc. James Calvin Ward	Army	Infantryman	B Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	10-11-65
Pfc. Alan Lynn Barnett	Army	Combat Eng. (Pioneer)	A Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	11-4-65
Pfc. Carl Stephen Daniels	Army	Infantryman	A Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	11-4-65
Pfc. Anthony Eugene Pendola	Army	Infantryman	C Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	11-6-65
Pfc. Harold Goldman	Army	Infantryman	H&H Co., 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt., 173rd Abn. Bde.	Hostile	11-8-65
Pfc. Robert Moreno	Army	Combat Eng. (Pioneer)	H&H Co., 2nd Bn., 7th Cav, 1st Cav Div.	Hostile	11-17-65
Airman App. Greg Eugene Hart	Navy	Airman Apprentice	USS Oriskany	Non-Hostile	10-26-66
Lance Cpl. Patrick Eugene Sinclair	Marine Corps	Rifleman	L Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Marines, 1st Div.	Non-Hostile	9-6-68
Pfc. Wayne Bibbs	Army	Aircraft Maint. Apprentice	F Trp., 8th Cav, 1st Avn. Bde.	Hostile	6-11-72



Marine Vincent Ginardi arrived in Vietnam just before his 17th birthday in August 1968. When he returned home at the end of his tour, he received a draft notice in the mail.

After basic training, Asbury went to Fort Eustis, Va., for helicopter crew chief training. On Oct. 23, 1968, he arrived in Vietnam. Stationed at Pleiku, he was assigned to D Troop, 1st Cav, 10th Air Cav, 4th Inf. Div.

As gun platoon crew chief on a Cobra (tail number 272), he rode in the second seat for about 200 flying hours. Throughout his tour in Vietnam, his underage secret was never revealed. But some 40 years later, his true age came out. During a unit reunion, a few of the men

attending thought he looked too young.

"One of them said, 'You don't hardly fit this group,'" Asbury said. It was the first time since the war he had told his story.

Vincent Ginardi's story began when he enlisted in the Marine Corps at 16 on Jan. 23, 1968. He had seen a Marine in dress blues one day and wanted to be like him.

Ginardi used a blank baptismal certificate from a local parish to make himself two years older. The Marine Corps recruiter accepted it without question. His grandparents, with whom he lived, offered no objections either.

Ginardi arrived in Vietnam in mid-August 1968, just before his 17th birthday. He became a cook with H&S Co., 1st Bn., 3rd Marines. But in February 1969, he was transferred to A Company as a rifleman.

Ginardi spent the next six months going on patrols. His worst experience came during an ambush in the A Shau Valley in June 1969 during *Operation Virginia Ridge*. Ginardi was one of 17 out of 90 in his company who came out of the fight without a wound.

Only once during his service was Ginardi's age ever challenged. An older buddy in basic training let it slip that he was 16. When questioned by the company captain, he maintained he was 18, and the issue was dropped.

Ironically, in the first month he was home from the war, Ginardi received a draft notice in the mail. After all, he was now 18.

"It really freaked me out," he said. But

after the draft board saw his discharge papers, it deduced it had made a mistake on his age.

TOO YOUNG TO DIE

The war was barely under way when 17-year-olds started coming home in body bags. In fact, 12 died in Vietnam—nine by late 1965, one in 1966 and two more by the end of the war (see chart above). It was more than the public could bear. Sometime in 1966, the military changed its policy to ban 17-year-olds from serving in Vietnam, though it did not apply to ships. For the following men, the order came too late.

Pfc. Robert Moreno, H&H Co., 2nd Bn., 7th Cav, 1st Cav Div., earned a Bronze Star for valor during the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley on Nov. 17, 1965. The Los Angeles native exposed himself numerous times to intense enemy fire to help repel NVA attacks. He eventually was mortally wounded.

Pfcs. Alan Barnett and Carl Daniels both served in the same unit—A Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div.—during *Operation Long Reach*. They died by enemy fire at LZ Juliet (Hill 732) on Nov. 4, 1965, just 13 days before the Ia Drang battle.

Airman Apprentice Greg Hart was aboard the *USS Oriskany* when a fire broke out Oct. 26, 1966. A flare that accidentally was ignited near the weapons locker caused a blaze that raced through five decks. Hart perished along with 43 other sailors.

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Hackworth: From Boy Soldier to Legendary Leader

ONE OF THE MOST WELL-KNOWN, highly decorated and controversial soldiers ever was Col. David H. Hackworth.

Described by Gen. Creighton Abrams as "the best battalion commander I ever saw in the United States Army," Hackworth served two tours in the Korean War and four in the Vietnam War. He earned more than 90 awards, including two Distinguished Service Crosses, 10 Silver Stars and eight Purple Hearts.

Hackworth began his military career at 14 when he lied about his age and joined the U.S. Merchant Marine near the end of WWII. A year later, at 15, he paid someone to impersonate his father so he could join the Army. His subsequent occupation duty took him to Trieste, Italy. Under the tutelage of WWII battle-hardened NCOs, he learned the value of hard training and the quest for perfection.

Hackworth received a battlefield commission to lieutenant in Korea at age 20 and ended the war as a captain. He created a special volunteer unit, the Wolfhound Raiders, 27th Infantry Regiment, which fought brilliantly against the Chinese and



Col. David H. Hackworth began his Army career at the age of 15, serving in Trieste, Italy, during the post-WWII Europe era.

North Koreans.

In Vietnam, he transformed a ragtag unit of ill-trained and demoralized men of the 4th Bn., 39th Inf. Regt., 9th Inf. Div., into a deadly guerrilla-fighting unit.

The latter part of his military career swirled in controversy after a 1971 television interview in which he called the Vietnam War unwinnable.

A noted journalist, he became a contributing writer on defense issues for *Newsweek*. In his latter years, he penned a syndicated column, speaking out on behalf of the troops. He also wrote and co-authored six books about the military.

In a 2002 *Naval Institute Proceedings* interview, Hackworth commented on war: "Something I'll never forget are the kids I commanded who are dead. I still think of them all the time. I don't think I would have ever been a great commander because, like [Army Col.] Glover Johns once told me, I love my soldiers too much."

Hackworth died of cancer at the age of 74 on May 4, 2005. (For more on Hackworth, see "Vietnam War: Courage Unrivaled" on page 39.)

After 1966, two 17-year-olds avoided being detected before getting to Vietnam, only to later lose their lives. Lance Cpl. Patrick Sinclair was crossing a river while on patrol with L Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Marines, near Dai Loc on Sept. 6, 1968. He and another Marine were swept away in the rain-swollen river and drowned.

Pfc. Wayne Bibbs of Blue Island, Ill., died in a helicopter shootdown June 11, 1972, near Hue. He was a door gunner with F Trp., 8th Cav, 1st Avn. Bde. An enemy round triggered an explosion

in his OH-6A helicopter, causing it to crash and burn.

As sad as it is to lose one's life at 17, it is even sadder to leave behind a wife and two-month-old baby girl. Pfc. Anthony Pendola of Peoria, Ill., arrived in Vietnam on Aug. 18, 1965, serving with C Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div. He was killed less than three months later by small-arms fire in the Ia Drang



Marine Pfc. Robert C. Burke was the youngest recipient of the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War. He was mortally wounded in action on Go Noi Island, 1968.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

I think the ache will always hold on. ... These feelings I have, I hope they'll do—it's all I have to honor you."

HEROISM AT GO NOI ISLAND

When Robert C. Burke joined the Marines at 17 on May 16, 1967, he wanted to do only one thing—be a mechanic. He loved working on cars while growing up on the family farm near Monticello, Ill. After boot camp, he attended Motor Transport School, graduating as a motor vehicle mechanic.

But by the time he landed in Vietnam in February 1968, his MOS was changed to 0311—rifleman. As all leathernecks know, every Marine is a rifleman first. Because of an emergency demand for more infantrymen in the field, Burke, who had turned 18 by then, had to trade in his wrench for an M-60 machine gun. He was now a machine gunner with I Co., 3rd Bn., 27th Marines.

The 3/27th operated near Da Nang Air Base, where booby traps and occasional snipers chipped away at the men for the first few months. In May 1968, though, *Operation Allen Brook* was launched to counter an NVA build up on Go Noi Island.

During fierce fighting on May 17, his company was ambushed at a dry river-

Valley on Nov. 6, 1965.

Pendola's wife received many letters from him during that short time. Today, those letters help his grown daughter, Tammy, understand a father she never knew, according to a posting on The Virtual Wall (www.virtualwall.org): "Now that the pain and anger are gone,



Anthony Pendola

bed. NVA machine gunners, well-concealed in a tree line, took a deadly toll. Snipers picked off those who tried to move or help the wounded. To make the situation worse, blistering heat baked the trapped Marines as the day dragged on, with no relief in sight. Finally, Burke had had enough.

Although he was told to stay put, he sneaked away with all of the ammo he could carry and began a one-man assault on the enemy bunkers. As Terry Rigney wrote in the 1st Marine Division Association's publication, "Burke's own rate of fire was so punishing that entire clusters of NVA were forced to back off to protect themselves."

Snipers who turned their fire on Burke were matched with machine gun fire as he moved forward. Some NVA tried to escape, but were cut down.

Burke occupied the enemy, buying precious time to move the Marine wounded to a safe area. When his M-60 jammed, Burke picked up an M-16 from a casualty and returned to the tree line while another Marine repaired the weapon. He again assaulted the enemy bunkers, firing from the hip and throwing grenades. He knocked out one position and killed two fleeing NVA.

When the M-60 was working again, he resumed his march of destruction, saturating the enemy positions with devastating fire. But a sniper's bullet dropped Burke to the ground. The NVA, seeing their destroyer stricken, unloaded on him, shooting him several times in the torso.

"By redirecting the fire upon himself and by eliminating many enemy positions," Rigney wrote, "he had allowed the men of his company to regroup and stage an effective assault upon the enemy positions."

Burke's family, after hearing of his son's death, was shocked to learn he was on patrols. Out of concern for his mother, he had led her to believe that as a mechanic he was well out of harm's way in Vietnam.

For saving countless lives that day and turning the tide of the battle, Burke was awarded the Medal of Honor. He was the youngest recipient of the war.

E-MAIL rwidener@vfw.org

This concludes the series on underage vets in military service.

CRITERIA UNDER REVIEW

Purple Heart for Military Victims of Domestic Terrorism?

The Defense Department is now required to review eligibility criteria for the Purple Heart. What is being determined is if service members killed or wounded on U.S. soil by politically motivated terrorists should be awarded the Purple Heart.

All of the casualties of the Islamist terrorist attacks on the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, received the Purple Heart. But those soldiers killed and wounded at Ft. Hood, Texas, and at the Little Rock, Ark., recruiting station in 2009 were not. The self-proclaimed Islamists in both of these cases were motivated by the same ideology as those who hit the Pentagon on Sept. 11. We will keep you posted on the latest developments.



VFW Supports TV Show for Vets

Hiring America—the first-ever national television program dedicated to job-seeking vets—opened its second season the third weekend in March. VFW is proud to offer its financial support for this worthy effort.

The 30-minute programs air on the global Pentagon Channel and in 35 local markets. The season runs 13 consecutive weeks, ending in mid-June. Created by executive producer Bill Deutch, it is hosted by correspondent Gigi Stone.

St. Louis Celebrates Its 250th Anniversary

Missouri's most populous city—site of VFW's national convention in July—was founded in 1764. For those venturing there for a visit, you might be interested in a few sites of special appeal to veterans.

For instance, the Missouri History Museum has a replica of the Spirit of St. Louis, Charles Lindbergh's

(an honorary VFW member) famous plane. Also, don't miss the Museum of Westward Expansion under the Gateway Arch in the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

Jefferson Barracks Historical Park and National Cemetery has a host of fascinating sites, including the new Missouri Civil War Museum in the Post Exchange & Gymnasium Building.

The Soldiers' Memorial offers a military museum that features exhibits for

Missouri's vets from all wars. The memorial is slated for a major upgrade. The St. Louis Gateway Mall across the street contains city memorials to residents killed in various wars.

Stigmatizing All Veterans

The April murders committed by an unbinged soldier at Fort Hood, Texas, set off another frenzy of media hysteria about "mentally unbalanced" war veterans.

The fact is Army Spec. Ivan Lopez's rampage had nothing to do with service in a war zone. He spent only four months in Iraq as U.S. troops were withdrawing at the end of 2011. Lopez was a truck driver with no experience whatsoever in combat.

"The media label this shooting PTSD," Marine Sgt. Dakota Meyer said. "PTSD does not put you in the mind-set to go out and kill innocent people." Stressed the Medal of Honor recipient, "That's not PTSD. ... It's close to psychotic."

New York psychiatrist Prakash Masand got it right in telling the *Christian Science Monitor*: "This is an extremely rare incident and shouldn't be cause for stigmatizing veterans and others with mental illness. The majority of veterans, with or without PTSD, can be model citizens, employees and family members. More than three-quarters of individuals in the armed forces who have a psychiatric illness had it prior to enlistment."

A Veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America for an amount of "up to and including my life."

That is Honor and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it!!

National Adjutant Establishes Employment Department

Sights set on growing employment challenges for veterans

National Adjutant Marc Burgess announced in March the creation of the DAV Employment Department to be based at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Ky.

The new department will enhance DAV's efforts to empower veterans by overseeing special employment initiatives and working with private and public sector entities to develop and build partnerships to address joblessness and underemployment.

"We are excited to announce that through this new department we will facilitate job fairs and lead efforts to connect veterans and employers," Adjutant Burgess said. "This initiative will take our efforts even further and answer a critical need facing our unique community nationwide."

DAV's mission to empower veterans to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity is supported on many fronts already through free professional services, volunteerism and the voice the organization gives the nation's veterans and their families and survivors.

With the full support of National Commander Joseph W. Johnston, two capable and experienced professionals from within DAV's ranks have been tapped to lead this critical department.

Jeffrey C. Hall is now the National Employment Director, and Danny Soto is Assistant National Employment Director.

"Both will be instrumental in facilitating programs, events and services to support professional empowerment for veterans," Commander Johnston said.

"While helping veterans struggling with employment challenges is not entirely new to DAV, this new department will best focus our efforts in this area, putting immense experience and knowledge to work for veterans in a concerted way," said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinski. "Jeff Hall is the right person at the right time to lead this new department, and he has a very capable assistant director in Danny Soto."

A combat veteran of the Persian Gulf War, Hall moves into this role after dedicating the last four years to DAV as Assistant National Legislative Director at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. There he represented DAV's voice before congress, testifying on behalf of DAV on issues related to benefits, the claims process, employment and education.

Hall joined DAV's professional staff as a National Service Officer Trainee in 1993 at the Chicago, Illinois, National Service Office. In 1996, he was assigned to the position of National Appeals Officer at the Board of Veterans' Appeals office in Washington, D.C., and was appointed Assistant Supervisor in Louisville, Kentucky in 1997. In 1999, he was appointed Supervisor of the Chicago National Service Office. In 2004, he was simultaneously promoted to Supervisor of the New York City National Service Office and National Area Supervisor of Area 10. He was appointed Assistant National Legislative Director in 2010 and served in that capacity until his current appointment. He is also a member and former President of the National Guild of Attorneys in Fact, Inc.



Hall

A disabled Navy veteran, Soto has been the Supervisor of DAV's National Service Office in Honolulu since 2010. He joined DAV's professional staff in 2000 after retiring as a Hospital Corpsman 1st Class. His DAV career began as a Transition Service Officer in El Paso, Texas. In 2004, he was assigned to the position of National Appeals Officer in Washington, D.C., where he simultaneously initiated DAV's military affairs program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and National Naval Medical Center Bethesda. In 2009, he was assigned to the position of Assistant Supervisor of our National Service Office in Phoenix.



Soto

"We are so excited to have this opportunity to provide such a crucial service to veterans," Hall said. "Throughout all my years as a service officer, this was the only area in which I wished we could provide more assistance. It is frustrating and even dangerous for a young person dealing with significant life changes not to be able to find gainful employment.

"Adding this service now fits perfectly with what we already offer. This is going to help a lot of veterans who need and deserve better." ■



From the NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR JEFFREY C. HALL

Empowering America's Heroes

The journey from injury to recovery is not complete until a veteran is able to find meaning in life. For those who are able, that means getting back to work to care for their families. The importance of helping them accomplish that, in a way, defines DAV as an organization. And yet, when we consider all that veterans have done to make our American Dream possible, we cannot go far enough to ensure they are able to fully enjoy and participate in our way of life.

It is for that reason that National Adjutant Marc Burgess and Commander Joseph W. Johnston have appointed me to launch the DAV Employment Department. I'm proud to be leading that effort and humbled by the importance of this initiative. In the coming months, we will be looking at ways that we can connect veterans with meaningful employment and develop strategies that address one of the major impediments to veterans leading high-quality lives.

We have already hit the ground running. On June 26, our partnership with RecruitMilitary began in earnest with the first of at least 100 job fairs we will be facilitating over the course of the next 18 months. The first fair was hosted by the

Washington Redskins in Washington, D.C.

We project this partnership will result in more than 24,000 veterans having the opportunity to meet with prospective employers. It will also connect them with resources to enhance their job search and continue the process until they are successfully employed.

Even before this department was launched, DAV had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) to provide

We are poised to provide **comprehensive assistance**, ensuring veterans receive their benefits and are given the resources they need to get back to work and transition successfully to civilian life.

our free benefits assistance and information at NCOA Career Expos.

With more than 500,000 veterans projected to leave active military service in the coming years, we are poised to provide comprehensive assistance that ensures they receive their benefits and are given the resources they need to get back to work and transition successfully to civilian life.

Stay tuned to DAV.org and our social networks for more information on career fairs coming to you. I thank our members and leaders for the opportunity you have given me and look forward to DAV's continued growth through this critically important venture.



Polytrauma and TBI

How a Decade of War Has Changed Treatment

By Steve Wilson

More than a decade of war has dramatically changed the way polytrauma (PT) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are treated in America's veterans returning home with these life-changing wounds.

"In the 1990s, there were specialized centers for these types of injuries, but the network we have now didn't exist," said Dr. Ronald Riechers, medical director of the poly-trauma team at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center.

Riechers explained that when the current generation of wars began, the VA developed a system of treatments based on the nature and severity of a patient's injury. Patients are classified at levels one through three, with three being the most severe. As a patient recovers, the condition is downgraded to the next level with what Riechers calls a "warm handoff" to the patient's individually assigned liaison service officer at the next treatment center.

Above: U.S. Army medical personnel offload a simulated injured soldier from a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter at Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), Fort Polk, La. Service members at JRTC 13-04 are educated in combat patient care and aeromedical evacuation in a simulated combat environment. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John R. Nimmo Sr./USAF)

"The system-based care has been the biggest change regarding how we treat these injuries," said Riechers.

Another change is the immediate treatment that often begins on the battlefield. In previous conflicts, the injured were evacuated to a treatment center. In recent wars, especially as bases were established and facilities erected, a patient could be moved from the point of injury to lifesaving care at full-spectrum medical facilities within the course of an hour.

“We have **better survival rates than the civilian sector** because of early intervention, and the ability to begin neurologic care at a tertiary medical facility is dramatic.”

*Dr. Ronald Riechers, medical director of the poly-trauma team,
Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center*

“What the military did early on was place medical professionals down range, as proximately close to the fighting that was safe,” Riechers said. “Neurosurgeons were there early, and some were aggressive in performing surgery on wounds to the skull, as sometimes the pressure created by that kind of injury is what would be fatal.”

The early intervention has greatly increased survival rates.

“We can aeromedical evacuate a patient [to a treatment center] rapidly after they received surgery early,” Riechers said. “This reduced negative cognitive impairment and death. We have better survival rates



David W. Franco (left) watches a Veterans Day celebration in Moorpark, Calif., with his father, David R. Franco, who holds his godson Hunter Henry. Both Marines, the two Francos were injured during separate deployments to Iraq and have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries, a mental wound afflicting an estimated 10 percent of troops returning from today's wars. Both also have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. (Chris Carlson/AP)

than the civilian sector because of early intervention, and the ability to begin neurologic care at a tertiary medical facility is dramatic.”

Riechers said the future of PT/TBI injury care consists of integrating treatments for patients with both post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a TBI. While the overwhelming majority of cases are mild, he said, TBI symptoms are often associated with a mild concussion and shouldn't be overlooked.

“Coexistence of PTSD/TBI is extremely high,” he said. “What you will see moving forward is people who have PTSD/TBI being integrated into interdisciplinary programs and treatments.”

“The challenge lies in identifying these injuries in these individuals who can't necessarily describe their experience due to amnesia that sometimes comes with the extreme adrenaline rush that led to the injury in the first place,” said Riechers.

Any veteran who may have experienced even what might have initially been called a “mild” concussion is encouraged to see a specialist to ensure they are properly diagnosed—especially as some injuries can worsen over time.

“The stigma of asking for help, whether a veteran suffered a TBI-related injury and is still serving or has transitioned out of uniform, can and should be removed from our mindset as a veteran community,” said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “Anyone who has suffered an injury like this, even if they were initially told it was mild or didn't report it, should absolutely see a medical professional.”

Riechers agrees.

“There's no IV drip to treat TBI and, unfortunately, there's no pill, either,” Riechers said. “The cure comes from early treatment, rehabilitation or surgery, if required. It's important to report head injuries and be evaluated.” ■



DAV Marks 100th Anniversary of World War I

By Steve Wilson

The summer of 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of World War I, which, after the fighting ended, soon saw thousands of ill and injured veterans return home to a country whose government was unprepared to care for them, their families or their future.

Several years later, veterans began banding into different groups all across the country. Former Army Capt. Robert S. Marx began to tour the country, uniting all of the separate veterans organizations under one banner, which eventually became today's DAV—veterans from all across the nation united in one cause.

The fighting began in Europe in July 1914, following the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife. This event, coupled with a series of alliances and an arms buildup across Europe, triggered the most destructive conflict in history up to that time.

When America entered the war in 1917, 20th-century technology was colliding with largely 19th-century "occupy by mass and force" tactics. New weapons such as poison gas, specialized fighter and bomber aircraft, tanks, machine guns and improved artillery contributed to the 53,000 American deaths and another 204,000 Americans wounded.

Mankind had invented new ways to kill or injure soldiers but, at the same time, military forces had improved ways to protect the combatants with things like better helmets, gas masks and evacuation procedures for the wounded.

When the armistice was signed in November 1918, America was ill-prepared for the number of wounded, ill and injured veterans who returned home.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

At the time, there was no agency like the Department of Veterans Affairs solely charged with the care and rehabilitation of veterans.

Many veterans across the nation started to organize to make their voices heard, in calling for medical care and other services to meet their needs. In Cincinnati, Judge Robert Marx became a leader and champion for veterans' causes. With his flair for leadership and organizing, he formed a unique organization dedicated to the service of disabled veterans and their families. This group was known as the Disabled American Veterans of the World War.

Today, 100 years after the war that brought DAV into existence, the organization is still fighting for veterans and their families of all eras for the benefits they earned through service and sacrifice.

"The premise of DAV hasn't changed since our



BLACK & WHITE PHOTOS COURTESY OF WOODS MEMORIES



founding," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "The issues are a bit more complex, and the method in which we deliver our message and services has evolved with technology, but our mission of service to veterans and their families is still at the core of our existence."

National Commander Joseph W. Johnston recently wrote President Obama and Congress, urging them to reach an agreement to fully fund, in advance, all federal programs, services and benefits which directly or indirectly support America's heroes, especially those who are wounded, injured or ill due to their service.

DAV's legislative team is championing the Putting Veterans Funding First Act, S. 932 and H.R. 813, which would protect benefits and services for veterans and their families in the event of a budget stalemate during a government shutdown.

The DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) is available at www.davcan.org for anyone to easily find their elected representatives and contact them with a personalized letter to advocate for legislation that benefits veterans.

"In our nearly 100 years of service, some things regarding the way we conduct our advocacy efforts have obviously changed," said Johnston. "But our values and focus on fulfilling our promises to veterans and their families of all eras is as important and vital as it was following World War I. Judge Marx's vision lives on today, and as a war brought DAV into existence, we'll keep advocating for those who sacrifice when the nation calls brave men and women to defend our freedom and way of life." ■



SUCCESS Ford Van to LaSalle Vet Home

SUCCESS!! We applied for a grant from our anonymous donor last April and we have been granted \$32,000 for a 2014 Ford E150 medical transport van pictured below. LaSalle Veterans Home will be the recipient.



Where does the money go?

(97 ½ cents of every fundraising dollar).

Because of fundraising, donations and support of Rolling Thunder IL1, we have been able to help the following Veteran facilities over the last several years:

Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans	\$48,000
LaSalle Veteran's Home	\$120,000
Manteno Veteran's Home	\$56,000
Hines VA	\$51,000
Concord Place for Homeless Veterans	\$10,700
POW/MIA Issue	\$64,000
Honor Flight	\$6,500
Various VFWs and Troop Support Orgs.	\$10,000

We hold three (3) fund raisers a year

- Big Thunder Run (First Sunday in October)
- Gun Bash every May
- Motorcycle Raffle (drawing held at the BTR)

Monumental honor for veterans

Purple Heart memorial dedicated in Woodstock

By AMANDA MARAZZO
Special to the Tribune

A military airplane flew overhead, followed by a Vietnam-era helicopter with service members standing on its skids saluting the crowd below.

The powerful scene took place Thursday as a Purple Heart monument was unveiled on the grounds of the courthouse in McHenry County — the first county in Illinois to honor veterans wounded in combat with their own landmark, organizers said.

As hundreds looked on, Illinois Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Bowman spoke of the cost of freedom and listed the numbers of men and women who have served, or are currently serving, around the world.

He also spoke of the numerous casualties, citing three men from the Woodstock branch of the Illinois Army National Guard who died in 2009 while scouting land in Afghanistan to build a school.

"When casualties pile up ... you tend to forget these are real people," Bowman said. "There are more than 400 Illinois National Guard (members) serving right now. These are our neighbors, employees, students from our universities volunteering their time ... Their families are heroes too."

Organizers credited the monument's arrival largely to the efforts of Rich and Monica Young, who they said took out a personal loan for \$10,000 to see that the monument could be in place by Aug. 7. That date is now Purple Heart Day in Illinois, designated as such by a 2011 law and chosen because George Washington established the military honor on Aug. 7, 1782.

Monica Young said her husband, a Marine who served in Vietnam, wanted to find a way to salute his father and uncles, as well as all service members, who have been wounded or killed in combat.

Rich Young, a retired McHenry County sheriff's deputy, and his wife, a retired executive secretary, also received donations of materials and services to get the two-



STACEY WESCOTT/TRIBUNE PHOTOS

A Purple Heart monument is unveiled Thursday at the McHenry County Government Center in Woodstock.



Mark Greenleaf, left, and Rich Young, a retired Marine, help unveil the monument. Young and his wife led the effort to fund the memorial.

sided monument constructed and installed.

"One day Rich decided he wanted to do something for his country and his father and his uncles," Monica Young said. "It is a heck of a lot of money, but when you make up your mind that's what you want to do ... the money isn't important."

"Being in front of the courthouse," she added, "no one can go in or walk out and not think of the veterans and what they have done for your freedom."

Organizers also looked to Woodstock, McHenry's county

seat and the first municipality in Illinois to receive a Purple Heart designation.

Among the speakers Thursday was retired Army Sgt. Allen James Lynch, who earned the Medal of Honor for risking his life protecting fellow soldiers during the Vietnam War.

Lynch, who lives in the Chicago area, said that after a while, a "monument becomes just a stone" if people don't remember its meaning. It is the duty of generations past to ensure future generations fight for their country, he said.

"This country is worth the sacrifice made by men and women who earned the Purple Heart," Lynch said.

He spoke of veterans who come home and "cry in their beer." He said that though they may be angry or sad that they lost friends or were badly injured in war, it is their duty to live honorably for those who did not come home.

"Honor those who died so you could come home," he said. "Make the sacrifice worth it ... make sure future generations know and want to fight for their freedom. Let's make sense of the honor ... the sacrifice of men and women who have given so much."

Dan Finn, of Oak Lawn, is state commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He served the Marines in Vietnam and, despite losing a leg, said, "I was lucky."

Gerald Pedrin, 67, of Beach Park, a Navy corpsman who served in Vietnam, is a member of the Lake County chapter of Purple Heart. He said the day's events were special because people need to know about true sacrifice.

"Everybody needs to know that freedom isn't given to you," Pedrin said. "It's earned. Someone had to sacrifice their lives for that."

Medal of Honor recipient, POW in Vietnam War

By EMILY LANGER

The Washington Post

Jon Cavaiani, an Army sergeant major and Special Forces veteran who received the Medal of Honor, the military's highest award for valor, for leading his outnumbered unit in the defense of a strategically critical outpost in the Vietnam War, died July 29 in Stanford, Calif. He was 70.

His death was announced by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. The website Military.com reported last year that he had myelodysplastic syndrome, a bone marrow disorder.

Mr. Cavaiani served in Vietnam in an elite unit of commandos that was deployed on hazardous reconnaissance and counterinsurgency missions, often in enemy-held territory. In 1971, then a staff sergeant, he was serving in a platoon charged with protecting a remote hilltop in the northwestern reaches of what was then South Vietnam, an area then controlled by the communist North Vietnamese.

Highly advanced and highly secret equipment used to intercept hostile communications and monitor enemy movement on the Ho Chi Minh Trail was located on the site, called Hickory Hill.

On June 4 and 5, the camp came under intense enemy fire by automatic weapons, rocket-propelled

grenades and mortar fire. Mr. Cavaiani led the defense after his captain was wounded and evacuated.

Mr. Cavaiani "acted with complete disregard for his personal safety as he repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire in order to move about the camp's perimeter directing the platoon's fire and rallying the platoon in a desperate fight for survival," his medal citation reads.

By midday, the onslaught had grown overwhelmingly intense, according to an account in the book "Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty," by Peter Collier.

Mr. Cavaiani directed the helicopters that evacuated U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese who were fighting with them.

But he remained behind. "That will tell you the most about Jon," Ralph Morgan, a sergeant in the Special Forces who served on Hickory Hill, said in an interview.

"I attribute my life to him," said Larry Page, a former Special Forces radio operator, who also was evacuated.

A heavy fog gave cover to the North Vietnamese, who launched an intensified ground attack. Mr. Cavaiani fought back with small arms and hand grenades and told his remaining men to escape, according to the citation. Some of those who made it to safety believed that he had died.

Severely wounded, Mr. Cavaiani took cover in a bunker with a comrade, Sgt. John Jones. They killed two North Vietnamese who entered. When a grenade exploded in the hideaway, Jones exited the bunker and was mortally shot, according to the account in Collier's book.

Mr. Cavaiani played dead and survived a fire in the bunker before being captured. He was interned in North Vietnamese prisons until his release in 1973.

The following year, he received the Medal of Honor from President Gerald Ford.

Through his "valiant efforts with complete disregard for his safety," reads the citation, "the majority of the remaining platoon members were able to escape."

Jon Robert Lemmons was born Aug. 2, 1943, in

Royston, England, to an American father and an English mother. He came to California as a boy and took his stepfather's surname, Cavaiani, after being adopted by him, said his brother, Carl Cavaiani.

A naturalized U.S. citizen, Mr. Cavaiani was first classified as ineligible for military service because of a severe allergy to bee stings, according to accounts of his life. He joined the Army in his mid-20s after persuading a doctor to attest to his fitness and retired in 1990 as a sergeant major.

A complete list of survivors could not be confirmed.

After his military retirement, Mr. Cavaiani worked in farming and spoke publicly, particularly to students, about his experiences in Vietnam.

"I always tell people I got



FRANK JOHNSTON/WASHINGTON POST PHOTO

President Gerald Ford congratulates Staff Sgt. Jon Cavaiani in December 1974 after awarding him the Medal of Honor for action at an outpost deep in enemy territory.

the medal because I couldn't outrun them, so I had to fight them," he told *The Modesto Bee* of California. "I don't care to get into the details. I've spent too much time trying to forget them."

Four decades after the battle on Hickory Hill, Mr. Cavaiani returned to Vietnam to help Defense Department officials locate the remains of Jones, the sergeant who had remained behind with him and whose body had not been recovered.

Mr. Cavaiani remembered and precisely identified the bunker where he and Jones had taken refuge, recalled Page, who also returned to Vietnam to assist in the effort.

Jones' remains were found, and, in 2012, he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.



Bringing a A CAREGIVING LOVE STORY Hero Home

Sergeant Cory Remsburg nearly died in Afghanistan. Here's how his family helped him get his life back // By Meg Grant

"We always knew, as Rangers, that getting really hurt was the risk—but we never thought it would happen."

—Army Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg, First Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRAD SWONETZ

Continues on page 35



From left: The soldier, pre-injury, in a helicopter over the Middle East war zone; receiving a visit in the ICU from President Obama in 2010; at January's State of the Union address, with his dad and Michelle Obama.

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, OCTOBER 1, 2009, 5 A.M.

The morning light rose in a muted haze, and the soldiers began pulling off their night vision goggles. Weapons squad leader Cory Remsburg, 26 and on his 10th deployment, headed to a clearing to help prepare the evacuation-helicopter landing zone for his 50 fellow Rangers, just back from an overnight operation. Then, in one life-shattering moment, team leader Sergeant Robert Daniel Sanchez, walking just ahead of Remsburg, stepped on a roadside bomb, setting off a massive explosion that hurled both Sanchez and Remsburg skyward.

"There was shrapnel everywhere, and the smoke and dust made it really hard to see," recalls Staff Sergeant Bryan Rippee, mission medic. Yet within minutes, he'd found his way to a nearby canal. There, covered in mud-caked debris, Sanchez lay dead. Next to him was Remsburg—Rippee's buddy and roommate back in the States—facedown in the murky water, his heart stopped and his lungs collapsed. A large piece of shrapnel had left a golf-ball-size hole in his head, above his right temple. His back, right eye and chest were peppered with smaller wounds.

Rippee worked furiously to keep Remsburg breath-

ing while waiting for medical transport to arrive. "I tried my best to suction the breathing tube [that had been inserted]," he explains. "I covered his chest injuries with dressings, then put him under an emergency blanket and cut off his wet clothes so he wouldn't get hypothermia." When he loaded Remsburg into the helicopter bound for a Kandahar hospital, Rippee was sure he'd never see his friend again. "He was in really, really bad shape," he says.

Cory Remsburg was injured far worse than anyone on the ground that day could have imagined. Yet Rippee, who eventually left the military and is currently studying at Brown University, did see him again. And so did much of the world in January of this year, when President Barack Obama introduced Remsburg during the State of the Union address. To a loud and sustained standing ovation by House and Senate members, the now 31-year-old soldier rose from his seat—with the assistance of his father, Craig Remsburg, who flanked him on one side, Michelle Obama on the other—and raised his right hand in a thumbs-up.

Obama, who first met Cory at D-Day anniversary ceremonies in Normandy in 2009, just four months before he was nearly killed by the bomb, offered the Ranger a sharp salute. The president then expressed gratitude to the dozens of caregivers who have assisted Cory in his recovery—



Cory's New Normal



10 a.m. Cory does a jumping exercise during his daily rehab.



3 p.m. Craig, aka "Secretary," keeps Cory's calendar.



4 p.m. Dog trainer Gerad Claseman works with Leo.

not the least among them, his dad and his stepmother, Annie Remsburg. It was a poignant moment for families across the country who are themselves caring for a loved one back from battle. In fact, a recent RAND Corp. study estimated that 1.1 million Americans—parents, spouses and friends—presently tend to hundreds of thousands of veterans who have returned from the post-9/11 conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with debilitating injuries and illnesses requiring long-term care. And the majority of those caregivers lack the physical, emotional and financial support to accommodate their charges.

Cory was lucky. His family, a fearless clan steeped in the military's can-do tradition, took a collective deep breath, reordered their lives and devoted the past four and a half years to helping their wounded warrior win his toughest battle yet. "When Cory got hurt, something switched on inside me," says Craig. "There was nothing more important than, 'Let's take care of this guy here. He needs our help.'"

Craig, a human resources executive, was on a business trip in Toronto when his cellphone rang on October 1, 2009. "I looked down and noticed the extra digits that tell me it's a satellite phone," he recalls. He knew it was his son. "I said, 'Hey, Cory, how you doing?'"

For a few seconds, the line was silent. Then the caller said, "This is Cory's company commander, and Cory's been hurt." Craig started writing down everything he heard: Near drowning. Coma. Injury to the head. Injury to the eye. Collapsed lungs. Burns. "I'm thousands and thousands of miles away, and I'm trying to get a picture in my mind," says Craig, 58. "Then the commander said, 'He's alive.' Once he told me that, I was going with it, hanging on."

Cory was air-evacuated to Bagram Airfield, where surgeons removed a large portion of his cranium to relieve pressure in his brain. Four days later, he was transferred to the Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where his medical team struggled to stabilize him.

"That's when we got the call that they wanted us in Landstuhl right away," says Annie, 63. "Any military family knows that's not a good call, because the Army isn't about to spend the money to fly the family to Germany unless it's truly a life-threatening situation."

There, on October 7, on the third floor of the Landstuhl hospital, in Room 9 of the ICU, Craig laid eyes on his younger son. No fewer than 20 machines with wires and tubes were hooked up to the 6-foot, 150-pound young man. "His head was bandaged, but his facial features clearly looked like Cory," Craig says. "I was initially startled by his size. He looked larger than life."

Internally, his body was at war. Cory's injured brain was swelling beyond traditional remedies. A neurosurgeon twice applied his scalpel to the Ranger's frontal lobe to make room for the distension, scooping out several additional centimeters of brain tissue. "It was either that or he dies, so you take your choices," says Annie.

Craig, a lively, upbeat man who tends to deflect tension with humor, remembers awkwardly trying to bring levity to the painful moment when the surgeon told him what he had to do. "Oh, jeez, we're Remsburgs, we need everything we've got!" he told the doctor, who didn't think the comment was funny. "You live in the moment," says Craig. "It's happening in front of you. You're praying and doing the best you can to keep looking forward."

After three tense weeks, Cory was finally stable enough to be flown to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

Craig and Annie were grateful to have made it through the first hurdle, but they knew much more was ahead. "During the Vietnam War most of the people who suffered the kind of traumatic brain injury [TBI] that Cory did would have died on the battlefield," Annie points out. "They didn't have the techniques to bring those men home alive." She adds: "Our son fought back. He's resilient like you cannot believe. We call him our miracle man."



6 p.m. Annie assists Cory in the kitchen at dinnertime.

1 a.m. Nighttime help arrives, thanks to a bedside horn.

Until Cory was hurt by the bomb, those who knew him would have used terms such as “gung ho,” “gregarious” and “energetic” to describe him. “Cory was our wild child, always going 150 miles an hour,” says Annie. “If you told him he couldn’t do something, that was exactly what he would do. And he

was the type of person who could walk into a room of 50 people not knowing one of them, but by the time he left, he’d have talked to them all.”

After his parents divorced, Cory and his brother, Christopher, now 32, split time between the Phoenix-area homes of Craig and their mom, Karen Petersen. Craig and Annie gained custody of the boys when Cory was 10, and the family moved to St. Louis, where Craig, once an Air Force firefighter and now a retired master sergeant from the Reserves, was transferred by his employer.

Cory enlisted in the Army in 2001, immediately after graduating from high school. “I wasn’t ready for college,” he says, “and I wanted to be helping someone, somewhere.”

Enthusiastic and ambitious, Cory decided to pursue Ranger training at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia. A dedicated soldier, he was among the first troops in Iraq in 2003. His go-getter personality and natural athleticism served him well, and he became certified as a HALO (high altitude–low opening) skydiver and a senior jumpmaster—prized skills for secret Ranger missions.

He also enjoyed playing volleyball and was a talented long-distance runner. In the spring of 2009, he and roommate Rippee participated in the Savannah Mile, in which Rangers compete against local first responders. Wearing Army boots, body armor and his camouflage uniform, Cory won the race in six minutes flat.

Like many of his Ranger buddies, Cory worked—and played—hard. “He was a playboy,” Annie says. “At the time of his last deployment, he had several girlfriends.” He was also making good money and had purchased a powerboat and a double-cab pickup truck. Just before heading to Kandahar, he and a handful of Rangers took R&R in Las Vegas. Hanging on the wall of his bedroom today is a photo from the trip showing Cory and three friends at a poker table, drinks in hand, smiles a mile wide.

By then, Craig and Annie had moved from St. Louis to Gilbert, Arizona, with hopes of eventually retiring. They had downsized to a smaller but more manageable “dream home,” and in the fall of 2009 were in the process of remodeling it. “Then Cory got hurt,” says Annie, “and we just stopped everything.”

The gravity of Cory’s condition became glaringly evident at the National Naval Medical Center, where he remained on breathing and feeding machines. He underwent the first few of dozens of surgeries—to insert a tracheotomy tube; to repair his smaller shrapnel wounds, including the one to his eye that resulted in a detached retina; to reattach the retina, which ultimately shredded, leaving him blind in his right eye; and, months later, to replace (twice) his cranium above the area of his brain injury.

Most frightening for Annie was when Cory experienced what is called storming, during which he’d break out in a profuse sweat and his heart rate would surge above 150 beats per minute. “Because he was in a coma, there was no way of knowing if he was reliving the explosion,” his stepmother says. “I’d grab a washcloth with cold water and bathe his body. I’d hold his hand and talk to him: ‘It’s OK, Cory. You’re safe now, you’re in a hospital, you’re going to be OK, hon. Just try to breathe, to relax.’”

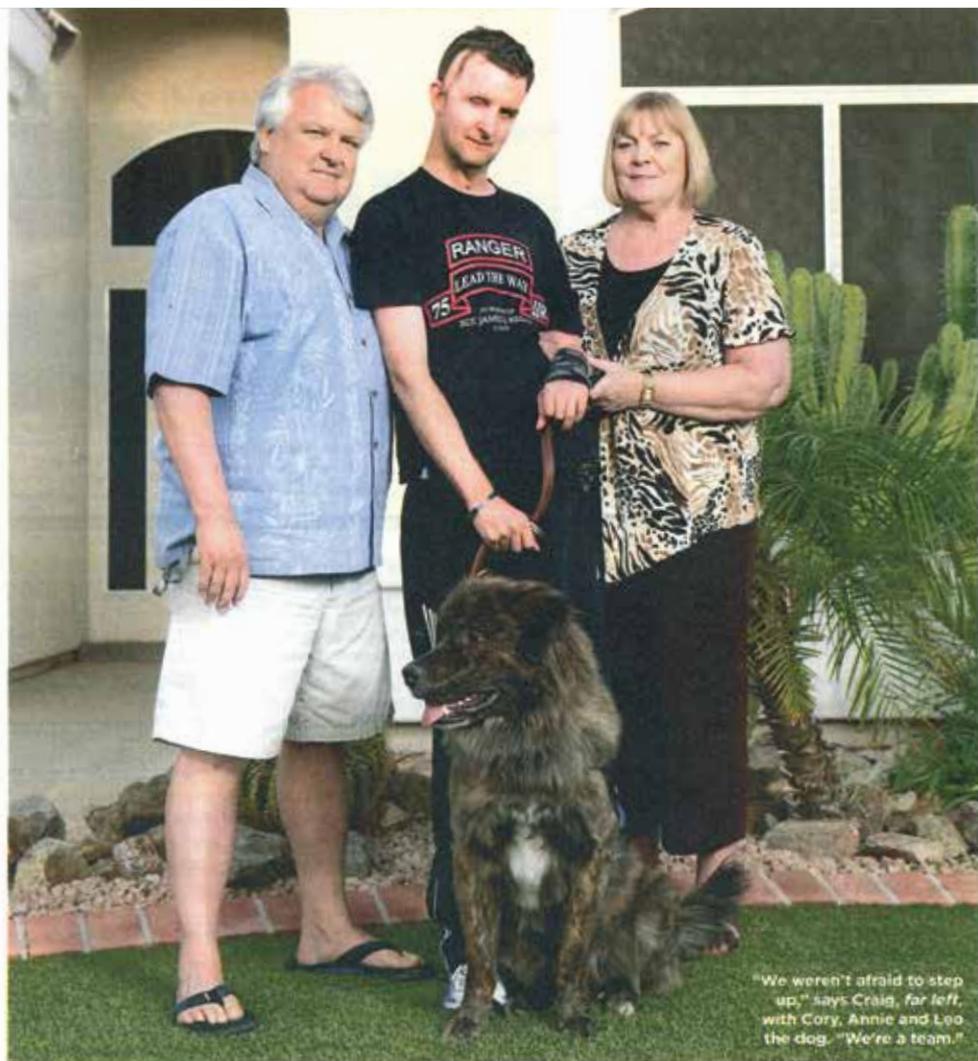
“It would help,” she says. “You would see the heart rate start to come down.”

Craig was determined to have a family member by Cory’s

1 For video of a day in the life of Cory Remsburg, go to aarp.org/magazine.

Continues on page 38

IMAGE (L) PHOTOLEFT; COURTESY CORP. KENDRICK; OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY PETER SOLOVA; (M) LUCAS/PHOTOFEST; (R) ANNESE



side 24-7, for as long as it would take. But that resolution was put to the test when, three weeks later, Cory was moved to Tampa's James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Polytrauma Center, one of five VA facilities in the U.S. specializing in TBIs. "I'm talking to people there," Craig says, "and they tell me, 'We've been here for a year and a half, and my son hasn't come out of his coma yet.' It was almost like a two-by-four just whacked me right in the head."

And so the couple decided to do everything possible, as Craig says, "to reach in there and have Cory remember." They plastered his hospital-room walls with family photos. They played CDs of the Zac Brown Band, put *Modern Family* reruns on the DVD player and held New York Giants cheering parties around Cory's bedside during games.

It seemed to work. One afternoon in late January 2010, Craig watched as a woman introduced herself to Cory as his recreational therapist. While Cory's rehabilitation ran the gamut of therapies, Craig could not fathom what kind of recreation his son, who still had difficulty opening his eyes and moving, was going to be doing. "I heard her telling Cory that before he knew it, he'd be flipping her the bird," Craig says. "And in my peripheral vision, I saw Cory raise his right hand and give the woman the finger. I laughed so hard. I thought, 'It's clicking.'"

The incident marked the beginning of Cory's emergence from his coma. He was tracking what was going on around him and, though he still wasn't talking, he

! Cheer on Sergeant Remsburg during his recovery! Tweet good wishes at #salutereensburg.

was communicating in basic ways. Yet he had miles to go toward becoming independent, the family's goal.

"It was like I was a baby," Cory explains. "I had to learn everything all over again."

He's made monumental strides. While he's partially paralyzed on the left side—his left hand and arm, in his words, are "totally useless"—Cory today is able to get around in a wheelchair and can walk with assistance. He still has some speech difficulties but nevertheless interacts naturally with people, wearing a near-perpetual grin and frequently offering a thumbs-up. His sense of humor remains intact, too. In declining offers from hair-transplant specialists who promise to "disguise" the skin graft on his head, Cory jokes that the scar is "a conversation piece." He does suffer from some high-level cognitive deficits, as well as minor post-traumatic stress disorder; while he doesn't remember the explosion, he occasionally has nightmares with fleeting images from the event. Still, if you ask Cory if he feels resentful, he'll answer, "Never. I'm still here. I'm grateful."

"And there's no way I could have come this far without my parents," he adds. "They've been incredible. Believe me, it's not easy having a kid with a TBI."

Craig and Annie aren't ones to complain either, but they concede that the challenges have been formidable. Luckily, they have complemented each other, from the start, in tending to Cory. Craig deftly maneuvered a complex military system and attended to the tedious business of managing Cory's finances. Annie, hardly a caregiving novice—her mom was diagnosed with polio in her 30s, and two siblings endured terminal illnesses—literally rolled up her sleeves and pushed through the daily grind of rehabilitation.

Cory, who admits he's grown closer to his stepmother throughout the ordeal, says, "Annie is all about TLC."

And sometimes a little tough love.

"Initially, we used a hoist from the ceiling to get Cory in and out of bed," Annie recalls. "He wore a diaper. He had a feeding tube. When they finally removed the feeding tube, I started training him: 'OK, Cory, you need to tell me when you need to use the bathroom, and I will put you on the toilet. You are not going to wear a diaper the rest of your life. You're a grown man, and we're going to get through this.'"

A few months into 2010, Annie, an employment-services manager, decided that the two-week rotations into Tampa from different family members just weren't sustainable. "My husband had taken so much time off," she says. "I was torn because I enjoyed my job, where I'd worked for 24 years. But I felt I could no longer juggle it and do a good job taking care of Cory. I said to Craig, 'Someone needs to be with Cory all the time for the long haul, and I'm the most likely candidate.'"

So in May 2010, after weighing the pros and cons, Annie resigned and moved to Tampa, taking up residence at the local VA-operated Fisher House.

Daily, she arrived at the polytrauma center in the morning, and stayed until Cory went to bed at night. She refused to ride the nurses; instead, she insisted that they teach her how to rotate Cory in bed to prevent

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 66)

Care for the 'Hidden Heroes'

Some 5.5 million Americans serve as caregivers for wounded veterans, but many are getting by with a fraction of the resources they need to help their loved ones—or themselves, according to a recent RAND Corp. report. To change that, former Senator Elizabeth Dole, along with first lady Michelle Obama, vice presidential spouse Jill Biden and others, is developing a host of new programs aimed at giving caregivers—"the hidden heroes," as Dole calls them—critical financial and legal support, and self-care tips.

"Once these veterans come home, the challenges increase enormously," says Dole, whose Elizabeth Dole Foundation commissioned the RAND report. "Caregivers provide medicine and injections. They manage rehabilitation. They cope with legal and financial issues they hadn't expected. Post-9/11 caregivers, in particular, work to prevent triggers that may cause emotional and behavioral problems."

Obama and Biden, who began advocating for military families through their Joining Forces initiative three years ago, are now working with Dole and other partners to develop targeted caregiver programs, including:

- Peer-to-peer support forums at all military installations.
- A caregiver peer-support network with one-on-one mentoring, online communities and community-based support groups, aimed at reaching 50,000 military caregivers globally.
- Training for caregivers on topics such as finances and legal issues.
- Free financial advice and legal resources.
- Job creation for the unemployed caregivers.

To tap into these new initiatives, visit whitehouse.gov/joiningforces.

For information on existing support, visit VA Caregiver Support at caregiver.va.gov.

Visit AARP's Caregiving Resource Center at aarp.org/caregiving for a host of helpful resources and additional tools.

—Paula Spencer Scott



Dole, center, meets with a wounded vet at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland.

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HERO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

bedsores, how to feed him and how to administer his medications. "I was going to ensure that Cory got the best care he could possibly get," she says.

It was an especially painful vigil at first because Cory still wasn't speaking. His soft palate and one of his vocal cords were damaged by the bomb, making it extremely difficult for him to project sound. That, of course, would not stop this Ranger.

On the morning of June 1, 2010, while rinsing his mouth after brushing his teeth, he aspirated some water and began choking. "He was making these sounds for the first time," Annie remembers, "and I said, 'Cory, you're making sounds.' He said, 'I know.' Just like that. Then I asked him, 'What's your name?' He said, 'Cory.' 'What's your dad's name?' 'Craig.' 'What's my name?' 'Annie.'" Annie was so excited that she called Craig on her cellphone and put Cory on. When Cory uttered the word "Dad" into the receiver, Craig, who was driving at the time, had to pull over, the tears came so hard.

The moment was a turning point.

Four years have passed since that day—four years made up of minutes and hours of unrelenting, tedious and dogged hard work for Cory. Four years marked by incremental but steady progress. Four years during which neither Annie nor Craig ever stopped long enough to question whether they possessed the steadfast dedication needed to get their son through—because, as a team, they've been too busy with each task in front of them. For Craig, that's meant spending two hours daily responding to emails and calls from half a dozen military liaisons involved in monitoring Cory's recovery. Or gathering his son's medical documents—charts, X-rays, therapy orders, surgical instructions—which now fill nine file boxes in his home office. Or advocating—successfully—to keep him on

active duty so his expenses would be paid. (Later this year, Cory will be retired as 100 percent disabled.) For Annie, it meant completing the daily run of rote exercises—replacing the fork in Cory's hand over and over again until he could learn to feed himself. Or stretching with him every morning, helping him roll his neck side to side to strengthen his battered muscles. Or teaching him to dress, a task that once took nearly an hour and today is accomplished in 15 minutes. "We've all learned to read each other pretty well," says Craig, "and we know when we can step back, and when we need to step in."

Little by little, Cory has moved away from the hospital setting at Tampa's polytrauma center—first sharing a nearby apartment with Annie while receiving outpatient therapy; then moving to Casa Colina Centers for Rehabilitation in Southern California, to gain transitional living skills apart from his parents; and finally, in August 2013, to a three-bedroom home in Gilbert, Arizona, a mile from Craig and Annie. A certified nurse assistant comes in five days a week to help him, and Annie—no surprise—willingly spends each night in one of the spare bedrooms.

Though Craig admits that living separately from his wife "certainly had a changing effect" on the relationship, he says that, in the end, "we have gotten closer. We took our new roles very seriously, we shared in this undertaking, and we can look back and be proud that we had a hand in where Cory's at."

Sometime within the next year, Cory hopes to move yet again, to a nearby home purchased for him by the New York-based Lead the Way Fund, which supports Army Rangers in need. (The house is currently being made handicapped accessible by NFL player Jared Allen's Homes for Wounded Warriors organization.) By that time, Cory should be well on his way to being able to live on his own safely, assuming he's conquered his most immediate goal: to walk independently.

"He's still a huge fall risk," says Kay Wing, owner of SWAN Rehab in Phoenix, where Cory currently works with physical, occupational and speech therapists at least four hours a day, five days a week. But, she insists, "he will get there."

Annie chalks it up to his newfound patience. "Cory was never patient growing up," she says. "Once, when we were in Tampa, I said, 'I am amazed with your level of patience because I helped bring you up, and I know that when you wanted it, you wanted it now.' He looked at me and said, 'What choice do I have?'"

Says Craig, "My son will eventually be able to do whatever he puts his mind to. It's up to him."

Cory's plans are clear: "To run again," he says, his words elongated and full of effort. "Eventually, go to college, get married, have a kid."

It's approaching 9 p.m. in Gilbert, and Annie, feeling good, pulls her minivan into her stepson's driveway. She's just returned from a dinner date with her husband, one of the regular rituals the couple has put into practice to, as Craig says, "make sure we take care of the caregivers." Having saved up their airline mileage, the pair are also planning a vacation for just the two of them this fall to Walldorf, Germany, and Annie's excited. But for now, she's tired.

She tiptoes to Cory's bedroom and finds Leo, the rescued Lab-husky-Weimaraner mix that Cory recently adopted and is training as a service dog, curled up next to his master. Cory flashes his stepmom a thumbs-up, and Annie, fingering a classic rubber and metal bicycle horn attached to a strap on a bedside railing, says good night.

Around 3 a.m., Cory sounds the horn. In the bedroom down the hall, Annie wakes. "I always hear it," she says. "And I get up and go in and walk Cory to the bathroom. I try to give him as much normalcy as possible."

She pauses, then adds, "I want Cory to have his life back, and together we're going to get there." ■

Hero of 'Unbroken' was POW, Olympic runner

By MARY MILLIKEN
Reuters

LOS ANGELES — Louis Zamperini, an Olympic runner and World War II prisoner who endured torture and humiliation and whose life inspired the book and film "Unbroken," has died. He was 97.

Mr. Zamperini was the "Torrance Tornado," the street tough turned track star who set a national high school record for running the mile. In 1936, he was known as "The Zamp," an 18-year-old University of Southern California standout who ran at the Berlin Olympics, where his roommate was Jesse Owens. In 1943, he was Lt. Zamperini, a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator, who, along with 10 other crew members, fell off the map on a mission over the Pacific.

Mr. Zamperini died after a 40-day bout with pneumonia, his family said Thursday in a statement released by Universal Pictures, the studio behind the upcoming film.

"It is a loss impossible to describe," said Angelina Jolie, who is directing the film. "We are all so grateful for how enriched our lives are for having known him. We will miss him terribly."

The film, which is to open Dec. 25, is based on the best-selling 2010 book "Unbroken" by Laura Hillenbrand on the life of Mr. Zamperini.

His tale had been simmering on Hollywood's back burner for decades. In 1957, Universal bought the rights to his memoir, "Devil at My Heels." Producers pegged Tony Curtis for the leading role, but then "Spartacus" came along and the project was dropped. Mr. Zamperini's saga languished.

A son of Italian im-



NOEL VASQUEZ/GETTY PHOTO 2011

Louis Zamperini's life will be the subject of the film "Unbroken," set for release by Universal Pictures this year.

migrants, the athlete, who was born in New York and later moved to Torrance, Calif., surpassed more experienced runners to qualify for the 1936 Olympics. He ran the 5,000-meter race, finishing eighth, but with a fast final lap that drew a personal compliment from German leader Adolf Hitler.

"His fighting spirit was a true representation of Team USA and our country, both in Berlin and throughout his life," the U.S. Olympic Committee said.

After the 1940 Olympics were canceled because of the war, Mr. Zamperini enlisted as an Army airman and began flying missions as an officer and bombardier over the Pacific in late 1942. His aircraft developed engine trouble and plunged into the Pacific hundreds of miles south of Hawaii.

For 47 days, Mr. Zamperini drifted on a life raft, fighting off sharks and starvation with two other crew members, one of whom died. When President Franklin Roosevelt sent Mr. Zamperini's parents a formal condolence note in 1944, he had no idea that Mr. Zamperini was living a

nightmare in a prison camp.

By the time of their capture, Mr. Zamperini had drifted 2,000 miles and weighed less than 100 pounds. Picked up by a Japanese patrol boat, the two survivors were beaten and tortured for more than two years. Mr. Zamperini was among the prisoners given mysterious injections to test their reactions.

"Louis was truly one of a kind," Universal Pictures said. "He lived the most remarkable life, not because of the many unbelievable incidents that marked his near century's worth of years, but because of the spirit with which he faced every one of them."

Mr. Zamperini had been active until recently, doing television appearances early this year with Jolie for the movie.

In May, Mr. Zamperini was named grand marshal of the 2015 Rose Parade, in Pasadena, Calif. The Tournament of Roses said Mr. Zamperini will be honored at the parade. No grand marshal will be named to replace him.

Tribune Newspapers
contributed.

DRAWDOWN DAMAGE

BY ERNESTO LONDONO

The Washington Post

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Shortly after midnight, Capt. Nicholas Ingham arrived at this massive air base, in the belly of an Air Force C-130. As the back door swung open, flooding the cabin with light, the heavily sedated Marine, strapped onto a stretcher, blinked away a tear. A black-and-white American flag tattooed on his chest rose and fell as a ventilator pumped air into his collapsed lung.

A team of doctors, nurses and medical technicians gently offloaded Ingham and a handful of other injured troops with mechanical precision, the first stop on their journey home.

It would be the same journey thousands of wounded warriors had made before.

These days, 12 years after the start of America's longest war, far fewer U.S. troops are being killed or wounded in Afghanistan. The military's drawdown has picked up pace, and Afghans have begun to shoulder the brunt of the fighting. But the war continues to churn out American casualties by the dozen each week. Their injuries rarely make headlines.

Military health care experts say those wounded in battle are coming home more severely injured than at any time since 2006, a sobering sign of the insurgency's strength at the twilight of the war. Many of the injured arrive on the medical evacuation flights that land twice a week at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland physically intact but mentally wrecked, struggling with the demons of multiple deployments over the past decade.

Their caretakers, part of a massive wartime medical evacuation system being wound down, have a rare and often grim vantage on the final chapter of the Afghanistan War, a conflict that is increasingly being endured, rather than fought, largely out of sight.

"Are you feeling any pain?" Maj. Scott Zakaluzny, a surgeon at Bagram's hospital, asked Ingham as his colleagues inspected the gashes torn into his back, arms and legs by shrapnel from a suicide bomb.

Ingham, 27, opened his eyes slightly and shook his head.

In Washington, among policymakers, the Afghanistan War is increasingly



NIKKI KAHN/WASHINGTON POST PHOTO

Capt. Nicholas Ingham was wounded by a suicide bomber while leading a group of Georgian soldiers in Helmand province. His doctors expect him to fully recover.

discussed with exasperation, like a curse. It is the type of warfare the United States must avoid at all cost, President Barack Obama said during his State of the Union address.

"We must fight the battles that need to be fought," Obama told those in attendance, among them a soldier disfigured by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. "Not those that terrorists prefer from us, large-scale deployments that drain our strength and may ultimately feed extremism."

Also in the House chamber that night was Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a former Air Force pilot who flew intelligence and medevac missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I think there is a sense in the military that Americans are not paying attention anymore," he had said a few weeks earlier, shortly after returning from a visit to Kabul. "I think they're right, to be honest. There is a sense that it's over, but it's not."

There are currently about 33,700 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, down from a peak of more than 100,000 in spring 2011.

The wounded have had a better chance at survival than in any previous U.S. war, a result of stunning achievements in battlefield care.

But in some ways, combat medics say, the work in Afghanistan has become more challenging. The injury severity score, a measure that takes into account the extent of a patient's wounds, has gone up gradually in Afghanistan since 2006, according to data compiled by the military.

Col. Kirby Gross, a physician who studies trauma care for wounded troops and who is deployed at Bagram, struggled to find the right words to explain how insurgents have become so proficient at killing and maiming American service members.

"They're nimble" was as much of a compliment as he was willing to pay.

Medical professionals say the combat evacuation system that sprang up

at the height of the Iraq War to care for the wounded is being pared down. In December, Bagram became the only base in Afghanistan with a top-tier trauma center, which means that patients across the battlefields in need of specialized care face longer journeys. As the footprint becomes smaller in coming months, the margin of error will widen, said Lt. Col. Mary Danko, the chief Air Force flight nurse in Bagram.

"Right now, it's a great process we have," she said. "But you worry about the one life you won't be able to save because of the lack of resources."

At the U.S. military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, the 3 miles of hallways that once were full of war victims are now largely empty. Air Force Lt. Col. David Zonies, the chief of trauma and critical care at Landstuhl, expressed longer-term concerns, noting that when his tour is up, he won't be replaced. The same goes for his partner.

"There's a very serious concern that we will potentially not learn the lessons of this war for the next one," he said. "After Korea and Vietnam, the money ran out, the resources ran out, skills started to wane. Are we going to make the same mistake after this conflict?"

Ingham had deployed twice before to Afghanistan during periods when U.S. troops battled insurgents every day. His last wartime assignment was to lead a group of Georgian soldiers given the job of preventing militants from firing rockets into a sprawling NATO base in Helmand province, in southwestern Afghanistan.

On Dec. 14, a lone driver in a blue sedan steered his vehicle toward a patrol Ingham was leading. The Georgian soldiers appeared edgy, and Ingham worried that if they overreacted, he could have a civilian casualty incident on his watch. So he walked toward the driver, alone, hoping to wave him off.

"Civilian casualties in Afghanistan are a particularly touchy subject," he said later. "I was trying to prevent something that could have turned into a very bad event."

As Ingham moved toward the car, the driver pressed on toward him. The captain raised his rifle in a final effort to get the driver to back off. By then, he was close enough to hear the man utter "Allahu akbar," or "God is great," words that could have meant only one thing in that context. Ingham opened fire, pumping 18 bullets into the driver, whose vehicle continued to inch toward him.

"I turned around and got a step and a half, and it exploded," Ingham said, comparing the fury of the blast to a massive wave that thrusts you from behind. The explosion sent the car's engine flying more than 300 feet and dug a massive crater in the ground. As he limped away from the plume of smoke, Ingham took a breath and realized he had been badly hurt.

"I felt my lung bubbling," he said, recounting the attack and its aftermath weeks later at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. "I knew something had gone through my chest."

Ingham's doctors expect him to make a full recovery, and he could soon lead Marines in combat again. But at the hospital, he is surrounded by service members who won't. One, Lance Cpl. Paul Shupert, who had been deployed in the same province as Ingham, arrived at Walter Reed a few weeks before, missing part of his right leg.

"It's a shame you guys are coming home hurt," Ingham told the 22-year-old Marine, shaking his head.

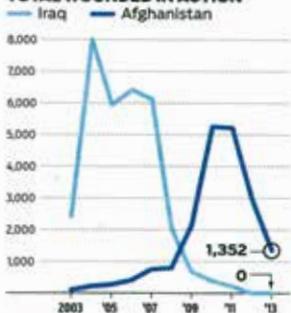
"We know what we signed up for," Shupert replied quietly.

There was no sense talking Shupert out of following in his father's footsteps when, at 17, he persuaded his parents in Jefferson City, Tenn., to sign a waiver allowing him to join the Marines. When he deployed to Afghanistan for the first time last summer, his mother was paralyzed by fear.

Fewer wounded but more severely

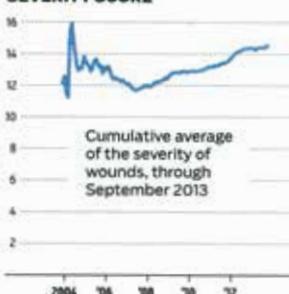
Although the number of troops wounded in action has gone down, the severity of the injuries has grown.

TOTAL WOUNDED IN ACTION



SOURCE: Defense Department

MILITARY INJURY SEVERITY SCORE



Cumulative average of the severity of wounds, through September 2013

THE WASHINGTON POST

"Everyone was thinking I was taking it too hard," Tonya Shupert said. "They think the war's over."

Tonya Shupert is nothing if not a patriot, often donning "Marine Corps Mom" T-shirts. But like many in military families, she struggled to understand why men like her son were still being sent to Afghanistan.

"I think there are some things we shouldn't be involved in," she said while doing laundry at the patient living quarters. "Some of those people have been fighting for years and years, and us going there is not going to change that."

The war changed her son permanently the afternoon of Nov. 25, after he had volunteered to help explosive ordnance disposal experts search a compound. Shupert had carefully followed the Marine in front of him, mindful that the compound could be surrounded by land mines.

"I guess I must have missed a spot," he said later. "I did back flips through the air and remember landing on my back and looking at my legs. My pants were blown off, and I saw it had taken off the foot."

Shupert has not allowed himself a moment of self-pity since that day, arguing that dwelling on his loss will not make the limb grow back. When he first saw family members at Walter Reed after being evacuated, they were comforted that he had not lost his sense of humor. The ordeal was a perfect excuse for a new tattoo, Shupert told them. He would ink the words "Part A" on his thigh and label his prosthetic leg "Part B."

After each flight arrives at Andrews, Army Col. Michael Worth writes a report with tiny narratives about each wounded warrior he has debriefed.

A few are bizarre, like the ordeal of a female lieutenant nurse who was accidentally shot in the foot by her boss.

"She doesn't know precisely what her boss was doing to cause the discharge," wrote Worth, who makes sure patients get to the right final destination for additional care.

Some are haunting. Only after failing to get a young soldier to talk after one flight did Worth realize that the Army Ranger had sustained serious wounds to his genitals.

But it is perhaps the mental wounds that trouble the colonel the most. He had recently welcomed home an Army couple. The wife, a staff sergeant assigned to a transportation unit who had been deployed seven times, had shot herself in the abdomen in an apparent suicide attempt. Her husband was relieved to be home, but ashen as he escorted his unconscious spouse off the plane.

Like most military officers, Worth tries to focus on the mission and not dwell on the politics of war.

"We execute the lawful orders of the president," he said. "What I see on the airplane is a consequence of that, and I'm here to help them and deal with them. Any thoughts I have as a private citizen will have to wait until I leave."

There was stoic silence among the military personnel awaiting Shupert's flight on a cold, windy evening in early December. As the plane turned on its landing lights and tipped its nose down, it was commanded to turn back skyward and circle overhead for more than 30 minutes. Vice President Joe Biden's team was ready to take off for a trip to Asia, so authorities at Andrews froze all other movement on the airfield.

On the ground, some in the medical team awaiting Shupert shivered, but they kept their thoughts to themselves. The Marine never knew the flight was diverted. When he was told about it later, his only reaction was: "Oh."

War and love: A father's account

BY CORY FRANKLIN

Every year around Father's Day, I recall several personal stories my father, now long gone, told me during our trip to the Normandy battlefield 30 years ago. Since this summer is the 70th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Europe in World War II, the sad actuarial truth is that before long there will be no more firsthand accounts of D-Day, Arnhem, the Bulge and other battles. They are preserved in footage, books, and on the Internet, but the personal stories — the tales of friendship, fear, valor and heroism — will soon be consigned to the mists of history. So on this anniversary, my father's stories assume added meaning.

In 1944, he landed at Utah Beach with the first wave in the early hours on D-Day. On the 40th anniversary of the invasion, we toured the beach together. After visiting nearby Pointe du Hoc, where Army Rangers scaled 100-foot cliffs to neutralize German gun emplacements that threatened the invasion, we arrived at Utah. With a faraway gaze, he stared at a placid English Channel and recalled it was nothing like the rough sea that made seasickness pills indispensable during transit in June 1944.

By 1984, Utah Beach was just another typical French beach: girls in skimpy bikinis, children building sandcastles and dogs chasing Frisbees. Except for historical markers, there was little indication this was once a landing site for the greatest amphibious assault in history.

A wave of long-suppressed memories rushed over him, and in a moment of supreme incongruity, he identified a spot where two teenage girls were sunbathing — the exact location where he took the



FAMILY PHOTO

Murray Franklin, a Brooklyn native, was a medic at the time of the assault on German forces.

He recounted that episode, which he had never mentioned before, in hushed tones.

shrapnel in his leg. Forty years on, he remembered.

Like many veterans, he rarely discussed his war experiences. Now at Utah, I had so many questions I didn't know where to begin. I wondered, "With all those men involved, how did we keep the invasion secret from the Nazis?"

He answered by grimly recalling a hushed-up incident, where hundreds of colleagues died during a botched rehearsal landing. Six weeks before the invasion, soldiers were stationed near an English beach called Slapton Sands. During a live ammunition practice maneuver, some men were killed by friendly fire and many more, some his friends, drowned or were burned to death when the Germans intercepted radio communications and attacked the

landing craft at sea. That day, hundreds more died than at the actual landing at Utah.

My father was a medic, assigned to care for survivors, but like everyone else he was under strict orders, under threat of court-martial, never to mention the episode. For decades, the details remained confidential. Even today, exactly how many died at Slapton Sands is uncertain.

He recounted that episode, which he had never mentioned before, in hushed tones and shook his head forlornly, "Such a waste."

Apparently, hundreds of dead bodies of colleagues washed up on the shore. That, and the enforced secrecy, profoundly affected everyone, including one traumatized young staff sergeant named J.D. Salinger. Some biographers speculate the Slapton Sands debacle was the reason the author of "The Catcher in the Rye" subsequently became a recluse.

Then my father segued to another story. While in England, around that time his best friend approached him at mess. Out of the blue, he asked my father, "Are you a bigot?"

The question shocked my dad. He thought he misheard his friend and asked him to repeat the question.

"Are you bigoted?"
My father was Jewish from a Brooklyn ghetto. His friend was a Southern Baptist from rural Texas. Before the war, neither had any experience with the other's religion, so this was a potentially sensitive subject that had never arisen before.

My father, tolerant by nature, was profoundly hurt by the question. He answered:

"Bob, you've known me since basic training. You know I am not like that.

Why did you ask me that now?"

Bob eyed him coldly, said nothing, and walked away. For several days, he deliberately avoided my father, who felt terrible and wondered what he did to insult his friend in such a manner to prompt that question. Who was the real bigot?

About a week later, my father was summoned before the top brass.

They basically said: "Major Franklin, we are releasing top-secret information to you. The approximate time and location of the Allied landing will be either the last week in May or the first week in June, depending on weather conditions. On the Normandy peninsula. This material is known only by selected officers, who must remain in England until D-Day, lest they be captured by the enemy.

"The code name for those entrusted with this information is that they are 'bigoted.' Anyone who inquires if you are a 'bigot' has already been briefed and is instructed not to discuss matters with those who answer they are not 'bigoted.' On penalty of court-martial."

My father instantly gained a newfound respect for his friend. For Bob to shun my father and walk away must have been tough.

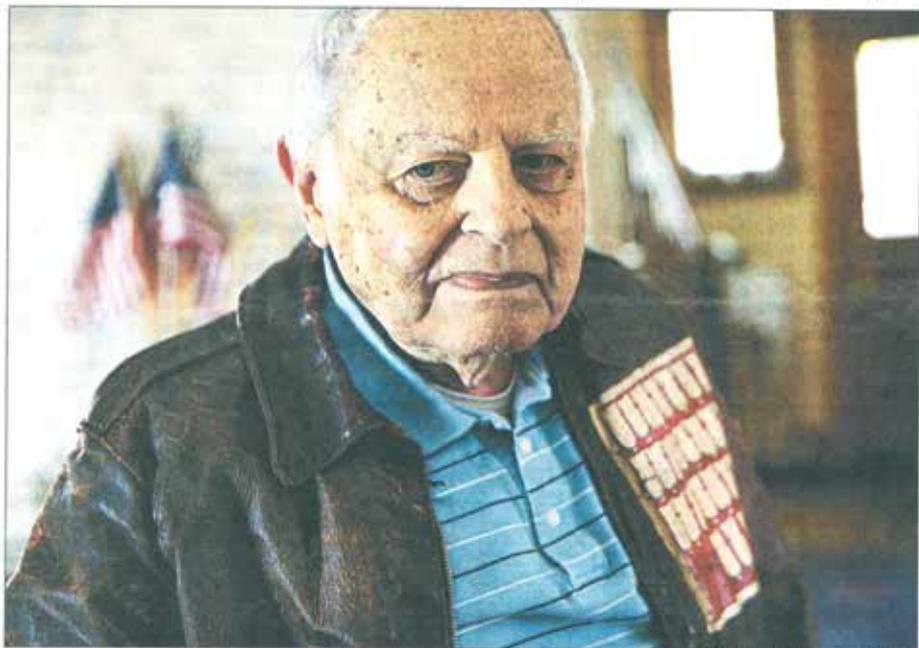
Before we left Utah Beach, my dad took one last look at the channel.

He said laconically to me, "I'm glad you never had to go through anything like this."

It was a father's expression of love for his son on Utah Beach.

Dr. Cory Franklin lives in Wilmette and is the author of a collection of essays, "Chicago Flashbulbs: A Quarter Century of News, Politics, Sports and Show Business (1987-2012)."

Numbers dwindling, but Chicago-area participants recall massive invasion at Normandy that turned tide against Nazis 70 years ago



NANCY STONE/TRIBUNE PHOTO

John Kraeger, 89, of Chicago, was part of a B-24 crew during the D-Day assault on Normandy, France, in 1944.

For D-Day vets, history still vivid

BY MITCH SMITH | Tribune reporter

Hank Rossetti clutched a black-and-white snapshot showing five young World War II veterans enjoying a meal and grinning for the camera.

"The guy in the middle is the only one still alive," Rossetti said.

The guy in the middle was Rossetti.

Seventy years ago Friday, the smooth-faced teenager with a white medic's band tied to his arm parachuted into the Nazi stronghold of Normandy, France. That day, D-Day, marked the beginning of the end of Adolf Hitler's reign of terror.

Rossetti still drives his car, walks around his Southwest Side home without a cane and recalls the horrors of World War II vividly. But he's part of an increasingly exclusive club.

About 15 million of the 16 million Americans who served in the war are dead, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Each day, the government estimates, an additional 413 U.S. World War II veterans die.



FAMILY PHOTO

Kraeger, left, said the attack was chaotic. "There (were) planes going everywhere, and we could see the ships down in the channel firing behind the invasion."

Continues on page 46

Not so long ago, it seemed that most men of a certain age had served in World War II. But there are only so many men in their late 80s or 90s, and that means there are only so many men like Rossetti who can speak firsthand about the war that freed Europe from Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

"I think it's important that people pay attention and think about this anniversary," said Keith Huxen, the National World War II Museum's senior director of research and history. "I know that there are going to be remembrances and ceremonies in the future that aren't going to have World War II veterans at them."

Rossetti, who descended into Normandy to set up an inland aid station six hours before the storming of the beaches, is a regular at his unit's annual reunions. He'll be at that event in Michigan during Friday's D-Day anniversary. Some of his comrades will be in France for a commemoration.

Recently, Rossetti said, World War II reunions have featured more spouses and children of soldiers than soldiers themselves. Rossetti, 89, was drafted into the Army after only a few months at optometry college. On D-Day, his first action in the war, he landed in a French field about 4,000 miles from the South Side neighborhood where he grew up.

"I was pretty scared," he said. "There's no doubt about it."

As Rossetti prepared to treat the wounded, another Chicagoan, John Kraeger, was flying over the English Channel toward targets in Normandy. The Rogers Park native was a ball turret gunner on an Army Air Forces B-24, providing relief for the ground troops overtaking the beaches.

"We flew across the channel and we bombed a road and rail junction," said Kraeger, 89. "It was like mass confusion. There (were) planes going everywhere, and we could see the ships down in the channel firing behind the invasion."

Like most of the remaining World War II veterans, Kraeger was among the youngest men in his unit.

"Doing that, being there, it's something you'll never forget," he said. "I was just an enlisted man, a very small cog in the big machine."

D-Day, a surprise attack designed to push Hitler's forces out of France, gave the U.S. a foothold in continental Europe. But the success came at substantial cost: More than 1,400 Americans died that day, and thousands more would perish as Allied forces continued their march toward Berlin.

In recent years — perhaps because of America's current wars, perhaps because of the dwindling number of WWII veterans — people have approached the men to express gratitude for their service, they said. On last year's D-Day anniversary, the White Sox honored Rossetti, a lifelong fan, as their "hero of the day."

Richard Duchossois, a young Army

Hank Rossetti, 89, of Chicago, was a medic who parachuted into the French countryside and helped treat soldiers wounded in the D-Day invasion 70 years ago.



"I was pretty scared. There's no doubt about it."

— Hank Rossetti, left, with Jimmy Dorino in a family photo, on his military service in Europe

officer from the Southwest Side who is now chairman of Arlington International Racecourse, said he has also noticed an uptick in attention, even as he tries to avoid dwelling on the memories.

"That's in the past, and I try to live in the future — but yeah, you think about it," said Duchossois, 92. "In the past year or so, maybe because Normandy has gotten so much attention, I was just dumbfounded with how many people say, 'Thank you for your service.'"

Duchossois, who lives in Barrington, is part of a delegation of American veterans organized by the National World War II Museum that is returning to Normandy for this year's D-Day anniversary. Though Duchossois didn't fight on D-Day, he landed on the beaches weeks afterward and served in Normandy. The French government will present him with the Legion of Honor, the country's highest award, during his visit.

Chicago's French Consulate presents the Legion of Honor to about 200 World War II veterans each year, officials there said. Kraeger received the honor in March.

Huxen, the museum historian, said it's important for Americans to learn what they can from the surviving World War II veterans. His institution sends interviewers to veterans' homes to video-record them for an oral history collection. Veterans who visit the museum in New Orleans can also record their reflections. The idea, he said, is that Americans in 20, 50 or 200 years will be able to hear firsthand from the men who stormed the beaches of Normandy or fought the Japanese at Iwo Jima in a way not possible for scholars researching previous conflicts.

"You will be able to see what that veteran really looked like, what that person really sounded like," Huxen said. "You will have a better sense of who this person was than someone from the 19th century where you only have a photo-

graph."

For now, though, some of those veterans are able to share their memories firsthand.

Rossetti recalled that as he and fellow soldiers worked to set up their aid station in Normandy, he watched in fear as Germans fired at American planes. As a medic, Rossetti carried only bandages and medication, no guns.

"I kept watching tracer bullets," he said. "They were shooting at our planes. I was kind of sweating that some of our guys would be shot down."

Rossetti's aid station was housed in a French farmstead perhaps 40 or 50 miles off the coast. No wounded Americans would reach them for at least a day. At one point after the injured started arriving, he said the young daughter of the couple hosting them ran outside as the Germans shelled the area. When her mother ran after her, Rossetti said, both were killed.

He said the memory still haunts him.

Rossetti went on to serve in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany before returning to his parents' home in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

Before long, Rossetti had moved out, started his career and gotten married. He bought the Southwest Side home he still lives in, a tidy one-story structure with a green lawn and trimmed shrub out front, more than 50 years ago.

As decades passed and America's triumph in the war faded from the headlines, Rossetti said the memories and the men he served with there remained with him.

Just last month, he was sitting with his wife, flipping through snapshots of himself 70 years ago. In most of the photos, he was surrounded by other uniformed men.

"I'm not embarrassed at all by it," Rossetti said. "I was looking through all these pictures. I was sitting there, Kathy was there, and I blurted out to Kathy, 'I loved all these guys.' And I started crying."

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MEMORIAL DAY: A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

This national holiday is about reconciliation and coming together to honor those who gave their all to our country



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. This year, it will be observed on Monday, May 27th. There are many stories about its actual beginnings, with more than 24 cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day.

There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War. A hymn by Nella L. Sweet that was published in 1867, *Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping*, carried the dedication, "To the ladies of the South who are decorating the graves of the confederate dead."

While Waterloo, New York, was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it is difficult to prove the actual origins of the day. It is more likely that it had many separate beginnings. Each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860s tapped into the general human need to honor our dead, and each contributed honorably to the growing movement that culminated in General John A. Logan issuing an official proclamation in 1868.

Clearly, Memorial Day's origins are not important; what is important is that Memorial Day was established. Memorial Day is not about division. It is about reconciliation and coming together to honor those who gave their all.

The Official Proclamation

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by General Logan, who was the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. It was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

New York was the first state to officially recognize the holiday (in 1873). By 1890, it was recognized by all the Union states. The South refused to acknowledge the day; it continued to honor its dead on separate days until after World War I, when the holiday changed from honoring only those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring all Americans who died fighting in any war.

It is now celebrated in almost every state on the last Monday in May, although several Southern states still have an additional, separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead (January 19, Texas; April 26, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi); May 10, South Carolina; and June 3, Louisiana and Tennessee).

The Red Poppy

In 1915, inspired by Canadian Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae's poem, *In Flanders Fields*, Moira Michael replied with her own poem:

*We cherish too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.*

Michael then conceived of an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial Day in honor of those who died serving our nation during war. She was the first to wear this flower and also sold them to her friends and co-workers. The money she raised from these sales went to benefit servicemen in need.

Later, a Madam Guerin from France was visiting the United States and learned of this new custom. When she returned to France, she made artificial red poppies to raise money for war-orphaned children and widowed women. This tradition then spread to other countries.

In 1921, the Franco-American Children's League sold poppies nationally to benefit war orphans of France and Belgium. The league disbanded a year later, and Madam Guerin approached the Veterans of Foreign Wars for help.

Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922, the VFW became the first veterans' organization to sell poppies nationally. Two years later, its Buddy Poppy Program was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948, the U.S. Post Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a red 3 cent postage stamp with her likeness on it.

The Tradition Fades

Traditional observance of Memorial Day has diminished over the years. Today, many Americans have forgotten the meaning and traditions of

Continues on page 50



POW/MIA

Remembrance Table

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 1 performs our Remembrance Table ceremony at many events.

Our Remembrance Table is set for (5). This place setting symbolizes all Prisoners of War and those men and women still listed as Missing in Action from all wars from the (5) branches of service.

The chairs are empty.

They are not with us today.

Remember

*The tablecloth is white,
symbolizing the purity of the
soldiers as they went off
to serve their country.*

Remember

*The bread plates are sprinkled
with salt, symbolizing the tears shed
by the families as they await
the fate of their loved ones.*

Remember

*There is a lemon on each plate,
indicative of the bitterness
these soldiers must feel at
being left behind by
their country.*

Remember

*The glasses are inverted.
They cannot toast with us
this season.*

Remember

*The red rose, symbolizes the love the
families and their fellow comrades
have for these soldiers.*

Remember

*The red ribbon on the vase, symbolizes
the hope we all have. That someday
these brave men and women will
be returned to their families
and their country.*

Remember. . . .



Schedule of Events

8 AM – 10:00 AM	Registration and Breakfast (Available by VFW)
10:00 AM	First Bike Out
10:30 AM	Vendors set up
11:00 AM	Last Bike Out
1:00 PM	Bikes return/Parking in rear
1:00 PM – Close	Band – Boombbox Heroes & Bliss
2:30 PM	1st Stop Ticket Drawing
3:00 PM	2nd Stop Ticket Drawing
3:30 PM	3rd Stop Ticket Drawing
3:45 PM	Remembrance Table Ceremony
4:00 PM	Door Prizes/Raffles
4:30 PM	Poker Hands announced
5:00 PM	Bike Raffle

14th Annual



“Big Thunder” Run

October 5th 2014

**Rolling Thunder® Illinois Chapter #1
would like to thank our friends at**

**Batavia Overseas Post 1197
Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**for allowing us the use of their facilities and
their kindness to us.**

Please support their efforts.

**Batavia VFW
645 S. River Rd (Rte. 25)
Batavia, IL 60561**

Memorial Day. At many cemeteries, the graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored and neglected. Most people no longer remember the proper flag etiquette for the day. And while there are towns and cities that still hold Memorial Day parades, many have not held a parade in decades. Additionally, some people assume that this day is for honoring any and all dead—not just those fallen in service to our country.

There are a few notable exceptions: Since the late 1950s, the 1,200 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery on the Thursday before Memorial Day. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing.

In 1951, the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of St. Louis, Missouri, began placing flags on the 150,000 graves at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery as an annual “Good Turn.” It is a practice that continues to this day. More recently, beginning in 1998, on the Saturday before the observed day for Memorial Day, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts place a candle at each of approximately 15,300 grave sites of soldiers buried at Virginia’s Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. And in 2004, Washington, D.C., held its first Memorial Day parade in more than 60 years.

Renewing the Meaning

To help re-educate and remind Americans of Memorial Day’s true meaning, the National Moment of Remembrance resolution was passed by Congress in December 2000. It asks that at 3:00 p.m. local time, all Americans “voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence”

The Moment of Remembrance has been a step in the right direction to returning the meaning back to the day. But what may be needed to return the solemn spirit back to Memorial Day is for a return to its traditional day of observance. Many feel that when Congress made the Memorial Day holiday into a three-day weekend as part of the National Holiday Act of 1971, it made it all the easier for people to be distracted from the spirit and meaning of the day.

As the VFW stated in its 2002 Memorial Day address, “Changing the date merely to create three-day weekends has undermined the very meaning of the day. No doubt, this has contributed greatly to the general public’s nonchalant observance of Memorial Day.”

Source: www.usmemorialday.org



Someone You Should Know

ARMY CAPTAIN BRENNAN S. GOLTRY

by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden • 82nd Airborne • Public Affairs Office

THIS IS THE TYPE OF STUFF he does every day." In the civilian world, those words might describe a hardworking, devoted colleague. In a combat zone, however, they take on a whole new meaning: "It's not the first time Capt. Goltry has been shot, and it's not the first time he charged the enemy," explained Capt. Buddy Ferris, a fellow officer in the legendary 82nd Airborne Division. Those words were used to describe then-Lieutenant Goltry's heroism in battle on February 2, 2007. That evening, Goltry, from Bakersfield, CA, was in command of the second truck in his platoon's five-vehicle convoy as it moved through Sammara, just north of Baghdad. Though the sun had set, a moonlit night provided little cover for the convoy — perfect conditions for an ambush.

Suddenly, in what Goltry described as a complex "L-shaped" attack, enemy combatants unleashed a barrage of machine-gun fire at the convoy, disabling the lead humvee and wounding its gunner. Goltry saw his fellow paratrooper's vulnerable position, and realized that the only

way to protect the wounded soldier would be to imperil his own safety. He ordered his driver to move his vehicle in front of the damaged truck to create a buffer and draw away fire. Lieutenant Goltry opened his door to return fire, even as his vehicle bore the brunt of the enemy's bullets.



CPT Goltry received a Silver Star and Purple Heart for the 2/7/07 battle, and a second Purple Heart for gunshot wounds from a previous battle.

SILVER STAR Official Citation

CAPTAIN (INFANTRY) BRENNAN S. GOLTRY UNITED STATES ARMY

Action Date: 2-Feb-07 • Service: Army • Rank: Captain • Company: Company C • Battalion: 2d Battalion Regiment: 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment • Division: 82d Airborne Division

CAPTAIN (INFANTRY) BRENNAN S. GOLTRY, United States Army, was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as 2d Platoon Leader, Company C, 2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, during combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on February 2, 2007, in Iraq. On that evening, Captain Goltry was in command of the second truck in his platoon's five-vehicle convoy as it moved through Sammara, just north of Baghdad.

Though the sun had set, a moonlit night provided little cover for the convoy—perfect conditions for an ambush. Suddenly, in a complex "L-shaped" attack, enemy combatants unleashed a barrage of machine-gun fire at the convoy, disabling the lead humvee and wounding its gunner. Captain Goltry saw his fellow paratrooper's vulnerable position and realized that the only way to protect the wounded

soldier would be to imperil his own safety. He ordered his driver to move his vehicle in front of the damaged truck to create a buffer and draw away fire. Captain Goltry opened his door to return fire, even as his vehicle bore the brunt of the enemy's bullets. He was shot twice in his left leg, but this didn't stop or apparently even slow him down. He jumped from his vehicle, rallied his men and killed a hostile combatant as he led the offensive against the ambush.

Rather than retreat, the squads pursued the enemies for several hundred meters and took over strategic positions as they cleared nearby houses. These efforts yielded the capture of an enemy combatant. Captain Goltry refused to be evacuated in a medical vehicle and instead stayed with his platoon. Captain Goltry's gallant actions and dedicated devotion to duty, without regard for his own life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Continues on page 52

Goltry was shot twice in his left leg. But this didn't stop or apparently even slow him down. He jumped from his vehicle, rallied his men, and killed a hostile combatant as he led the offensive against the ambush. Rather than retreat, the squads pursued the enemies for several hundred meters and took over strategic positions as they cleared nearby houses. These efforts yielded the capture of an enemy combatant. Lieutenant Goltry refused to be evacuated in a medical vehicle and instead stayed

with his platoon. Goltry later called the whole incident "just another day."

For those who know him, Goltry's valor in action is no surprise. And neither is his humility: When discussing his actions, he always deflects attention from himself. "I'm real proud of my men," he said. "They fight real hard for me, and they've saved my (rear) more than once."

Aristotle once declared that excel-



lence is not an act, but a habit. For making a habit of bravery, determination, and courage, Capt. Goltry was awarded the Silver Star, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and two Purple Hearts on July 31, 2007. He is scheduled to receive a third Purple Heart for wounds sustained during an attack on Sammara's police station this past May. Captain Goltry continues to serve in Iraq. ✦

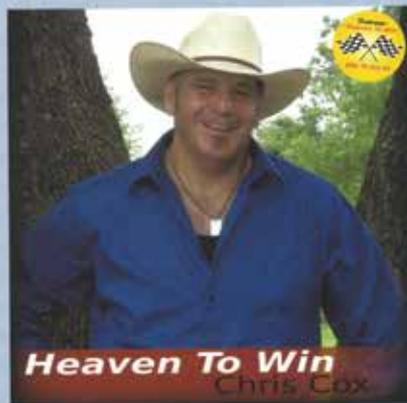
Country Singer and Songwriter Record Album to Aid MOPH

by Russell Smith

SGT. CECIL L. COX SERVED in Merrill's Marauders, 1st Battalion, White Combat Team, Intelligence and Recon Platoon and received a Bronze Star for valor. His grandson, Chris Cox, recorded a country album, *Heaven to Win*, which includes a song called "When You Come Home," about America welcoming home its military heroes. Like the other tracks on the album, it

was written by legendary country music writer Walt Wilder. Wilder wrote for Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and others.

Now 77, Wilder, a Korea and Vietnam veteran, is releasing never-before-recorded songs and he wants to do two things: help new artists and benefit his fellow veterans. Wilder and Cox have pledged to donate a portion of all sales of *Heaven to Win* to MOPH. Cox, who belongs to the Proud Descendants of



Merrill's Marauders, wants to honor his grandfather's sacrifice, making him the perfect new voice for Wilder's old school, traditional country. The title song, "Heaven to Win," is a tribute to Dale Earnhardt. The Christmas song Wilder wrote for Elvis Presley, "December in the Snow," was rehearsed by Elvis, but he died before he could record it. *Heaven to Win* is for sale at Amazon.com for \$12.98. In the search bar enter "Album Heaven to Win Chris Cox." If 500 albums are purchased by November 5, Best Buy and Walmart will place the CD on their shelves nationwide. Buy yours today! ✦



Sgt. Cecil L. Cox

AN AMAZING POOL OF TALENT AT AN EMPLOYER'S FINGERTIPS

by Dakota Meyer

IN COMBAT, A SNIPER'S goal is to become a needle in a haystack. Marksmanship is only a piece of the puzzle. Whether I was in the Sierra Nevada Mountains or the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan, stealth was not just a tool, it was the objective. Before I became a Marine sniper, I spent months learning to tread softly and blend into my environment, skills that have saved my life more than once.

When I transitioned out of the military, however, it didn't take long to see that my objective needed to change. To be successful as a civilian, I had to go in the opposite direction of my training—I needed to make myself stand out.

With less than eight percent of Americans having served in the armed forces, your military service already makes your resume unique. Now you have to make sure it gets in front of the right people. Standing out, not stealth, should be the new strategy of every veteran and transitioning service member searching for a career after the military. How can an employer hire you if they can't find you?

Employers are looking for men and women who have proven skills like leadership, discipline, and problem solving. Who better than the men and women who have served in uniform? I've spent over a year now working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our

Heroes and Toyota to get my fellow veterans hired through job fairs and online efforts. This means that over the course of that year, I've been in numerous rooms with countless people whose only job is to recruit veterans. With this in mind, our team launched the Personal Branding Resume Engine, an online tool that helps veterans market all of the skills they gained in the military to civilian employers. But helping veterans brand themselves for employers was only the first part of our effort. The endgame is to connect these men and women with the recruiters that are searching for them. Well, I am proud to report that this week we've taken the next step forward by introducing a first-of-its-kind, free employer search feature as part of the Resume Engine. This new option allows veteran users to add their completed resumes to a searchable database. Companies looking to fill open positions can then search that resume bank for candidates that fit their job qualifications, at absolutely no cost.

As a veteran, I know that the talent of my fellow service members is without question. But as a business owner, I have found that it can be not just challenging, but also expensive, to find good candidates. One of the primary reasons I started my own business—Dakota Meyer Enterprises—was to put veterans back to work.



Through my advocacy and experience though, I've found that it's not always an option for a small business owner to close up shop and attend a hiring fair or to put critical cash into purchasing access to job banks. By making the Resume Engine's new search feature free of charge, we're hoping to level the playing field and create opportunity for businesses of every size to have access to this incredible pool of talent.

When I received the Medal of Honor in 2011, I felt like I was given a new charge. I firmly believe I have a responsibility to help as many of my fellow veterans and their families succeed after their years of sacrifice. I've said time and time again: if you want to help a veteran, hire one. But now I find myself saying something equally true, if not more so: if you want to help your business, hire a veteran. I encourage veterans and employers to check out the latest version of the Resume Engine and let's keep working together to make a difference in the employment issues facing our military families and our great country. *

About the Author: Dakota Meyer is a Life member of the Order, Medal of Honor recipient and former Marine sergeant.

Honoring the Fallen

The family of fallen SEAL portrayed
in *Lone Survivor* remembers their son.

By Steve Wilson

Danny Dietz was one of four Navy SEALs on Operation Red Wings, a mission to eliminate a high-ranking member of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. They were ambushed, and he and two other comrades did not survive.

The major motion picture and book, *Lone Survivor*, are based on retellings of the story by fellow SEAL Marcus Luttrell. Dietz's family has seen the heroic ending of his life portrayed in writing and on the big screen, and they are using the occasion to bring awareness to his values and celebrate his life and the service of his fellow sailors.

Danny's parents describe their son as an intelligent, curious and energetic young man who was always

"I don't think I will ever understand my son being gone, but my purpose is to tell his story and ensure people never forget."

placed in the gifted and talented programs throughout his school years.

"He had so much energy and curiosity, even at a young age," said his father, Dan Dietz. "As a young child, he wanted to be a ninja, but when he was 9, he learned that wasn't real and right then decided being a Navy SEAL was the next best thing."



Danny Dietz, 19

"Then around eighth grade he decided he was bored with the normal routine and wanted to have a sort of 'bad-boy' image," said his mother, Cindy Dietz-Marsh. "He started hanging out with some bad kids."

Danny's luck ran out when he started skipping school. "The court sent him to a military-style boot camp for young people," said Dietz-Marsh. "He came out of that and came home as the son I wanted."

"He decided to get school done and got into a program where he did four years of high school in just one year," she said.

After taking a few months off, Danny joined the Navy with the intent of fulfilling his lifelong dream of becoming a SEAL.

"I was a Navy corpsman with the 1st Force Recon Marines," the elder Dietz said. "We trained with all of the military's special forces, and I knew what kind of attitude it took. I told Danny he'd never make it, and he just kept saying, 'Oh yes, I will.' When he finally did become a SEAL, we were so proud of him."

But he never bragged about being part of an elite unit. "When he came home on leave, he told people he drove an ice cream truck," Dietz said.

The book and film portraying his life give his parents mixed feelings, calling their emotions "nervous yet excited."

"Marcus could've walked away, blocked those memories from his mind and never told this story," said Dietz-Marsh. "But he didn't. He didn't stop until this story was told."

Dietz-Marsh said that when the movie came out, she was petrified of having to sit through the scene of her

“As a young child, he **wanted to be a ninja**, but when he was 9, he learned that wasn’t real and right then decided being a **Navy SEAL was the next best thing.**”

son’s final moments on a mountain in Afghanistan.

“I have so many mixed emotions,” she said. “But the world needs to see what the military does for our freedom. This is a film that is much needed.”

Because of his selfless actions in the mountains of Afghanistan, Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class Danny Dietz was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, the United States’ second highest medal awarded for valor.

Danny’s parents dedicate their free time to causes that honor his contributions. Dietz-Marsh is a board member of the Danny Dietz Memorial Fund, which helps qualifying students obtain money for a college education. Dietz works with the Danny Dietz Training Institute, which helps at-risk youth, something his son was once considered.

They now have published their own book, *Danny: The Virtues Within—What America Can Learn from Navy SEAL Danny Dietz*. Rather than a military book, this is a story about overcoming adversity and building character.

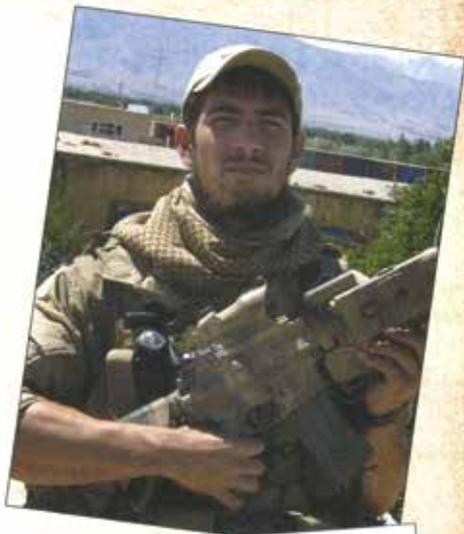
In April 2009, Colorado lawmakers voted to name a 10-mile stretch of Santa Fe Highway the “Navy SEAL Danny Phillip Dietz Jr. Memorial Highway.”

“Danny would’ve never wanted all of this publicity,” Dietz said. “But Danny belongs to the nation now. This is the message people need to hear—the message that young people like Danny protect America.”

“I don’t think I will ever understand my son being gone,” said Dietz-Marsh. “But my purpose is to tell his story and ensure people never forget.”

“That Gunner’s Mate Dietz had a drive to overcome the roadblocks he had in front of him is very much indicative of the tenacity of America’s veterans,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “I want to personally thank the Dietz family for sharing their brave son’s story with us and the nation.”

“Danny was doing what he was born to do,” Dietz said. “He was being a Navy SEAL. If I leave a fraction of that heritage behind for America, I’ll be happy.” ■



Top: Dietz in Afghanistan, 2005; Middle: Dietz, center, with his parents, Dan and Cindy, Summer 1998; Bottom: Dietz, right, with younger siblings, Eric and Tiffany, Christmas 2004

Miracles on a Mountainside

March 30 - April 4, 2014
Snowmass Village, Colo.



The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic will be back on the mountainside in Snowmass Village, Colo., this April. For almost 30 years, alongside a cohort of dedicated sponsors who help make the event possible, DAV and the Department of Veterans Affairs have co-hosted this life-changing sports rehabilitation clinic for our nation's ill and injured veterans.

Nearly 400 veterans and active-duty service members participated in the 2013 clinic. With skiing, snowboarding, hockey, kayaking and a number of other sports and activities, the clinic is a solid week of mettle testing and courage finding. Some participants faced physical challenges after losing a limb during their time in service, others battled the debilitating effects of illness, and many fought to overcome post-traumatic stress disorder or the lingering symptoms of traumatic brain injury.

Each year, these men and women prove to themselves that these injuries and illnesses do not define who they are. During its 28-year history, the clinic has helped thousands of our nation's finest by offering the challenges and support veterans need to overcome mental and physical obstacles.

It is a powerful and often emotional journey for participants and volunteers alike. For many, the clinic is the first time these men and women have dared to take on adaptive sports since becoming injured or falling ill, and it changes their perception of what is possible and attainable in their lives.

Disabled veterans receiving care at a VA medical facility, as well as injured or ill active-duty personnel, can request initial information and registration packets by calling 970-263-5040. ■





DAV Aids Veterans' Travel to World War II Memorial

By Steve Wilson

Fifty World War II veterans, with DAV's assistance, traveled in June to Washington, D.C., via the SouthWest Honor Flight program, to tour the National World War II Memorial.

Don Vecoli, retired Navy veteran and founder and president of SouthWest Honor Flight, said Manatee County Chapter 18, Florida has provided volunteer assistance for the program, which has flown more than 600 World War II veterans since its first journey in September 2008.

"DAV Chapter 18 has been very generous in support of my program," the former Navy master chief petty officer said of DAV volunteers.

"For our last three flights, I've had 10 guardians from Chapter 18," said Vecoli. "The guardians totally dedicate themselves to the veteran."

Albert Mackay, Chapter 18 Adjutant, said DAV was happy to assist with coordination efforts and provide some of the volunteer guardians.

"Some of the [World War II] veterans initially don't want to go," Mackay said. "But when they do, they're glad they did."

A big piece of the Honor Flight program is assisting the veterans once they arrive in Washington.

Mackay said travel assistance is usually a veteran's



Alfred Mignone is among 50 fellow veterans of World War II who visited the National World War II Memorial in June, as part of the SouthWest Honor Flight program.

biggest concern, but the guardians take care of this. "We're close to this," he said. "We want to pay them the respect they're due."

One of the Honor Flight participants, former Navy yeoman Alfred Mignone, said his ship, the heavy cruiser *USS Houston*, was torpedoed by the Japanese twice. The Honor Flight was therapeutic in that he was able to interact with fellow World War II veterans.

"They got us two times," he said. "Oct. 14, 1944, and Oct. 16, 1944. I can still see the pictures in my head and will never forget the smell, but we

still brought our ship back."

Mignone thought he would be a hindrance on the trip because he could not walk for long distances at a time, but DAV said, "No problem."

"They had volunteers to push those of us in wheelchairs, both in Washington and when we returned home," he said. "I can't say enough about DAV—I'm going to support them every chance I get."

National Adjutant Marc Burgess praised the Chapter. "I commend the efforts of this organization and applaud our Florida Chapter for their volunteer efforts," he said. "We serve all veterans from all eras, and this is a stellar example of our resolve to ensure America's veterans lead enriched and high-quality lives." ■

WAR THE WITHIN

PART III: Rx FOR A BROKEN SYSTEM

If there's such a thing as a post-traumatic stress (PTS) success story, it's that of David Seligman's family.

His father-in-law, a Vietnam War veteran, listened when David needed to unload after his first combat tour in Iraq. His wife stood by him through three deployments and weathered the hair-trigger emotions that followed him home from battle. His grandfather, a Marine who fought on Okinawa during World War II, joined the family in encouraging David to get treatment.

"It helped to know that people who had it that bad were saying, 'Getting help is not a weakness,'" Seligman says. "They had credibility. Why would I avoid (treatment options) they wish they'd had?"

Seligman also considers himself fortunate to have had a commander who supported his efforts to seek treatment, as well as the help of a good counselor. And his father-in-law, Paul Sutton, was inspired to get treatment for his own PTS after Seligman pursued it for himself.

It's a success story worth telling. More than half a million people with ties to the wars in

Iraq and Afghanistan are affected by PTS and depression. Sufferers include returning troops, their spouses and their children. The effects can include divorce, substance abuse, unemployment and, in severe cases, suicide.

The American Legion's ad hoc committee on PTS and TBI (traumatic brain injury) has been addressing the problem, urging greater focus on mental health for returning troops and veterans, as well as for their families. The Legion is also working to help remove the potentially career-killing stigma from the condition and fighting for top-quality treatment for veterans no matter where they live.

The payoff could be substantial, according to a detailed analysis by the RAND Corp., a nonpartisan, nonprofit research group. Just providing quality care for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans dealing with PTS and depression in the two years following a deployment, according to RAND, would save more than \$2 billion and hundreds – if not thousands – of lives.

"I have always maintained, being an attorney, that when you raise your hand to take the soldier's oath, you enter into

Melissa Seligman and her husband, David, with a photograph of her father, Paul Sutton. RAY C. THOMAS

a contract with the U.S. government," says William Detweiler, a past national commander of The American Legion and chairman of the Legion's PTS/TBI ad hoc committee. "You agree to follow orders and defend our country to protect its interests and its people. Consequently, if I am injured in keeping that oath and performing my duty, the federal government owes me the benefits that I have earned through my service, including health care and disability benefits."

"Be sure the family is fully engaged."

Veterans have struggled for quality mental-health care services and benefits for psychological conditions since the Legion first fought to get post-traumatic stress recognized as a combat injury more than 30 years ago.

"Unfortunately, mental problems – psychological problems – too often are given second-class citizenship within the medical profession in general," says Jeanne Stellman, professor emeritus and special lecturer at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, and a member of the Legion's PTS/TBI committee.

The public can be equally dismissive, she says. "Part of the normal human response to mental-health/behavioral-health problems is to tell people to get a hold of themselves. You don't tell someone with prostate cancer to get a grip and move on. You are fighting medicine. You are fighting human nature, and you are fighting VA bureaucracy."

Stellman's prescription is straightforward: get mental-health care off the back burner. Persuade VA and DoD to share their best treatments for PTS and TBI. Create a medical record that will follow a soldier from the military to VA and, once the condition is diagnosed, involve the entire family in the treatment plan.

"One of the hallmarks of post-traumatic stress is withdrawal and avoidance," Stellman says. "That means that veterans may have trouble keeping (treatment) appointments. One way to make sure they do is to be sure the family is fully engaged."

Vietnam War veteran Ken Jones, who spent years battling PTS before getting help at a VA Vet Center in Anchorage, agrees. "Recovery is not a do-it-yourself project," says Jones, who has written two books on the trials faced by returning combat troops. "You get into a doom loop. Nothing you look at ever has any meaning."

Servicemembers worry that getting mental-health care will cost them security clearances that are important to future careers, says Terri Tanielian, senior research analyst at RAND. Despite recent changes to security-clearance applications, veterans remain concerned that getting help for a mental-health problem could be used against them. The RAND research team recommended that the military and other employers evaluate people for their functional ability to perform their jobs, instead of relying on simple questions

Labor Department tries to put PTS/TBI sufferers to work

Four years ago, the U.S. Department of Labor started fielding calls from employers who wanted to hire wounded warriors but were leery of PTS and traumatic brain injuries. That prompted DoL to launch the America's Heroes at Work program, to ease employment challenges for veterans with invisible wounds and debunk myths about PTS and TBI.

"People hear PTSD, and they think about what they see on TV and what they've heard in the media," says Michael Reardon of DoL's Office of Disability Employment Policy. "We help employers understand what it is, and what it is not."

Veterans with PTS or TBI face considerable hurdles to finding jobs if they reveal their conditions. Many are reluctant to tell employers that they are getting treatment for PTS or living with TBI, DoL officials say.

"One big thing is just helping people understand PTSD is the result of a trauma ... you can heal," says Lisa Stern of America's Heroes at Work. "When you have a broken arm, you go to the doctor, get it treated, and in time it heals. With PTSD, people learn compensatory strategies for continuing productive lives."

America's Heroes at Work provides one-on-one assistance and training to hundreds of employers who want to hire veterans. This includes reminding federal agencies that qualified veterans who have an at least 30-percent disability rating can be hired without applying through the difficult USAJOBS website.

The program also gives free, confidential guidance to employers on providing workplace accommodations for wounded warriors. Not all veterans with PTS or TBI need additional help. Just having the opportunity to work can be enough.

"Most of the time, work is going to keep you together," says Katia Albanese of the America's Heroes at Work team. "This is such a critical element in the recovery process. When you go to work, it helps you figure out what your mind and body can do again."

— Ken Olsen

 www.americasheroesatwork.gov

Continues on page 60

PTSD

Know the Warning Signs and Seek Treatment

If you think you have PTSD, it's important to get treatment, and early treatment can help reduce long-term symptoms.

When To Seek Assistance:

- Feeling out of sync
- Jumpiness
- Worry
- Irritability
- Can't sleep
- Relationship issues
- Sadness
- Low motivation



"Need for speed"

- Suicidal thoughts
- Substance abuse
- Work problems
- Isolating

If You Think You Have PTSD:

- Talk to your family doctor.
- Talk to a mental health professional, such as a therapist.
- If you're a veteran, contact your local VA hospital or Vet Center.
- Talk to a close friend or family member. He or she may be able to support you and find you help.
- Talk to a religious leader.
- You can also fill out an online PTSD screening and take it with you to the doctor. The online screen, available on the National Center for PTSD web site (ncptsd.va.gov), asks about stressful military experiences.

PTSD Claims Simplified

■ Veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) will find the disability claims process much easier under a new VA rule that eliminates the requirement for documented evidence of an in-service stressor.

Under the rule, if a veteran claims service connection for PTSD, VA will reduce the evidence needed if the trauma claimed is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and is consistent with the places, types and circumstances of the veteran's service. A VA examination will be conducted to confirm that the stressor recalled by a veteran supports a PTSD diagnosis and that the veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor.

"This is a major step forward for veterans claiming service-connected PTSD," said National Service Director Garry J. Augustine. "Veterans will be required to undergo a Compensation and Pension examination by a VA or VA-contracted psychologist or psychiatrist in order to qualify under the new rule."

"This new rule will reduce the time needed to adjudicate a veteran's claim," said Augustine. "It also means



that needed health care and therapy can be provided to veterans sooner."

The rule applies to claims received by VA before July 13, 2010, but not decided; claims on appeal on or after that date; claims at the Board of Veterans Appeals, but not decided on the effective date; and claims pending because of remands by the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. PTSD claims denied before July 13 can be re-submitted to the VA for adjudication.

The rule also has no geographic requirement, so veterans who did not serve in Iraq or Afghanistan, but

suffered a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity do not have to present documented evidence of the event. The new rule is also not limited to service in a combat zone or land, but applies to all veterans who served on active duty and were discharged or released from duty under conditions other than dishonorable.

"Our corps of National Service Officers is knowledgeable and proficient with the new rule," said Augustine. "Veterans can obtain our free assistance by calling their nearest DAV National Service Office, or they may find one on our Web site at www.dav.org." ©



Defying the Odds

2014 DAV Freedom Award Recipient
Survived Fort Hood Shooting, Inspires
Fellow Veterans at Winter Sports Clinic

By Charity Edgar

Army veteran Patrick Zeigler was named recipient of the 2014 DAV Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colo., on April 4.

After returning from a second combat tour in Iraq, Zeigler was shot four times, including once in the head, by another soldier at the Fort Hood Soldier Readiness Processing Center on Nov. 5, 2009. The prognosis doctors gave Zeigler was very grave, and he was not expected to live. Medical professionals believed he would remain in a vegetative state for the rest of his life.

Zeigler defied all odds and relearned to walk, talk and embrace life again. In spite of the extent of his injuries, he relearned to ski at the clinic and participated in scuba



Patrick Zeigler with wife, Jessica, and son, Liam



Patrick Zeigler is suited up and ready to hit the slopes with his instructors. Zeigler relearned at the 28th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

diving. The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is renowned as a world leader in adaptive sports.

Every year at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, one participant is chosen to receive the DAV Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement. This award is given to the participant who served as an inspiration to all ill and injured veteran athletes throughout the week. The award recognizes a veteran who excels while taking a giant step forward in their rehabilitation process. This is a man or woman who proves to the world that a disability does not define them.

"After arriving at Snowmass, Patrick received devastating news that tragedy struck Fort Hood again," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. "He could have become bitter or given up. But instead, he shared his condolences with the families of Fort Hood victims, addressed the difficulties service members face when returning home from war and shared his positive message of hope for the future."

Zeigler was joined at the five-day event by his wife, Jessica, and son, Liam, as well as his new service dog, Ranger, which his local DAV Chapter had helped finance through donations from the community.

"It's just incredible how people come together to honor veterans and service members who have given a lot back to their country," said Zeigler. "I just want to say thank you, and we love you guys. We really do love the support we get, and it really tugs at your heartstrings and makes you think about what's so good in the world instead of always what's so negative." ■

POW-MIA Day

A Remembrance

The legacy of our nation's wars is written in the epitaphs of those missing. Since the beginning of World War II, more than 83,000 men and women have disappeared in the fog of war, but they are remembered with thankfulness by family members and their nation.

To honor the service of prisoners of war, as well as those who remain missing in action, the country marks National POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 20. In addition to special ceremonies at the Pentagon, the entire nation will recognize the day as one of remembrance of those who had to wait until war's end before coming home...and those who still remain behind.

Today, hundreds of Department of Defense (DoD) specialists around the world are dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of those missing. The Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) consists of archival researchers, intelligence collectors and analysts, field investigators, scientists and other experts. They all practice the art of the recovery of remains by scouring the world—from mountain peaks to murky swamps to the bottom of the sea—to find those who rest on the field of battle.

"For decades, the DPMO has led the search to recover the remains of the men and

women who served our nation, and each of them have a remarkable record of service," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess.

"DAV is dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of our missing in action," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. "In recent years, DPMO and its associated commands have recovered and identified an increasing number of MIA remains, and are committed to even greater recoveries.

"This is one of most compassionate acts of recovery and identification," Augustine said. "It brings closure to the families who have lived without answers to the question of what happened to their loved ones as long as 70 years ago."

"DAV recognizes that the efforts of the DPMO and the DoD are a challenge, but it is necessary that our nation leaves no person behind," Burgess said. "For most of our citizens, POW/MIA Recognition Day comes once a year. For the families with missing loved ones, it is a mystery that remains unanswered every day." ■

Servicemembers assigned to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command place a POW/MIA flag on the wreckage of an aircraft during recovery operations on the island of Espiritu Santo on the Republic of Vanuatu. Two specialized teams excavated several ground and aircraft crash sites in search of Americans who remain unaccounted for from World War II. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Adelita C. Mead/DoD)



Number of Homeless Veterans Declines

The number of homeless veterans has decreased by 24 percent since 2010. That's according to the Point-in-Time Estimate of Homelessness, a national report released annually by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Data for homeless vets living in shelters or on the streets is collected by volunteers over the course of a single night every January. According to the 2013 report prepared by HUD, 57,849 homeless veterans were counted on a single night. That shows an 8-percent reduction from January 2012 to January 2013. The decline keeps the VA on track to meet the goal of eradicating homelessness among veterans in 2015. (Results from the 2014 survey were not available in time for this issue of *DAV Magazine*.)

"That is very good news regarding a very tough problem," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "No one who served our country should be huddled under a bridge, in shelters or camped out in the woods, and I applaud the government's efforts, as well as our Departments, Chapters and individual members who work so hard to end this national tragedy." Participating in stand downs, collecting and distributing winter coats and serving meals in shelters are just a few ways that DAV members contribute in their neighborhoods every day.

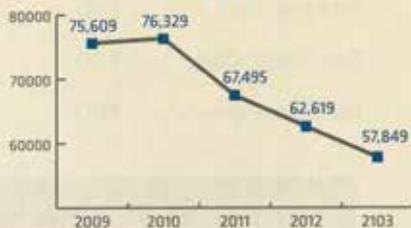
As they walked through communities around the country, the volunteers used the new Point-in-Time



mobile application for iPad and iPhone, developed by the VA's Office of Information Technology. With it, the volunteers were able to collect basic demographic information about the homeless veterans and log their locations using the Apple geo-locator. The new app did more than demonstrate the VA's readiness to innovate with mobile computing. It also helped the VA break through major hurdles to create a path for future mobile development.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said in a statement that the VA is "not going to rest until every veteran who has fought for America has a home in America. The results in the latest report are a credit to the effort given by our dedicated staff, and our federal, state and community partners who are committed to ending veterans' homelessness." ■

Estimates of Homeless Veterans
2009-2013



Percentage of Homeless Veterans by Gender
2013





Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
U.S. Unaccounted-For from the Vietnam War
Prisoners of War, Missing in Action and Killed in Action/Body not Recovered
Report for: Illinois

Military Service	Country of Casualty	Name	Loss Rank	Status	Date of Incident	Home of Record
USMC	S. Vietnam	ALWAN, HAROLD JOSEPH	O4	XX	1967/02/27	PEORIA, IL
USAF	Laos	ANDERSON, GREGORY LEE	E4	BB	1970/01/29	WHEATON, IL
USAF	Laos	BEUTEL, ROBERT DONALD	O2	XX	1971/11/29	TREMONT, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	BROWN, THOMAS EDWARD	O2	BB	1966/04/26	DANVILLE, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	BROWNLEE, ROBERT WALLACE	O5	XX	1972/04/24	CHICAGO, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	BUELL, KENNETH RICHARD	O4	XX	1972/09/17	KANKAKEE, IL
USAF	Laos	BUNKER, PARK GEORGE	O3	BB	1970/12/30	HOMEWOOD, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	BURKE, MICHAEL JOHN	E3	XX	1966/10/19	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	Laos	BYRNE, JOSEPH HENRY	O4	BB	1966/03/13	EVANSTON, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	CARLSON, JOHN VERNER	O3	BB	1966/12/07	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	CAUSEY, JOHN BERNARD	O3	BB	1966/02/25	GRANITE CITY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CLINTON, DEAN EDDIE	W1	XX	1967/06/11	DIX, IL
USN	S. Vietnam	COBBS, RALPH BURTON	O4	BB	1965/09/17	EAST ST LOUIS, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	COLLINS, WILLARD MARION	O3	BB	1966/03/09	QUINCY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CUNNINGHAM, KENNETH LEROY	E2	XX	1969/10/03	ELLERY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CZERWIEC, RAYMOND GEORGE	E5	XX	1969/03/27	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	DAYTON, JAMES LESLIE	W1	BB	1966/05/08	GRANITE CITY, IL
USN	Laos	DEUTER, RICHARD CARL	O2	XX	1969/11/22	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	EAGS, DENNIS KEITH	W1	XX	1970/04/23	PROPHETSTOWN, IL
USN	S. Vietnam	FARRIS, WILLIAM F	E4	BB	1968/02/06	WEST SALEM, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	GALVIN, RONALD E	E2	XX	1967/03/08	RIVER FOREST, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	GATEWOOD, CHARLES HUE	E3	XX	1968/05/31	CHICAGO, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	GERSTEL, DONALD ARTHUR	O4	XX	1972/09/09	MATTESON, IL
USN	Laos	GOLZ, JOHN BRYAN	O2	BB	1970/04/22	ROCK ISLAND, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	HERRERIO, ROBERT D	E5	XX	1966/10/10	AURORA, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	HILL, JOSEPH ARNOLD	E3	BB	1968/05/28	TAYLORVILLE, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	HOSH, ANTHONY F	E6	XX	1966/04/19	NEWTON, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	JABLONSKI, MICHAEL JAMES	E3	BB	1969/06/27	CHICAGO, IL
USMC	Laos	JANOUSEK, RONALD JAMES	O2	BB	1969/09/09	POSEN, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	KELLER, JACK ELMER	O4	XX	1966/04/21	CHICAGO, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	KNABB, KENNETH KEITH JR	O3	XX	1968/10/21	WHEATON, IL
USAF	Laos	LEMON, JEFFREY C	O3	XX	1971/04/25	FLOSSMOOR, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	LEWANDOWSKI, LEONARD J JR	E2	XX	1966/10/19	DES PLAINES, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	MADDOX, NOTLEY G	O4	XX	1967/05/20	ROCKFORD, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MARSHALL, RICHARD CARLTON	O3	BB	1965/09/05	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	MASON, JAMES PHILIP	E5	BB	1968/10/17	DE KALB, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MCCORMICK, CARL OTTIS	O6	BB	1972/10/06	PERIOA, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	MEYERS, ROGER ALLEN	O4	BB	1969/02/09	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MOORE, WILLIAM JOHN	E4	BB	1966/05/18	MOMMOUTH, IL
USAF	Laos	NEWBERRY, WAYNE ELLSWORTH	O3	BB	1968/09/29	EAST ST LOUIS, IL
CIVILIAN	S. Vietnam	NIEHOUSE, DANIEL LEE		KK	1966/11/25	IL
USN	N. Vietnam	NIGHTINGALE, RANDALL JOHN	E5	BB	1968/03/17	ONARGA, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	NOLAN, JOSEPH PAUL, JR	O2	XX	1971/05/16	OAK PARK, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	OLSEN, FLOYD WARREN	O3	XX	1968/04/21	WHEATON, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	PARTINGTON, ROGER DALE	O3	BB	1969/11/01	SPARTA, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	PERISHO, GORDON SAMUEL	O3	XX	1967/12/31	QUINCY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	PHIPPS, JAMES L	W1	XX	1968/01/09	MATCOON, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	PILKINGTON, THOMAS HOLT	O2	XX	1966/09/19	MORTON GROVE, IL
USMC	N. Vietnam	PRICE, WILLIAM MARSHALL	O2	XX	1972/10/12	KEWANEE, IL
USA	Laos	RATTIN, DENNIS M	E4	XX	1969/10/16	BRADLEY, IL

Status Codes: AR - AWOL/Deserter/Collaborator Returnee KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only)
BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered KR - Died in Captivity, Remains Returned RR - POW Returnee
BR - Body Recovered MM - Missing (Civilians Only) XX - Presumptive Finding of Death
EE - Escape NR - Remains Returned/Remains Recovered

This Vietnam War missing personnel report was prepared by the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). Please visit our web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> for updates to this report and other official missing personnel reports.

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Continues on page 65

Military Service	Country of Casualty	Name	Loss Rank	Status	Date of Incident	Home of Record
USAF	N. Vietnam	REXROAD, RONALD R	O3	XX	1968/04/03	RANKIN, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	RIGGINS, ROBERT PAUL	O4	BB	1968/04/22	CHAMPAIGN, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	ROTH, BILLIE LEROY	E5	BB	1965/06/27	LACON, IL
USN	Laos	SAGE, LELAND CHARLES COOKE	O2	BB	1969/06/23	WALWEGAN, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SANDS, RICHARD EUGENE	E3	BB	1968/05/12	SPRINGFIELD, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SCOTT, DAVID LEE	E4	BB	1968/04/28	CARLOCK, IL
CIVILIAN	S. Vietnam	SHIMON, ALEX		MM	1972/07/12	IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	SKIBBE, DAVID WILLIAM	O1	BB	1970/03/02	DES PLAINES, IL
USAF		SMITH, JOSEPH STANLEY	O1	BB	1971/04/04	ASSUMPTION, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	STORY, JAMES GLELLON	E2	BB	1969/06/13	BERWYK, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	STPIERRE, DEAN PAUL	O3	XX	1968/05/22	KANKAKEE, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	SWANSON, JOHN W JR	O3	XX	1967/06/15	ARLINGTON, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	SWITZER, JERROLD ALLEN	E2	BB	1968/03/18	PARIS, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SYKES, DERRI	E3	KK	1968/01/09	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	TERRY, ORAL R	E3	XX	1968/05/03	MASCOUTAH, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	TROWBRIDGE, DUSTIN COWLES	O2	BB	1969/12/28	WAYNE, IL
USAF	Laos	WHITT, JAMES EDWARD	O4	BB	1972/03/23	PENFIELD, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	WILEY, RICHARD DENNIS	E4	BB	1972/06/12	DECATUR, IL

Report Totals:

Total BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered:	34
Total KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned:	2
Total MM - Missing (Civilians Only):	1
Total PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only):	0
Total XX - Presumptive Finding of Death:	31
Total:	68

End of Report

Status Codes:	AR - AWOL/Deserter/Collaborator/Returnee	KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned	PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only)
	BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered	KR - Died in Captivity, Remains Returned	RR - POW Returnee
	BR - Body Recovered	MM - Missing (Civilians Only)	XX - Presumptive Finding of Death
	EE - Escaptee	NR - Remains Returned/Remains Recovered	

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Report Prepared: 6/3/2014

Page Number: 2

VETERANS PROGRAM

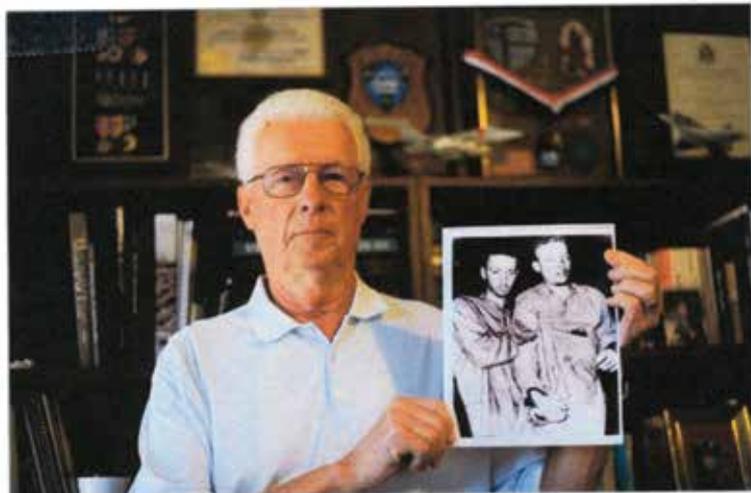
Concord Place now offers affordable senior housing that every American veteran over the age of 55 can afford. To ensure our American Heroes do not spend another day homeless.



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A Vietnam War POW takes America to task over its treatment of a Taliban POW.



Nic Coury

Phil Butler holds a picture of him and his cellmate. They were heading to Hanoi for a sham trial when he was hit in the head with a bottle, which is why his cellmate is holding him up.

Recently released prisoner of war U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is a man I can identify with. On April 20, 1965, I was flying a night combat mission in an A4C Skyhawk over what was then called North Vietnam. My own bombs malfunctioned upon release during a run on enemy trucks. They exploded just below my airplane, blowing the wings and tail section off. Instantly I was in a whirling cockpit hurtling toward Earth, over enemy territory, but managed to eject and parachute to the ground. I spent the next four days on the run through the jungle before being captured. I then spent the next 2,855 days as a captive POW in North Vietnam.

During those years I – and other POWs – endured terrible conditions and periodic torture sessions for political propaganda, public display and false confessions. We each resisted to our individual utmost but ultimately our captors extracted written confessions (ones that we made as improbable and silly as possible) from everyone.

I've been asked if I was a POW with U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. The answer is no – John McCain was a POW with me. You see, he got there two and a half years after I was captured. John and I were in the same company at the U.S. Naval Academy, so I had a prior personal relationship with him. I say this because I can't understand his hawkish attitude toward getting involved in more wars, let alone his attitude toward the prisoner exchange that led to the release of Bowe Bergdahl. I heard John say the price of exchange for Sgt. Bergdahl, five of our Taliban prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was too high because they might be dangerous when released. Maybe he has forgotten that in 1973 our country made an exchange to bring 801 of us back home.

The price of that exchange? A country.

We agreed to give up and withdraw our troops in exchange for Vietnam. Could anyone dispute that there were dangerous people in North Vietnam (maybe 30 million of them) at that time? In fact they could – and did – harm American soldiers for the next two years before we completely withdrew in 1975. So I don't hear McCain complaining about that prisoner swap.

Speaking for myself, I'm pretty happy with both of them.

No one could possibly believe the Taliban treated Bergdahl well. Reports so far indicate the Taliban confined him to total darkness in a small metal cage for weeks at a time.

They also suggest he was beaten and otherwise tortured during his nearly five years as a POW and that he was extremely ill when he was finally released. Yet there is a clatter of nonsense coming from right-wing pundits and multiple armchair warriors, writing and appearing on national TV, arguing that we should have left Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, an American POW, in Taliban hands.

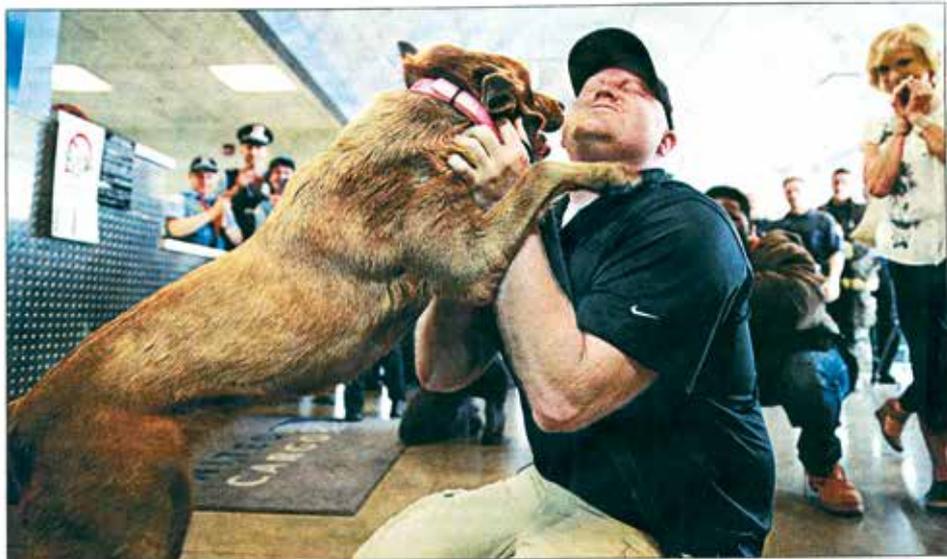
It's easy for political hacks and chicken hawk commentators to discount the value of one American soldier, especially when there is a perceived partisan political benefit to doing so. Since he was rescued, Bergdahl has been the target of constant attacks. There have been suggestions that he deserted, that he did not deserve to be rescued and that he was somehow worth less than five members of the Taliban. Even his family has had to endure violent threats and his hometown canceled a parade in his honor because of the vitriol it inspired. In my opinion this is simply un-American, unpatriotic and unconscionable.

The circumstances of Sgt. Bergdahl's departure from his unit and capture are still being investigated. And he might very well have had the same popular political views now held by a majority of Americans: that we can't win a war in Afghanistan and should get out as soon as possible. It's true that if he did hold those views, he should not have acted on them while involved in active combat duty. And tragically, some of his fellow soldiers may have faced Taliban attacks during the search for him. But none of that obviates our country's sacred obligation not to leave its fighting men and women in enemy hands. The Taliban held Bergdahl for nearly five years. Five years of brutality at the hands of our enemies.

There are real costs to war. I know that in a way that most of our politicians never will. And there are real risks; make no mistake that releasing five Taliban members was a risk. But to suggest that because there is a risk to trading five Taliban members for our own soldier we should not have done so is cowardly and un-American. Moreover, following that line would put our men and women in uniform at further risk. Why would the enemy keep captured soldiers alive if they knew we didn't value them enough to exchange enemy prisoners for them? I believe this prisoner swap for Bergdahl was brave and honorable. I am disgusted and sickened by the armchair warriors and political hacks that have come out of the woodwork to attack Bergdahl's release from captivity. The majority of them are political partisans who oppose everything the president does and they are using this young soldier as a means to attack the president.

My hope in all this is that Americans will eventually understand the truth underlying this incident, and that truth is this: We can never give up on our young men and women who we send into harm's way. The broader lesson is that we shouldn't be getting into all these needless wars, wars that we can't win or benefit from to begin with. We should use better judgment and diplomacy to avoid the terrible costs in blood and treasure. But who knows? Maybe this incident with Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl will create a greater national discussion that will bring sensibility and humanity back to our country.

To that end, I'd like to offer a personal and heartfelt note: Welcome home Bowe.



JOHN J. KIM/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Cila, a former military service dog, greets Jason Bos on Wednesday at O'Hare airport after last seeing him nearly two years ago.

WAR BUDDY REUNION

After parting in 2012, ex-soldier who didn't know if he'd ever see his furry partner again has a new housemate

BY ANDY GRIMM
AND MICHELLE MANCHER
Tribune reporters

It was a sad parting when Sgt. Jason Bos left Fort Lee in Virginia nearly two years ago and had to say goodbye to MWD Cila M389, the bomb-sniffing chocolate Lab he called Cici.

Over nearly five years, Bos and Cila — MWD stands for Military Working Dog, and M389 is the identification number tattooed in her ear — had forged a bond as they searched for roadside bombs and hidden weapons caches in Iraq, and screened sites for presidential visits across the U.S.

Their partnership ended when a back injury forced Bos to leave the Army in 2012. Cila was just 5 years old and still had time to serve, so while Bos headed home to Michigan, Cila remained on active duty.

Bos, 33, did not know if he'd ever reunite with Cila. But a month ago, he saw on Facebook that Cila was due to retire. He was thrilled when the kennel master at his former base contacted him to see if he wanted to adopt her.

"I said, 'Yes. What do I have to do?'" Bos said.

After filling out the paperwork, Bos contacted the American Humane Association and Mission K9 Rescue for help with the expense of bringing Cila from Germany.

On Wednesday, after a nine-hour flight, Cila stepped out of a travel carrier at O'Hare International Airport, where a somewhat nervous Bos was waiting.

"I hope she remembers my voice," he had said a day earlier from his home near Grand Rapids.

Any concerns were quickly erased as Cila leapt into her old partner's arms.

"Hi, baby," Bos yelled. The excited Lab rolled on her back, and Bos gave her a good belly rub.

"She looked at me, she started smelling me, she knew me," Bos said later.

How could she not? Bos and Cila had trained together for months at the military kennel at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, then served multiple overseas deployments starting in 2008. Cila was trained to sniff out explosives while off leash, responding to Bos' shouted commands and hand signals as he and other soldiers trailed dozens of yards away.

While on base, Bos often spent his off-duty time playing with Cila at the kennel. On stateside duty, which included tasks such as checking the site of a presidential visit, the handlers and their dogs bunk together in hotels.

"They tell you not to get too attached, that they're not a pet, they're a tool to help keep people safe," he said. "But it's hard."

But when the time comes for a soldier to go home, the specially trained dogs usually

stay behind.

A dog's stint in the military typically lasts until it no longer can work, at least seven years. That's what Bos was told when he asked if he could take Cila home with him after he was injured in training.

Back in Michigan, he has been taking classes at a college near the home he shares with his brother.

Now he'll have another housemate. The boyfriend of Bos' mother built Cila a dog-house, and the dog will sleep on Bos' couch, which certainly will be more welcoming than the heated concrete she slept on in the Army, Bos said.

"Her whole life has been about working. Now it's time for her to worry about just relaxing," Bos said.

As they got ready to leave O'Hare, Cila hopped into a dog bed in the SUV that would take her to her new home.

"It means everything to me," Bos said.

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LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS PHOTO

Retired Marine Cpl. William "Kyle" Carpenter was wounded in Afghanistan in 2010.

Top military honor for Marine who took grenade

BY REBECCA BRATEK
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Nearly four years ago, Cpl. William "Kyle" Carpenter jumped between a grenade and a fellow Marine while they were guarding a patrol base in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

Carpenter, now 24, suffered the brunt of the explosion, which shattered his jaw and other bones, collapsed his right lung and took his right eye. He spent more than two years at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, undergoing more than 40 surgeries.

On Thursday, President Barack Obama — who said Carpenter "displayed a heroism in the blink of an eye that will inspire for generations" — presented the retired Marine with the Medal of Honor. He is the eighth living recipient from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to be chosen for the nation's highest military honor.

"We are here because this man, this United States Marine, faced down that terrible explosive power,

that unforgiving force, with his own body," Obama said at the White House ceremony.

Carpenter and Lance Cpl. Nicholas Eufrazio were stationed on a rooftop in Marjah on Nov. 21, 2010, when their base began to take fire.

Carpenter and Eufrazio were on the rooftop alone; the rest of their platoon was in the compound below. They were protected only by a circle of sandbags, and they lay down on their backs behind the sandbags, seeking cover.

The Taliban lobbed three grenades into the base. One injured an Afghan National Army soldier; the second didn't detonate. The third landed with a "thud" near the two men on the roof.

Carpenter says he doesn't remember what happened next, but he remembers being on the rooftop with his best friend — a relationship Obama described as a "friendship forged in fire."

Other Marines in the compound said Carpenter tried to stand, lunged toward the grenade and

disappeared into the smoke. They found him lying face down.

"I think about the Marines who were with me in Marjah," Carpenter said. "Today, I accept the medal for them."

Eufrazio, as a result of a traumatic brain injury, couldn't speak for more than a year after the explosion, and his recovery continues at home in Plymouth, Mass.

Carpenter, a native of Flowood, Miss., attends the University of South Carolina. He skis and snowboards, he has sky-dived, and he ran the Marine Corps marathon in 2013.

"If any American seeks a model of the strength and resilience that define us as a people, including this newest 9/11 generation, I want you to consider Kyle," Obama said.

Obama has presented the Medal of Honor to 39 members of the armed services, 31 posthumously, in the first six years of his presidency.

Reuters contributed.

rebratek@tribune.com

Sgt. Kyle Jerome White Awarded Medal of Honor



WASHINGTON (Army News Service, May 14, 2014)—Former Sgt. Kyle Jerome White was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama at a White House ceremony yesterday, making him the sixth living Army recipient, and the 14th service member overall, to earn the medal in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

President Obama said "... Today, we pay tribute to a Soldier who embodies the courage of his generation—a young man who was a freshman in high school when the Twin Towers fell, and who just five years later became an elite paratrooper with the legendary 173rd Airborne—the Sky Soldiers." The president recounted the Nov. 9, 2007, ambush outside the village of Aranas, in which five soldiers and a Marine would perish, as White's unit of 13 Americans and a squad of Afghan soldiers descended into what was called "ambush alley." Suddenly, the chatter of AK-47s and the smoke trails of rocket-propelled grenades, known as RPGs, lit up the valley, sending shattered shards and chunks of red-hot metal and rock flying.

With nowhere to escape the three-pronged onslaught but down a steep decline, White, 1st Lt. Matthew Ferrara, Spc. Kain Schilling, Marine Sgt. Phillip Bocks and an interpreter were left stranded as the rest of the unit slid 160 feet down the mountain. The 20-year-old then-specialist emptied one 30-round clip from his M-4, but as he went to slide another into place, an RPG screamed in nearby and, "it was just lights out," as White later described. That wouldn't be

the last time that day he would be rocked by a nearby explosion. White saw his buddy Schilling trying to stay in the shade of what Schilling later recalled "as the smallest tree on earth." Schilling had been wounded severely in his right upper arm, so White sprinted to Schilling, applied a tourniquet, then saw Bocks. After four sprints and attempts to pull Bocks to cover, White was finally successful, and began administering first aid. He applied a tourniquet, but it was too late. Bocks' wounds had been too severe, and he passed away. When White looked up, he saw Schilling take another round, this time, to his left leg. Again, he sprinted to Schilling, but out of tourniquets, he used his belt and was able to once again stop the bleeding.

While the one-way battle continued, White saw his lieutenant lying face down. He ran to Ferrara's aid, but he was already dead. As White recalled in an earlier interview, he had accepted that he and Schilling weren't going to make it through this firefight. "It's just a matter of time before I'm dead," White had said. "I figured if that's going to happen, I might as well help while I can." White next secured a radio, as both his and Schilling's had been destroyed by small-arms fire. He re-



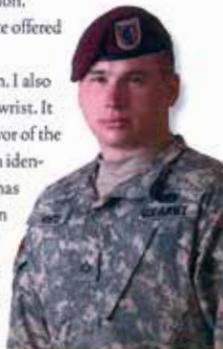
laid a situational report and called for mortars, artillery, air strikes and helicopter guns runs. Suddenly and for the second time that day, an explosion that "scrambled my brains a little bit there," said White. A friendly 120-mm mortar round had fallen a bit short of its intended target. Though struggling to keep Schilling and himself from falling asleep, White was eventually able to lay out a landing zone and assist the flight medic in hoisting all the wounded aboard. Only then did he allow himself to be medically evacuated.

Today, nearly seven years later, White and each of the surviving Soldiers of the Battle of Aranas, wears a stainless steel wristband made by one of the unit's Soldiers. Each is etched with the names of those who didn't come home: 1st Lt. Matthew C. Ferrara, Sgt. Jeffrey S. Mersman, Spc. Sean K.A. Langevin, Spc. Lester G. Roque, Pfc. Joseph M. Lancour and Marine Sgt. Phillip A. Bocks. "Kyle,

members of Chosen Company, you did your duty, and now it's time for America to do ours," said Obama. "You make us proud, and you motivate all of us to be the best we can be as Americans, as a nation."

Following the ceremony, White offered his thoughts to the media:

"I wear this medal for my team. I also wear a piece of metal around my wrist. It was given to me by another survivor of the 9 November ambush; he wears an identical one," White said. "This has made it even more precious than the medal of symbol just placed around my neck. On it are the names of six fallen brothers; they are my heroes." ✦



MEDAL OF HONOR Official Citation

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of Congress the Medal of Honor to

SPECIALIST KYLE J. WHITE UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty: Specialist Kyle J. White distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a radio telephone operator with Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade, during combat operations against an armed enemy in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on November 9, 2007. On that day, Specialist White and his comrades were returning to Bella

Outpost from a *shura* with Aranas Village elders. As the soldiers traversed a narrow path surrounded by mountainous, rocky terrain,

they were ambushed by enemy forces from elevated positions. Pinned against a steep mountain face, Specialist White and his fellow soldiers were completely exposed to enemy fire. Specialist White returned fire and was briefly knocked unconscious when a rocket-propelled grenade impacted near him. When he regained consciousness, another round impacted near him, embedding small pieces of shrapnel in his face. Shaking off his wounds, Specialist White noticed one of his comrades lying wounded nearby. Without hesitation, Specialist White exposed himself to enemy fire in order to reach the soldier and provide medical aid. After applying a tourniquet, Specialist White moved to an injured Marine, similarly providing aid and comfort until the Marine succumbed to his wounds. Specialist White then returned to the soldier and discovered that he had been wounded again.

Applying his own belt as an additional tourniquet, Specialist White was able to stem the flow of blood and save the soldier's life. Noticing that his and the other soldier's radios were inoperative, Specialist White exposed himself to enemy fire yet again in order to secure a radio from a deceased comrade. He then provided information and updates to friendly forces, allowing precision airstrikes to stifle the enemy's attack and ultimately permitting medical evacuation aircraft to rescue him, his fellow soldiers, Marines and Afghan Army soldiers. Specialist Kyle J. White's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade and the United States Army.



PURPLE HEART MAGAZINE

WASHINGTON — In the foyer of the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Va., there is a marble wall covered in stars. They represent those who have fallen in the service of the CIA. Below them, jutting out from the polished rock, is a black book embedded in a case of glass and steel. The book is a guide to the stars, giving the names of some of those who died and withholding the names of others.

On the pages of the CIA's Book of Honor are 107 hand-drawn stars organized by the years those officers died. For 2007, there is a single, anonymous star.

It belongs to Marine Maj. Douglas Alexander Zembiec.

Long thought to be an active-duty Marine when he was killed in Baghdad, Zembiec was actually serving with the CIA's paramilitary arm. While the CIA would not comment on whether Zembiec worked for the agency, former U.S. intelligence officials said in interviews that he died in an alley in Baghdad on May 11, 2007, as a member of the Special Activities Division's Ground Branch.

It was the final chapter in the life of a Marine known to many as the Lion of Fallujah. He is one of the few Americans to be simultaneously honored by the military and the CIA for his actions. Because he was working covertly, his role was never acknowledged publicly despite its mention in the 2012 book, "The Endgame," by Michael R. Gordon and Gen. Bernard E. Trainor.

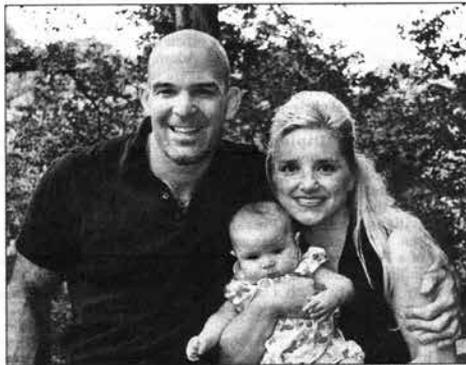
Family members and former intelligence officials say Zembiec was working with a small team of Iraqis on a "snatch and grab" operation targeting insurgents for capture. Moments after warning his men that an ambush was imminent, he was shot in the head by an enemy insurgent; he died instantly.

In the ensuing gunbattle, the Iraqis serving beside Zembiec radioed back, "Five wounded, one martyred," according to battle reports.

Top military commanders, including Gen. David Petraeus, lauded Zembiec's actions on the night he was killed, and the military dedicated a helicopter landing zone to him at Camp Victory at Baghdad International Airport in 2008. It included a white sign with Zembiec's name, his awards and the emblem of the Marine Corps.

Markedly absent: the crest of the CIA.

LION OF FALLUJAH



ZEMBIEC FAMILY PHOTO

Marine Maj. Douglas Zembiec, his wife, Pam, and their daughter, Fallyn. He is credited with saving 25 men on the night he was killed.

Fearless and beloved Marine served in elite CIA unit when he was killed on Iraq mission



MICHEL DU CILLE/WASHINGTON POST PHOTO

Marine pallbearers carry the coffin of Maj. Douglas Zembiec at Arlington National Cemetery on May 16, 2007. He died in Baghdad.

Zembiec, who was 34, is credited with saving 25 men on the night of his death, and for his heroism he was awarded the Silver Star.

"He was something else," his wife, Pam Zembiec, said at her home in Maryland. "Sometimes I thought he was born in the wrong time, like he should have been born with the Spartans."

Proud warrior

Zembiec was a warrior, and an outspoken one at that, heralding a firefight during the battle of Fallujah in 2004 as "the greatest day of my life."

Among his Marines he was known for his humility and fearlessness. He was the company commander for Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, and during the first battle of Fallujah he led from the front, rallying his men and directing fire even after being wounded. His Purple Heart would be one of 78 citations for the 139 Marines of Echo Company during that deployment.

Zembiec was also awarded the Bronze Star for valor for rushing into the middle of a machine-gun-raked street to get the attention of an Abrams tank supporting Echo Company. Abrams are equipped with small radios on the rear to allow infantrymen to talk to the tank crew while behind the safety of 60 tons of steel; but for whatever reason the radio, or "grunt phone," wasn't working, so Zembiec scaled the tank while bullets ricocheted off its hull.

After he knocked on one of the hatches repeatedly, the crew of the tank finally opened up. Zembiec then loaded a magazine of illuminated tracer rounds and began shooting from the top of the tank to mark the building his Marines were being shot from.

The tank swung its turret and without warning fired its massive 120 mm gun. The blast threw Zembiec into the air and onto the street below.

"He deserved five Bronze Stars, not one," retired Sgt. Maj. Williams Skiles said. Skiles served as Zembiec's company first sergeant during the battle of Fallujah. In a going-away plaque given to Skiles, Zembiec called him "the metal-weld" that kept the company together.

For all Zembiec's accolades, he was always more comfort-

able talking about his Marines' deeds than his own.

"My men fought like lions and killed many insurgents. The valor and courage of the Marines was magnificent," Zembiec wrote in a letter to his wife during the battle. "The Marines fought with such ferocity that any Marine who went before us would have been proud."

It was his frequent references to his Marines as lions that earned him the nickname Lion of Fallujah.

Born in Hawaii

Zembiec was born in Hawaii and raised in Albuquerque, N.M. His father, Donald Zembiec, is a retired special agent for the FBI; and his mother, Jo Ann Zembiec, once a third-grade teacher, now volunteers as the master gardener for the New Mexico Veterans' Memorial Rose Garden, as well as with other nonprofit organizations.

Zembiec attended the U.S. Naval Academy, where he rose to prominence for his prowess on the wrestling mat. He graduated in 1995 as an All-American athlete and Marine officer. Years later, Zembiec would sometimes return to the academy to coach the midshipmen on the wrestling team.

His wife included his letters in her recently published book, "Selfless Beyond Service: A Story About the Husband, Son and Father Behind the Lion of Fallujah."

"He wrote those letters because he wanted his Marines to know how much he loved them," Pam said.

And his Marines loved him back.

Shortly after Zembiec's return from Iraq, he and his father were driving separately onto Camp Pendleton, in California. When his father pulled up to the gate, the Marine on duty looked into the vehicle and asked, "Are you Captain Zembiec's father?"

In an interview at his home in New Mexico, Donald Zembiec said he nodded.

"I was with him in Fallujah," the Marine continued. "And if we had to go back in there, I'd follow him in with a spoon."

After a short stint at the Marines' Special Operations Training Group at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2005, Douglas Zembiec decided to apply for a coveted slot in the Ground Branch of the CIA's Special Activities Division.

The position is extremely competitive, and the CIA accepts only one Marine Special Operations officer every few

"He went for this with all of his guts and glory," his wife said. "I've never seen this man stressed in my life until he started interviewing for this. He was pacing, and he couldn't sleep."

His parents saw the move to the CIA as a strategic one to stay in a combat-related role and avoid a staff position.

"He wanted to be at the tip of the spear," Jo Ann Zembiec said. He was accepted into the program and was sent to the agency from the Marines for a two-year assignment.

On loan to CIA

Shortly afterward, he deployed to Afghanistan. His work with the CIA was the first experience Pam Zembiec had as a military spouse after they married in April 2005.

"The three months gone, three months back seemed like a cake ride for me," Pam said, referring to the length of her husband's deployments with the agency.

Because of the secrecy of the Ground Branch's operations, Zembiec rarely talked about the job, and Pam followed suit, letting the unknown form a layer of normalcy as she raised their newborn daughter, Fallyn, and their Labrador retriever, Valhalla, outside Annapolis.

"I wouldn't have been able to focus on our life if I would have known," Pam said. "Because he didn't tell me anything, I never for a second worried about him. I never thought he was in any kind of danger. He was smart; he knew what he was doing. He was trained."

"I always expected someone to come to the door and tell me that Doug had been in a motorcycle accident," his mother said. "I never thought he would be killed in combat."

In March 2007, Doug Zembiec volunteered to deploy again, this time to Iraq, where he was able to call Pam almost every day.

"The last thing Doug said to me on the phone, I'll never forget it," Pam said. "Wait a minute, wait a minute, I have to tell you something before I hang up. Babe, you should see what we're doing with the Iraqi people and what we're doing to help them. Things are getting better over here."

"He was elated; he was crazy about his job."

That was the morning of May 11, 2007.

Looking to lay blame

Four people came to Pam's door that night. One of them was Col. John Ripley, a mentor to Doug Zembiec, a family friend and a Marine legend.

"When the guys came to tell me that night ... I was very angry," Pam Zembiec said. "At the time I wanted to blame someone, and I blamed (the fact) that he wasn't with his Marines."

Zembiec's job with the CIA meant that he was working with other Special Operations types and Iraqis, not the Marines with whom he had fought during his earlier deployment to Fallujah.

"I saw a lot of tough guys crying in that house," said Elliot Ackerman, a friend who was in Marine Special Operations training when Zembiec was killed. "They cried for Doug, but because of where we were in the war I think they cried for themselves too."

The last time Ackerman saw Zembiec was in early 2007 when his friend had driven through the night from the District of Columbia to North Carolina so they could do dive training together. They stayed up into the early hours of the morning, catching up, until it was time to do the dive. Before they left, Ackerman offered Zembiec breakfast because hadn't eaten in the past 12 hours.

"And all he wanted was a glass of milk," Ackerman said. "A big glass of milk."

It took years for Pam's anger to subside. She felt she had been forced to remain silent about her husband's involvement even as movies like "Zero Dark Thirty" trumpeted the CIA's operation to kill Osama bin Laden. The film also referenced the Ground Branch.

"I'm kind of irritated: Why did I have to lie about Doug, and why he was killed, when the whole world knows about Ground Branch?" his wife asked. "It's time to say, 'Hey, this is what he was doing when he was killed: He was in charge of an elite group.'"

Todd Ebitz, a CIA spokesman, said, "Consistent with long-standing practice, we do not comment on who may or may not have been honored anonymously with a star on the agency's Memorial Wall."

Weeks after his death and his burial in Arlington National Cemetery, Pam and the rest of Doug Zembiec's family were invited to a private ceremony in then-CIA Director Michael Hayden's office on the seventh floor of headquarters in Langley. Hayden quietly thanked them for Zembiec's service. In attendance were some of the men who were serving with him when he was killed, along with Shannon Spann, the wife of Johnny Spann, a former Marine and the first American killed in Afghanistan, in November 2001. Spann, like Zembiec, was in the CIA's Special Activities Division.

Later, the CIA's next director, Leon Panetta, presented Pam Zembiec with the anonymous star that was subsequently chiseled into the Memorial Wall and inscribed in the Book of Honor.

Today, she has come to terms with her husband's death and her feelings toward the agency. She said she plans to return to CIA headquarters in three years to mark the 10th anniversary of his death at his star.

"It's nobody's fault," she said. "Doug chose this path. He died doing what he loved, and he made a difference. And that's what matters."

Adam Goldman, Julie Tate and Greg Miller contributed.

SOLDIER MISSING FROM WWII ACCOUNTED FOR

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing since World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Pfc. Bernard Gavrin, 29, of Brooklyn, N.Y., will be buried on Sep. 12, in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C. On June 15, 1944, as part of an Allied strategic goal to secure the Mariana Islands, U.S. forces were ordered to occupy Saipan. After a month of intense fighting, enemy forces conducted a suicide assault, known as a banzai attack. This was designed to inflict as many casualties as possible against the 105th Infantry Regiment (IR), 27th Infantry Division (ID). During these attacks, elements of the 105th IR sustained heavy losses, with more than 900 soldiers killed or injured. Gavrin was reported missing in action on July 7, 1944.

On July 8, 1945, with no new information concerning Gavrin or 21 other service members of the 105th IR, investigators issued a presumptive finding of death. In November 1948, the American Graves Registration Services (AGRS) reviewed the circumstances of Gavrin's loss and concluded his remains were non-recoverable.

In September 2011, a private archaeological company excavated land near Achugao Village, Saipan, and uncovered human remains of an American serviceman from the July 7, 1944, battle. These remains were identified as Army Pvt. William Yawney, 23, of Freemansburg, Pa.

In September 2013, a Japanese non-governmental organization interested in recovering Japanese soldiers from the battle in Saipan, alongside the same private archaeological company from 2011, recovered human remains and personal effects belonging to American servicemen, from an unmarked burial located a few meters from the 2011 excavation site. The remains were handed over to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC).

In the identification of Gavrin's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Gavrin's cousin. Along with Gavrin, Army Pfc. Richard L. Bean, 24, of Manassas, Va., was accounted for.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans, who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

U.S. Department of Defense
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)

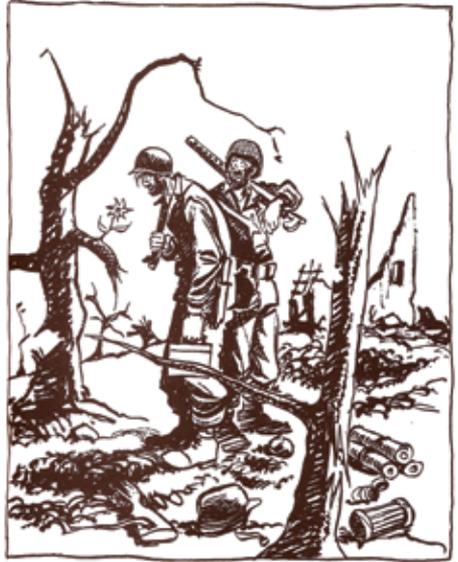
Updates from the U.S. Department of Defense

Bill Mauldin

Cartoonist (creator of "Willie and Joe" of WWII fame)



"I need a couple guys what don't owe me no money for a little routine patrol."



"Spring is here."



Born in 1921, Bill Mauldin came of age in the People's Century, when ordinary men and women grappled with the global crises of depression and war. He chronicled their lives in cartoons and, in so doing, ennobled both his subjects and his craft.

A polymath who would have succeeded in almost any field, Bill chose cartooning for both temperamental and financial reasons. His impoverished upbringing in the desert Southwest left him with a powerful independent streak and a reflexive sympathy for the underdog. "I was born a troublemaker and might as well earn a living a tit," he reasoned at age 17 when he decided to take up political cartooning as a career. He managed one year at the

Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.

Then, in 1940, the unemployed cartoonist joined the Army. There, he cartooned one afternoon a week for the 45th Division News. Some brass bristled at the insubordination of his humor, but enlisted men loved it. Bill Mauldin was already a 45th Division celebrity when he landed in Sicily in July 1943.

The strain of combat soon engraved itself on his





cartoons, as it did the men. After his transfer to the Stars and Stripes in early 1944, Bill created two war-weary “dogfaces” named Willie and Joe who captured the sardonic humor of the front. When “Up Front ...by Mauldin” was syndicated back home in April of that year, it caused a sensation. Arm chair followers of the war had never seen their fighting men depicted as anything but pious, clean-cut warriors.



In 1945, the twenty-three-year-old cartoonist returned home the youngest Pulitzer Prize winner in history, the author of a best-selling book, and the most famous enlisted man in the United States Army. He stunned fans by using his syndicated feature as a bully pulpit to protest racial discrimination and anti-communist hysteria. In 1948, after doing battle with United Features Syndicate over its censorship of his work, Bill Mauldin retired from cartooning altogether.

Over the next decade, he wrote articles and books, starred in Hollywood movies, covered Korea as a war correspondent, piloted airplanes, ran for Congress, and raised a family. In 1958, he turned to cartooning at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Within

a year, he won his second Pulitzer Prize. In 1962, he moved to the Chicago Sun-Times and saw his syndication reach 300 papers. His bold cartoons for Civil Rights and against the Vietnam War made him a legend to a whole new generation of fans.

Bill Mauldin retired from cartooning in 1991 after an injury to his drawing hand. Stricken by Alzheimer’s disease, he entered a nursing home in 2002 . In the months before he died, old veterans and their relatives sent him over 10,000 cards and letters They thanked him for keeping their humanity alive during that most savage of wars. These tributes, more than any honor or award, rank Bill Mauldin as one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century.

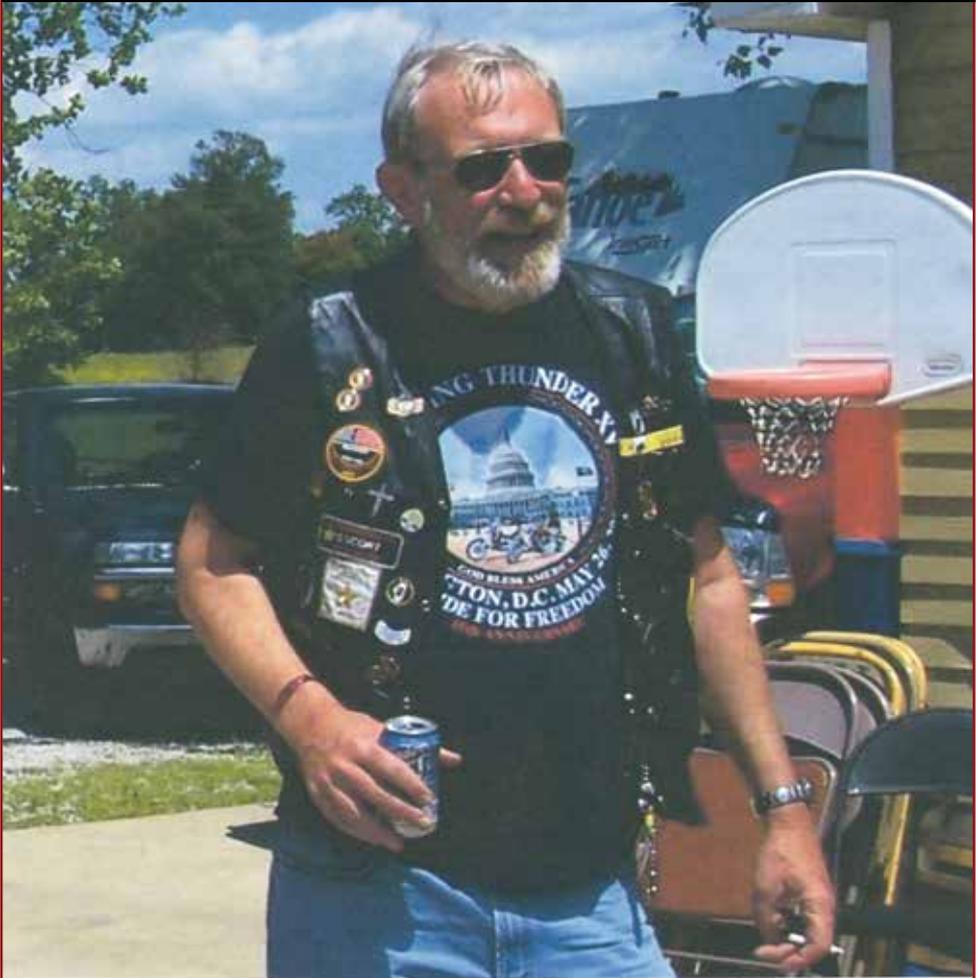


Bill Mauldin died on January 22, 2003. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Todd DePastino

Todd DePastino is the author of *The Man Who Lived His Life Backward: A Biography of Bill Mauldin* to be published by W.W. Norton in October, 2007, among others. He lives and works in Pittsburgh.

IN LOVING MEMORY



In loving memory of our Rolling Thunder Brother, Larry "Roadkill" Smith who went to be with The Lord June 9th, 2014. Larry served in the Marine Corps from 1966 to 1972 having spent 3 tours of duty in Vietnam with the First Radio Battalion, III Marine Amphibious Force. He was awarded the Navy commendation Medal and the Bronze Star both with the combat "V". He cared deeply about veterans especially POW's and MIA's and he will be missed deeply. Ride free Brother.

Vietnam War Memorial

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 36 years since the last casualties.

Beginning at the apex on panel 1E and going out to the end of the East wall, appearing to recede into the earth (numbered 70E- May 25, 1968); then resuming at the end of the West wall, as the wall emerges from the earth (numbered 70W - continuing May 25, 1968) and ending with a date in 1975. Thus the war's beginning and end meet. The war is complete, coming full circle, yet broken by the earth that bounds the angle's open side and contained within the earth itself.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of the North Weymouth, Mass. listed by the U.S. Department of defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall. 39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger. The largest age group, 8,283 were just 19 years old. 3,103 were 18 years old. 12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old. One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old. 997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam. 1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam. 31 sets of brothers are on the Wall. Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons. 54 soldiers on the Wall attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school. 8 Women are on the Wall. Nursing the wounded.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall. Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons. West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. there are 711 West Virginians on the Wall. The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses on the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. they lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 - 245 deaths. The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred. That's 2,415 dead in a single month.

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 29, 2012

Presidential Proclamation -- Vietnam Veterans Day

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

On January 12, 1962, United States Army pilots lifted more than 1,000 South Vietnamese service members over jungle and underbrush to capture a National Liberation Front stronghold near Saigon. Operation Chopper marked America's first combat mission against the Viet Cong, and the beginning of one of our longest and most challenging wars. Through more than a decade of conflict that tested the fabric of our Nation, the service of our men and women in uniform stood true. Fifty years after that fateful mission, we honor the more than 3 million Americans who served, we pay tribute to those we have laid to rest, and we reaffirm our dedication to showing a generation of veterans the respect and support of a grateful Nation.

The Vietnam War is a story of service members of different backgrounds, colors, and creeds who came together to complete a daunting mission. It is a story of Americans from every corner of our Nation who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved. It is a story of patriots who braved the line of fire, who cast themselves into harm's way to save a friend, who fought hour after hour, day after day to preserve the liberties we hold dear. From Ia Drang to Hue, they won every major battle of the war and upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

Eleven years of combat left their imprint on a generation. Thousands returned home bearing shrapnel and scars; still more were burdened by the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress, of Agent Orange, of memories that would never fade. More than 58,000 laid down their lives in service to our Nation. Now and forever, their names are etched into two faces of black granite, a lasting memorial to those who bore conflict's greatest cost.

Our veterans answered our country's call and served with honor, and on March 29, 1973, the last of our troops left Vietnam. Yet, in one of the war's most profound tragedies, many of these men and women came home to be shunned or neglected -- to face treatment unbefitting their courage and a welcome unworthy of their example. We must never let this happen again. Today, we reaffirm one of our most fundamental obligations: to show all who have worn the uniform of the United States the respect and dignity they deserve, and to honor their sacrifice by serving them as well as they served us. Half a century after those helicopters swept off the ground and into the annals of history, we pay tribute to the fallen, the missing, the wounded, the millions who served, and the millions more who awaited their return. Our Nation stands stronger for their service, and on Vietnam Veterans Day, we honor their proud legacy with our deepest gratitude.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War.

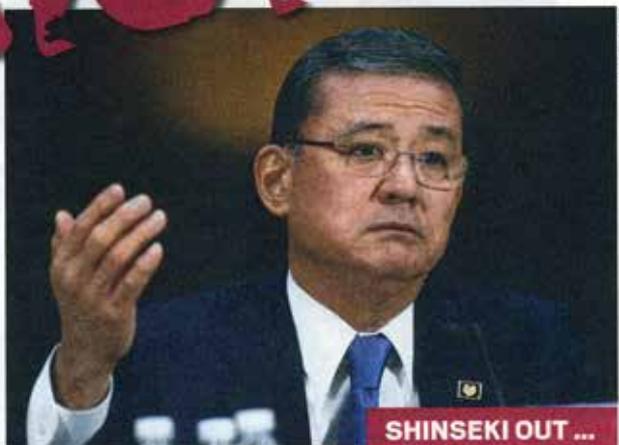
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

VA IN CRISIS



Charges of secret waiting lists and overly long delays for veterans seeking treatment at VA's Phoenix Health Care System and elsewhere caused a firestorm. Here are the details of what transpired in Phoenix, as well as what is being done to solve the problem. BY TIM DYHOUSE



Eric Shinseki withstood a firestorm of criticism that eventually led to his resignation May 30. The former Army general resigned after the VA Office of Inspector General investigated charges of "gross mismanagement" at VA's Phoenix Health Care System.

In its initial report about the scandal at VA's Phoenix Health Care System (HCS), VA's Office of Inspector General (IG) divulged that it had uncovered evidence of "significant delays in access to care." Those delays, the report stated, "negatively impacted the quality of care."

Even more damning, the May 28 report noted that the investigation had "confirmed that inappropriate scheduling practices are systemic throughout" VA's network of hospitals and clinics.

What's most troubling, though, is that the IG investigated charges that VA staff members put the well-being of patients at risk in the pursuit of performance awards and financial bonuses.

"Allegations at the Phoenix HCS include gross mismanagement of VA resources and criminal misconduct by VA

senior hospital leadership, creating systemic patient safety issues and possible wrongful deaths," according to the report.

The IG stressed that its review of the Phoenix HCS—which includes the VA medical center in Phoenix and six community clinics—would be "comprehensive." Specifically, that includes examining medical records, business practices and procedures, as well as conducting "numerous" personnel interviews.

As of early June, the IG had examined a sample of 226 medical appointments at the Phoenix HCS. The facility officially reported that these patients waited on average 24 days for their first primary care appointment, and 43% waited more than 14 days. But IG's investigation uncov-

ered a much different reality. The actual average wait time was 115 days, with more than 84% waiting more than 14 days.

The IG's early investigation focused on three main questions:

- Did staff purposely omit veterans names from its electronic waiting list?
- If so, at whose direction?
- Were the deaths of any veterans omitted from wait lists attributable to delays in care?

IG identified 1,700 vets (35 of whom had died as of June 6) who were waiting for a primary care appointment but were not on the facility's electronic waiting list. According to VA's rules in place, these vets were not reported as waiting because they were not on the official list.

This is really at the heart of the potential scandal in Phoenix, and—what is becoming clearer—throughout VA's entire health care system.

"A direct consequence of not appropriately placing veterans on EWLs (electronic wait lists) is that the Phoenix HCS leadership significantly understated the time new patients waited for their primary care appointment in their FY2013 performance appraisal accomplishments, which is one of the factors considered for awards and salary increases," according to the IG report.

Other allegations made against VA staff in Phoenix include "mismanagement, inappropriate hiring decisions, sexual harassment and bullying behavior by mid- and senior-level managers."

FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

IG concluded its report with five recommendations for the new VA secretary:

- Provide appropriate health care to the 1,700 veterans in the Phoenix system who had been excluded from wait lists.
- Identify veterans in the Phoenix system who may be at the greatest risk because of a delay in the delivery of health care.
- Conduct a nationwide review of veterans on wait lists.
- Prepare and release a nationwide report on new enrollee appointment requests.
- Direct leadership at all VA facilities to ensure that all newly enrolled vets have received care or are shown on the facility's electronic waiting list.

At the time of the report, IG had deployed or was planning to deploy "rapid response teams" to 69 VA medical facilities. These teams had already uncovered "instances of manipulation of VA data that distort the legitimacy of reported waiting times." When appropriate, IG says it will assign blame to individuals and report them to the Department of Justice.

ACCELERATING APPOINTMENTS

In an effort to speed up the process of veterans seeing a doctor, VA launched the *Accelerating Access to Care Initiative* on May 23 (see internal audit results in *Washington Wire*, page 13). In the first phase, all VA health care facilities were to review their capacities in order to

provide veterans medical appointments "when, and in the manner, they want them."

The reviews will examine if

- Primary care clinics are correctly sized and productive.
- Clinic hours can be extended on nights and weekends.
- Health care providers can be eligible for overtime pay.
- Private health care firms in the surrounding communities can provide a veteran's requested care.

The goal is to improve access to care for patients in VA's system while also offering the "flexibility to use private sector care" when needed (see right).

Another aspect of the plan is to attempt to accommodate patients. Each VA facility will make at least three attempts to contact any patient new to VA care or new



Acting VA Secretary Sloan D. Gibson, shown here in a Nov. 6, 2013, photo, was appointed temporarily to head the VA after Shinseki's departure.

to a particular clinic who is scheduled for an appointment more than 30 days out or is on the electronic wait list.

VA will ask the patient if he or she wishes to be seen sooner. If so, and the capacity and resources exist, VA will reschedule a new appointment. If VA resources are not available, then "non-VA medical care referral will begin."

In addition, VA facilities will review their electronic wait lists daily for cancelled appointments and contact veterans who might be interested in being seen earlier.

Facilities also will be required to submit a report every other week to VA about their clinic capacities and productivity, the status of the electronic wait list

and non-VA care authorizations.

VA said in late May that it should take at least 90 days for facilities to contact patients and reschedule appointments. These new practices will become a regular feature of "normal VA business."

PRIVATE CARE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

One solution for accelerating the pace of appointments is to rely on private health care, paid for by VA, to treat veterans. VA does this now when a veteran's local VA medical center or clinic is too full, does not provide the specific service or the veteran lives too far from a VA facility.

"We are using our current authority to immediately provide care in the community, to include primary care," acting VA Secretary Sloan D. Gibson said in early June. "In Phoenix, VA is working to award a contract which will extend the ability to use non-VA providers in the community for primary care."

Eligibility for private care is complex and varies for non-service connected vets. For more information, visit www.nonvacare.va.gov/.

Here are some statistics released by VA about non-VA health care.

- Currently, some 9%-10% of VA's budget for health care costs is for non-VA care.
- From 2008-13, non-VA care outpatient visits grew from 8.9 million to 15.3 million, a 72% increase.
- In fiscal year 2013, VA provided non-VA care to more than 1 million veterans at a cost of \$4.8 billion, an increase of \$4.5 billion from the prior year.
- From October 2013 to April 2014, VA provided non-VA medical care to some 904,714 veterans at a cost of \$3.38 billion.

In addition, legislation passed in the House and Senate that aims to open up more access for VA patients. It proposes a two-year program that would allow vets to seek private health care if they live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or have been waiting more than 30 days for treatment (see *Issues Up Front*, page 10).

It also would authorize construction of 26 medical facilities in 18 states and provide \$500 million to hire more doctors and other health care providers.

At press time, the bills were being reconciled to send one package to the President for signing.

E-MAIL magazine@vfw.org

CHARLES M. PROVINCE



Charles M. Province, a veteran of the US Army, is the sole and single Founder and President of The George S. Patton, Jr. Historical Society. He is the author of “The Unknown Patton”, “Patton’s Third Army”, and “Patton’s One-Minute Messages”

More information is available on his website, “[The Patton Society](#)” particularly on the page, “[Northeast Kansas Korean War Memorial](#)” where Province’s poem is displayed.

IT IS THE SOLDIER

It is the Soldier, not the minister Who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the Soldier, not the reporter Who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the Soldier, not the poet Who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the Soldier, not the campus organizer Who has given us freedom to protest.

It is the Soldier, not the lawyer Who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the Soldier, not the politician Who has given us the right to vote.

It is the Soldier who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag, And whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protester to burn the flag.

©Copyright 1970, 2005 by Charles M. Province



WCPF MISSION

Our mission is to take an active role in helping those less fortunate to find stability while providing positive opportunities needed to live their lives with dignity and pride.

WCPF has partnered with Concord Place Assisted Living Community in Northlake, IL to provide a warm safe place for homeless and in-need Veterans to live. As our Veterans needs are on-going continued support of this project is greatly needed.

JOIN US WITH OUR MISSION TO PROVIDE A HOME FOR A VETERAN IN NEED!

DONATE TO THE VETERAN PROJECT

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History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1970, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida, TIMES-UNION, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China (PRC), as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations members states. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he and an Annin advertising agency employee, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

On March 9, 1989, an official League flag that flew over the White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day 1988 was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will stand as a powerful symbol of national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation".

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982.

Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act required that the League's POW/MIA flag fly six days each year: Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. It must be displayed at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the headquarters of the Selective Service System, major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all Federal cemeteries and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service. In addition to the specific dates stipulated, the Department of Veterans Affairs voluntarily displays our POW/MIA flag 24/7, and the National Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans and World War II Memorials were all recently required by Congress to display the POW/MIA flag daily, as do many State Capitols and other locations across the country.



The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducts global search, recovery and laboratory operations to identify unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts in order to support the Department of Defense's personnel accounting efforts.

The command is located on the island of Oahu in Hawaii and was activated Oct. 1, 2003. In June 2013 JPAC opened a satellite laboratory at Offutt AFB, Neb. Employing more than 500 joint military and civilian personnel, JPAC continues its search for the fullest possible accounting of the more than 83,000 Americans still unaccounted for from past conflicts.

The laboratory portion of JPAC, referred to as the Central Identification Laboratory, is the largest and most diverse forensic skeletal laboratory in the world. The command maintains three permanent detachments to assist with command and control, logistics and in-country support during investigation and recovery operations. Detachment One is located in Bangkok, Thailand; Detachment Two in Hanoi, Vietnam and Detachment Three in Vientiane, Laos. JPAC also maintains a liaison officer on Miesau Army Depot, Germany to help planning, execution, logistical and administrative support for JPAC operations in Europe.

In order to facilitate logistical support to teams, JPAC maintains eight storage facilities throughout Southeast Asia, Europe and the Pacific. Having these facilities strategically placed around the world minimizes costs and provides quick access to supplies.

The core of JPAC's day-to-day operations involves researching case files, investigating leads, excavating sites and identifying Americans who were killed in action, but were never brought home.

This process involves close coordination with U.S. agencies involved in the POW/MIA issue, including the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, the Armed Forces mortuary affairs offices, U. S. Pacific Command, Department of State, the Joint Staff, Defense Intelligence Agency, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory and the U.S. Air Force's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory.

In order to ensure mission success and the return of unaccounted- for Americans, JPAC routinely engages in technical negotiations and talks with representatives of foreign governments to promote and maintain positive in-country conditions wherever JPAC teams deploy.

Message from the National Executive Director

March 2013

Dear Supporters:

Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. was created in 2007 to start a fund from which we could address the needs of Veterans, our active duty Military and their families who have fallen between the cracks and have not received the help that they deserve. Often, our returning Troops are receiving quality medical care and support from the VA. However, too many times “the system” fails to meet their critical needs for one reason or another.

Our National organization with all of our state chapters are working tirelessly to keep Veteran awareness at a high level. We have been able to address many Veteran’s problems as they arise and help advance their causes with legislative efforts. Regrettably, sometimes we are simply unable to meet the needs of many Veterans because of bureaucratic delay or systemic shortcomings.

That is where Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. comes in. It is a tax exempt corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS and we are there to help when all else fails. You can learn more about Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. from our brochure or by contacting Rolling Thunder®, Inc. National or any local Rolling Thunder®, Inc. Chapter. Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. is one of the most effective non-profit Veteran’s organization in the country, giving 95% of all donations received directly to Veterans in need. Spread the word and help disabled Veterans and their families. We need your help in raising funds for Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. so we can help more Veterans in need, our active duty Military and their families.

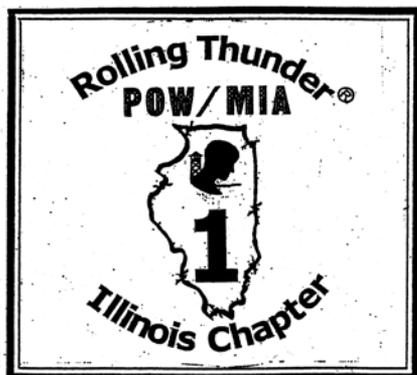
Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. is proud to be one of our country’s leading Veterans non-profits. Our mission is getting 95% of all donations directly to Veterans who apply for assistance. Please donate today by clicking on the above PayPal Link.

Thank you in advance, for your support to Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. in our Mission to help America’s Veterans.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Artie Muller Founder/Executive Director





Rolling Thunder

by Marsha Burks Megehee

**A thundering vigil of truth, trust and honor
Of brothers chained, forgotten and denied
Thank God the sounds of Rolling Thunder
Grow louder than the presidents who lied.**

**Forgotten heroes, made to be remembered
By a nation that sacrificed their souls to war
This roaring fire of freedom, from just an ember
A brother's promise - brought from near and far.**

**A parade of truth, Memorial Bridge is sighted
Old Glory's promise flying in the wind
Tattooed Angels, CEO's, GI Joes united
Cry "Freedom! We have not forgotten them!"**

**The Run to The Wall where many secrets slumber
Names, roses, gifts and loved one's tears
On Capitol Hill they're only just a number
Lost names no politician ever hears.**

**They thunder past the bridge at Arlington
Phantom soldier coffins, row on row
False tombs holding paper fathers, sons
While secret sins of betrayal rest below.**

**Past the White House, flag of POW/MIAs
Somber Black, head bowed, a prisoner of the past
Rolling Thunder's promise will never go away
Until their missing brothers - come home at last. . .**

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Rolling Thunder recognized for helping Veterans

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter One was honored by the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs for the group's efforts to help Illinois veterans and POW/MIA awareness.

At right: IDVA Director Erica Borggren presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter One for providing LaSalle Veterans Home with a medical transport van

and other needed items. Representing the chapter were members John Mikuski, Bill Houghtaling, Dominic Ruggerio and Jim Murray.

MSHV co-founder and board president, Bob Adams: "The Midwest Shelter has been blessed in many ways throughout the years by veterans organizations that have given of their time, talent and treasure to make sure we are able to leave no hero behind to homelessness, joblessness and poverty. Among the first and continuous contributors is Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter One. Since we opened in 2007, Rolling Thunder has contributed more than \$36,000 to our organization. They have held food and clothing drives. Each year they invite our veterans to their annual Christmas Party and shower them with gifts. These wonderful men and women show their fidelity to their brothers and sisters in need by being a vital source of support for MSHV. Words cannot properly express our gratitude for their efforts."



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Rolling Thunder chapter worked to spread awareness on POW reacts to release

POSTED 9:32 PM, MAY 31, 2014, BY WGN WEB DESK AND MAGGIE CARLO
UPDATED AT 04:15PM, JUNE 1, 2014

Raising awareness about POW Bowe Bergdahl has been a mission of the Warrenville Rolling Thunder since Bowe was captured in 2009.

Billboards, bumper stickers, t-shirts and banners are just some of the ways the men and women of this chapter have been spreading Bowe's story. So you can imagine when they got word Bowe had been rescued by Special Forces they were overjoyed.

"This is better than anybody could have expected, like I said, honestly I thought we were going to get this guy home in a body bag and for him to come home alive that's the greatest thing it should set a precedent lets go after the other POWs that we know are still alive from the other wars."

Dennis Reiter is one of the founding members of the Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 from Warrenville. Their major mission is to publicize POW-MIA issues. For the last 5 years they have been working around Illinois and the country to raise awareness about Prisoner of War Bowe Burgdahl's.

"It was important for us to kind of keep it alive because we were afraid if we didn't say anything no one would." Saturday word of Bowe's rescue spread quickly among the members of Rolling Thunder Warrenville. "He said yes he is released, and I just sat down be honest with you, I cried so."

Bill Sharpness is a Vietnam Veteran who joined the Rolling Thunder about 10 years ago, it meant visiting a painful part of his past, but it also meant healing a part of him.

"It was always on my mind the POW issue I always had this guilty feeling and I met some members of the Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 Illinois and they were very dedicated it helped me."

And although there is much joy today for Bowe and his family, Bill and his fellow members of the Rolling Thunder are determined to not forget about other prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

"The POW/MIA issue to keep it alive is our mission we won't forget them and just the thought of the families they don't know what happened it's not right."

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FACT SHEET

Incorporated in 1995, Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. is a class 501(c)(4) non-profit organization with over 90 chartered chapters throughout the United States and members abroad. While many members of Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. are veterans and many ride motorcycles, neither qualification is a prerequisite. Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. members are old and young, men and women, veterans and non-veterans. All are united in the cause to bring full accountability for the Prisoners Of War-Missing In Action (POW/MIA) of all wars, reminding the government, the media and the public by our watchwords: "We Will Not Forget."

The Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. Story

In the fall of 1987, Artie Muller and Ray Manzo, two Vietnam veterans met to discuss their personal concerns about the POW/MIA's from the Vietnam War. Having honorably served their country and having taken an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies..." and to "bear true faith and allegiance to the same," they were deeply troubled by the abhorrent neglect of attention given to those who did not make it out with their lives or their freedom. These veterans discussed the more than 10,000 reported sightings of live Americans living in dismal captivity. Intelligence reports of these sightings were generally ignored by the government and mainstream press.

The First Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. Demonstration

The Founders of Rolling Thunder[®], Inc., Artie Muller and Ray Manzo, were ordinary men who understood that they had a right to have their voices heard and proceeded to lay down the plans for a gathering in Washington, D.C. during the 1988 Memorial Day weekend. They reached out to their families, fellow veterans and veteran's advocates to unify and form a march and demonstration in the nation's Capital. Their arrival would be announced by the roar of their motorcycles, a sound not unlike the 1965 bombing campaign against North Vietnam dubbed Operation Rolling Thunder. Hence, they would call themselves "Rolling Thunder[®], Inc." a title that would endure time and be trademarked in 1990. Word spread quickly and by Memorial Day weekend in 1988, approximately 2,500 motorcycles from all over the country converged on Washington, D.C. to demand from our leaders a full accounting of all POW/MIA's. As the Founders of Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. made their stand that day in front of the Capitol, they reflected thankfully for the people who came in support of the POW/MIA's and for the unity that was felt. This was the first Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. demonstration. Only until ALL POW/MIA's ARE ACCOUNTED FOR, it will not be their last. On that day, the foundation was laid for the annual "Ride for Freedom" to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall (also referred to as the "Ride to the Wall"). The number of participants/spectators in the Memorial Day weekend Ride for Freedom has grown from 2,500 to an estimated 900,000.

VETERAN & COMMUNITY SERVICE

In 2007, Rolling Thunder[®] Charities, Inc. was established as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, non-profit organization which enables individuals and corporations to receive a tax deduction for funds donated to Rolling Thunder[®] Charities, Inc. These funds are used for veterans, active duty military and their families in need of help. No officers of Rolling Thunder[®] Charities, Inc. receive compensation; we all donate our time.

- Rolling Thunder[®] Charities, Inc. spends hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in financial aid, food, clothing and other essentials to veterans, homeless veterans and veterans' families in need, women's crisis centers and toys for children.
- In 2005, Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. united with the National Alliance of POW/MIA Families to petition the U.S. Government to use the designation "Prisoner of War/Missing in Action" (POW/MIA) — a designation recognized by the Geneva Conventions — not "Missing/Captured". This will ensure that prisoners' rights and protections remain consistent under the Geneva Conventions.
- Expenditures exceed over half a million dollars a year, nationwide, to educate the public and increase awareness about the POW/MIA issue and other injustices suffered

by veterans. The organization regularly donates POW/MIA flags to local area schools, youth groups, non-profit organizations, special interest groups and organizes flag raising ceremonies. Veterans speak to youth groups about the honor of serving their country and educating them about the POW/MIA issue.

- Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. sponsors search missions into Southeast Asia for POW/MIAs and the remains of those killed in action.
- Thousands of hours are logged in by Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. members at local VA hospitals nationwide. Members visit and provide moral support to nursing home veterans and patients suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. helped facilitate the publishing of a POW/MIA U.S. postage stamp through the U.S. Postal Service that displayed dog tags with the declaration – “POW & MIA - NEVER FORGOTTEN”
- Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. participated in the dedication of the World War II Memorial in 2004 and assisted with organizing the World War II parade that took place on that historic date.

LEGISLATION

Rolling Thunder[®], Inc. has advocated and/or co-authored legislation to improve the POW/MIA issue, veterans’ benefits, concerns and interests as follows:

House Resolution 111

Since 2007 we continue to lobby Congress to establish a Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs. The Committee would conduct a full investigation of all unresolved matters relating to any United States POW/MIAs unaccounted for from the Iraqi War, Afghanistan, Gulf War, Vietnam War, the Korean War, Cold War and WWII.

Respect for Fallen Heroes Act of 2006 (H.R. 5037) (Bill Summary) (PUBLIC LAW 109-228) Legislation to prohibit certain demonstrations at cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration at Arlington National Cemetery and for other purposes. On May 24, 2006 it passed the Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent. The House agreed to suspend the rules and agreed to the Senate amendment by voice vote on that same day. On May 29, 2006 the bill was signed by the President.

Veterans’ Housing Opportunity & Benefits Improvement Act of 2006 (S.1235) (Bill Summary)

Legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by the family member and to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans; make modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training within the Department of Labor; provide Life and Health Insurance coverage to certain veterans and their family members; and for other purposes.

Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006 (H.R. 1070) (Bill Summary) (S.3421-PUBLIC LAW 109-461)

Sec. 502 Department of Veterans Affairs goals for participation by small businesses owned and controlled by Veterans in procurement contracts. Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Members of the House should actively engage with employers and the American public, to encourage the hiring of members and former members of the Armed Forces who were wounded in service and facing transition to civilian life.

Veteran-Owned Small Business Promotion Act of 2005 (H.R. 3082) (Bill Summary)

Legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to require that nine percent of procurement contracts entered into by the Department of Veterans Affairs be awarded to small business concerns owned by veterans, and for other purposes. Passed House on July 24, 2006 by unanimous voice.

Persian Gulf War POW/MIA Accountability Act of 2002 (S.1339)

First introduced by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colorado) in August 2, 2001, the legislation amends the Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000 which was signed into law in November of 2001. That law provides for the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of certain foreign countries in which American Vietnam POW/MIA's or American Korean War POW/MIA's may be present, if those nationals assist in returning POW/MIA's alive. The new law extends the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of Iraq or the greater Middle East region. It provides for the International Broadcasting Bureau, which includes the Voice of America, to broadcast information about the law in the Middle East. The necessity of this legislation is demonstrated by the case of Jessica Lynch and six other POW's returned alive. SSgt. Matt Maupin (Army) captured 4/9/04, remains found, identified and returned 3/30/08, as well as Pfc. Byron W. Fouty (Army) and Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez (Army), both captured 5/12/07 remains found, identified and returned 07/10/08.

The POW/MIA Memorial Flag Act of 2001 (S.1226)

This bill was signed into legislation by President George W. Bush in part due to Rolling Thunder®, Inc. lobbying efforts. The main force behind this bill was Senator Campbell and Congressman Dan Burton. Rolling Thunder, Inc. was highly instrumental in passing legislation to ensure that the POW/MIA flag will fly below the American Flag any day the American flag is flown in Washington, D.C. at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean Memorial and the WWII Memorial.

Displaying of the POW/MIA Flag over Federal Buildings and Military Facilities

Rolling Thunder®, Inc. was highly instrumental in passing legislation requiring that Federal buildings, all Post Offices, the Vietnam and Korean Memorials in Washington, D.C. and military facilities fly the POW/MIA flag on all six National holidays.

Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000

Senator Campbell sponsored and co-authored with Rolling Thunder®, Inc. the Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000. The Act provides for the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of certain foreign countries in which American Vietnam War POW/MIA's or American Korean War POW/MIA's may be present, if those nationals assist in returning POW/MIA's alive.

Missing Service Personnel Act of 1997

Since the mid-1980's, Rolling Thunder®, Inc. has worked tirelessly on this bill that would guarantee missing servicemen or women could not be arbitrarily "killed on paper" by the U.S. government without credible proof of death. The bill was originally sponsored by Senator Campbell in 1993. Rolling Thunder's efforts helped facilitate passing of a majority of the resolutions and efforts continue to restore the law as it was originally written.

MISSION STATEMENT

The major function of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is to publicize the POW-MIA issue: To educate the public that many American Prisoners of War were left behind after all previous wars and to help correct the past and to protect the future Veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners Of War-Missing In Action. We are committed to helping American Veterans from all wars. Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is a non-profit organization and everyone donates his or her time because they believe in the POW/MIA Issue that we are working on.

Revised: March 2013

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