

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

# VFW

**EX-WWII GIs  
TAKE ON  
CORRUPTION IN  
TENNESSEE TOWN**

p26



# THE ANCIENT OLYMPICS

---

*Did great athletes make great warriors?*

**LAST DAYS OF  
THE INFANTRY IN  
VIETNAM, 1972**

p36

**OCCUPATION  
DUTY AFTER  
THREE WARS**

p30

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BY KELLY GIBSON

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BY KATHERINE DAWSON

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**ON THE COVER:** Ancient Greek chariot races are depicted on pottery from the era. With the Summer Olympics in London this August, the Games raise once again the age-old relationship between warrior and athletic training.

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# Command Post

## Focusing on Issues that Matter Most

Though the nation as a whole has pressing domestic concerns, those who protect it worldwide cannot be forgotten in the shuffle.

By VFW Commander-in-Chief Richard De Noyer



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
Richard L. De Noyer

A momentous event occurred in 2011: the war in Iraq ended. After nearly nine years of headline-making news, the 1.5 million veterans of that war are quickly fading from public view.

Preoccupied with domestic economic concerns and electoral politics, the American people and the news media have largely moved on.

That is not a luxury VFW can afford. The issues that matter most to the youngest generation of war veterans must remain front and center on VFW's agenda. And that is why recogni-

tion is a top priority in the publications, legislative and community arenas. It is our collective goal to focus attention on the needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

The magazine, special commemorative publications and the convention program provide the symbolic recognition. Meanwhile, VFW Posts supported by national headquarters departments, as well as the Washington Office, have provided direct backing.

VFW members in local communities have demonstrated tangible home front support all along. But now the struggle is increasingly centered in the nation's capi-

tal and corporate offices.

Budgetary battles, of course, are on the front burner. Paying for war seems a lot easier than paying for its consequences, namely the direct effects on the warriors.

Smoothing the transition to civilian life for returning vets should be everyone's business. That translates into long-term health care, education and employment.

Medical care includes not only for the physically wounded, but the psychologically afflicted as well. Treating traumatic brain injury and emotional stress is an important first step. Peace of mind is crucial for success in life. No

commitment of mental health counseling resources is too great to achieve this end, especially when it can save lives.

It is no secret that a college degree or vocational training is often the path to a meaningful career. Tremendous strides were made with passage of the *Post-9/11 GI Bill*. Now it's time to secure those gains by protecting enrolled vets from institutions of higher learning that don't have their best interests at heart.

Incorporating veterans into the workplace is every American's responsibility. But as fellow vets, VFW members are uniquely qualified to sing the praises of veterans for their work ethic. Paving the way for disabled vets must be a top priority and ensuring the reemployment rights of reservists is a societal obligation.

As the nation's oldest organization of war-zone veterans, we are ideally suited to clear the trail to a successful transition. Let's show what we stand for by welcoming Iraq and Afghanistan vets home with concrete steppingstones to success.



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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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### VFW OBJECTIVES

- To ensure the national security through maximum military strength.
- To speed the rehabilitation of the nation's disabled and needy veterans.
- To assist the widows and orphans and the dependents of disabled and needy veterans.
- To promote Americanism through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.

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# Mail Call

## Civil War Vets & Baseball

Re: “Civil War Vets Helped Popularize the National Pastime” (May). It was a pleasure to find that this article was carefully researched and sourced. The most current list of major league players and managers who were Civil War vets now numbers 37.

Navy vets Thomas Patterson and George Zettlein (he had an extensive service record followed by an impressive ball-playing career) are included. William C. “Cherokee” Fisher spent a lengthy term as a POW in the notorious Andersonville Prison; then had a long professional career. Two other prominent owners—John T. Brush and Arthur Soden—were veterans, bringing the total to five.

**PETER MORRIS**, AUTHOR, *BUT DIDN'T WE HAVE FUN?: AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF BASEBALL'S PIONEER ERA 1843-1870*

## Marines Used 1895 Lee Navy Rifle

“America’s ‘Foreign’ Service Rifle” (May) about the Krag-Jorgensen misidentified the weapons in the photo on page 42. Those Marines are armed with the Model 1895 Lee Navy, a straight-pull bolt action in caliber .236/6mm. It was the first U.S. military rifle to be loaded by a stripper clip, and was the smallest caliber adopted until the 5.56mm (.223).

All Marine companies on Cuba were equipped with the Lee. Its first use in combat was at Guantanamo Bay by the 1st Marine Battalion during the battles of Camp McCalla and Cuzco Wells, June 9-14, 1898. At the latter firefight, the Lee rifle effectively engaged concentrations of Spanish troops at up to 1,200 yards. Marines used it in Peking in 1900. Far East Marine battalions were the first to receive the Krag.

Designed by James Paris Lee and manufactured by Winchester Repeating Arms Company, about 15,000 were made. After 1900, it was

mostly replaced by the Krag in Navy/Marine service. It was finally phased out completely in 1907.

**ROBERT WHITE**,  
SUMMERFIELD, N.C.

## Memorials Honor Afghanistan/Iraq Vets

Re: “Memorials Salute Afghanistan and Iraq Fallen” (May) should have identified the opening photo as the I Marine Expeditionary Force Memorial, which includes a division, aircraft wing, logistics group and headquarters group, totaling 45,000 Marines and sailors. This was an interesting and informative piece.

**PAUL MINER**,  
PLATTE COUNTY, WYO.

The National War on Terrorism Memorial in Hillcrest Memorial Park cemetery in Hermitage, Pa., has doubled in size (from six to 12 panels). A stainless steel frame with glass for the 12th panel was installed May 21-22, 2012. As of that date,

6,906 names dating back to 1975 are etched on the panels. Every two weeks, cemetery staff etches the newest names.

**TOM FLYNN**, PRESIDENT OF  
THE NWTM FOUNDATION

## Kids Serving as Soldiers

Because “What I Had Long Wished to Be—A Soldier” (June/July) covered only the Revolutionary War, some noteworthy boys were not included from later wars.

They include David Glasgow Farragut, 9, who began his naval service as a midshipman on the *USS Essex* in 1811, and served during the entire War of 1812. He later became America’s first Navy admiral.

David Coleman, 16, served aboard the *USS John Adams* in the War of 1812. William Graham, 12, enlisted as a drummer in 1801 and participated in the war against Tripoli’s pirates. Samuel Coridell, 13, was a drummer in the 1815 conflict with Algiers. *Boys in Arms* promises to be a very interesting series.

**JOSHUA POLLARINE**,  
MISSOULA, MONT.

Thought you might be interested to know that there is an organization for “kid soldiers”—Veterans of Underage Military Service (VUMS). From 1940 to 1960, an estimated 250,000 kids ages 12 through 16 enlisted in the armed forces. They included women as young as 13 who joined during WWII. VUMS has produced five books about all of them.

**BILL MORGAN**,  
NATIONAL COMMANDER,  
GALLOWAY, OHIO

## Medal of Honor Continues to Intrigue

I read with great interest “At the Pinnacle of Heroism: The Medal of Honor” (June/July). The sidebar titled “Medal of Honor: Fascinating Facts” left out some important information.

For instance, there are actually at least six total cases where a Medal of Honor recipient saved the life of another: Pat Brady-Webster Anderson (Vietnam), William Hills-Joel Lyman (Civil), Henry Hogan-Henry Romeyn (Indian), William Schmidt-John Kountz and Theo Rodenbough (Civil) and William Dixon, Amos Chapman and George W. Smith (Indian campaigns)—not clear who saved whom.

There were seven sets of brothers awarded the Medal of Honor: five were during the Civil War (Black, Capehart, Galloway, Pond and Thompson), one in the Spanish-American War (Harry and William Miller) and one during two wars (Gaujot brothers for the Philippines War and Mexican border, 1911).

A great deal of information can be found at our website: [www.mohhsus.com](http://www.mohhsus.com).

**WILLIAM SWEENEY**, MEDAL  
OF HONOR HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF THE U.S.

To correct a slight typo—Thomas Norris held the rank of lieutenant when he was rescued by Michael Thornton on Oct. 31, 1972.

**PAUL ZIMMERMAN**,  
UDT 21/SEAL TEAM 2

continued on page 9 ►






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LYRICA may cause dizziness or sleepiness.

Do not drive a car, work with machines, or do other dangerous things until you know how LYRICA affects you.

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Who should NOT take LYRICA:

- Anyone who is allergic to anything in LYRICA

## BEFORE STARTING LYRICA

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## BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

- Avandia® (rosiglitazone)\*, Avandamet® (rosiglitazone and metformin)\* or Actos® (pioglitazone)\*\* for diabetes. You may have a higher chance of weight gain or swelling of your hands or feet.
- Narcotic pain medicines (such as oxycodone), tranquilizers or medicines for anxiety (such as lorazepam). You may have a higher chance for dizziness and sleepiness.
- Any medicines that make you sleepy

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- See "Important Safety Information About LYRICA."

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- Feeling "high"

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- Weight gain
- Sleepiness
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- Dry mouth

If you have diabetes, you should pay extra attention to your skin while taking LYRICA and tell your doctor of any sores or skin problems.

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- Take LYRICA with or without food.

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- Drink alcohol or use other medicines that make you sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Change the dose or stop LYRICA suddenly. You may have headaches, nausea, diarrhea, or trouble sleeping if you stop taking LYRICA suddenly.
- Start any new medicines without first talking to your doctor.

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In lieu of medals, Confederate soldiers sometimes received “letters of praise” for their bravery. But at least in one case some did. In the 1870s, Virginia Military Institute awarded its Confederate Medal of Valor to members of the Corps of Cadets (some as young as 14) who participated in the 1863 Battle of New Market.

**WILLIAM BANKS,**  
NEW MARKET, MD.

“The Pinnacle of Heroism” and “What I Had Longed to Be” are just exceptional articles for their respective inspiration. Great job—they both rate an A+.

**FRANK E. WHELAN,**  
BRANFORD, CONN.

## Con Thien Finally Remembered

Thank you for “Hill 48: A Battle for Con Thien” (June/July) and the recognition given the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines. In honor of all Marines who were in “Leatherneck Square,” a part of Parris Island is so named. Semper Fi.

**CYNTHIA RATLIFF,**  
CORDOVA, ALA.

As a veteran of this battle, I want to say how much I appreciate the article. Now I can share my story with family and friends.

**DAVID NUGENT,** E-MAIL

It was wonderful to finally see an article on Con Thien—the meat-grinder. As a member of K Co., 3rd Bn., 4th Marines (attached to the 9th Marines), a lot my friends died making sure the North Vietnamese did not come across Con Thien in the summer of 1967.

Thanks for this story. My wife read it, and now she better understands me.

**MICHAEL G. REAGAN,**  
E-MAIL

I enjoyed “Hill 48,” but wanted to point out a small error. I am sure the author meant to write the Ontos had 106mm recoilless rifles. I served in Vietnam on a jeep-mounted 106.

**RICHARD MACLEOD,**  
DOWAGIAC, MICH.

Thanks for the article on Hill 48. I was present for the actions of Sept. 7-10 and remained with the battalion throughout that month. Vets of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, might be interested to know that it has an active reunion association and website: [www.326Marines.org](http://www.326Marines.org).

**WALT WHITESIDES,** E-MAIL

Thank you for writing about 3/26. We all appreciate it. As a member of 2nd Platoon, I was wounded and evacuated on Sept. 11 and returned to India Company in October.

An interesting note about Navy Cross recipient James Barrett: at one time a Georgia tobacco farmer, he was quite a guy. The story goes that when Marine officers went to present his medal, he came in from the tobacco fields, accepted it and went right back to work.

**MIKE PADULA,** E-MAIL

Capt. Frank Bynum, not mentioned, was later KIA.

**CHUCK COFTY,**  
CHARLOTTE, N.C.

## Springfield '03 in the Sights

“Springfield '03 Saw Combat Worldwide” (June/July) by John Plaster is typical of the gushing love affair military historians have with this rifle.

Some 75% of Doughboys used the M1917, a British design refitted for U.S. rounds, during WWI. The American Enfield, a forgotten star of U.S. arms, was the real hero-rifle of the Great War.

**MARK ANICH,** OMAHA, NEB.

The photo on page 43 must have been misidentified. The rifle being fired appears to be a British short magazine Lee-Enfield MK III caliber .303. It is distinctive in that the fore stock extends almost to the front sight and the bayonet stud is below the barrel. Also, the back packs on the troops pictured are not the same as those issued to WWI-era Doughboys.

**HERBERT GOLDSTEIN,**  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

This is just a note to say how much I enjoy reading the *Shoulder Arms in America's Wars* series. My Post, 2866, has two Krag rifles displayed above the bar. Keep up the good work!

**FRANK REIS,**  
ST. CHARLES CO., MO.

## Commemorating the War of 1812

“USS Constitution Museum Evokes Memories of War of 1812” (June/July) by Matthew Brenckle was well done and a complimentary piece, which will surely encourage visitors to see the ship and museum.

But please note that “Old Ironsides” is berthed in Charlestown Navy Yard. The missing “w” makes all the difference.

**R.P. DOUGLAS,** NATICK, MASS.

**Editor's Note:** *This typographical error was entirely the fault of the editor (and not the author). I have been severely chastised.*

The photo caption accompanying the sidebar

“Commemoration a State Affair in America” (June/July) should have said that Francis Scott Key was a delegate invited aboard the ship to seek the release of Dr. William Beanes. Scott was detained until the bombardment ended because he knew the British strength.

**JERRY ROMESBURG,** E-MAIL

**Editor's Note:** *VFW Posts in the Buffalo, N.Y., area, are actively participating in War of 1812 commemorations. Re-enactor Keith Treacher of Post 3068 led a special ceremony and memorial service in June at the Garrison Cemetery National Historic Site in Cheektowaga, N.Y., for 500 soldiers killed in 1813 and buried in mass graves. A reception followed at Post 6251 in that town.*

## Quincy's Unique Memorial

“Vietnam Fallen Not Forgotten in Quincy” (May) was enlightening in that this Massachusetts city had such a high proportion of fatalities in the war. As a former Quincy resident (until 1965), this story had special meaning for me. Thanks for writing the article and giving the city the credit it deserves.

**WALT WENGEFELD,**  
FLORIDA

## Homestead Act Helped Many

I enjoyed “Homestead Act Allows Vets to Live Off Land” (May). Widows of fallen veterans also were given preference for a homestead. One of my ancestors of the 1st Iowa Cavalry was captured and died in a Confederate prison camp. But his wife was able to secure land in northwest Iowa under the act.

**LUTHER DAPPEN,**  
FLANDREAU, S.D.

# Now Hear This

## Taps 150th Anniversary Celebrated

On May 19, in Arlington National Cemetery, 200 buglers and trumpeters gathered to commemorate the creation of Taps during the Civil War. Since 1900, it has been routinely played at military funerals.

The solemn 24-note military bugle call is now a well-established national song of remembrance. It is also known as “Butterfield’s Lullaby” or “Day is Done.”



Members of Bugles Across America, consisting of 7,500 volunteers, play the musical melody regularly at the funerals of veterans nationwide.

First played in July 1862, the tune was created by Union Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield, commander of the 3rd Brigade, Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, after the unit retreated to Harrison’s Landing, Va. He revised the tune traditionally used to signal “lights out.”

It replaced the customary three rifle volleys and French bugle call used by American troops for battlefield burials. Bugler Oliver W. Norton of the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteers was the first to sound it, at the funeral of an

## VIETNAM HERO RECOGNIZED

### Medal of Honor Awarded 42 Years Later

**SPEC. 4 LESLIE H. SABO, JR.**, received his long overdue posthumous Medal of Honor on May 16. Awarded in a White House ceremony attended by about 50 of his unit members, the medal came after bureaucratic snafus (the original paperwork was lost) and a persistent campaign.

On May 10, 1970, in what came to be known as the “Mother’s Day Ambush,” Sabo displayed tremendous courage near Se San, Cambodia. As a member of B Co., 3rd Bn., 506th Inf., 101st Airborne Div., his platoon was on a recon patrol when ambushed. Sabo virtually single-handedly forced the North Vietnamese to retreat.

Amidst the firefight, Sabo shielded a fellow soldier from a grenade blast, absorbing the brunt thus saving the man’s life. Despite his wounds, he charged an enemy bunker being wounded again. In the process of blowing the bunker, the grenade blast took his life. This is according to his citation. An account in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* says he was shot and killed while helping to secure a landing zone for a medevac to lift out wounded GIs.

Seven other men from his platoon were killed in the fighting. His unit’s nickname is *Currahee*—meaning “We Stand Alone Together” in Cherokee.

Beginning in 1999, Alton Mabb—a 101st vet—launched a campaign to get the Medal of Honor for the 22-year-old Pennsylvania native. It would be 13 years before the presentation. “I just think America shouldn’t forget,” Mabb said.



artilleryman.

Jari Villanueva, author of the booklet *Taps* and director of the Maryland National Guard’s honor guard, said Taps was quick to take hold.

Patrick Warfield, an assistant professor of musicology at the University of Maryland at College Park, said Taps embodies the nation’s values. He told the *Washington Post*: “Every country has its own national mythology. In the U.S., we are so connected to

the notions of egalitarianism, patriotism, democracy and equality.”

## High School Enlistees Being Honored

A relatively new and welcome movement is spreading across the country. Called *Our Community Salutes*, it offers recog-

nition to graduating high school seniors who enlisted in the armed forces. This school year, 4,700 enlistees were recognized during 22 ceremonies in at least a dozen states, according to *USA Today*.

Last fiscal year, 43,850 (29% of enlistees) were 17 or 18 when they went on active military duty.

In 2009, Ken Hartman, a former school board member in Cherry Hill, N.J., launched the program at his hometown high school. Disenchanted with all the fanfare focused on college-bound students and the lack of recognition for military enlistees, he acted. As he asked: “What about these kids going off to war? Sacrificing their lives?”

Gene Clark, executive director of *Our Community Salutes*, said by June, 44 cities were already planning ceremonies in 2013.

The special recognition ceremonies are often prompted by refusal of school boards formally to do so. Valedictorians and star athletes are put on a pedestal, but not those willing to serve their country. Many parents would like to see braided honor cords with the colors of the flag worn by their children at graduation.

As an example of how rare enlistees are at some high schools, the *Washington Post* pointed out that less than 2% of students in the Class of 2011 in Fairfax County, Va., joined the military. Surely this exceptional group rates recognition.



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# Issues Up Front

## Are State Veterans Homes Threatened?

VFW says older veterans could be shut out of state veterans homes if Congress doesn't act soon. Legislation is required to remedy the potential lack of VA funding.

Some older veterans say they prefer to live in state veterans homes because of the camaraderie of being around others who served the nation in uniform. They also say the fact that it is free—through a combination of VA and Medicare funding—doesn't hurt, either.

But a veteran's option of free care at a state facility could soon evaporate, according to VFW officials.

"If between VA and Medicare, the full cost of care per veteran is not covered, some state veterans homes will face financial crisis," said Gerald T. Manar, deputy director of VFW's National Veterans Service.

"The current policy puts certain state veterans homes in a position of choosing between providing quality care for its residents or admitting more veterans. This is a choice they shouldn't have to make."

Currently, VA pays a small per diem to state veterans homes for each veteran in their care. According to the *Independent Budget*, which is a suggested spending outline for VA created

annually by VFW, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America, that per diem is less than one-third of the average cost of a veteran's care.

The remaining two-thirds is a mix of funding from state support, Medicaid, Medicare and other public and private sources.

"It is essential that Congress and VA recognize that veterans often need a level of care greater than what the Medicare reimbursement rate provides," VFW Commander-in-Chief Richard De Noyer told members of the Senate and House

erans homes the full cost of the nursing home care they provide to veterans. It is the main reason VFW supports *H.R. 2530*, a bill sponsored by Rep. Michael Michaud (R-Maine).

"[The legislation] will allow covered veterans to access state veterans homes at no cost to them and will allow state veterans homes to avoid severe financial losses that could jeopardize their services to veterans," Michaud said.

Unfortunately, the bill has sat idle in Congress for more than a year. Michaud said in June that it is awaiting action in the Senate after "being held up by one senator who is requiring that the Senate consider one of his priorities before they consider the legislation."

### BIG WORKLOAD, SMALL BUDGET

According to the Government Accountability Office—the audit, evaluation and investigative arm of Congress—state veterans

11% from 2005. Overall, VA's state veterans home program encompasses 137 nursing homes in 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Beyond Chief De Noyer's vocal support of *H.R. 2530* during his testimony on Capitol Hill, VFW representatives also testified July 25, 2011, before the House VA Subcommittee on Health on behalf of the bill, not long after its introduction.

"We also have worked with both congressional staff and the National Association of State Veterans Homes to ensure this legislation will result in desired outcomes," Manar said.

Michaud says the Senate recently included an amendment based on *H.R. 2530* in its version of this year's VA appropriations bill.

"While rules prevent the House from including a similar amendment in our version of the appropriations bill, I will be working closely with my colleagues to ensure that the Senate amendment is included in any final package that comes out of the conference," he said.

Manar added that this issue is "very important" for VFW because of the aging population of veterans.

"The last big wave of veterans came from the Vietnam War era," Manar

said. "Some of these individuals and their families are finding that they are unable to stay at home by themselves and have health issues that cause them to need assistance. In order to do the right thing for veterans, this issue must be addressed."

## VFW WANTS CONGRESS

to pass legislation that gives VA the authority to pay state veterans homes the full cost of the nursing home care they provide to veterans.

VA committees on March 7. "We cannot allow procedural hurdles or budgetary considerations to result in inadequate care for veterans in our state homes."

VFW wants Congress to pass legislation that gives VA the authority to pay state vet-

erans homes 52% of VA's overall patient workload in nursing facilities, while consuming 12% of VA's long-term care budget.

As of the third quarter of fiscal year 2010, VA counted 19,681 veterans in state homes, an increase of nearly

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# Washington Wire

## New MIA Searches in Vietnam, India

Vietnam and India agreed in June to allow U.S. search teams to excavate sites in their countries. U.S. teams will search three locations in Vietnam and an undetermined number of sites in the Himalaya Mountains of northeast India.

Hanoi announced its agreement during a meeting between U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Vietnamese Defense Minister Phuong Quang Thanh June 4. Panetta's visit was the first by a Pentagon chief since the end of the war. On June 6, Panetta announced the agreement with India during a visit to New Delhi.

The sites in Vietnam are believed to be in Quang Binh province in central Vietnam and Kon Tum province near the border with Cambodia and Laos. At press time, 1,664 U.S. troops were unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, with 1,300 of them being in Vietnam.

In India, the U.S. knows of 16 WWII-

era aircraft crash sites in the Himalayan region. About 400 GIs involved in some 90 aircraft crashes in northeast India are unaccounted for from WWII.

Meanwhile in May, a VFW delegation led by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton toured the Chinese military archives in Beijing. The May 29 visit was the first time representatives from any non-governmental organization had entered the People's Liberation Army's archives.

"It was a unique honor that we hope will further our government's effort to return unaccounted-for American servicemen home to their families," Hamilton said.

## Joint Health Records to Start in 2014

The VFW-backed plan to consolidate VA and Pentagon medical records will begin in 2014, according to a joint announcement by the VA and Defense

continued on page 16 ►

## REPLICA TO BE ERECTED

## VFW Prevails in Mojave Cross Case

**AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE** of court battles, a one-acre site in California's Mojave National Preserve that was established as a veterans memorial in 1934 will return to its original purpose.

On April 23, a U.S. district court judge settled a lawsuit first brought by the American Civil Liberties Union in 2001. The verdict gives VFW control of the site in exchange for five acres elsewhere in the 1.6 million-acre national preserve in Southern California.

VFW's Department of California will take responsibility for the site, most likely by the end of the year. VFW will restore a replica of a cross first erected by WWI veterans on the site, now known as the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial, to honor their fallen comrades.

"This is a great victory that brings the veterans one step closer to restoring this WWI memorial to its rightful place in the desert and in history," said Hiram Sasser, litigation director for the Liberty Institute, which represented VFW before the Supreme Court, where the case had been referred in 2003.

"We are pleased the government and the ACLU could resolve their remaining differences and begin the healing process for the millions of veterans who have endured this case for over a decade."

Once the land swap is completed, the National Park Service plans to enclose the site, leaving entrances for visitors. It also will place signs noting the area is private land and install a plaque identifying the enclosure as a memorial for U.S. war veterans.



JPAC PHOTO BY U.S. MARINE CORPS SGT. NEILL A. SEVELIUS



A Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command recovery team removes foliage around aircraft wreckage in Arunachal Pradesh, India, on Feb. 16, 2009. The U.S. and India reached an agreement earlier this year to send JPAC teams to India to search for remains of WWII airmen.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW's Washington Office at [vfw@vfw.org](mailto:vfw@vfw.org). A member of VFW's National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.



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secretaries in May at the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago, Ill.

Implementation of the integrated electronic health record, or IEHR, will cost \$4 billion to develop and will be phased in between 2014 and 2017, according to VA Chief Information Officer Roger Baker.

The program will launch at the Hampton VA Medical Center in Virginia and a hospital in the San Antonio area in 2014. It will then spread to other VA and military hospitals through 2017. The first shared records will relate to immunizations and lab work.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the initiative will create “the world’s largest electronic health record system.” He and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki chose the facility in North Chicago for the announcement because it is the first in the nation to combine military and VA medical services for active-duty troops, family members and veterans at one location.

## VFW Wants VA to Run Jobs Programs

A bill pending in the House would transfer all veterans employment and rehabilitation programs from the Department of Labor to VA. A VFW official says such a move would improve oversight and efficiency.

“VFW believes that shifting responsibility for veterans employment programs to VA will ultimately ensure better service for our nation’s veterans,” Ryan Galluci, deputy director of VFW’s National Legislative Service, told *Military Times* in April.

“However, we must ensure that any legislation that passes ensures that veterans workforce programs remain fully funded and that any transition of authority happens with minimal interruptions.”

*H.R. 4072—the Consolidating Veteran Employment Services for Improved Performance Act of 2012*—would transfer all job training, counseling and placement programs, as well as homeless vet reintegration programs, to VA

in 2014.

Those programs are currently administered by Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS). *H.R. 4072* sponsor Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Va.) said none of VETS 218 full-time employees would lose their jobs, but merely be transferred to VA. He added that VETS annual budget of about \$258.8 million would not change.

At press time, the bill was under consideration by the House VA Committee.

## New Job Initiative is ‘Win-Win’

A new White House initiative aims to ease the transition into civilian jobs for former troops. The *We Can’t Wait* plan would help ex-GIs get civilian credentials and licenses for skills they learned in the military.

VFW’s Commander-in-Chief Richard De Noyer says it’s a “win-win” situation for recently discharged troops, private-sector firms and taxpayers.

“The Department of Defense paid more than \$1 billion in unemployment compensation last year to former servicemen and women who were unable to find work,” De Noyer said. “This new initiative will help ensure their specialized military training meets civilian standards for credentialing and licensing, which will save the government money and provide industry with a fully qualified and job-ready workforce.”

For more information about the initiative, access [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/veterans\\_report\\_5-31-2012.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/veterans_report_5-31-2012.pdf).

## Bill Would Protect Jobs at TSA

The House approved legislation in May that would require the Transportation Security Administration to comply with a law protecting the civilian jobs of reservists called to active duty. The bill, *H.R. 3670*, would force TSA to adhere to the *Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act* (USERRA) of 1994.

VFW’s Director of National Legislative Service Raymond Kelley

## HIGH DEMAND JOBS



VA PHOTO

## VA and Labor Offer Job Training Aid

VA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR announced May 15 that unemployed veterans can apply for financial assistance to help them cover the costs of job training. The Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)—created as part of the *Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011*—hopes to retrain 99,000 vets for “high-demand” jobs.

Qualified vets between the ages of 35-60 can access up to 12 months of assistance equal to the full-time Montgomery GI Bill-active duty rate of \$1,473 monthly. VA began accepting applications May 15. Assistance under VRAP will be available through March 31, 2014.

To see a list of qualifications, access [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) or call VA’s call centers at 1-800-827-1000. Qualified vets can apply online at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>

told the *Washington Post* in May that TSA has been exempt from USERRA since it was formed following the Sept. 11, 2001, Islamist terrorist attacks. The concern was that too many potential TSA employees would be called to active duty during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Kelley said that while the exemption made sense then, it should end now.

“It’s also positive for TSA because the people who would be most responsible for protecting airports are those who served in uniform,” he told the *Post*.

VFW supports *H.R. 3670*, which was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation June 4.

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# 'VICTORY



# OR DEATH'

## ANCIENT OLYMPIC SPORTS

BY KATHERINE DAWSON

Athletics in the ancient world were often seen as preparation for war. And two age-old questions will always be debated: do sports serve a useful purpose in military training and do great athletes make great warriors?

**A**n epitaph at Olympia sums up ancient Greek views on sport nicely: “Agathos Daimon, nicknamed ‘the camel,’ from Alexandria, a victor at Nemea. He died here, boxing in the stadium, having prayed to Zeus for victory or death. Age 35. Farewell.”

Another inscription proclaimed: “A boxer’s victory is gained in blood.” At the 564 B.C. Olympics, ultimate fighter Arrichion took that to heart, during his final round, he “died seeking victory,” it is said.

Such inscriptions epitomize the Greek sense of perseverance rooted in honor and zeal for victory even to the point of death. And explain why the Greeks cultivated brutal athletic contests. As one orator said, “You know that the Olympic crown is olive, yet many have honored it above life.”

That the phrase “victory or death” is honorably recorded on the tombs of Greek soldiers is no coincidence. Greeks saw the demonstration of courage, tenacity and resourcefulness on the sports field—the same qualities necessary on the battlefield—equally beneficial to the defense of their city-states.

British writer George Orwell’s phrase *war minus the shooting* “seems especially apt for application to ancient Olympia,” Nigel Spivey wrote in *The Ancient Olympics: A History*, “where war’s encroachment upon athletic activity was overt and frequent.” Indeed, “events were contested to the point of serious injury and fatality; and the entire program of athletic ‘games’ could be rationalized as a set of drills for cavalry and infantry fighting ... all games were war games.”

Greek competitions may or may not have been a metaphor for mock combat, but they enthralled their audiences nonetheless. The ancient Olympics were spectator sports at their most exciting, filled with hard-core action, thrilling moments of tension and personal feats of glory.

### WARFARE, ATHLETES & GREEK SOCIETY

Sports and war were intertwined in ancient Greece. So-called combat athletes

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** The pankration was a strange mix of wrestling and kick boxing, perhaps resembling most closely today’s “ultimate fighting.”

were often equated with warriors who fell in battle against the dreaded Persians. “There was a popular assumption that great athletic achievement signals military prowess,” Michael Poliakoff wrote in his *Combat Sports in the Ancient World: Competition, Violence, and Culture*.

Athletic accomplishment brought honor and status in society. Tombstone inscriptions bear this out in that athletes received praise similar to that of soldiers. The tradition of the sportsman-soldier is ancient. In fact, more than a few great Greek warriors also were Olympians. The difference between now and then is that Greek athletes doubled as warriors by necessity.

In some periods of Greek history, combat sport substituted for wartime heroism. In *The Iliad*, a boxer named Epeios makes athletic victory a surrogate for achievement on the battlefield, for example. Philosopher and author Philostratus, in commenting on the lives of great athletes, said, “They made war training for sport and sport training for war.”

Athletic training in ancient Greece was essentially intended to keep male citizens physically fit for war. “No male activity could be far removed from warfare in a society in which hand-to-hand combat was a constant and periods of peace exceptional and short,” wrote Mark Golden in *Sport*



## WAR AND ATHLETIC COMPETITION:

“... the entire program of athletic ‘games’ could be rationalized as a set of drills for cavalry and infantry fighting ... all games were war games.”

—NIGEL SPIVEY, *THE ANCIENT OLYMPICS: A HISTORY*



BPK, BERLIN/NEUE GALERIE - MUSEUMS-LANDSCHAFT HESSEN KASSEL/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

Skills honed in the “combat sports”—wrestling, boxing and pankration—proved vital when Greek warriors were forced to fight weaponless in hand-to-hand combat against the Persians in the decisive Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.

and Society in Ancient Greece.

Indeed, the word “athletics” is derived from the Greek verb “to struggle or to suffer for a prize.”

“Wrestling, boxing, javelin-throwing, the *pankration* and the rest were all easily conceived as ideal ways of preparing young men for armed hand-to-hand combat,” concluded Moses Finley and H.W. Pleket in *The Olympic Games: The First Thousand Years*.

During the ancient Greek battles for survival against the Persians at Marathon and Thermopylae, when warriors were forced to fight unarmed in hand-to-hand combat, they soon discovered the usefulness of athletic skills honed in the highly competitive “combat sports.”

Unlike the modern jock of today, ancient athletes had to harden their bodies for the brutality of potentially life-threatening contests.

Greeks developed a fierce appetite for violence starting at a young age. That combined with athletics made for ultimate entertainment at the Olympics.

## SYMBOLS OF WARFARE AT OLYMPIA

Olympia itself, the site of the ancient Olympics, exhibited the trappings of warfare. As Donald Kyle pointed out in *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, it was hardly “a haven for pacifism.” He writes: “The seers of the Olympic oracle were consulted for military advice, and many war trophies (weapons and armor) from local as well as foreign conflicts were dedicated at Olympia.”

In fact, Kyle found, “Olympia was a museum of military as well as sport history.” Monuments proclaiming military victories, war trophies and weapons could all be found there.

“The famous statue of Nike,” Tony Perrottet wrote in *The Naked Olympics: The True Story of the Ancient Games*, “far from being a memorial of peace, was erected on a twenty-five-foot-high pillar by the Messenians to commemorate their victory in a vicious war with the Spartans.”

Alexander the Great saw Olympia as the capital of the Greek world, so it is not surprising that he had his military victories announced in the sanctuary there.

## ‘HEAVY’ EVENTS: COMBAT SPORTS

Ancient Greeks called them the “heavy” events—wrestling, the *pankration* (a sort

of anything goes wrestling) and boxing. Modern-day historians have translated the phrase to mean combat sports. “Experience in the martial arts was of paramount importance to the future warrior,” wrote Judith Swaddling in *The Ancient Olympic Games*. And these were the activities to learn such skills.

“These were the signature events of the Greek athletic tradition,” Perrottet wrote, “born from military training, practiced by every able-bodied male citizen in the *palaestia*, or wrestling school, and as formally stylized as any Eastern martial art.

“The trio of contact sports was ferocious, vicious, and dangerous, regularly provoking injuries, even fatalities. Athletes were exempt from homicide charges, and every year there would be cremations after the festival.”

According to Kyle, “The Greeks admired combat athletes for their toughness, endurance and fighting spirit, all virtues in a warrior society in which children grew up with stories of fighting and death in Homer.”

Several centuries after the Olympics began, Assyrian rhetorician and satirist Lucian

wrote from a stranger’s perspective of what it would have been like to visit an Athenian gymnasium—center of training:

“Some of them [athletes], locked in each other’s arms, are tripping one another up, while others are choking and twisting each other and groveling together in the mud. Others, standing upright, their bodies covered with dust are attacking each other with blows and kicks. One looks as if he were going to spew out his teeth, unlucky man.”

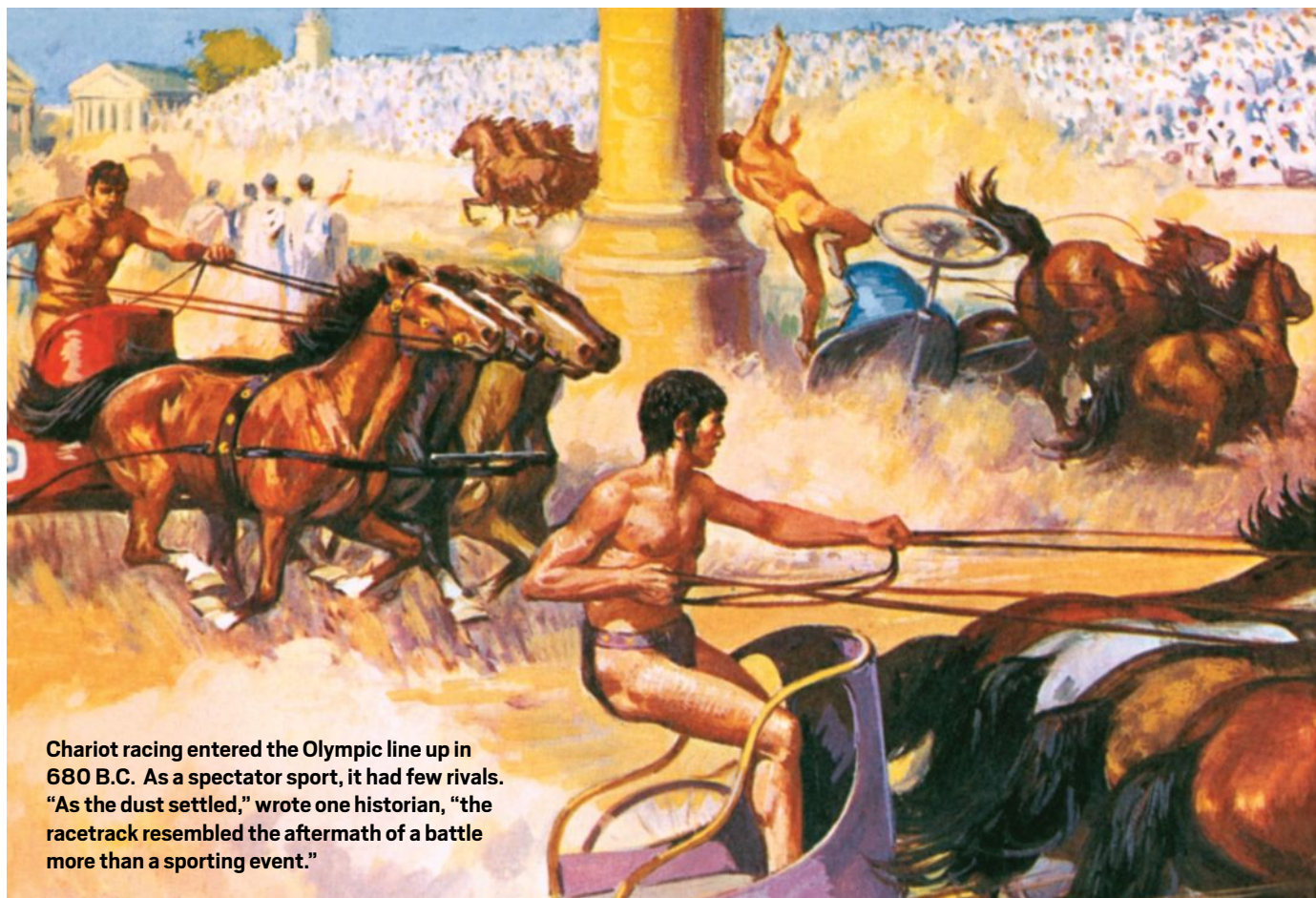
Not surprising, according to Perrottet. “Greece was a warrior society,” he wrote. “Soldiers had to be tough. We hear of deaths and even posthumous victories at Olympia.”

Some events reached a point where states found it necessary to immunize athletes from laws against committing homicide when opponents

were accidentally killed. Without fear of punishment, these mock-warriors could compete with “a level of officially sanctioned violence and danger that the modern

**An ancient Greek boxer, cast in bronze, bears the scars of his brutal sport. Boxing may have been invented to train soldiers to fight without helmets, toughening their heads to blows and learning to dodge them. It became an Olympic event in 688 B.C.**





Chariot racing entered the Olympic line up in 680 B.C. As a spectator sport, it had few rivals. "As the dust settled," wrote one historian, "the racetrack resembled the aftermath of a battle more than a sporting event."

Olympic movement would never tolerate," Poliakoff says.

### **PANKRATION: 'ULTIMATE FIGHTING'**

In Greek, *pankration* means the "all-powerful thing." Today, the sport most akin to it is the spectacle known as "ultimate fighting." Violence was its hallmark—it joined the Olympic line up in 648 B.C. According to ancient poet Pindar, "One must wipe out his rival by doing everything" in this event.

*Pankration* was a brutal combination of kick boxing and wrestling; jiu-jitsu is sometimes regarded as its modern-day incarnation. Said to have been a "hazardous style of wrestling" and "barbarous and brutal," author of *Athletics of the Ancient World* E. Norman Gardiner described it best as a primitive rough-and-tumble fight, where the object was to force the opponent to acknowledge defeat by using any means.

While wrestlers might have a drooping cauliflower ear and a gnarled nose, *pankratiasts* are described as "crippled, bent, crushed or altogether maimed."

They emerged from their matches with snapped bones and dangling jaws from an opponent's foot that caught an unguarded angle.

Biting and gouging of sensitive body parts, such as eyes, was officially prohibited. Strangling and genital-striking, however, were considered legitimate moves. Sostratos of Sicyon had his own unique strategy. Nicknamed "Mr. Digits," he snapped his opponents' fingers to force them into surrendering, winning three Olympic victories in the process.

This was a hard-core sport. The trainer of one *pankratiast* wrote to the competitor's mother: "If you hear that your son has died, believe it, but if you hear he has been defeated, do not believe it."

Genuine crowd-pleasers, *pankratiasts* were amazing showmen. Polydamas of Skotussa strangled a lion with his bare hands, held a bull by its hooves and stopped a speeding chariot by seizing its wheels. Taking on three supposed "Immortal" Persian bodyguards, he killed all three single-handedly.

Painted on vases with blood cascad-



**PANKRATION:**  
Polydamas of Skotussa strangled a lion with his bare hands, held a bull by its hooves and stopped a speeding chariot by seizing its wheels.



The “race-in-armor,” or running with shields, was an Olympic contest largely about military fitness. Soldiers of later eras who were trained to run with a full pack could identify with it.

WILLIAM SPENCER BAGDATOPOULOS/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

ing down their faces, there is little doubt that *pankratiasts* were considered heroic demigods. It is no surprise that they were among the first sports professionals.

### **BOXING: STRIKING BRUTAL BLOWS**

Boxing was the most divine of sports with the least godly looking participants, and the most brutal in Greek eyes. It was a regular Olympic event starting in 688 B.C.

It was said that the sun-god Apollo beat Ares, the god of war, in the first boxing match at Olympia. Some speculate the Spartans created the sport, which was later used as military training. According to Perrottet, “[Greeks] invented boxing to train their soldiers to fight without helmets, toughening their heads and teaching them to dodge blows.”

Greeks originally wrapped leather strips around their fingers to deaden blows, but later used hard leather sometimes reinforced with metal. No body parts were off limits, including the genitals.

Boxers were known for their scarred faces and were depicted in artwork with twisted noses and mangled features. As described by Roman satirist Gaius Lucillius, “Boxers became so disfigured that they could not claim inheritances, and even their dogs did not know them.”

Neither bursting blood vessels nor broken jaws ended a match as long as an opponent was still standing. There were no rounds in Olympic boxing. Fights con-

tinued until one boxer was knocked out or indicated defeat by holding up a finger.

While some matches were short, others persisted much longer. “Contests often lasted for many hours,” Swaddling wrote. “Sometimes the boxers agreed to exchange undefended blows in order to end the contest before nightfall.”

Ancient boxing champions Damoxeno and Kreugas ended a match before dark uniquely. After receiving a blow to the head, Damoxenos pierced his opponent under the ribs with his fingers and tore out a handful of his intestines.

“It is often claimed that boxing became more blood thirsting in Roman times,” Swaddling wrote. “But this brutality would be hard to equal.”

Boxers Diognetos and Kleomedes both killed opponents in the ring yet were given a hero’s honors. Of the eight specific fatalities recorded in the combat sports, four occurred in boxing—three caused by illegal fighting tactics.

### **WRESTLING: MAN’S OLDEST SPORT**

Greeks considered wrestling a gentlemen’s sport, but it was still held in high esteem and certainly rough on the body. It joined the Games in 708 B.C.

“Wrestlers might attempt to immobilize, to strangle or to incapacitate opponents,” wrote Mark Golden, author of *Sport in the Ancient World from A to Z*.

Upright wrestling, according to Greek philosopher Plato, was most useful while

in combat. The objective was to have an opponent fall three times before he was declared defeated. This gave soldiers practice at taking down an enemy on the battlefield.

Thereus defeated the legendary wrestler Cercyon of Arcadia and then killed him in a decidedly non-sporting event.

### **CHARIOT RACING: GRAND PRIX OF ANTIQUITY**

Ancient chariot racing was as glamorous as today’s Kentucky Derby, but held the peril of modern car racing.

Unpredictable and risky in the extreme, four horses (or two) were attached to a chariot in which the driver stood. Forty participants clamored down the track for 12 double laps—six miles—challenging participants with 24 deadly 180-degree turns.

Spectators watched with white-knuckle intensity as drivers risked their lives at every corner they rounded. Charioteers thanked their gods with every successful turn as competitors were tossed onto the track and severely injured or even trampled to death.

“His companions caught the runaway team and freed the blood-stained corpse from his rig,” Greek play writer Sophocles wrote of one particular accident victim. “He was disfigured and marred past the recognition of his best friend.”

The Olympic chariot race was the

continued on page 24 ►





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## ‘Victory or Death’

◀ continued from page 22

Grand Prix of antiquity, according to Perrottet, and “as the dust settled, the racetrack resembled the aftermath of a battle more than a sporting event.”

No doubt, fatalities were the highest in this event. But because drivers were often slaves, they were deemed expendable and not counted.

Nancy Reed, author of *More Than Just a Game: The Military Nature of Greek Athletic Contests*, noted that the two-team chariot race “was eventually recognized as an official [Olympic] event due to the increasing importance of cavalry fighting at that time.” The military nature of the contest was certainly paramount, and the event probably originated in past methods of warfare when heavily armed warriors were driven into battle by chariots.

Teamwork between horses, charioteers and warriors was critical in a contest when chariot warfare was a normal part of military training.

### RACE-IN-ARMOR: GREEK STEEPLCHASE

Several celebrated events can be directly linked to military training, such as the *hoplitodromia* or “race-in-armor.” The event not only displayed individual speed, but also one’s agility when fully dressed in armor. It is perhaps today’s equivalent of running with a full pack.

Twenty-five participants wore *greaves* (bronze shin protectors), a helmet and carried a shield while competing in a 400-meter race. The armor purposely made the race difficult, causing athletes to fall or drop their shields.

“A modern-day counterpart to the *hoplitodromia* is the steeplechase: in both events running is deliberately impeded,” Swaddling wrote. “The more difficult the task, the greater glory that results from accomplishing it.”

*Hoplitodromia* was always the last event of the Olympic games. “It was desirable to reflect in the Games the fact that the infantry had supplanted the cavalry as the main Greek military arm,” wrote M.I. Finley.

Ethnic Greek historian and essayist Plutarch said, “The race in full armor is presented after all the rest of the athletic



### OLYMPIA BATTLE:

“... crowds ‘still wearing their festive robes, with wreaths and flowers in their hair’ watched the fighting from the sidelines, ‘impartially applauding the doughty deeds performed on both sides.’ ”

— TONY PERROTTET, *THE NAKED OLYMPICS: THE TRUE STORY OF THE ANCIENT GAMES*

events, so testifying that military fitness is the aim of athletics and competition.”

### JAVELIN: MARTIAL SKILL

“Javelin-throwing, of all athletic events, had the strongest connections with warfare,” Swaddling, as well as other Olympic historians, contends.

Ancient javelins differed slightly from today’s model. The Greeks used a leather-throwing thong that wrapped around the lower part of the shaft, creating a loop for the thrower’s fingers. The strap increased the distance and accuracy for an untrained thrower.

A javelin was the second armament of the infantryman for centuries, enabling him to strike at a distance. Long range and accuracy were crucial factors in warfare.

“Long range enabled the soldier to hit the enemy before the enemy can hit him,” H.A. Harris wrote in *Greek Athletes and Athletics*. “It is perfectly possible to devise competitions which will test both these qualities in a throw.”

Hence the popularity of this Olympic event from the beginning when it entered the Games in 708 B.C.

### BATTLE AT OLYMPIA, 364 B.C.

Dating back to the earliest days, the sacred site of the competitions was a bone of contention. City-states were not above staging pitched battles at Olympia itself. Pisa, located approximately four miles from Olympia, had long believed that the turf hosting the Games was illegally occupied by Elis.

Pisatans, along with their Arcadian allies, occupied Olympia with troops and hosted the Games themselves in 364 B.C.

Humiliated, Elians retaliated by attacking in the middle of a wrestling match. Elis mobilized hoplite soldiers and massed cavalrymen. Pisa positioned soldiers on the river banks and archers on rooftops.

Olympic spectators, instead of searching for safety, decided not to let a battle spoil their entertainment, treating the combat as a thrilling sporting event. Elis was rated the underdog and wasn’t expected to put up too much of a fight after centuries of peace.

“According to the author Diodorus,” Perrottet wrote, “crowds ‘still wearing their festive robes, with wreaths and flowers in their hair’ watched the fighting from the sidelines, ‘impartially applauding the doughty deeds performed on both sides.’ ”

The Elians, despite their underdog status, tore through Olympia with shocking force. “The enraged Elians shattered the Arcadian defense, pushing forward into the Sacred Grove of Zeus [known as the *Altis*] itself, where the bloody hand-to-hand combat ensued,” Perrottet wrote. Ancient historians did not tally the casualties, but they were probably significant based on descriptions.

Ultimately, the Elians retreated to their base at nightfall and the defenders erected a wooden wall around Olympia. Because Pisatan allies feared they had upset the gods, they soon returned Olympia back to its original hosts.

Clearly, the links between warfare, military training and sports in the Olympics are undeniable. “Only one thing brought the Greeks together, and gave a peaceful outlet to their rivalries: athletics,” concluded Perrottet. “It was the glue of the Aegean world. But the Games weren’t so much a celebration of peace as a substitute for open violence.”

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# EX-GIs BATTLE FOR THE BALLOT

In 1946, a group of WWII veterans overthrew a political machine in the small community of Athens, Tenn., to take back their local government with the support of local VFW members.

BY KELLY GIBSON



Three ex-servicemen fire at the Athens, Tenn., jail where McMinn County deputies were holed-up on election night, Aug. 1, 1946.

A crowd mills around the McMinn County Jail in Athens, Tenn., in the morning following a night of gunfire. WWII vets continued their armed watch to ensure order prevailed.





TENNESSEE STATE ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY/AF PHOTO

secession from the Union. The railroad that ran through the county was essential in providing support for both Union and Confederate troops. And it was McMinn County's own Harry T. Burn, a first-term member of the state legislature, who cast the deciding vote in 1920 to ratify the 19th amendment, allowing women the right to vote.

So it came as little surprise when McMinn County found itself in the middle of a political firestorm in August of 1946.

The 1936 race for McMinn County sheriff became hotly contested after Democratic candidate Paul Cantrell won by a landslide against a Republican ticket that had been in control since the Civil War. After each election for the next decade, it became increasingly clear that Cantrell, a cog in the powerful Tennessee political machine run by then-Memphis Mayor Ed Crump, could not be defeated.

## VETS RETURN

Amidst the growing power of the Crump machine, some 3,526 young men left the quiet country roads and rambling hills of McMinn County for battle overseas. In the summer of 1945, they began returning home to find that their small town had fallen victim to a corrupt government.

One *Saturday Evening Post* reporter wrote: "Soldiers now returning from the front do not seem satisfied with the conditions they find at home. They have done their job, but they fail to discover that we have done ours. They find in the land they love the old political gangs, racial intolerance, scoundrels in public office, irresponsible strikers and the lascivious night-club air of those who have fattened on war and death...they find cant, greed, luxury, hypocrisy, lust and avarice."

Bar fights between veterans and local law enforcement officers became commonplace. Officers received a kickback for every ticket issued and every person arrested, so innocent passers-through would often receive unlawful tickets or harassment by local authorities. Gambling and bootlegging ran rampant in the community.

According to a report by the *Daily Post-Athenian* (Athens, Tenn.) in 1946, at a rally, a GI speaker said, "The principles that we fought for in this past war do not

exist in McMinn County. We fought for democracy because we believe in democracy but not the form we live under in this county."

So the young men who had fought for their country stood up to fight again—this time in the voting booths. An all-GI ballot appeared in Athens for the August 1946 election. Cantrell had moved from McMinn County sheriff to Tennessee state senator. He endorsed incumbent Pat Mansfield, who had replaced Cantrell. Knox Henry, a veteran who served in North Africa during WWII, hoped to overthrow Mansfield.

Because of the county's history of voter intimidation and ballot box stuffing, members of the veteran ticket sent numerous requests to state and national leaders requesting assistance in holding a fair, honest election—all requests remained unanswered.

As Election Day neared, the veterans rallied recruits from neighboring counties, including members of the VFW Post in nearby Blount County (Post 5154 in Louisville is still active today) to help watch election sites in Athens, McMinn's county seat. They prepared to use any action necessary to ensure a fair election.

## ELECTION DAY BATTLE

Trouble began early election morning. Sheriff Mansfield arrested Walter Ellis, an ex-GI serving as Precinct 1 election judge, without cause. It wasn't until much later that Mansfield would accuse Ellis of committing ballot fraud. After Ellis was removed, Mansfield ordered some 20 armed deputies to guard the courthouse.

Tension remained high through mid-afternoon. Tom Gillespie, a farmer, arrived at Precinct 11 to vote. Allegedly, Mansfield's men observed Gillespie voting "the wrong way," and he was asked to leave because he supposedly was voting in the wrong precinct. When Gillespie protested, claiming that he had always voted there, Deputy Sheriff Windy Wise hit Gillespie with brass knuckles, then shot him. Gillespie sustained a flesh wound to his back and was removed from the voting site for treatment.

Meanwhile, fighting broke out at other nearby precincts. Election judge

**A**braham Lincoln, during his first inaugural address in reference to the turmoil brewing between the North and the South, wisely stated: "The government, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

And Lincoln's words rang true shortly after WWII, when the people of McMinn County, Tenn., banded together to overthrow a political machine that had taken advantage of the small community for several years.

Throughout its rich history, McMinn County in southeastern Tennessee had been politically tangled. During the Civil War, residents narrowly voted against

Bob Hairrell, also an ex-GI, was beaten by Minus Wilburn, the election deputy stationed at Precinct 12 by Sheriff Mansfield. Officials illegally closed the 12th Precinct polls early, locked the doors and guarded the entry.

Sheriff Mansfield traveled to the 11th Precinct to count votes. Former-GIs and election judges Charles Scott, Jr. and James Howard Vestal were asked to stay in the front of the office while Sheriff Mansfield and several other Cantrell men counted ballots in the rear. The vets

veterans had apprehended four deputies.

### 'ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE'

As the polls closed for the evening, Sheriff Mansfield and his men attempted to secure the ballot boxes, bringing them to the jail to be counted.

The veterans knew they'd have to move the ballot boxes to a neutral location to stop any ballot counting irregularities. Outside of the jail, approximately 12 hours after the first act of aggression, the battle began.

car, one landing on top of the jail porch, and the final bundle rattling the jail wall. After the explosions, Mansfield and Cantrell's men knew they'd been beaten.

### VICTORY FOR THE PEOPLE

According to an official statement released the following day by the all-veteran group, "The GI election officials went to the polls unarmed to have a fair election as Pat Mansfield promised. They were met with blackjacks and pistols. Several GI officials were beaten and the ballot boxes were moved to the jail. The GI supporters went to jail to get these boxes and were met by gunfire."

Chuck Redfern, station manager and announcer for WLAR radio station in Athens, himself a veteran, remembered the fighting some years later as some of the most brutal he'd experienced.

"But no one died," Redfern said. "I was a Marine in the South Pacific, but I came closer to getting killed that night than I did in the war. That is the miracle of the battle and, in fact, it changed politics in the county forever."

During the fighting, crowds had overturned automobiles and set them on fire. As the sun rose over the battle-ravaged streets of Athens, veterans continued their watch to keep order.

Cantrell and his men conceded the election to the veterans. After the final uncompromised ballots were counted, the former-GI ticket had won fairly.

The veterans of McMinn County cast a stone into the political pond and gained national media attention. The ripples from the veterans' efforts affected other communities, ranging from Oklahoma to New Jersey. One Arkansas veteran, quoted by the *Knoxville (Tenn.) Journal* in August 1946, said that "rioting would look 'mild in comparison if there are any irregularities'" in his local election.

All other uprisings were settled peacefully, but each acted as a reminder to corrupt leadership that the public would no longer stand for electoral injustice.

A 1946 *New York Times* editorial by Eleanor Roosevelt said it best: "We may deplore the use of force, but we must also recognize the lesson which this incident points for us all. When the majority of the people know what they want, they will obtain it." ☛

E-MAIL [kgibson@vfw.org](mailto:kgibson@vfw.org)

As the deputies drove away with  
the ballot box, a crowd began to shout,

**"GET YOUR GUNS BOYS,  
GET YOUR GUNS!"**

were not allowed to leave the area, and were locked in the building. When they protested, the deputies got violent.

"They were right at us, trying to slug us with knuckles and their guns," Vestal recounted. "He [Charles] broke the glass and we stumbled through."

As the men escaped the locked office, Wise was quick to pursue, raising his gun and pointing it at the ex-servicemen. Vestal and Scott, both unarmed, threw their hands up and walked slowly across the street toward a gathering crowd.

Wise returned to the office, and Vestal and Scott were escorted to the hospital to treat their wounds from the broken window. Chief Deputy Boe Dunn, along with six other deputies, ran to secure the ballot box. As the deputies drove away with the ballot box, a crowd began to shout, "Get your guns boys, get your guns!"

The veterans, initially unarmed to promote a peaceful election, decided it was time to meet force with force, so the group gathered at a local tire shop. Two armed deputies approached war veteran and election commissioner Otto Kennedy and a small group of vets. A scuffle broke out between the groups.

The WWII vets stationed in the garage held their fire, waiting for more deputies to appear. As the vets waited, the crowd grew. Reportedly, thousands lined the surrounding blocks until the first shot rang out. By the end of the skirmish, the

Ralph Duggan, a veteran-leader, said they had no choice but to meet fire with fire. Shots rang out around 9 p.m., according to Sheriff Mansfield in a *Chattanooga Daily Times* report.

"Counting of ballots stopped when the gunfire broke out, but in the returns reported, the veteran-backed ticket reportedly was ahead 3-1," the report read.

It's unclear who fired the first shot, but a vicious shooting spree between ex-GIs and officers ensued.

"The room I was in received most of the fire," Ken Wilburn, who was 14 at the time of the incident, told the *Dalton (Tenn.) Daily Citizen* in 2008. "Glass kept falling and falling. Bullets would hit the plaster and it kept falling... Then I crawled through to another room and sat behind a [brick] wall for close to five hours. All hell broke loose."

Thousands of rounds were exchanged, with no end in sight.

Around 1 a.m., the vets cut telephone lines to slow communication as reports that members of the National Guard were being mobilized to calm the situation. As 2 a.m. neared, the deputies inside the jail threatened to kill three vet hostages should the firing fail to cease. Neither side showed any sign of backing down.

At 3 a.m., the veterans decided enough was enough. In a last effort to end the battle, they detonated three bundles of dynamite—one destroying Mansfield's

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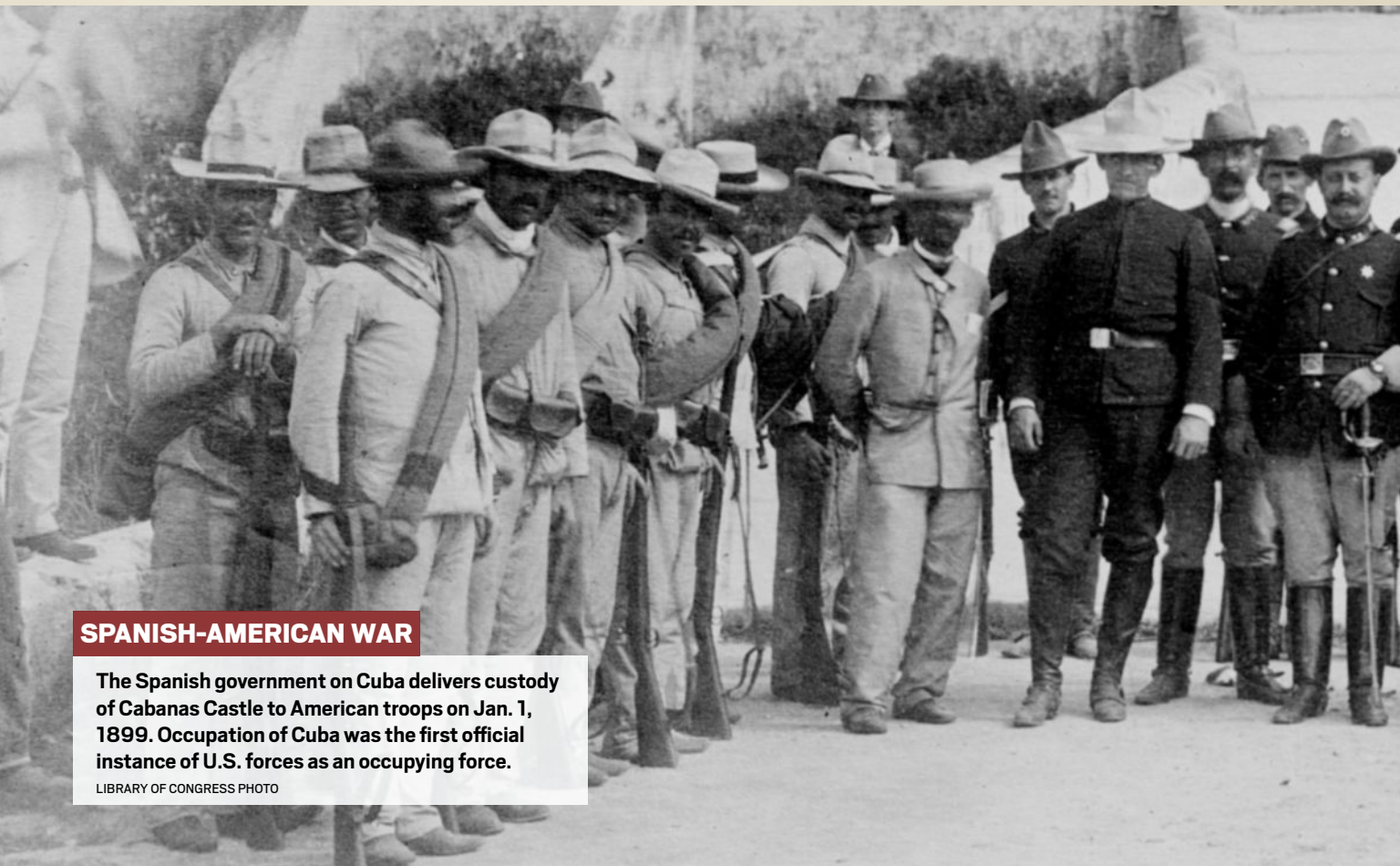
## OCCUPATION DUTY AS A VFW QUALIFIER

Occupation duty has a long and storied history as qualifying service for VFW eligibility. Here is a glimpse of the places that conferred membership on veterans who wore these little-known medals. **BY ROBERT WIDENER**

COURTESY ROBERT WIDENER



COURTESY 11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION



### SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The Spanish government on Cuba delivers custody of Cabanas Castle to American troops on Jan. 1, 1899. Occupation of Cuba was the first official instance of U.S. forces as an occupying force.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO



**A**merican military personnel who served on occupation duty in foreign lands have always been eligible for VFW membership. For 92 years, between 1898 and 1990, recipients of seven Army, Navy and Marine Corps occupation service medals were entitled to claim the Cross of Malta. And they did so by never seeing combat.

### BEGINNING WITH CUBA

Soon after the Spanish-American War ended, U.S. forces began a new function on Cuba. The U.S. flag was hoisted over the island on Jan. 1, 1899, signifying the nation's first official overseas military occupation.

Troop strength on Cuba peaked at 45,000 that March. Soldiers disarmed insurgent forces and maintained law and order. Pacification was completed by the summer, and thereafter U.S. troops were gradually withdrawn until May 20, 1902, when the last men departed.

But American soldiers were back four years later. In the fall of 1906, President

Theodore Roosevelt dispatched an expeditionary force to Havana. This Army of Cuban Pacification, consisting of 5,000 soldiers and 1,000 Marines, was restricted to garrison duty. At no time did U.S. servicemen engage in fighting.

With the revolt quelled, the last personnel left in the spring of 1909. They received the Cuban Pacification Medal. Perhaps the best-known recipient was "Colonel" Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame.

The Army of Puerto Rico Occupation Medal went to troops stationed there between Aug. 14-Dec. 10, 1898. Some 16,253 regulars and volunteers (including poet-author Carl Sandberg, an active VFW member) served on that island.

### WWI-ERA GERMANY

In the wake of World War I, 240,000 Doughboys mounted a "watch on the Rhine." The newly created Third Army, made up of three corps comprising nine infantry divisions—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 32nd, 42nd, 89th and 90th—was stationed in a dozen different cities. The 4th Marine Brigade—5th and 6th

Marines—also was part of the American Army of Occupation.

By mid-1919, however, the Third Army was reduced to a mere 6,800 men and redesignated American Forces in Germany. The U.S. watch formally ended on Jan. 24, 1923, when the Stars and Stripes was lowered at Fort Ehrenbreitstein in Coblenz.

Three VFW commanders-in-chief—Eugene P. Carver (1928-29), Otis N. Brown (1939-40) and Joseph N. Stack (1945-46)—took part in the occupation of Germany after fighting in France in 1918.

### POST-WWII: JAPAN AND KOREA

After World War II, GIs saw service on two continents. In Asia, soldiers were posted to defeated Japan (including the RyuKyu Islands and Bonin-Volcano Islands), as well as its former colony, Korea. The Army's 6th, 7th and 40th Infantry divisions as part of the 24th Corps were stationed on the peninsula.

Troop strength there peaked at 72,360. One GI, Pvt. Charles Labita of E Co., 32nd IR, 7th ID, was KIA at an outpost near Kaesong on the Ongjin Peninsula

Far left: Doughboys of H Co., 58th Inf. Regt., 4th Inf. Div., pose with their Colt .45s at 3rd Army Headquarters in Coblenz, Germany, February 1919. Left: Mounted troops of the 11th Airborne Division perform occupation duty on horseback in Japan after WWII.



## Qualifying Medals for VFW Membership

Each Occupation Medal means eligibility for the VFW.  
For more information, go to: [www.vfw.org/Join](http://www.vfw.org/Join)

### SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR ERA

Army of Cuba Occupation ..... Army ..... July 18, 1898-May 20, 1902  
Army of Puerto Rico Occupation .... Army ..... Aug. 14-Dec. 10, 1898  
Cuban Pacification ..... Army ..... Oct. 6, 1906-April 1, 1909  
Cuban Pacification ..... Navy ..... Sept. 12, 1906-April 1, 1909

### WORLD WAR I ERA

Army of Occupation of Germany..... Army ..... Nov. 12, 1918-July 11, 1923

### ARMY OF OCCUPATION

Italy ..... May 9, 1945-Sept. 15, 1947  
Germany (except West Berlin) ..... May 9, 1945-May 5, 1955  
West Berlin..... May 9, 1945-Oct. 2, 1990  
Austria..... May 9, 1945-July 27, 1955  
Korea ..... Sept. 3, 1945-June 29, 1949  
Japan..... Sept. 3, 1945-April 27, 1952

### NAVY OCCUPATION SERVICE

Italy ..... May 8, 1945-Sept. 15, 1947  
Trieste ..... May 8, 1945-Oct. 25, 1954  
Germany (except West Berlin) ..... May 8, 1945-May 5, 1955  
Austria..... May 9, 1945-Oct. 25, 1955  
Asiatic/Pacific ..... Sept. 2, 1945-April 27, 1952



Army of Cuba Occupation Medal    Army of Puerto Rico Occupation Medal    Cuban Pacification (Army) Medal    Army of Occupation of Germany Medal



Army of Occupation-Europe Medal    Army of Occupation-Far East Medal    Navy Occupation Service Medal

on July 14, 1948.

The divisions were sent home, but the newly formed 5th Regimental Combat Team maintained a symbolic presence. The last GIs left on June 29, 1949 (the 5th went to Hawaii)—one year before the Korean War erupted. Only a 472-man Korean Military Advisory Group remained behind.

Japan was occupied by GIs beginning Aug. 30, 1945. Ultimately, 15 Army divisions, as well as the V Amphibious Corps (2nd and 5th Marine divisions), served on occupation duty there. U.S. Army troop strength in Japan peaked at 385,649 in December 1945.

By the time of South Korea's invasion in 1950, only the 1st Cavalry, 7th, 24th and 25th Infantry divisions were stationed in Japan. Also present was the 5th Air Force along with Naval Forces Far East.

When the occupation ended on April 27, 1952, with the restoration of Japanese sovereignty, Army forces there totaled 106,108. By then, of course, many of the troops were directly involved in the Korean War build-up.

Also, the Navy patrolled around many

of the islands of Japan and off Korea, rating the Navy Occupation Service Medal. Some sailors served on shore in Asia.

### POST-WWII: EUROPE

Europe hosted by far the largest number of U.S. troops. They included the unique U.S. Constabulary. A million or more GIs rotated through Germany during the 10-year occupation period (1945-55). Among them were past VFW commanders-in-chief John Stang, Howard Vander Clute and Norman Staab.

Contrary to unsubstantiated claims circulated in 2003, only three American soldiers may have died from hostile causes in occupied Germany. On Dec. 23, 1945, two GIs of the 78th Infantry Division were killed near Templehof Airport by unidentified assailants. And on March 3, 1946, Lt. James Wilson of the 778th Ordnance Co., 78th Inf. Div., was shot to death by a Soviet sentry in Berlin while driving his car.

Austria, like Germany, was occupied for an entire decade. U.S. troops controlled one of four Allied zones there. The backbone of the Army's combat comple-

ment in Austria was the 350th Infantry Regiment, which was relieved from the 88th Infantry Division in May 1948. Also part of the early occupying force was the 4th Constabulary Regiment.

In mid-1952, GIs peaked at 17,490. The occupation closed with Austria's independence on July 27, 1955. During the occupation, on May 3, 1951, one GI, Cpl. Paul Gresens of the 796th MP Battalion, was shot and killed by two Soviet soldiers in Vienna.

Military government lasted in Italy proper until Sept. 15, 1947, date of the ratification of the Italian Peace Treaty. The 10th Mountain Division, and 34th, 85th, 88th and 91st Infantry divisions were there early on. The 5th Army's II Corps was gone by the end of September 1945, leaving behind one division. Eligibility for the Army of Occupation Medal (AOM) encompassed service within the compartment of Venezia Giulia E. Zara or province of Udine, or with a unit specifically designated.

One area of occupation in post-WWII Europe was unique because it witnessed actual firefights. Disputed Trieste, in the

continued on page 34 ►



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## Without Firing a Shot

◀ continued from page 32

province bordering Italy and Communist Yugoslavia, caused hostile action along the Morgan Line between members of the 88th Division and Tito's partisans during 1945-46.

On the ground, two 88th soldiers were KIA. And on July 12, 1946, a squad of L Co., 351st Inf., was ambushed by "Jugs" near Ursina. No Americans died in the firefight, but two Yugoslavian soldiers did. In the air over Bled, Yugoslavia, the communists shot down a plane of the U.S. European Air Transport Service, killing five Americans.

October 1946 saw the "Blue Devils" at 11,352 men—the only division in the entire U.S. Army then at full operational strength.

### CITIES IN CRISIS

Though Italy itself was not occupied after 1947, the 88th's 351st Regiment remained on duty in Trieste until Oct. 26, 1954, when the city was restored to Italy. Approximately 5,000 U.S. soldiers formed TRUST (Trieste U.S. Troops).

Soldiers who served on the Yugoslav border through mid-September 1947 earned the AOM, but those stationed in Trieste after that date were excluded. Tens of thousands of GIs rotated through Europe's "trigger city" over nearly 10 years.

The U.S. Navy, however, did recognize its personnel offshore in the Adriatic Sea up until October 1954, with the Navy Occupation Service Medal.

One remnant of the Army of Occupation remained on duty for another 36 years. Members of the Berlin Brigade and various Air Force units continued to qualify for the AOM, and thus VFW, until Oct. 2, 1990, when the Allied occupation formally ended. By the time the brigade was deactivated four years later, 100,000 GIs had served in the city.

As history shows, with only a handful of minor exceptions, hundreds of thousands of uniformed Americans qualified for VFW membership solely by virtue of overseas service recognized by the Army or Navy Occupation Medal. They have been welcome in the ranks for well over a century.

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# LAST DAYS OF THE INFANTRY IN VIETNAM, 1972

By the final full year of the war, American grunts were a rarity in the field. The last of them would die by enemy action in early June. For light weapons infantrymen and their constant companions—mortarmen, combat medics, armor recon and crewmen, artillery forward observers and their field radio operators—it was a lonely end. It was the same for a handful of Special Forces advisers. Three task forces would close out GI ground operations.

BY RICHARD K. KOLB



**A**s 1972 opened, only two U.S. divisions (the 1st Cav and the 101st Airborne) along with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade (LIB) fielded a total of 14 infantry battalions in Vietnam. Five of those battalions were gone within the first two months of the year. The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment also still maintained one squadron (the 2nd) in-country. (Its G and F troops lost a total of three men KIA, all armor crewmen in separate incidents, early in the year.)

America's ground war was ending, and the casualties clearly reflected that fact. Infantry KIA occurred only sporadically, mostly in the first three months of the year. Throughout 1972, a total of 16 "11 Bravos" (excluding advisers with that MOS operating with ARVN units) were killed on the ground as a result of enemy action. Fourteen, or 88%, were members of the "First Team": seven were killed by small arms and seven in explosions. The 196th's only ground-grunt KIA (two) came from the 2nd Bn., 1st Infantry, on Feb. 25-26, in two different actions before the massive NVA Easter Offensive was launched on March 30.

## RECALLING THE WANING DAYS

Many 196th vets recall those last days in the field vividly when U.S. withdrawal was in full swing. A squad leader in D Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., Sgt. Dana Monaco remembers conducting "mostly search and destroy patrols and guarding the ridge line around DaNang. I came home during the large-scale troop pull out in March, but a lot of my men were still there for the finale in August. These were not nice times."

Terry Jordan was a mortarman with the 1st Bn., 46th Inf., based at Hill 350 (LZ Maude). In April, his unit was the farthest north, with 100 men working the bush around Charlie Ridge. "Humping 81mm mortars on top of your rucksack, weapon, ammo and 81mm round wasn't easy," he said.

Jim Gales was a gunner with an 81mm mortar crew of B Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. "The last few months, right up until June, we spent guarding the radar site [LORAN Station] for guiding B-52s, being out on Observation Post 56, FSB Linda and at Camp Carroll," he remembers.

John Woyansky was a platoon leader in the 1st Infantry's 2nd Battalion until leaving in mid-June. "Those were tense times," he says. "We were in rolling hills southwest of Phu Bai guarding some signal/intelligence site, running patrols. Most of my platoon went to the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Apparently, remnants of the platoon became a '4th Platoon' in that unit. Fortunately, they all made it out alive."

As the American infantry war ground to a halt, two line outfits vied for the title of "last to leave": elements of the 196th and the 1st Bn., 7th Cav, 1st Cav Division. The "First Team" missed that mark by a mere week or so, but has other claims to distinction, some unwanted. Its troopers stayed in the field, doggedly pursuing the enemy.

A squad leader of an 81mm mortar crew attached to E Co., 1st Bn., 7th Cav, Sgt. Maximo Carraso arrived in Vietnam in January 1972. He was based at a mini-firebase in March and April. "During the NVA Easter Offensive," he says, "FSB Spudis was constantly hit. Even after moving back to Bien Hoa in August, we were hit by 122mm rockets. We could see them being launched; they sounded like speeding freight trains."

Walter Roberts was a medic with 2nd Plt., D Co., 7th Cav, leaving the country in early June. "Our company was committed to search and destroy missions in Long Khanh, Phuoc Long and Tay Ninh provinces. We had numerous contacts with NVA regulars who were well-dug into bunker complexes," he recalls 40 years later.

The last infantry GIs to die in Vietnam on the ground by enemy action were 1st Cav Rangers: Sgt. Elvis Osborne and Spec. 4 Jeffrey Maurer. On June 9, H Company's Ranger Team 76, led by Osborne, conducted a recon patrol near Tan Uyen. After helicopter gunships raked the NVA bunker complex there, the team went in to assess the damage. Either rocket fire or a command-detonated bomb rigged as a mechanical ambush device claimed their lives.

H Company ceased combat operations by mid-July. A month later, on Aug. 15, it was inactivated, the last U.S. Ranger unit to serve in Vietnam. It was credited with the longest continuous combat tenure of any Ranger outfit in U.S. military history up to that time. (The 1st Cav's 34th Scout Dog and 62nd Combat



**Woody Collins, Sgt. Larry Corpuz, Sgt. Clint Vogel, Jim Gales, Al Horner and Frank Hagen of the 81mm Mortar Plt., B Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., 196th LIB, await their last flight on a Huey helicopter from the chopper pad on Observation Post 56 in June 1972.**

PHOTO COURTESY JIM GALES



**ABOVE:** Members of D Co., 1st Bn., 7th Cav., were among the last grunts to exit Vietnam in August 1972. They operated around Bien Hoa.

**BELOW:** Taking a break under a poncho are 7th Cav officers 1st Lt. Mike Dawson, Capt. Bob McConnell, 1st Lt. Ernie Seitz and 2nd Lt. Gary Bergholdt.



COURTESY BOB MCCONNELL

Tracker platoons also were on duty until mid-August.)

### **TASK FORCE GARRY OWEN: 1ST BN., 7TH CAVALRY**

It was the 1st Bn., 7th Cav, the core of *Task Force Garry Owen*, that carried the division's banner until the bitter end in early August. It operated in III Corps around Bien Hoa from firebases such as Bunker Hill and Grunt.

On June 15, when the 3rd Brigade left Vietnam, "Deadly Delta" was created out

of B Company with troopers from the 2nd Bn., 8th Cav and 1st Bn., 12th Cav, filling the remaining ranks.

Some 139 men were assigned to the company plus an artillery forward observer and his radio operator, four medics and three Kit Carson Scouts (former enemy Vietnamese). Providing fire support was B Battery, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery.

A brand-new arrival to the war and the 1st Cav was

Marc G. Thibodeaux. "I actually enlisted to go to Vietnam, so the Army had to send me there even though I was an 11 Bravo," he said. "I ended up in-country in May 1972 and with Delta Company through August." (Thibodeaux would serve the remainder of his tour, until Jan. 31, 1973, as a gate guard for the Command Aircraft Company at Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon.)

Lt. Sandler Heller led the 4th Plt., C Co., 1st Bn., 7th Cav, for about five weeks, then switched over to "Deadly Delta." "The men were the best you

could ask for," Heller stresses today. "It was the wrong image projected back in the world. We were in the field well past the time the President announced the U.S. no longer had ground combat troops in Vietnam. We got the word live on the radio as we were boarding a slick for another insertion and patrol."

Bob McConnell was captain of Delta Company and agrees with Heller's assessment of the troopers.

"As we drew back and drew down, no one wanted to be the last man killed in Vietnam," he says. "Despite that, Custer's Finest, the 1st of the 7th Cav, stayed hard core to the end. We did combat assaults, set ambushes on trails and blew bunker complexes up to the last. The last guys out of the bush that August said good-bye to Vietnam with a mag and a frag. Men in the 1st Cavalry did heroic things for each other without hesitation. I am proud to have been one of their commanders."

McConnell describes Delta's final days in the field graphically: "Our last combat mission was an air assault northeast of FSB Grunt. It was full on air cavalry with artillery prep, Cobras firing rockets, resupply on day three and a 'frag and mag mad minute' as we boarded slicks for the last time after the operation was completed. The last 'kills' by *Task Force Garry Owen* were a bunch of dead monkeys hosed by Cobras.





#### LAST COMBAT PATROL

On Aug. 10, 1972, the last U.S. infantrymen of D Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., are extracted from the field just west of DaNang by a helicopter of the 11th Combat Aviation Group.

COURTESY GEORGE WHITEHOUSE

“It was all over by Aug. 8 as the task force melted away. Unlike the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., there was no formal, ceremonial stand down for *TF Garry Owen*. No press was on hand to greet our last patrol, so our last mission went unrecorded.”

#### TASK FORCE GIMLET: 3RD BN., 21ST INFANTRY

When the 196th LIB left Vietnam in early June, the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry,

stayed behind to protect DaNang Air Base. Along with B Btry., 3rd Bn., 82nd Field Artillery, it formed *Task Force Gimlet* (the 21st’s nickname) on June 15.

The task force’s normal routine was punctuated by a tragic accident on July 7. While in a night defensive position, four men of 1st Platoon of A Company were killed by “friendly fire” from an artillery round fired by B Battery based on Hill 260.

“I was the radio-telephone opera-

tor (RTO) on the gun (#2) that fired the friendly fire round and was stationed with the RTO who called in the mission for the platoon,” remembers Ron Fox. “I refused to fire the round because I knew something was not right. I made Fire Direction Center (FDC) re-plot the data three times and required the FDC officer to give me a direct order to fire the gun.”

John Rieu was a medic attached to that six-gun battery, which was ordered to fire a high-explosive round, and was down in the parapet during the fire mission. “The mistake was either made by the grunts in the field or the tactical operations center personnel,” he says. “The gun battery crew entered the coordinates provided to them correctly and was not at fault.”

In early August, Lt. Col. Rocco Negrì stood before the specially handpicked men of D Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. “No taking chances. No heroics,” he told them. “This is our last patrol.” For three days, Aug. 8-10, the grunts beat the bush in the DaNang “rocket belt.” Several were wounded by booby traps. Spec. 4 James McVicar stepped on a half-buried c-ration can, which exploded, spraying him with shrapnel. Evacuated to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in DaNang, he was the last line infantryman wounded in the war.

Six men of Fire Team Bravo, 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, D Company, led by Lt. John Vermilion, were the last to be

Artillerymen on Gun #4, B Btry., 3rd Bn., 82nd FA, ready to load the final U.S. round of the Vietnam War on Aug. 10, 1972. By month’s end, unit members were home.

#### LAST ARTILLERY ROUND FIRED



COURTESY GEORGE WHITEHOUSE

lifted out of the field by helicopter on that history-making mission. When the entire operation was completely done, Sgt. Al Alcalá exclaimed: “God, I can’t believe we’re finally going home—that it’s over!” CBS reporter Phil Jones accompanied that final patrol. “For the grunts,” he proclaimed, “the Vietnam War is over.”

But it had been hard slogging to get to that juncture of history. Roger Drouet was among those extracted from the field on Aug. 10. An M-60 machine gunner, he participated in 25 aerial missions from January through July. “We stayed in the jungle two weeks at a time,” he recalled, “sometimes inserted by helicopter into hot LZs. We set up listening posts on trails outside night defensive positions, which were often probed by sappers. Memories

of the sounds, sights and smells of these operations never go away.”

Rich Wengatz arrived in Vietnam on Jan. 1, 1972. An 11D20—armor recon specialist—he started out with the 2nd Sqdn., 11th ACR at Pho Loi. On May 28, he went to the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., and finally C Co., 2nd Bn., 21st Inf., from June 15 to Aug. 12. His path to Vietnam was unique. “I was a Department of the Army volunteer who selected the option for Vietnam,” he said. “On the last night my unit was in the field, my squad drew the short straw and set up along a known NVA trail with an OP and tripwires/Claymores.”

Also arriving in January, Rich Waldrop ended up in the mortar platoon of HHC in battalion headquarters at the base of Hill 321. He clearly remembers the last

stand down: “As I stood in the final formation where we furled the colors, I realized I was part of a historical moment in the Vietnam War and was proud to have served.”

Gun bunnies of B Btry., 3rd Bn., 82nd Field Artillery were part of that history, too. Ron Fox vividly recalls the final mission: “The battery stayed out for another day to cover the infantry as they pulled out of the field. There was a massive fire for effect, all six guns firing 20 to 30 rounds each and then Gun #4 fired one final round. The U.S. flag that flew over the firebase was taken down and so ended the U.S. artillery’s role in Vietnam.”

George Whitehouse was the section chief of the Fire Direction Center. “That final, ceremonial round went off of Hill 260 at 1100 hours on Aug. 10,” he says. “I remember thinking this is really it for me [he had been with three other artillery units that stood down], and we are really going home. But it was five weeks too late for the four troopers who died on July 7. I carry their names around in my wallet to this day. May we never forget the sacrifices they made.”

Even after *Task Force Gimlet* ended, some grunts were still serving in Vietnam because they arrived late. Tim Ingle got to DaNang on March 9. Starting off with C Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., he eventually wound up in B Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. “We mostly tromped around in the rocket belt outside DaNang and suffered the elements,” he said. “Most men were worried that they would be the last American killed in the war.”

But he, like a few others, was destined for a longer stay. “Those of us who were left in my unit beyond August were sent to F Trp., 8th Cav, 1st Avn. Bde., to work security from Marble Mountain, a miserable place,” Ingle recalled. “I finally left Vietnam on Nov. 12, 1972.”

By the fall, only three rifle security companies remained behind—in Long Binh and Qui Nhon—as part of the U.S. Army Support Command, and they were all gone by Nov. 26. However, seven air cavalry troops were there until Feb. 26, 1973. The Infantry Security Force (Special Guard) stayed until the very end in March 1973. The first U.S. infantry unit to arrive in-country, it was composed of specially chosen soldiers.

continued on page 42 ►



IRAQ • AFGHANISTAN

ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. KYLE DAVIS

## Whatever Happened to 3/21?

**AFTER IT WAS INACTIVATED** in Oakland, Calif., on Aug. 23, 1972, the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, remained out of combat action for the next 32 years. It was reactivated again (after several earlier activations) on March 16, 2002, and assigned to the 25th Infantry Division. Since Dec. 16, 2006, the Gimlets have been stationed at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska.

As a component of the 25th’s 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 3/21 completed its first Iraq tour in 2004-05. Serving in and around Mosul, it earned a Valorous Unit Award as part of the entire brigade for *Operation Founding Fathers*, which supported elections in Nineveh province. A second tour in Iraq, 2008-09, saw the battalion in Diyala province with *Task Force Lightning*. Earning three campaign stars over two tours, the battalion sustained eight KIA and some 76 WIA.

In March 2011, the 3rd Battalion deployed to Afghanistan as part of the 4,000-man 1st Stryker BCT—the “Arctic Wolves.” Operating in the southern provinces of Zabul and Kandahar, the Gimlets saw duty in places like Outpost Lion on the edge of the Horn of Panjwai. By the time it returned to Fairbanks in April 2012, six battalion members had been KIA by the Taliban.

**ABOVE: Soldiers from 2nd Plt., B Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 25th Inf. Div., pause outside a locked door during a search for hidden weapons in Rawah, Iraq, on Aug. 10, 2005.**



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# Last Infantry Days

◀ continued from page 40

## TASK FORCE MADDEN: 2ND SF BATTALION, 1ST SFG

But it would be among another group of elite Army troops that the last American would die in a firefight in Vietnam. Near the war's end, Special Forces (SF) tasks were classified and hence largely unknown. The 1st Special Forces Group, based on Okinawa, formed *Task Force Madden* and dispatched nine operational teams and 113 SF personnel to Vietnam beginning July 5, 1972.

*TF Madden* would be the 1st SFG's last combat operation of the Second Indochina War. One of its tasks was to train indigenous personnel as instructors and cadre for the Cambodian Medium Range Reconnaissance Patrolling Course. One training camp was located at Long Hai in coastal Phuoc Tuy province.

B Company of the 2nd SF Battalion supplied the detachments for the task



LAST GREEN BERET KIA

**Special Forces medic Sgt. Fred Mick died in an ambush on Oct. 12, 1972. He was the last U.S. serviceman killed by small-arms fire in the Vietnam War.**

PHOTO COURTESY JANINE WILLS

force. Operational Detachment 22 consisted of 20 men commanded by Capt. James M. Fletcher. One of the 10-man teams included Master Sgt. Nicholas Marvais, operations sergeant; Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Newman, intelligence sergeant; and Sgt. Fred G. Mick, assistant medic. Marvais and Mick would be on a fate-

ful convoy in the fall.

As fate would have it, Cliff Newman missed that convoy. "The week prior to Fred's incident, I was supervising a patrol in a reportedly dry (secure) area and walked into a small ambush," he recalls. "I stepped on a booby trap and shattered my left foot. Fred was one of

the medics who applied first aid. I was evacuated to the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon, and about two weeks later on to Okinawa. The VFW Post there awarded me a life membership, by the way."

On Oct. 12, Mick and Marvais were riding in a 2 1/2-ton truck in a convoy carrying equipment being returned to Bien Hoa. Traveling along Highway 13, the convoy—it included 10 Cambodians—was ambushed between Long Thanh and Long Binh. "The ambush was triggered by an explosion followed by heavy small-arms fire," Marvais stated in the after-action report. When he checked, "Sgt. Mick was dead." Seven Cambodians also were killed.

Sniper fire pinned the survivors down in a ditch until relief arrived. Mick's body was taken by a medevac helicopter to the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon. Marvais was wounded in the ambush. Today, both Marvais and Newman are members of the Special Forces Association. Newman serves as administrative director.

As for Sgt. Mick, he had been in-country only 22 days, having arrived on Sept. 19. Age 26, he was married with a daughter. Posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, Mick has not been forgotten. A street is named after him at Fort Lewis, Wash., and a plaque and tree outside Groveport High School in Ohio preserve the memory of the last Green Beret KIA in the war. Moreover, Mick was the last American actually killed by small-arms fire in the field in Vietnam.

Even after 40 years, Mick's former commanding officer remembers him fondly. "Sgt. Mick was an outstanding soldier and a fine young man," says Jim Fletcher. "It is appropriate that his service and sacrifice be recognized."

That same sentiment holds true for the GIs who pounded the ground when virtually all Americans believed the last ground combat units had been withdrawn from Vietnam by 1972.

Author and Vietnam vet William J. Shkurti wrote of them in *Soldiering On in a Dying War*: "The troops that had to rose to the occasion. They looked out for each other, sacrificed for each other, and, in the end, protected the interests of their country. While their countrymen were divided and distracted, they held it together and soldiered on." ❄

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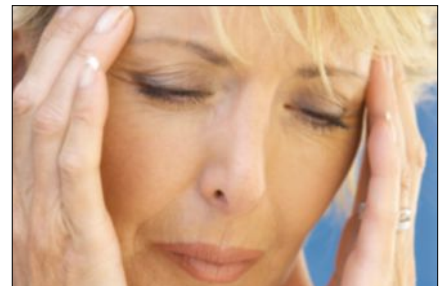
Lipogen PS safety has been reviewed by the FDA (FDA GRAS Notice No. GRN 000186) PS is the ONLY health supplement with a FDA "qualified health claim" for BOTH, COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION AND Dementia.



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# A FINAL SALUTE



VFW magazine presents this memorial listing in tribute to the 59 Americans killed in Afghanistan between the dates listed below.

**FEB. 4-APRIL 24, 2012**

## DEATHS TO ENEMY ACTION AIR FORCE

**Lt. Col. John D. Loftis**, 866th Air Expeditionary Sqdn., Paducah, Ky.

## ARMY

<sup>1</sup>**Spc. Edward J. Acosta**, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf., 3rd BCT, 1st Armored Div., Hesperia, Calif.

**Staff Sgt. Jordan L. Bear**, 2nd Bn., 508th Inf., 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Denver, Colo.

**Sgt. Joshua A. Born**, 385th MP Bn., 16th MP Bde., Niceville, Fla.

**Staff Sgt. Christopher L. Brown**, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Columbus, Ohio

**Sgt. Daniel J. Brown**, 2nd Bn., 8th Inf., 2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Jerome, Idaho

**Spc. Antonio C. Burnside**, 1st Brigade Special Troops Bn., 1st BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Great Falls, Mont.

**Cpl. Timothy J. Conrad, Jr.**, 385th MP Bn., 16th MP Bde., Roanoke, Va.

**Pfc. Johnathon F. Davis**, 4th Sqdn., 73rd Cav, 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Griffin, Ga.

**Spc. James E. Dutton**, 125th Brigade Support Bn., 3rd BCT, 1st Armored Div., Checotah, Okla.

**Sgt. 1st Class Shawn T. Hannon**, 1st Bn., 148th Inf., 37th BCT, ARNG (Ohio), Grove City, Ohio

**Sgt. Tanner S. Higgins**, 1st Bn., 75th Rangers, Yantis, Texas

<sup>2</sup>**Sgt. Jamie D. Jarboe**, 4th Sqdn., 4th Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Inf. Div., Frankfort, Ind.

**Chief Warrant Officer Nicholas S. Johnson**, 2nd Bn., 25th Aviation, 25th Combat Aviation Bde., San Diego, Calif.

**Pfc. Payton A. Jones**, 2nd Bn., 508th Inf., 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Marble Falls, Texas

**Maj. Robert J. Marchanti II**, 1st Bn., 29th Inf. Div., ARNG (Maryland), Baltimore, Md.

**Pfc. Michael J. Metcalf**, 2nd Bn., 504th Inf., 1st BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Boynton Beach, Fla.

**Staff Sgt. David P. Nowaczyk**, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Dyer, Ind.

**2nd Lt. Clovis T. Ray**, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf., 3rd BCT, 25th Inf. Div., San Antonio, Texas

**Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey J. Rieck**, 1st Bn., 148th Inf., 37th BCT, ARNG (Ohio), Columbus, Ohio

**Capt. Nicholas J. Rozanski**, 1st Bn., 148th Inf., 37th BCT, ARNG (Ohio), Dublin, Ohio

**Spc. Philip C.S. Schiller**, 1st Bn., 23rd Inf., 3rd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., The Colony, Texas

**Sgt. Dean R. Shaffer**, 2nd Bn., 25th Aviation, 25th Combat Aviation Bde., Pekin, Ill.

**Staff Sgt. Tyler J. Smith**, 2nd Bn., 508th Inf., 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Licking, Mo.

**Spc. David W. Taylor**, 2nd Bn., 508th Inf., 4th BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Dixon, Ky.

**Chief Warrant Officer Don C. Viray**, 2nd Bn., 25th Aviation, 25th Combat Aviation Bde., Waipahu, Hawaii

**1st Lt. Jonathan P. Walsh**, 2nd Bn., 504th Inf., 1st BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Cobb, Ga.

**Spc. Jeffrey L. White, Jr.**, 1st Bn., 501st Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div., Catawissa, Mo.

**Sgt. William R. Wilson III**, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., 172nd Inf. Bde., Getzville, N.Y.

**Sgt. Chris J. Workman**, 2nd Bn., 25th Aviation, 25th Combat Aviation Bde., Boise, Idaho

## MARINE CORPS

**Cpl. Christopher D. Bordoni**, 1st Bn., 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Div., Ithaca, N.Y.

**Cpl. Roberto Cazarez**, 1st Light Armored Recon Bn., 1st Marine Div., Harbor City, Calif.

**Sgt. Joseph D'Augustine**, 8th Eng. Support Bn., 2nd Marine Logistics Group, Waldwick, N.J.

**Staff Sgt. Joseph H. Fankhauser**, 7th Eng. Support Bn., 1st Marine Logistics Group, Mason, Texas

**Cpl. Aaron M. Faust**, 2nd Bn., 9th Marines, 2nd Marine Div., Louisville, Ky.

**Lance Cpl. Ramon T. Kaipat**, 1st Light Armored Recon Bn., 1st Marine Div., Tacoma, Wash.

**Cpl. Conner T. Lowry**, 2nd Bn., 11th Marines, 1st Marine Div., Chicago, Ill.

**Cpl. Alex Martinez**, 1st Combat Eng. Bn., 1st Marine Div., Elgin, Ill.

**Lance Cpl. Osbrany Montes De Oca**, 2nd Bn., 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Div., North Arlington, N.J.

**Cpl. Michael J. Palacio**, HQ Bn., 3rd Marine Div., Lake Elsinore, Calif.

**Lance Cpl. Abraham Tarwoe**, 2nd Bn., 9th Marines, 2nd Marine Div., Providence, R.I.

## DEATHS TO ACCIDENTS & DISEASE, ETC. AIR FORCE

<sup>3</sup>**Capt. Ryan P. Hall**, 319th Special Ops Sqdn., Colorado Springs, Colo.

<sup>4</sup>**Capt. Francis D. Imlay**, 391st Fighter Sqdn., Vacaville, Calif.

<sup>3</sup>**Senior Airman Julian S. Scholten**, 25th Intelligence Sqdn., Upper Marlboro, Md.

<sup>3</sup>**Capt. Nicholas S. Whitlock**, 34th Special Ops Sqdn., Newnan, Ga.

<sup>3</sup>**1st Lt. Justin J. Wilkens**, 34th Special Ops Sqdn., Bend, Ore.

## ARMY

**Capt. Michael C. Braden**, Division HQ, HQ Bn., 1st Inf. Div., Lock Haven, Pa.

<sup>5</sup>**Pfc. Cesar Cortez**, 5th Bn., 52nd Air Defense Arty, 11th Air Defense Arty Bde., 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, Oceanside, Calif.

**Staff Sgt. Jesse J. Grindey**, 287th MP Co., 97th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde., Hazel Green, Wis.

**Capt. Aaron D. Istre**, HQ Co., 13th Sustainment Command, Vinton, La.

**Sgt. Allen R. McKenna, Jr.**, 1st Sqdn., 10th Cav, 2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Noble, Okla.

**Sgt. Jerry D. Reed II**, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., 172nd Separate Inf. Bde., Russellville, Ark.

**Spc. Daquane D. Rivers**, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., 172nd Inf. Bde., Marianna, Fla.

**Sgt. 1st Class Billy A. Sutton**, 223rd Eng. Bn., 168th Eng. Bde., ARNG (Mississippi), Tupelo, Miss.

**Spc. Manuel J. Vasquez**, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., 172nd Inf. Bde., West Sacramento, Calif.

**Spc. Dennis P. Weichel, Jr.**, 1st Bn., 143rd Inf., 56th Troop Command, ARNG (Rhode Island), Providence, R.I.

## NAVY

**Petty Officer 3rd Class Kyler L. Estrada**, assigned to 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Maricopa, Ariz.

<sup>6</sup>**Petty Officer 1st Class Paris S. Pough**, USS Carl Vinson, Columbus, Ga.

<sup>3</sup>**Constructionman Trevor J. Stanley**, Naval Mobile Construction Bn. 3, Virginia Beach, Va.

<sup>1</sup> died in La Jolla, Calif.

<sup>2</sup> died in Topeka, Kan.

<sup>3</sup> died near Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti

<sup>4</sup> died in southwest Asia

<sup>5</sup> died in Bahrain

<sup>6</sup> died in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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# M-1 GARAND RIFLE:

## 'THE GREATEST BATTLE IMPLEMENT EVER DEvised'



**PART VIII** This is the eighth of a 10-part series on the shoulder arms that waged America's wars from the Revolution to Afghanistan.



The standard infantry weapon in WWII and Korea, this world-famous shoulder arm made the American soldier and Marine a deadly foe.

BY JOHN L. PLASTER

**A**n entire generation of GIs shared Gen. George S. Patton's high opinion of the WWII rifle, with the M-1 Garand's name becoming synonymous with great battles such as Normandy, Tarawa, Monte Cassino, Iwo Jima and Inchon. As the only standard semi-automatic rifle of any WWII power, the M-1 decisively outclassed all the bolt-actions of the Axis powers.

Springfield Armory master designer and Canadian-born John Garand took a decade to refine and tweak it before it was standardized on Jan. 9, 1936, as the "Rifle, Semi-Automatic, M-1."

But if not for the last minute intervention of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Douglas MacArthur the M-1 would have fired a .276-caliber cartridge, already approved by an Army board.

It wasn't just that the new round was less powerful. Cognizant of Depression-era budgets, MacArthur knew Army depots already held millions of .30-caliber rounds. He could hardly afford to convert .30-caliber Browning Automatic Rifles and M-1919 machine guns to the .276-caliber. Thus, like the Model 1903 Springfield rifle it replaced, the M-1 was chambered for



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

**Alert for enemy movement, their M-1 rifles ready, American infantrymen advance carefully on Vella Lavella Island in the Solomons during 1943.**

the .30-06 cartridge.

M-1 rifle production began in 1937 at just 10 per day; by Pearl Harbor production had grown to 1,000 per day; and at its June 1944 peak, each day nearly 6,700 rifles rolled off the line. By WWII's end, a total of 4,024,034 had been produced. Manufacturing resumed during the Korean War and did not halt entirely until the intro-

duction of the M-14 rifle in 1957. A total of 5.5 million were made. It was not finally phased out until 1959.

Weighing 9.5 lbs. with a 24-inch barrel and 43.5-inch overall length, the M-1 held eight rounds. Instead of stripping cartridges off a clip, the shooter pushed the entire clip into the receiver which, after the last shot, automatically ejected it and left the



bolt open, ready for another clip.

Unless he loaded the rifle correctly, a GI could suffer “M-1 Thumb,” not clearing his finger fast enough to avoid the bolt painfully slamming on it. An infantryman normally carried 10 pre-loaded clips in his cartridge belt of 80 rounds. Although when anticipating heavy action, he could sling bandoliers over his chest holding an additional 48 rounds each.

Simple but robust, this was the rifle a GI could drop in the mud, pick up and fire, earning it a reputation for rugged reliability. Wielding his M-1, a trained infantryman could fire 30 aimed shots per minute, far outshooting his foes.

Then there was the rifle’s mythical flaw: the “ping” of its ejected clip supposedly alerting nearby foes that the rifle was empty. Firearms historian Bruce Canfield pointed out that a “ping” could hardly be heard amid the din of battle, and even if it was heard, that GI’s fellow squad members would have drilled any foolhardy enemy who tried to rush their comrades.

## LETHAL INSTRUMENT

In the hands of courageous soldiers and Marines, the M-1 Garand lived up to Patton’s praise. Take Staff Sgt. Joseph Schaefer of the 1st Infantry Division, for example. On Sept. 24, 1944, near Stolberg, Germany, his platoon’s first squad was captured by the Germans, the second squad fled under enemy pressure, and his pinned squad was rushed.

Single-handedly, firing “his M-1 rifle, he broke the first wave of infantry.” He did the same to the next attack, killing six more Germans. Then more enemy appeared on his flank and he rushed them, killing five and wounding two others, forcing the Germans to flee.

Instead of halting, Schaefer kept running, overtaking the Germans and solely liberating his sister squad. As his Medal of Honor citation notes, his quick thinking and quick shooting eliminated “15 to 20 Germans” as he rescued a dozen fellow Americans.

On Iwo Jima, Marine Navy Cross recipient Pvt. Henry T. Pound, 24th Marines, employed three M-1s against Japanese forces. Climbing a jagged



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

**A squad of paratroopers from the Army’s 187th Regimental Combat Team, accompanied by a sniper, fire upon enemy forces in Korea.**

rock overlooking enemy positions, his well-aimed fire pinned them down while his unit fought its way forward. But Pound drew intense fire.

After his helmet was pierced by a bullet and his rifle hit, he scrambled down, got another M-1 and returned to his perch. Soon his second Garand was struck and again he replaced it, holding down the Japanese a full 90 minutes before an enemy bullet found its mark. The Arkansas native’s family received his posthumous award.

During the Battle of the Bulge, Army Pvt. James Hendrix of the 4th Armored Division, with the relief force fighting its way to encircled 101st Airborne Division paratroopers at Bastogne, Belgium, found his column halted by two 88mm German guns.

Instead of seeking cover, he dismounted from his halfrack, rushed toward the guns and, as his Medal of Honor citation notes, “by the ferocity of his rifle fire, compelled the gun crews to take cover and then to surrender.” He also silenced several machine guns, rescued wounded comrades, and was among the first to break through the siege that day, Dec. 26, 1944.

The M-1 rifle also could be an imposing club, as demonstrated by Army Pvt. John McKinney, 33rd Infantry Division, in the Philippines. Awakened

by a sword’s glancing blow, McKinney grabbed his M-1 and clubbed to death a Japanese officer, and shot another soldier. Seeing 10 more about to use a captured machine gun on his unit’s perimeter, he “leaped into the emplacement, shot seven of them at pointblank range, and killed three more with his rifle butt.”

Wielding that machine gun and clubbing more attacking enemy, he kept up the fight until reinforcements arrived. By this time, 37 dead Japanese lay around him, all slain by this Medal of Honor recipient.

## ON KOREA’S BATTLEFIELDS

In Korea, too, the M-1 proved itself. Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Dudley, 24th Infantry Division, desperately defended the Pusan Perimeter, the final Allied foothold on the Korean Peninsula. A fine shot, his “unerring accuracy with the M-1 rifle, often at unbelievable ranges, soon became the pride of the organization,” according to his citation. Over five days, Aug. 2-7, 1950, Dudley shot more than 50 North Korean soldiers.

Another Pusan defender, Pfc. Clovis Taylor of the 2nd Infantry Division, personally accounted for 25 North Korean soldiers with his M-1 over an eight-day period, not to mention another 67 killed by his machine gun section.

continued on page 48 ►

# Reunions & Claims

**REUNION COORDINATORS:** To publicize your unit's reunion, fill out the form on page 54 of the February 2012 *VFW* magazine or submit a form online at: [www.vfw.org/ReunionForm](http://www.vfw.org/ReunionForm). Send paper submissions to "Reunions," *VFW Magazine*, 406 W. 34th St., Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Incomplete or illegible forms will be discarded. Submit at least four months in advance of reunion date. VFW members only.

## AIR FORCE

1st Combat Evaluation Grp. (1CEVG): Emerson McAfee (859) 986-4362, [emcafee@windstream.net](mailto:emcafee@windstream.net)  
 1st Radio Relay Sqdn.: Otis Tom Keith (985) 649-6441, [okeith@aol.com](mailto:okeith@aol.com)  
 18th Aviation Co., Otternest: James H. Wittel (719) 597-8915, [jjim4u2@msn.com](mailto:jjim4u2@msn.com)  
 18th MAS/ALS: Eddie Gajate (856) 345-9738, [alumni@18thbluediamonds.org](mailto:alumni@18thbluediamonds.org), [gajate1@comcast.net](mailto:gajate1@comcast.net)  
 19th Bombardment (Bomb Wing, Air Fueling, Air Lift): Dallas E. Falk (919) 269-7032, [dbf47linconvert@aol.com](mailto:dbf47linconvert@aol.com)  
 19th AREFS: Ron Hines (919) 696-3006, [rohines96@comcast.net](mailto:rohines96@comcast.net)  
 24th Women in the Air Force -- All Air Force women: Geraldine Dixie Odom (912) 687-4066, [geridixie@pineland.net](mailto:geridixie@pineland.net)  
 316th Tactical Air Wing, 1965-1975, Langley, VA: Rex Riley (757) 294-3253, [130r08@gmail.com](mailto:130r08@gmail.com)  
 31st Grp., 309th Fighter Sqdn., WWII: Dalton Smith (201) 244-5854, [daltonsmith@optonline.net](mailto:daltonsmith@optonline.net)  
 3454th Training Sqdn.: John Kemper (303) 775-2874, [jonshirkemper@aol.com](mailto:jonshirkemper@aol.com)  
 356th Tactical Fighter Sqdn.: Lester Fields (478) 922-9198, [smsgt752@bellsouth.net](mailto:smsgt752@bellsouth.net)  
 362nd TWES: Edwin Diehl (812) 847-4683, [Edetdiel@node1internet.com](mailto:Edetdiel@node1internet.com)  
 39th, 40th, 41st Tews Sqdns., 35h G.P., 51st FIW, 5th AF: Linne Haddock (719) 687-6425, [lhaddock@mac.com](mailto:lhaddock@mac.com)  
 47th A&E Matron RAF Sculthorpe: Larry Brown (724) 316-4780, [leroy\\_brown@verizon.net](mailto:leroy_brown@verizon.net)  
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# M-1 Garand

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Both Dudley and Taylor were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Marine Pfc. Charles H. Monroe, Jr., a Navy Cross recipient from the 1st Marines, also showed what one rifleman could achieve with an M-1. Masses of Chinese soldiers swept toward his unit's hilltop position near Hagaru-ri on Nov. 28, 1950, pinning down fellow squad members. Monroe fired his M-1 expertly, knocking down attacker after attacker. Despite severe wounds, the Georgia marksman "continued to deliver accurate and effective marksmanship," killing at least 11 Chinese, wounding more, and repelling the human wave assault.

Marine Sgt. Nils Ingemansson of the 5th Marines similarly fought off numerous attackers while defending a remote combat outpost. When a numerically superior enemy force assaulted his position on Sept. 6, 1952, the native Swede climbed atop a bunker to better see the approaching enemy.

Although exposed to heavy fire, he successfully repelled the Chinese, killing 15 with his M-1 and many more with hand grenades. His Navy Cross credited Ingemansson's actions for holding the entire outpost, citing his "courage, valiant fighting spirit and unwavering devotion to duty."

## GENERATIONAL SYMBOL

Unquestionably, the M-1 was the GI's best friend. Army Lt. John B. George called it "the best military hand weapon ever placed on the battlefield in appreciable numbers." An Army report concluded that "by all past standards [it was] the infantryman's perfect weapon."

With a history of such great fighting men intertwined with that of John Garand's rifle, it should be no wonder that today, 70 years after its adoption, there's still a waiting list to purchase surplus M-1 rifles through the Civilian Marksmanship Program.

The M-1 was not just a battle implement, it symbolized a whole generation of American warriors in two wars. ☼

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## BOOK CORNER

Boyer, Walter J. *How the Helicopter Changed Modern Warfare*. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Co., 2011.  
 Gay, Timothy. *Assignment to Hell: The War Against Nazi Germany*. N.Y.: Penguin Group, 2012.  
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 Rogak, Lisa. *The Dogs of War: The Courage, Love, and Loyalty of Military Working Dogs*. N.Y.: Thomas Dunne Books, 2011.

# Reunions

◀ continued from page 49

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# CLAIMS

Readers are urged to help these vets seeking claim substantiation statements.

Respond directly to the person listed at the end of the claim assistance request. This service is provided for VFW members who are in the process of filing a VA claim.

Please submit your claim online at [www.vfw.org/ClaimForm](http://www.vfw.org/ClaimForm) or use the form on page 54 of the February 2012 issue and send to: *VFW Magazine, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111.*

If you need assistance in preparing a claim, contact your local VFW Service Officer. See March 2010 *VFW* magazine, p. 44, for listing.

**HQ 355 Combat Support Grp., 333 TAC Fighter Sqdn., PACAF, 1968**—Seeking anyone who can verify storage of Agent Orange on base to substantiate claim.—Larry Joynor (720) 849-8942.

**Cargo Handling Bn. 4, Nov. 1952-Mar. 1954**—Anyone attached to that unit who can help to substantiate a claim for peripheral neuropathy in both legs.—Paul G. Clausen, (712) 263-4801, pada1@frontiernet.net.

**C Co., 737th Railway Operating Bn., 1945-46**—Seeking anyone in this unit who can verify excessive noise as railway brakeman to substantiate claim.—Patrick J. Murray, (651) 451-7695, murraypj1@msn.com.

**VP-1, Iwakuni, 1964-65**—Anyone with this unit at this time to confirm detachment to Da Nang.—Ignazio Di Girolamo, (252) 384-0169, sonnyd87@gmail.com.

**3rd Bn., 9th Marines, 1977-78, or 1st Bn., 8th Marines, 1978-1980**—Seeking Marines who served with me with knee problems to substantiate claim.—Thomas Goldie, (815) 631-5982.

**11th Regt., Reaction Pltn., USMC, Feb. 22-Mar. 5, 1969**—Seeking Al Pennington, or anyone from that unit who was involved in fighting below Hill 327 or near/on retaking Hill 247 to substantiate claim.—Bob Babbitt, (775) 351-7087.

**C Co., 4th Bn., 9th Inf., 25th Div., Cu Chi, Vietnam, 1966-67**—Anyone who served with this unit at this time to substantiate medical claim.—Samuel L. Webster, (228)

437-0604.

**USS White River LFR-536, 1967-71**—Seeking crew members with digestive disorders (Crohn's, colitis) or any autoimmune disease to substantiate Agent Orange claim.—Biff Springborg (763-878-1500, biffandmar40@hotmail.com).

**440th Signal Bn., 1948-52**—Seeking Willie Gephrey to verify the incident riding on top of food supply when I froze my feet to substantiate claim.—Floyd Deareld Peebles (843) 446-8801, deareld1930@hotmail.com.

**Fort Dix to Ansbach, Germany to Vienna, Austria, Oct. 6, 1946-Feb. 16, 1948**—Seeking anyone traveling with me during that time who remembers me having a severe gastroenteritis attack to substantiate medical claim.—Theodore Maute, Jr., (239) 642-3535.

**Yokohama, Japan, 1951-53**—Seeking Lon B. Herth, Steven Albright or Joe Plunket, or anyone else who remembers me receiving flash burns to my eyes to substantiate claim.—Mathias C. Moomaw, (540) 740-8282.

**7th Div., Camp Casey, Korea, Apr. 8, 1969-Jan. 18, 1971**—Seeking anyone who served with me to substantiate Agent Orange claim.—Cecil Hembree, (417) 451-2110.

**NMCB 10, Aug. 1968, Camp Pendleton, Calif.**—Seeking anyone who remembers me being shot in the left eye from M-16 blank to substantiate medical claim.—Edward Gowanlock, III, (903) 238-3428.

**River-section #512: River Patrol Force T.F. 116, May 12, 1967-July 18, 1968**—Seeking anyone from Personnel Task Force 116 or anyone who served with me who remembers use of Agent Orange to substantiate ischemic heart disease and Agent Orange claim.—Thomas Joseph Scola, Sr., (727) 372-9390.

**Co. I, 65th Inf. Regt., 3rd Inf. Div., July 27, 1953-Oct 1954, Korea**—Seeking anyone from that unit at that time who recalls a 3rd Division maneuver after July 27, 1953 where Co. I was shelled with live ammo from friendly tanks and five or six comrades were killed to help substantiate claim.—Ron Farrell, (716) 988-3860.

**LCI (M) #754, Jan. 20, 1944-May 5, 1946**—Seeking anyone from my unit who remembers me getting an ear infection from fungus found in the coral water in New Guinea to substantiate medical claim.—Walter Baer, (412) 264-0536.

continued on page 54 ▶

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USS Leonard F. Mason DD-852: Wayne Thompson (619) 339-8846, gonavynew@yahoo.com  
USS Leyte CG-32: W. Van Wagenen (732) 727-5993, Leyte1956@aol.com  
USS McMorris DE-1036: Jules Galbreth (972) 219-9674, julorgal@yahoo.com  
USS Meredith DD-434, 726, 890: Richard Kutschbach (740) 774-3894, dk1962@gmail.com  
USS Miller DD-535: LeRoy Kock (610) 929-8343  
USS Missinewa AO-144: Elaine Brockhaus (843) 903-2745, kebrockhaus@aol.com  
USS Monrovia APA-31: Bob Mandt (386) 846-0343, APA-31@comcast.net  
USS Mountrail APA-213: Don DiCoio (973) 696-3725, dicio44@aol.com  
USS Mt. Katmai AE-16: Mickey Ganitch (510) 352 1257, MBGanitch@earthlink.net  
USS Mt. Olympus AGC-8: Joan Coratti (386) 788-6451, jhamster@aol.com  
USS Mullany DD-528: Jon E. Miller (309) 444-2408, webmaster@ussmullany.org  
USS Navarro APA-215: Carl Shaulis (218) 481-9730, carlshaulis@att.net  
USS Ogleshorpe AKA-100: Ron Williamson (908) 475-4435, misty639@embarqmail.com  
USS Oriskany CVA-34: Sherwood Winkel (773) 841-6532, swink43@att.net  
USS Perkins DDR-877: Bob Linton (314) 397-2388, malinton@sbcglobal.net  
USS Perry DD-844: Steve Silk (973) 696-2268, steve@ussperry.com  
USS Piedmont AD-17: Warren Hopkins (707) 795-4111, vfw3237@sbcglobal.net  
USS Plymouth Rock LSD-29: David Dorch (870) 236-3725, tazrhondave@yahoo.com  
USS Proteus AS-19: Paul Castle (619) 237-1314, Paul1@ix.netcom.com  
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# VFW In Action

## Post Turns Vacant Store into Military Museum

Members use an abandoned building as an education center to enlighten youth about the contributions of veterans.

**P**ost 10049's Military Museum in Simi Valley, Calif., started with a poster collection and one member's desire to share history with his community. That same desire spread to many members.

Nigel "Tony" Boucher, Post senior vice commander and Vietnam War vet, started accumulating military posters after he was discharged from the Navy in the 1970s.

The collection started when Boucher was traveling the United States while working for the motion picture industry. "I love art and you could get these great lithographs cheap," Boucher said. The posters consist of everything from recruiting propaganda to war bonds. The oldest dates back to 1908 and the collection continues through each war until modern day. In total, Boucher has collected approximately 100 posters.

After joining VFW four years ago, he started bringing his collection to social functions to add to the Post's décor. "I was using the posters whenever we had a holiday coming up," Boucher said. "For example, around the Pearl Harbor anniversary I'd bring anything related to the event."

Since Boucher's retirement, the poster project has reached new heights. He proposed to the town's marketing director the idea of using a vacant store front to showcase his collection. "The city went for it," he said. "Everyone seemed



Visitors enjoy the poster collection and artifacts assembled by Post 10049 inside the Military Museum. Civil Air Patrol Squadron 1986 members view the Gold Star display assembled by the Post.

**“VFW HISTORY IS THERE**  
and it generates great pride in our service, our history  
and the fact we can share this with our community.”

—WAYNE WRIGHT, DISTRICT 7 COMMANDER IN CALIFORNIA.

to think it was a great idea.”

The display started in a small shop in Simi Valley's mall in 2011. But because of the exhibit's popularity, Boucher's collection moved to a more spacious store when an American Eagle Outfitters outlet moved out.

"It was perfect for a museum," Boucher said. "There were so many different cubicles for separating time periods, such as WWI from WWII."

With that in mind, Post 10049 and its Ladies Auxiliary joined forces in hopes of turning the abandoned outlet into a historical center for their local community. "We put our heads together and under the direction of Tony and his wife, Jill, who both have artistic backgrounds, we grabbed paint brushes and brooms and got to work on making it happen," said Wayne Wright, District 7 commander in California.

Between the location change, Post commitment and community members who donated personal items, the display grew from posters to a variety of military memorabilia that dates back to the Spanish-American War of 1898. It now includes weaponry, flags and a picture showcase of veterans from Simi Valley. It also has a large collection of every service's uniform since WWI.

"We have great pride in it," Wright said. "VFW history is there and it generates great pride in our service, our history and the fact we can share this with our community."

The museum itself runs on community donations and volunteer dedication, neither of which is in short supply. Tour groups from elementary and high school history classes, college students and Boy Scouts are some of the regular visitors at the VFW Military Museum.

Ladies Auxiliary and Post volunteers proudly run the establishment and consider it an educational opportunity for anyone who walks through the door.

"It's there to educate young people, to show them that the freedom we have is because of veterans who served," said Boucher.

✉ **E-MAIL** [kdawson@vfw.org](mailto:kdawson@vfw.org)

# Member Corner

## Protecting the Integrity of VFW's Logo

**Counterfeit use of VFW's name and emblem costs the entire organization, both in perception and monetarily.**

**V**FW's Cross of Malta is the organization's official logo, an easily identifiable image that symbolizes the organization's reasons for existence. VFW's Quartermaster General says that's why his office guards the 81-year-old logo so vigilantly.

"We have the strongest voice for veterans on Capitol Hill, provide assistance to families of veterans, help veterans file VA claims, offer educational scholarships and assist military families and our communities," Bob Greene said. "This is why we need to protect the integrity of VFW's name and logo."

VFW's legal ownership of the Cross of Malta dates to June 9, 1931, when it trademarked the image. That distinction, pursuant to *U.S. Code Title 36, Chapter 7A, Sections 111-120*, gives VFW the exclusive right to use the name "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" and the Cross of Malta emblem and badges adopted by the organization.

"This means that VFW has registered the precise logo appearing on your merchandise with the U.S. Patent Office," Greene explained. "Furthermore, it is a federal offense to use the name or emblem of a federally chartered veterans organization, according to *U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 705*."

That section of the U.S. Code explains that infringement occurs when a violator uses a trademark or logo that is identical or "confusingly similar" to the protected image. When this happens, the owner, in this case VFW, may commence legal proceedings against a party that infringes the registration.

In *Sections 804 and 805* of VFW's bylaws, no Post, District, county coun-

cil, state or other VFW unit—including officers and members—has authority to grant the right to use the phrase "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States," or any form thereof, including the acronym "VFW" or any VFW emblem.

"The only way someone has the authority to use the VFW name or emblem would be to obtain a purchase order or license agreement from VFW National Headquarters," Greene explained.

To get permission, Greene says interested parties should submit a written request to the commander-in-chief's office at national headquarters. They must explain how, when and where they want to use it. Based on that, VFW will either grant or decline permission.

"Aside from special dispensation, the VFW Store is the only authorized source to use the VFW name and Cross of Malta on apparel, caps or other merchandise," Greene said. "If you need something outside of the vast selection at [www.vfwstore.org](http://www.vfwstore.org) or the VFW Store catalog, call 1-800-821-2606 and speak to the certified customization consultant about special purchases, quantity and custom orders."

According to Greene, *Sec. 715* of VFW's bylaws notes that 10% of the VFW Store's net profits are rebated back to the respective Department each fiscal period.

"So when you buy from the VFW Store, your money stays in VFW and all



### *Cross of Malta's Design*

Each design aspect of VFW's Cross of Malta symbolizes something special. The cross, radiating rays, and Great Seal of the U.S. together symbolize the character, vows and purposes distinguishing VFW as an order of warriors who have traveled far from home to defend sacred principles.

Its eight points represent the beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure, the merciful, the peacemakers; blessed are they who mourn, seek righteousness and are persecuted for righteousness' sake. VFW

added the sun's rays between the eight points and the cross. These emphasize the vigor and warmth with which the present-day brotherhood is pledged to defend the nation and to extend its mercy.

Superimposed over the cross is the American eagle—the sacred symbol of a proud nation and people.

While the Maltese Cross has religious origins and was used by the crusading Knights of St. John as a battle standard centuries ago, it is equally relevant today as a symbol of all those battling for noble ideals.

levels benefit, whereas all profits from counterfeit merchandise go directly into a vendor's pockets," he said.

Greene, who says infringement of VFW's logo is "widespread," believes that all VFW members have a responsibility to guard against improper use of the Cross of Malta.

"The integrity of the VFW logo is dependent on your commitment to protect it, and your vigilance is crucial in eliminating 'knock-offs,'" Greene says. "If you encounter anyone illegally reproducing the VFW logo, notify my office immediately."

For more information:

**E-MAIL** [qmggeneral@vfw.org](mailto:qmggeneral@vfw.org)

# Benefits of Membership

## Hearing Loss Linked to Dementia

**G**radual hearing loss is a common symptom of aging, but also has recently been associated with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia.

According to a recently published study by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, the risk of dementia appears to rise as hearing declines. Older people with even mild hearing impairment were nearly twice as likely as those with normal hearing to develop dementia, the study found. And when severe hearing loss is present, the risk nearly quintupled.

Researchers also suggest that improving hearing can stave off depression, which can lead to other mental and physical maladies. "No one would think of not treating their high blood pressure, but hearing loss is still perceived as not that bad for you," said lead



researcher Dr. Frank Lin.

He adds that hearing loss has an enormous impact on the lives of his patients and their family members. "Yet because it is such a slow and insidious process, it is often left ignored and untreated," Lin said. Early treatment with hearing aids may help.

To find out how VFW can help you get treatment for your hearing loss, call the *VFW Member Benefits Department* at 1-800-821-2606, *option 3*.

## Home Ownership Made Easy

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- Being mortgage-free sooner can put you in a much more comfortable place for retirement. You may even be able to retire earlier, if you wish.
- Your monthly payment may be lower and that can mean more money stays in your pocket each month.
- You could take advantage of some of your equity to get money for other purposes, like debt consolidation, home improvements and repairs or



tuition payments.

Even if you're not ready to refinance to a 15-year term, refinancing to a 30-year term could lower your monthly payment and may be another good option.

So what should you consider before signing on the dotted line? There can be costs associated with refinancing, including fees (title search, appraisal, application, land survey), insurance and closing costs. Some VFW members may be eligible for programs where many of these costs are eliminated. You can learn more about home loans and refinancing by calling 1-800-821-2606, *option 1*.

## Reunions & Claims

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USS Shelton DD-790: Ron Kunkel (406) 277-4445, kunkel\_330@yahoo.com  
 USS Shenandoah AD-26: David Zapf (505) 890-0113  
 USS Solace AH-5: Chuck Jones (903) 243-3713  
 USS Southerland DD-743: John Jones (402) 431-1661, jearlj@cox.net  
 USS Spiegel Grove, LSD-32: Phil Sengle (860) 552-4540, psengle@gmail.com  
 USS Stockham DD-683: Don and Betty Nace (717) 764-1081, rghimler@aol.com  
 USS Straub DE-181: Robert LaFlamme 337 Elm St., Enfield, CT, 06082  
 USS Stribling DD-867: Larry Fehlinger (812) 934-5440, Sfehlinger@etczone.com  
 USS Taconic AGC-17: David J. Asselin (321) 631-6928  
 USS Taylor DD/DDE-468: Otto Zipf (703) 257-5474, zipopf@earthlink.com  
 USS Terrell County: Leroy Duncan (618) 920-3372, dunkydo9@aol.com  
 USS Tolovana AO-64: Cecil Hensley (843) 685-9112, chensley19@sc.rr.com  
 USS Truxtun DLGN/CGN-35: Jerry Lane (915) 821-1436, President@truxtunassn.org  
 USS Tutuila ARG-4: Randy Pilak (414) 321-8195, amersairl@netzero.com  
 USS Vreeland DE/FF-1068: Mark Smith (817) 454-5051, mlsmith100000@aol.com  
 USS Walton DE-361: Jerry Hudson (573) 291-1922, marjer67@ktis.net  
 USS Warrington DD-843: Stan Prager (916) 791-6700, Stashuman843@msn.com  
 USS Wedderburn DD-684: Sedney Lanier (910) 389-5701, llanierdd684@gmail.com  
 USS West Point AP-23: Ed Barton (843) 482-0814, GEBarton@homesc.com  
 USS Wilkes-Barre CL-103: Bob DiDonno (860) 690-9215, bdidonno@aol.com  
 USS Yellowstone AD-27: Paul Bowen (352) 854-1387, bowp@att.net  
 VAP-61/VAP-62/VJ-61/VJ-62: Jim Temple (757) 721-3077, Templej2@cox.net  
 VP-205/VPB-205/VP-45: Buck Jones (601) 528-9374, bpj1927@yahoo.com  
 VPB/VP-26 Patrol Sqdn.: Jerry Schroeder (630) 377-1361, chat604@att.net

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 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing (Bien Hoa): Buddy Tate (336) 260-0467, tate4224@bellsouth.net  
 541st Trans. Guntrickers, Cold Sweat, Portnoff-Farmer-Freeman-Carresso 1968: Sgt. Oliver NCOIC Cold Sweat Jr. (479) 675 9824, Landoliver@hotmail.com

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**Philippines, Leyte-Taclobin, Biak, New Guinea, Pearl Harbor**—Seeking Pearl Harbor survivors or nurse stationed at 9th General Hospital to substantiate claim.—Casimir Stevens, (505) 602-5880  
**2nd Bn., 94th Arty, Feb. or March 1971, Lam Son 719**—Seeking Benny Valentine or anyone else who remembers me receiving a concussion from a 122mm rocket that landed in Benny Valentine's bunker to substantiate medical claim.—James Keeney (660) 973-7345  
**Korat, Thailand, 1965-66**—Seeking anyone who served with me at that time to substantiate Agent Orange claim.—Victor T. Fleury (907) 745-1644, ltf@me.com  
**C Co., BLT 1st Bn., 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Div. (Rein) FMF, March 1971-Apr. 1972**—Anyone from this unit or on board the USS Dubuque LPD-3 in Okinawa to help substantiate Agent Orange claim.—Derrick Horne (270) 761-1202



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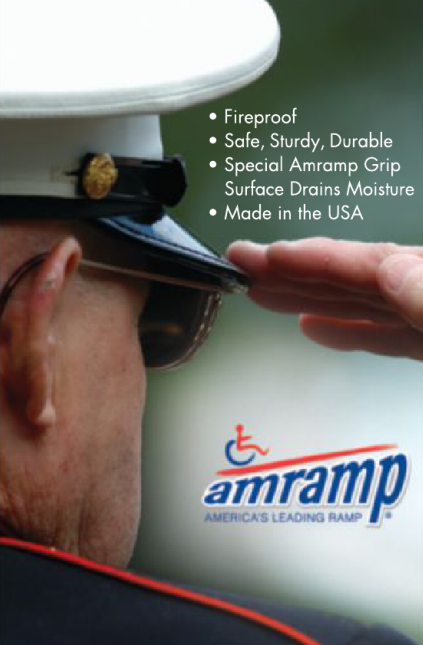
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## Vets in Focus

# Former Army Captain Nominated for Medal of Honor

Will Swenson is described as a 'remarkable soldier' so it's no wonder his heroism in Afghanistan is now up for recognition.

**W**ill Swenson is a hero by all standards. He has proven he is the kind of man to charge into a firefight. He did just that to help retrieve the bodies of Marines killed in Ganjgal in Afghanistan's Kunar province.

The former Army captain fought to save lives. Yet he quietly retired from the military in February 2011 with no fanfare and unrecognized for his valor.

"I'll put it this way, if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be alive today," said Dakota Meyer, the Marine who was awarded the Medal of Honor on Sept. 15, 2011.

Meyer recently told *Military Times* that it is "ridiculous" that Swenson had not yet received some form of recognition.

Charlene Westbrook, widow of Army Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Westbrook who died as a result of the Sept. 8,

2009, battle, agrees. (Westbrook sustained a gunshot wound to the face and neck, and died the following month at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.)

"I don't understand how the Army isn't awarding him something that he clearly, clearly deserves," Charlene said of Swenson.

But that is most likely about to change.

Swenson has been nominated for the Medal of Honor for his actions in the battle for which Meyer received the nation's highest honor.

If Swenson is awarded the Medal of Honor, it would be the first time that two service members received it for the same action since the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia.



PHOTO COURTESY ARMY STAFF SGT. MATT MCKENZIE

WILL SWENSON

**WAR ZONE:** Afghanistan  
**DATE:** Sept. 8, 2009  
**UNIT:** 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div.  
**ROLE:** Adviser

**Will Swenson's** heroic actions in Afghanistan on Sept. 8, 2009, convinced his commanders to nominate him for the Medal of Honor.

Then a member of 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Swenson was involved in planning the mission to meet with villagers near the Pakistan border. He was assured that fire support would be available, if needed.

But when he repeatedly called Forward Operating Base (FOB) Joyce for fire support during the battle, his request was denied and help didn't arrive. Swenson, the trainer of the Afghan Border Police unit in Shakani, was told that no helicopters were available.

"This is unbelievable," Swenson told reporter Jonathan Landay at that time. "We have a platoon [of Afghan army] out there, and we've got no Hotel Echo [high-explosive artillery shells]. We're

pinned down."

His frustrations were evident during the investigation of the six-hour firefight.

"When I'm being second-guessed by somebody that's sitting in an air-conditioned tactical operations center, why [the] hell am I even out here in the first place?" Swenson asked of investigators. "If I am willing to put my initials on it, I understand the importance of making sure the rounds hit where they are supposed to hit."

Aside from attending Meyer's Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House, Swenson has avoided the spotlight.

Marine Gen. John Allen recommended Swenson for the medal, saying it was "the right thing to do" despite a lapse of two years. Allen, the top commander in Afghanistan, took a personal interest in the intense engagement, which also led to the awarding of two Navy Crosses.

Marine 1st Lt. Ademola Fabayo and Marine Staff Sgt. Juan Rodriguez-Chavez both received Navy Crosses in June for their actions at Ganjgal. They were in the Humvee with Swenson and Meyer on their last trip into the village under heavy enemy fire.

Fabayo and Swenson also worked together to evacuate more casualties under fire in an unarmored Ford Ranger pickup truck used by Afghan forces.

"He is a remarkable person, officer and soldier," said Staff Sgt. Matt McKenzie, who was based at FOB Joyce with the 1st Bn., 32nd Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. "I was in the TOC that day, and it was sad to hear what was going on, but not be able to help them personally."

Swenson and Meyer hardly knew each other, and Fabayo and Chavez were stationed at different bases. Yet in the end, these four men came together to do what few others would do under the same circumstances.

"He is very deserving," said McKenzie, now a squad leader for wounded warriors at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. "I feel honored for having known and served with him." ✪

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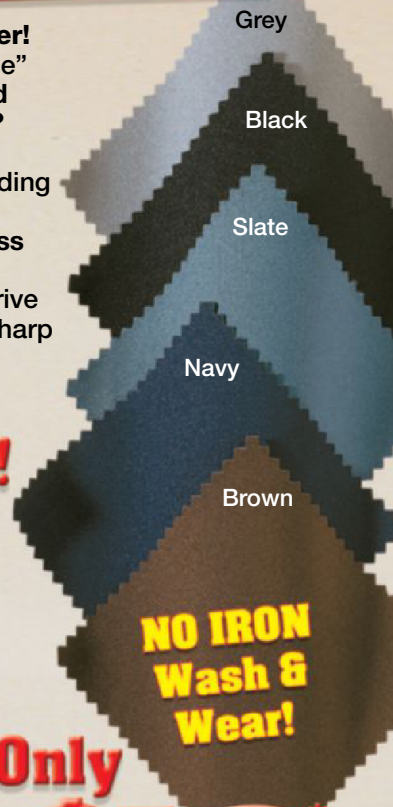
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