

MAY 2020

# VFW

M A G A Z I N E

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75 YEARS AGO

RESTREPO VET  
TALKS GRIEF

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
G. INESTINE B. ROBERTS  
AGE 66 YEARS  
WHO DIED AT PIKESPEAK  
AFTER THE FOURTH DESCENT  
OF PIKE'S PEAK  
ELIZABETH CHAPTER  
DAUGHTERS OF THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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## MAY 2020

Vol. 107 No. 8

**COVER PHOTO:** Travis MacCody Strong pauses near a plaque in August 2019 on the summit of Pikes Peak, a 14,115-foot-high mountain near Colorado Springs, Colo. Strong was wounded in 2006 in Iraq while serving with the 2nd Infantry Division. (Photo by Gil Bolibol)

## 16 CLIMBING PIKES PEAK

Travis MacCody Strong, a wounded Iraq War veteran, and Mandy Horvath, a fellow double amputee from Missouri, climbed Pikes Peak in four days last August. The pair's trek raised funds for a non-profit that donates refurbished cars to veterans. **BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.**

## GRIEF CAN BOND VETS AND CIVILIANS

An Afghanistan War veteran who served at the famous Combat Outpost Restrepo spoke to a college class studying a documentary about the deployment. He told them that civilians and vets confront the same emotions when dealing with the death of someone close. **BY ROBERT F. WILLIAMS**



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## 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

On May 7, 1945, World War II officially ended in Europe. Here's an overview of America's four-year involvement in — as well as VFW's gratitude for the selfless sacrifice of those who fought — the largest conflict in world history.

**BY TIM DYHOUSE AND TINA CLARK**



## VFW LAUNCHES #STILLSERVING CAMPAIGN

Veterans volunteer for charitable causes at a higher rate than the general population. VFW wants to make sure its members get some much deserved recognition for their selfless endeavors.

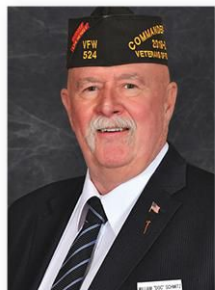
**BY JANIE DYHOUSE**



**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



# Post Commanders: Lead the Charge on Memorial Day



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
William "Doc" Schmitz

The nation observes a sacred day on May 25. Memorial Day is the time when Americans take a moment to remember all those who have died in uniform serving our great nation. And you — as a VFW commander — will be looked upon as a role model in how the day is recognized.

As a leader in an organization comprised of war veterans, you have an obligation to illustrate why this day is important. The men and women who have died while serving in the U.S. military fought for all of us.

They took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution with their lives, and that's exactly what they did. All Americans should take some time on Memorial Day to show their gratitude.

That's where VFW leaders and members can help. Here's a few ideas to get you started:

**Distribute Buddy Poppies:** VFW's official flower, the Buddy Poppy, is a hallmark of Memorial Day. For nearly 100 years, VFW members have handed out these blood-red flowers to their fellow citizens as a reminder of the sacrifices paid by uniformed Americans who have died in defense of the nation. Encourage your younger members to continue this tradition.

**March in parades:** If your town or city doesn't stage such an activity, encourage your Post to organize one. Not only can you build productive relationships with community leaders, you'll also illustrate to your fellow citizens about the day's importance.

**Place flags at gravesites:** This is a perfect opportunity for your Post members to share a patriotic activity with groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

**Host a patriotic program:** This is an opportunity to invite the public to your Post. As part of the event, you can deliver a prepared speech that you can obtain from VFW National

Headquarters. Simply log in to <https://vfw.org> and click on the "Patriotic Holiday Speeches" link under the Member Resources heading on the My VFW page. VFW's Communications Department usually has updated speeches available two weeks prior to the holiday.

**Attend commemorative ceremonies:** Be sure to wear your VFW hat and VFW-themed apparel. Be respectful and serve as an example to other attendees.

Whatever you do to recognize this day, it's important that Posts take the lead and represent VFW proudly in their communities. Your fellow citizens will look to you to set the best possible example.

They took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution with their lives, and that's exactly what they did. All Americans should take some time on Memorial Day to show their gratitude.



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### VFW OBJECTIVES

To ensure 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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## Wrestle Like a Girl



I trained and coached a team on the *USS Shangri-La* that won an at-sea match, which we felt gave us bragging rights as champions of the South China Sea. I am glad to see that someone with the training and capability is offering the best parts of the sport to young women.

**ROBERT ISARD**  
ELKINS PARK, PA.

## Five Brothers Served

The five brothers who all served in Vietnam warmed my heart and brought back memories. Myself, my brother and my brother-in-law all served in Vietnam — Marines, Navy and Army. Welcome home, brothers, and thanks for serving.

**TOM BERGS**  
BROWERVILLE, MINN.

The McMullen family had five members who served in Vietnam, or as Lt. Col. Francis McMullen's activities were, he flew Nimrod (A-26) missions out of Nakon Phaom, Thailand. Those who served were: Francis, Thomas, Steven, Lenard and Myron. Three other brothers also served before that: William, Frank and Lloyd. Our father, William E. McMullen Sr., served in France and Germany in World War I.

**THOMAS MCMULLEN**  
IRWIN, IOWA

## Operation Varsity

This was not the largest airborne operation in military history. In *Operation Market*, the First Allied Airborne Army put almost 35,000 paratroopers and glider-riders into Holland. Also, paratroopers do not "emerge from gliders." Paratroopers jump from aircraft while in flight.

**JOSEPH CONNOLLY II**  
BELLE ISLE, FLA.

## Passover in Nazi Germany

This story was great reading. I am Jewish and a life member of VFW Post 549 in Tucson, Ariz. This year will mark 65 years with one Post! Of the six magazines I receive each month, yours is No. 1 in reading. Keep up the good work.

**AUSTIN AGRON**  
TUCSON, ARIZ.

## FMF Corpsmen Training

My magazine arrived, fittingly, on the 51st anniversary of my cousin, John Sullivan's, death in Vietnam. Johnny was a Navy corpsman. He was on a firebase when it was overrun on Feb. 25, 1969. Thank you for the article on Fleet Marine Corpsmen. It highlights the important, selfless role these men played. May they never be forgotten and may God protect those who serve today.

**FRED PRUDHOMME**  
N. CHARLESTON, S.C.

I was a corpsman in the Marines in Korea 70 years ago. In Korea, corpsmen were also considered as extra fire power as well as lifesavers. I am pleased that we now have the time to train FMF corpsmen.

**RICHARD SKATES**  
BUTTE, MONT.

Well done! This is one of the most outstanding and enjoyable articles I have read in several months. I plan to share it with several of the troops I have had the ability of serving with while on active duty and in Vietnam.

**RALPH CROSS**  
DALLAS, TEXAS

## Vietnam Map

I could not help but notice the picture on p. 33 as information I sent to help with the recovery of the remains of North Vietnamese soldiers. Although it was over 50 years ago, I remember everything as if it happened yesterday.

**WILFRED VINCENT**  
TWENTY-NINE PALMS, CALIF.

I participated in the killing and burial of some dozens of VC regulars from the 9th VC division in late December 1967 along Hwy. 13 south of An Loc. I was assigned to the 1st Inf. Div., at the time.

**CHAD SPAWR**  
HASLETT, MICH.

## Women's History Month

I saw a face I recognized. In Vietnam in 1968, we moved from Tan San Nut to Long Binh when the new HQ was constructed. One of several WACs who I worked with was Esther Gleaton. They all were a ray of sunshine on a rainy day.

**JAMES MCMICHAEL**  
FORT SCOTT, KAN.

I saw the photo of a nurse next to a hospital bed with a veteran in it. I am a WWII vet and spent most of three years during the war working in a hospital in the South Pacific as a ward boy. Today, I would be considered a nurse's assistant. Keep up the good work.

**WILLIAM WILLHELM**  
CAMPBELLSVILLE, KY.

It was very brief, no commentary regarding the impact women have made in the military or the issues women veterans have had in the past receiving recognition and care at the VA. The accompanying included three pictures of Army women: one Marine, one Air Force woman and one picture with names and rank but no branch of service. Clearly missing was the Navy.

**SUSAN MARSHALL**  
CAROLINA BEACH, N.C.

I was excited to see the cover indicating Women's History Month, but was deeply disappointed to find only five pages on women. As an advocate for women during my military career, I know of the challenges women faced but most were overcome by their determination to overcome them.

**LARRY WEBER**  
SUMTER, S.C.



"Mail Call" features letters from our readers in nine issues per year. If you have questions, comments or concerns about any subject or article from our most recent issue, letters can be emailed to [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org), with the subject line, "Mail Call," or mailed to: VFW magazine, Mail Call, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Letters must be no more than 200 words, and VFW magazine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and accuracy.



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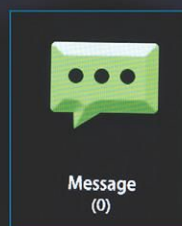
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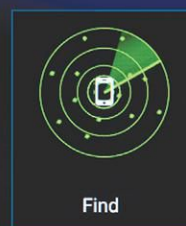
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## Navy Names Ship for WWII Hero

The Navy announced on Jan. 20 that a future aircraft carrier will be named for a World War II African-American sailor who fought valiantly during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The *USS Doris Miller* (CVN-81), the fourth carrier in the new Gerald R. Ford-class, is expected to enter the Navy's fleet in the early 2030s.

Mess Attendant 3rd Class Doris Miller was a cook aboard the *USS West Virginia* (BB-48) when the Japanese launched their attack early on Dec. 7, 1941. He was ordered to the bridge to aid the mortally wounded commander. Taking initiative, Miller manned a .50-caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun, a weapon he had not been trained on.

"It wasn't hard," Miller told the Navy's History and Heritage Command shortly after the incident. "I just pulled the trigger, and she worked just fine. I had watched the others with these guns. I guess I fired her for about 15 minutes."

During a ceremony earlier this year on Martin Luther King Day at Pearl Harbor, Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly noted that Miller worked tirelessly during the difficult day.

"When the order came to abandon ship, he stayed and helped," Modly said. "He was one of the last three sailors to leave the *USS West Virginia*."

Modly also noted that the future aircraft carrier will be the second ship named for Miller and the first aircraft carrier named for an African-American.

"This also is the first aircraft carrier to be named in honor of an enlisted sailor," Modly added.

Miller died less than two years after his Pearl Harbor exploits as a crew member of the *USS Liscome Bay* (CVE-56). On Nov. 24, 1943, as the escort carrier was supporting U.S. operations off Makin in the Gilbert Islands, a torpedo from a Japanese submarine sunk the ship with the loss of 644 men, according to the National Naval Aviation Museum.



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. NAVY

**Navy Adm. Chester Nimitz pins the Navy Cross on Mess Attendant 3rd Class Doris Miller on May 27, 1942, at Pearl Harbor. Miller received the award for valiantly fighting off Japanese attackers on Dec. 7, 1941, at the U.S. base in the Pacific.**

## Coast Guard Museum to Start Construction in 2020

The only U.S. military service without a national museum plans to begin building one later this year. The museum will be located in New London, Conn., home of the U.S. Coast Guard academy, about 130 miles northeast of New York City.

As of January, the National Coast Guard Museum

Association had amassed more than \$56 million in fundraising efforts. Construction of the museum, which is estimated to cost at least \$100 million, is expected to take four years. That means the earliest it could open would be late 2024.

The centerpiece of the facility will be the *USCGC Eagle*, a tall sailing ship the Coast Guard uses as a training vessel. For more information, visit [www.coastguardmuseum.org](http://www.coastguardmuseum.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. COAST GUARD MUSEUM

**An artist rendering shows what the proposed U.S. Coast Guard Museum will look like after it is constructed at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. The 80,000 square-foot, five-story, partially glass structure is expected to cost at least \$100 million and be completed by 2025.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM



## Portraits Displayed at Veterans Museum

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, will feature two new exhibits beginning this month.

The first, *We the People: Portraits of Veterans in America*, runs from May 2 through Sept. 6. It features 50 large-scale watercolor portraits of "veterans of all ages and all walks of life," according to the museum.

From May 22 to May 25 (Memorial Day), the museum will host *The Wall That Heals*, which is a traveling version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The scaled-down version is 71½-foot high at its tallest point and 375 feet long.

For more information, visit <https://nationalvmm.org>.

**ABOVE: The National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, will feature an exhibition of veterans portraits painted by Ohio native Mary Whyte. The 50 portraits will be on display through Sept. 6.**



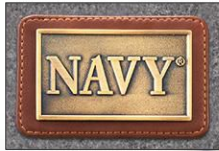
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PHOTO BY BOB KNUDSEN

VFW Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz testifies on March 4 before a joint hearing of the House and Senate VA committees during the 2020 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Schmitz was backed by hundreds of VFW members and activists during his testimony.



## VA Must Serve Veteran Interests ‘Above All Others’

*VFW Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz ended the VFW’s annual Legislative Conference with a speech in front of House and Senate members. He called on lawmakers to expand the Agent Orange presumptive conditions list.*

BY DAVE SPIVA

VFW Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz addressed many VFW priorities at a joint hearing of the House and Senate VA committees during the organization’s annual Legislative Conference on March 4.

One of Schmitz’s main topics was expanding the Agent Orange presumptive conditions list. Schmitz said that Vietnam veterans have “long suffered” from the effects of Agent Orange.

“Thousands have died and many have been left to endure these negative health consequences from diseases that have been scientifically linked to Agent Orange,” Schmitz said.

Schmitz also said that the continued delay in adding diseases to the list is causing a hardship for veterans and families. The diseases he said should be added are:

- Bladder cancer.
- Hypothyroidism.
- Parkinson-like symptoms.
- Hypertension.

Schmitz urged Congress to take action on that matter to end the “needless suffering” of Vietnam War veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange.

Also covered at the hearing was the VA MISSION Act. Schmitz said that VA, Congress and VFW must work together to ensure the law serves its intended pur-

pose — improving access to health care.

“VFW has consistently received feedback from our membership that VA care is their primary choice, and VFW believes that VA medical facilities should be adequately staffed and funded to provide the appropriate amount of care to veterans,” Schmitz said. “However, when community care is necessary to address capacity, lack of services or timeliness of care, VA’s community care program must work seamlessly and quickly to deliver care.”

Schmitz urged VA to evaluate community care wait times “in the same light” as urgent care for the best interests of veterans.



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“Above all else, processes must exist to serve veterans and place their interests and needs above all others,” Schmitz said. “Processes must remove barriers to veteran care. There can be no room or excuse for anything that lengthens the time it takes for care to be received.”

During his speech, Schmitz commended Congress for eliminating the “Widow’s Tax” for military survivors. He said that families can now “focus on healing” from the loss of a loved one and not have to worry about receiving benefits the veteran earned.

Schmitz then praised the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for reducing the veteran homeless population since 2010. He said that he is pleased to see that the population dropped from 74,087 in 2010 to less than 40,000 in 2018.

Schmitz also thanked Congress for the passage of the *Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*, which restores VA benefits to “Blue Water” Navy veterans of the Vietnam War who have a disability connected to Agent Orange exposure.

“As a Vietnam veteran, I am personally thankful for your leadership in passage of the [bill],” Schmitz said. “I have many friends, several who are in the audience today, who would like me to extend their thanks for the long-overdue benefits and recognition.”

Schmitz also extended his gratitude to members of the VA committees who “dare to care” for veterans.

“During a time of divisive partisanship, you have worked across the aisle and across chambers to pass legislation to improve care and benefits for America’s veterans and our families,” Schmitz said.

Here are some other highlights from the Chief’s presentation to House and Senate lawmakers. To view Schmitz’s full speech, visit <https://www.vfw.org/legislativeconference>.

## BURN PITS

- Pass the *Veterans Right to Breathe Act (H.R. 4574)*, which would improve how the Department of Defense tracks, treats and prevents the harmful impact of burn pits.
- Establish and properly fund independent research on the impact of burn pits, to include gender-

specific effects.

- Provide veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan the care and benefits they deserve.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE

- Call on Congress to pass the *Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act (H.R. 3932)* which would ensure veterans have access to life-saving preventive medicine through VA care.

## MILITARY-CIVILIAN TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

- Pass the *Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2019 (H.R. 2326)* which would ensure resources similar to the military’s Transition Assistance Program are made available to veterans after they transition out of service.
- Ensure that the Department of Defense is helping service members prepare for civilian life after military service.

## WOMEN VETERANS

- Ensure women veterans have the ability to choose the gender of their VA health care provider.
- Improve privacy for women at VA clinics.

## VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

- Expand VA wartime benefits to so-called “early Vietnam veterans,” who served from Nov. 1, 1955, to Feb. 27, 1961.
- Urge the U.S. to keep improving its relationship with Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries for full-accounting and remains-recovery efforts.

## MEDICAL CANNABIS

- Pass *VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2019 (H.R. 712)* to require VA to conduct a scientific study of the efficacy of medicinal cannabis for treating veterans.

## PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS

- Expand the definition of Persian Gulf War veterans to include veterans who served in support of

operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*. The areas included are:

- Afghanistan.
- Israel.
- Egypt.
- Turkey.
- Syria.
- Jordan.

## HOMELESSNESS

- Urge Congress and VA to expand the definition of “homelessness” so VA can provide benefits and services to homeless veterans who are not securely housed.
- Encourage Congress to work with VA to provide separate living arrangements for veterans with minor children and veterans who have survived sexual trauma.

## CAREGIVER PROGRAM

- Pass legislation to amend VA’s health care benefits package to include nursing home care, just as all veterans are eligible to receive home and community-based services.

## DISABLED VETERANS

- Call on Congress to pass the *Hear Our Heroes Act of 2019 (H.R. 3866)* which would establish presumptive benefits for combat veterans diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus.
- Urge Congress to pass the *Blast Exposure Protection Act of 2020 (H.R. 5739)* which would establish a presumption of service-connection for disabilities associated with blast exposures.

## REMAINS RECOVERY MISSION

- Urge Congress to pass the *Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Support Act (H.R. 4879)*, which would exempt Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) employees conducting recovery missions from being furloughed in the event of a government shutdown.
- Support full funding and personnel staffing for the DPAA.
- Expand recovery operations into North Korea. ✦

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# The Independent Budget Calls for \$114.8 Billion for VA

VFW, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) in February released the 2020 edition of *The Independent Budget*.

For 32 years, the veterans' organizations have presented a proposed budget and policy recommendations to Congress and the president. The report serves as the organizations' benchmark for properly funding VA and ensure a timely delivery of quality health care and appropriate benefits.

*The Independent Budget* calls for a VA medical care budget of \$98.4 billion for 2021 (\$4 billion more than the Trump Administration's recommendation) and \$100.6 billion for 2022. *The Independent Budget* also recommended about \$114.8 billion for VA's total budget, which is \$4.4 billion (18 percent) more than last year's budget request.

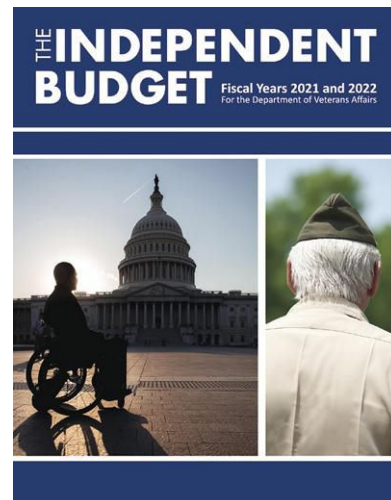
Some of the notable proposed items in *The Independent Budget* included:

- \$64.4 billion for medical services.
- \$3.23 billion for the Veterans Benefits Administration.
- \$2.48 billion for electronic health care record modernization.
- \$779 million in 2021 and \$1.4 billion in 2022 to extend eligibility for caregiver support.
- \$776 million to fill VA outpatient primary care and mental health positions at VA.
- \$328 million for prosthetics and sensory aids.
- \$218 million for the Board of Veterans' Appeals.
- \$200 million for women's health programs.

In the veteran service organizations' VA budget proposal, authors of *The Independent Budget* said they recognize that Congress and President Donald Trump face pressure to reduce federal spending, but that the "growing demand" for veterans' health care and benefits validate the need for a fully funded VA.

"We appreciate that Congress remains committed to doing the right thing and has continued to provide increases in appropriations," the authors stated. "However, the serious access problems in the health care system identified in 2014 and the enactment of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 has created a financial obligation that [without sufficient resources] could erode efforts to effectively and efficiently modernize the VA health care system."

For more information about *The Independent Budget*, visit [www.independentbudget.org](http://www.independentbudget.org).



## VA's Solid Start a 'Win' for Veterans

VA launched a program that connects veterans with benefits and resources. VA hopes it will help veterans transition from military to civilian life.

VA said that Solid Start can help vet-

erans to help them better understand the benefits available to them. VA plans on calling newly discharged veterans three times — at the 90-, 180- and 365-day marks after discharge.

With phone scammers often targeting veterans, VA Solid Start representatives will never ask veterans for financial information or talk about "uncomfortable" subjects, according to VA.

VFW Director of Communications Terrence Hayes said that the first year of a veterans' transition from military to civilian life is "critical" and creates significant stress and pressures.

"The VFW believes the Solid Start program is a win-win for our veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs in ensuring that newly separated veterans receive the health care and benefits

they've earned during this critical stage of their lives," Hayes said.

Solid Start also helps ensure that transitioning veterans are aware of VA's free mental health resources available to them for up to a year, regardless of discharge status or service history.

"Transition can be difficult, but knowing that the VA is proactively seeking out these veterans to provide them with detailed information on health care, mental health, home loan and employment services may ease stress for our veterans and their families," Hayes said.

Another resource veterans have, regardless of how long they've been separated from the military, is the VFW Member Service Center. It can be reached by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS (1-833-839-8387) or e-mailing [MSC@vfw.org](mailto:MSC@vfw.org).



erans with anything from home loans to health care services from the VA.

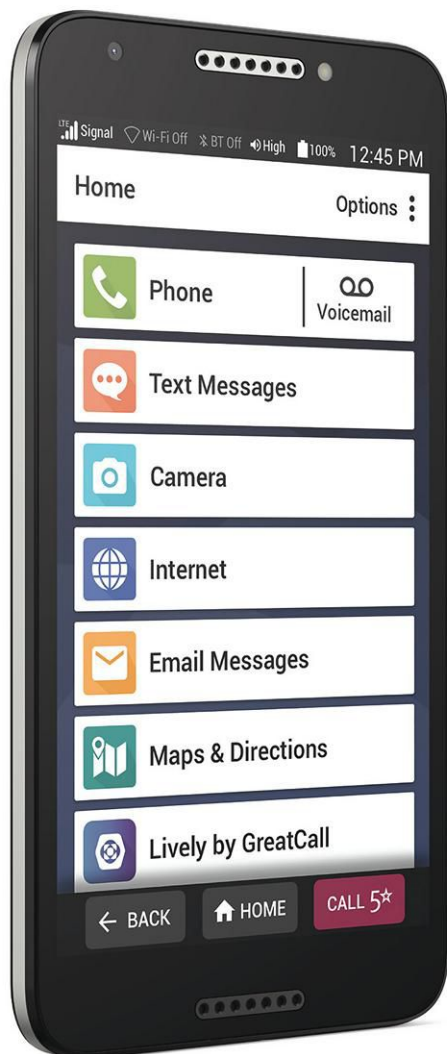
According to VA, more than 200,000 service members will transition out of the military in 2020. The new program allows VA representatives to start contacting

**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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## VFW Supports Law to Help Veterans Find STEM Jobs

PHOTO BY TIA DUFOUR/THE WHITE HOUSE



President Donald J. Trump signs the *Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act* (P.L. 116-115) into law during a ceremony on Feb. 11 in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C. VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence (third from left) was in attendance during the bill's signing.

A new law signed by President Donald Trump on Feb. 11 could expand veteran eligibility for STEM-related education programs and encourages veteran participation in such fields.

The *Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act* (P.L. 116-115), a VFW-supported law, aims to assist veterans who pursue careers in STEM, or science-, technology-, engineering- and mathematics-related occupations.

According to the law, veterans now have access to:

- The Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship program, which recruits and trains individuals to be mathematics and science teachers.
- National Science Foundation fellowships and master's program fellowships for mathematics and science teachers.
- Grants for computer and network security capacity building.
- Traineeship grants leading to a doctorate degree in computer and network security research.

The law makes veterans eligible to participate in programs by the National Science Foundation, a federal agency that provides grants to scientists and students.

The law directs the National Science Board to include data on what barriers student veterans face when trying to enter into STEM education programs and careers.

VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence was in attendance for the bill's signing ceremony in the Oval Office of the White House.

"We thank the president for signing this important bill which will enable America's veterans to succeed after military service," Lawrence said.



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JESSI MONTE/US AIR FORCE

## Legislation Introduced to Study Cancer Among Pilots

Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) introduced a bill in February that would help the Department of Defense and VA learn more about how military pilots are affected by radiation emitted from their aircrafts.

If passed by Congress and signed into law, the *Military Pilots Cancer Incidence Study Act* (H.R. 5858) would require DOD to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to study the cancer and mortality rates of pilots in the military. The bill, ultimately, aims to provide military pilots with quality preventative health care while serving.

A former Air Force pilot, Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.), a life member of VFW Post 6049 in Morris, Ill., co-sponsored the bill. Kinzinger said that when he joined the Air Force in 2003, he knew some of the "risks" military service came with.

"What I didn't realize then was the amount of radiation pilots are exposed to during that service," Kinzinger said.

Last year, the McClatchy Company, a media company based in Sacramento, Calif., released a study which found that military pilots have a "greater" exposure to radiation than other service members. VA data also shows that the rates of reported cases of prostate cancer among veterans has risen more than 15 percent since 2000.

"We owe it to these brave service members to know what health risks they assume and ensure we screen and treat early, so they live longer and healthier lives," Luria said.

**ABOVE:** A pilot with the Air Force's 492nd Fighter Squadron prepares for a training exercise on March 3 at Royal Air Force Lakenheath in England. The *Military Pilots Cancer Incidence Study Act* (H.R. 5858), introduced by Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) in February, could provide military pilots with quality preventative health care if signed into law.



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# 'ALWAYS KEEP MOVING'

A DOUBLE-AMPUTEE CLIMBS PIKES PEAK TO RAISE AWARENESS AND MOTIVATE VETERANS EVERYWHERE. THE IRAQ WAR VET SAYS HE'S AN EXAMPLE THAT "YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO."

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.



Travis MacCody Strong, left, and Mandy Horvath pose along the trail headed towards the 14,115-foot summit of Pikes Peak, about 12 miles from Colorado Springs, Colo., in August 2019. It took the couple four days to complete the trek, which is considered the highest summit of the southern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains.



**O**ne hop at a time on clenched fists, Army veteran Travis MacCody Strong, 43, fought off exhaustion last year to reach the summit of Colorado's Pikes Peak on a brisk late-August afternoon.

Swinging from one railroad tie step to the next along the Manitou Incline hiking trail en route up Pikes Peak, it had taken Strong and fellow double-amputee companion, Mandy Horvath, four days to reach the 14,115-foot summit.

The couple basked in the euphoria of completing the climb, accompanied by supporters and local media outlets as they overlooked the belt of mountainous grandeur from its highest point.

"It was tougher than I had anticipated, so it felt like a relief to get all the way to the top," said Strong, a member of Post 501 in Kiowa, Colo. "It was such a freeing experience for me."

With sweat-drenched shirts that read "Legless Legends," Strong and Horvath attributed their climb as an effort to raise money on behalf of Cars4Heroes, a Missouri-based non-profit that raises money to fix donated cars for veterans.

For Strong, however, the climb up Pikes Peak began more than a decade ago. It started in a foreign swath of barren desert terrain in Iraq — the night he first died.

## 'DON'T KNOW HOW I SURVIVED'

Four days after America celebrated Thanksgiving in 2006, off in a desolate corner of the world plagued by an ongoing war, Staff Sgt. Strong and four others from the 1st Bn., 23rd Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div., a unit known as the 1st Stryker Brigade, sat tucked in an armored vehicle on patrol.



**From front to back: Mandy Horvath, Travis Strong, Robert Greenier and Nicholas Hallisy trek up the trail during the third day of the trip up Pikes Peak in August 2019. Strong will try for a personal best this year on May 22.**

On that day — Nov. 27 — the crew trekked down a moonlit dirt road encased by dilapidated structures in the northern district of Baghdad called Shula, when an unforeseen explosively formed penetrator (EFP) detonated.

The piercing explosion scattered the crew, leaving Strong without his right leg and the left in severe condition. He and Lt. John Poluska, whose thigh caught a piece of the EFP, bled profusely as others scrambled to help. They both received tourniquet assistance and were quickly transported by the other members to a field hospital at Camp Liberty.

"I honestly don't know how I survived that night," Strong said. "I flatlined four times, but I just kept fighting each time to stay alive."

Heavily sedated, Strong swam in and out of consciousness. When he eventually gathered his faculties, nearly 14 hours after the event, he had already been moved to a hospital within Baghdad's

Green Zone. It was there that Strong learned his left leg had been amputated due to its severity.

Strong recalled waking to other members of 1st Pltn., B Co. at his bedside. Despite noticing both his legs had been removed, the infantryman's hardest reality to grasp, he admitted, rested with those familiar faces that had been with him through two deployments beginning in 2003.

"Seeing their faces and knowing that I'm not going to be with them again was probably the hardest thing to bear at that moment," Strong said. "It was a tough thing to grasp, knowing that that was it for me."

The Purple Heart recipient was then escorted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where the first few steps toward his unlikely climb began to unfold against an avalanche of overwhelming feelings.

"I went through every emotion imaginable when I was there — anger, sadness, depression and despair," Strong admitted. "But I never gave up. This was just the start of my new life."

## 'YOU HAVE TO KEEP GOING'

Strong, who prides himself in living up to his last name, spent a few months mulling over his new circumstances and finding ways to beat them. He grew restless, approaching his "new life" with the sort of ferocious fervor that many veterans of war carry from their days in the military.

"You're trained to push through stuff," Strong said. "That's something I've always kind of done, but the military really enhanced that mentality for me."



First, he set his sights on rehab, where he began to build and sculpt his upper body. Strong set a five-year timeline on being able to walk using prosthetics, which he eventually did in time to walk down the aisle at his own wedding.

"Even though we're not together any-

A competitor and an adrenalin-seeking junkie at heart, Strong found activities that, although strenuous, provided a harmonious blend of both. With help from local organizations that include No Boundaries, Strong started getting his fix of adrenaline and competition by partak-

"I found myself being more active without the prosthetic legs on," he admitted. "It's been hit or miss as far as finding prosthetics that work and don't slow me down."

## HE HELPS OTHERS, TOO

In November 2018, Strong found a way to transition from the icy slopes of Colorado to the crushing waves of Cocoa Beach, Fla.

He reached out to Ed Martinez, a Cocoa Beach city commissioner and business owner, and Craig Harriman, CEO of Beachside Media, both of whom are veterans, in hopes of participating in Cocoa Beach's inaugural "Military Surf Festival."

Strong became one of seven wounded veterans to participate in the event, learning to surf without prosthetics by using his chiseled arms to maneuver up, over and around the waves.

Those bulging arms have become a common sight for passersby attempting to climb the Manitou Incline, too. Since 2019, Strong has willed his way up its 2,244 railroad steps seven times.

Strong recorded his fastest time up the Manitou Incline — 2 hours, 30 minutes — back in August of last year, when racing Horvath during his first trip up Pikes Peak. The trip was Horvath's second, and Strong's first.

The couple's climb generated enough funds by the time they reached the summit that Cars4Heroes promptly awarded Army veteran Dennis Michels a Ford Expedition.

For Strong, putting his body on the line for a greater cause continues to bring him purpose in his postmortem Army life. He intends to participate in a few more veteran-based events to raise awareness for veteran homelessness and suicides in 2020.

"I want to be a living example that just because something traumatic happened, you can still go out and do whatever you want to do," Strong said. "It'll just be a little bit different."

Strong's latest goal is to climb the Manitou Incline again, shattering his "personal best" time while placing a No. 22 sticker after every 22 steps. The added feature, he hopes, will serve as a reminder that nearly 22 veterans commit suicide per day. The climb is slated for May 22. 🇺🇸

EMAIL [irodriguez@vfw.org](mailto:irodriguez@vfw.org)



PHOTO BY ROBERT GREINER



PHOTO BY GIL BOLIBOL

**TOP:** Travis Strong, left, and Mandy Horvath climb up the rocky peak in August 2019 on the final day of the climb towards the Pikes Peak summit. The pair arrived at the summit in the afternoon.

**BOTTOM:** On their way to the summit of Pikes Peak last August, Travis Strong, front, and Mandy Horvath climb along the edges of the mountain on the fourth and final day. The pair's climb to the summit also raised enough funds to provide an Army veteran and his family a vehicle.

more, that was a huge motivation of mine at the time," he said. "I really pushed myself to accomplish that goal."

But Strong didn't stop there.

"You have to keep going," he added. "The goal is always to keep moving."

ing in downward mono-skiing, snowmobiling and sled hockey around Colorado.

Strong has become a regular around the slopes near his home in Manitou Springs, just west of Colorado Springs. But he's not confined to just ice, or prosthetics.

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# USING GRIEF TO BRIDGE THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY DIVIDE

*A former paratrooper now working on his doctorate degree explains how college students can better understand veterans and their experiences.*

**BY ROBERT F. WILLIAMS**

Army Staff Sgt. Robert F. Williams prepares for a patrol while on duty with 4th Plt., D Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf., 173rd Abn. Bde., on Feb. 26, 2008, at Observation Post Restrepo in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. Williams, a VFW life member, served with the battalion featured in the 2010 film *Restrepo*.

Often reduced to a series of empty “thank yous” and 10 percent discounts, the relationship between veterans and civilians seems to grow more distant with each passing year.

A forever war fought by an increasingly isolated warrior caste means that finding common ground between these two groups has never been more critical.

While not ostracized, student veterans often feel alienated from their younger peers. Traditional students seem intrigued by veteran experiences, but most shy away from engaging in meaningful conversation.

At first glance, the reasons for the divide between these two groups seem clear. Distinctions in age, experience, and perspective are obvious to those with even a moderate level of awareness.

Many student veterans are slightly older than their civilian peers in years, but significantly older by virtue of their experiences. Others are in their 30s, with families, and little in common with 20-year-olds.

Initially, these differences seem to doom college campuses to the same expanding divide afflicting the country as a whole. In reality, however, the inverse is true. The situation on college campuses is ready-made for finding shared humanity between these two distinct populations.

Last fall, Dr. Hilary Lithgow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill required students in her Literature of War class to watch an Afghanistan War documentary.

Directed by journalist Sebastian Junger, *Restrepo* profiled the 2007 deployment of the Army’s 2nd Plt., B Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf., 173rd Abn. Bde., to Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley.

Because I served with the battalion (in 4th Plt., D Co.) in Afghanistan’s Kunar province, including four months from October 2007 to February 2008 in the Korengal Valley, I was asked to be a part of the class’s discussion of the film. My friend and fellow student veteran Doug Yorty, who was helping teach the class, urged me to participate.

Dr. Lithgow enthusiastically agreed and, after some initial hesitation, I accepted the invitation.

## REAL EMOTIONS

As that day’s conversation unfolded, we talked about the documentary and the experience of combat. It was an awkward discussion, moving at different speeds as veterans and civilians contributed ideas, each hesitant to offend the other, but nevertheless moving forward.

Our momentum waned, however, as we turned to the film’s depiction of paratroopers learning of a comrade’s death. The rawness of the men’s reactions, so unlike those created by Hollywood, seemed to shock the civilian students.

“I’m not sure I can relate,” a woman in the class said.

Despite my awareness of the palpable rift between veterans and civilians in the room, I was taken aback by her comment.

“I would say you can,” I said to her. “Grief is grief. Everyone has, or will, lose something or someone important to them. While it might not be in a firefight, you can relate to losing someone close to you.”

At the time, I had no idea how powerful those words would be, but it later became clear that the entire classroom felt that statement’s poignancy.

I met my wife in 2014. She was reeling from the loss of her husband to cancer at the all-too-young age of 29. I was emotionally distraught from three combat tours and a divorce.

We bonded over our shared understanding of grief and built a relationship based on supporting and loving each other through our shared humanity. After describing this connection with my wife to the young woman in the class, I felt a light-bulb moment had occurred in the room.

## GRIEF IS A ‘UNIVERSAL’ EMOTION

I was nervous talking about this subject. I mean, who the hell was I to say anything? I’m no war hero, just a guy who did his job in a military career full of ups and downs. Nor am I an expert on the subjects of war or Afghanistan. My only qualification, in my mind, was sliding down a mountain on top of Junger one winter day in the Korengal Valley.

In reality, however, my qualification was identical to anyone’s in that room: my humanity.

After we discussed how universal grief is, despite the particularities of its circum-

stances, I could feel the entire class come together and release a collective sigh. This is what learning feels like, I thought at the time. It was a beautiful moment.

“Certain experiences are universal to humans,” one student later commented in her writing about that exchange. “Trying to make sense of the incomprehensible, regret about decision-making, intense experiences of connection with others, how to process something we can’t forget, things we’ve done that register with us in complex ways after the fact.”

And, of course, grief.

Our brief dialogue on grief also taught me that my story is worth telling. What is awkward and not very exciting or unique to me can teach someone else about war and humanity. And maybe close the gap between veteran and civilian.

Exchanges like these foster shared understanding across a divide that sometimes seems insurmountable. A discussion about widely shared experiences like losing someone you love can help open the door for future conversations that build community, much as ours did that day in Chapel Hill.

All too often veterans insulate themselves from their civilian peers, while many civilians think of the veteran as a monolith on a pedestal of praise. Neither approach is constructive. In that classroom, we were reminded that each of us is human despite our different experiences. Most humans experience the same emotions whenever death occurs: pain, sadness, grief and healing.

More than lending authenticity to an excellent documentary, I was able to give credence to the idea that all of us are connected in some way. Difficult discussions allow us to ground universal experiences, not as “military” or “civilian,” but rather, human. At the end of the day, grief is grief, and bonding through our shared understanding of human emotion is but one way to bridge a divide that is far less wide than it seems. ★

EMAIL [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org)

*Robert F. Williams served as a section leader for a heavy weapons platoon in Afghanistan and is a life member of VFW’s Department of North Carolina. He is a first-year Ph.D. student at The Ohio State University studying military history.*



# VFW'S ASSISTANCE HAS 'BEEN A BLESSING'

An active-duty military softball team uses sponsorship from the VFW to keep the team together and excel in national tournaments.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

John Stock had been around the military slow-pitch softball circuit for almost a decade before it dawned on him that his team needed a sponsor to continue playing together.

With the sum of its active-duty parts scattered about on Air Force and Army bases across the country, from Alaska to Florida and everywhere in between, Stock found it difficult to keep his core group of guys together for tournaments.

the country had done. As the team weeded through different possibilities for a sponsorship prior to the start of the 2017 circuit, one of the options brought up was the VFW.

"Growing up in Minnesota, I was familiar with the VFW because a lot of the travel hockey teams are sponsored by a local Post, and my dad had even had his wedding reception at one of them," Stock said. "None of the other softball teams we

ty to not just thank them for their service, but show what we're about by supporting them in any way we could."

For the past three years and counting, Stock has received \$5,000 a year through the Military Assistance Program, supplementing the team with softball uniforms and covering tournament entry fees, travel expenses and lodging each season.

"With all of us being so spaced out and having families to support and stuff, it would've been very difficult to keep this going without the help from VFW," Stock said. "So getting to represent VFW the last three seasons as part of our partnership has been a blessing."

Since partnering with VFW, Stock and his team have participated yearly in four of the nation's largest United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and All World Sports (AWS) men's slow-pitch softball tournaments for military members. Each season, the team competes in the Commander's Cup in San Antonio; the Military Band-Aid Invitational in Colorado Springs, Colo.; the Military World Series in Viera, Fla.; and the AWS Las Vegas Worlds in Las Vegas.

Between April and December, the team keeps busy playing across the country, but they're welcomed in each location by a local VFW Post, another perk Stock and his team have been afforded as VFW's team.

"We try to stop by VFW Posts in the cities where we're at for tournaments," Stock said. "They usually welcome us in with open arms and have even fed us pre-game meals. Some even come out and support us at our games, so it's a blessing to know we've got that kind of support."

Stock and his team was scheduled to begin their 2020 season at the Commander's Cup in San Antonio on April 6. Their next tournament is the Military Band-Aid Invitational in Colorado Springs in June.

✦  
EMAIL [irodriguez@vfw.org](mailto:irodriguez@vfw.org)



VFW's sponsored active-duty military softball team poses during the Military Band-Aid Invitational in Colorado Springs, Colo., in June 2019. The team plans to play in the event again this year.

"I wanted to keep playing softball, but I wanted to keep playing with the guys that I had played with over the past five years," said Stock, a VFW member of Post 3000 in Quartz Hill, Calif., about 22 miles northeast of Edwards Air Force Base. "It was convenient when we were near each other, but things had started to fall apart because of the constant moving around."

Overburdened by tournament entry, travel and lodging fees, Stock resolved to do what many of the other active-duty military softball teams playing around

had seen on the softball fields had VFW on them, so I figured I'd give it a shot."

Stock pitched the idea of such a partnership over email to Lynn W. Rolf, director of Programs at VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. Rolf quickly responded by urging Stock to apply for a grant from VFW's Military Assistance Program.

"He found me on LinkedIn and pitched his idea, and I thought it'd be worth experimenting with," Rolf recalled of the 2017 exchange. "It was a great opportuni-

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## 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY IN EUROPE

U.S. Ninth Army soldiers Tech. Sgt. Vincent Pellegrino, Tech. Sgt. Oliver Scarcelli and Tech. Sgt. James Spear get the news of Germany's surrender on their way to a mess hall on May 8, 1945, in Beckum, Germany. The Nazis actually gave up on May 7 but fighting continued for another day in eastern Europe.

# Allies Stormed to Victory in Europe

75 years ago this month, Allied forces accepted Germany's unconditional surrender, ending World War II in Europe. On the diamond anniversary of that momentous event, VFW offers its recognition and gratitude to the millions of Americans who wore the nation's uniform and served in the European Theater of Operations between 1941 and 1945.

**BY TIM DYHOUSE AND TINA CLARK**

### WWII Medals Offered VFW Membership

World War II veterans produced the largest bloc of VFW-eligible veterans in the organization's history. More than 16 million Americans served overseas during the four-year-long conflict.

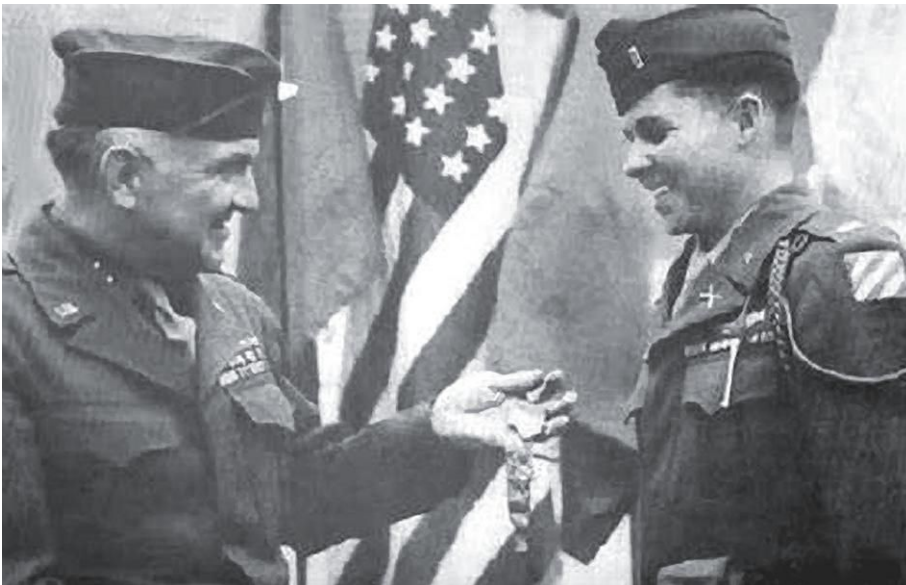
When VFW hit its biggest membership tally of more than 2 million in 1992, WWII veterans represented the largest portion of the membership. At right are two VFW-eligible campaign medals earned by troops who served in the European or American theaters.

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES



A French woman thanks troops of the U.S. 79th Infantry Division for liberating her town of Cherbourg, France, in June 1944. The 79th lost nearly 3,000 of its troops to combat deaths with another nearly 11,000 wounded.

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY



Army 1st Lt. Audie Murphy (right), of B Co., 15th Inf. Regt., 3rd Inf. Div., receives the Medal of Honor from Seventh Army Commander Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch on June 2, 1945, near Salzburg, Austria. In total, Murphy, one of the most decorated soldiers of WWII, earned 33 medals and citations.

### European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal

This medal was awarded to all members of the U.S. armed forces who served in the prescribed areas or aboard certain Navy ships between Dec. 7, 1941, and Nov. 8, 1945.



### World War II American Campaign Medal

This award was presented to all members of the U.S. armed forces who, between Dec. 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946, served in the American Theater of Operations. Though it was awarded to some troops who served within the United States, to be VFW-eligible, the recipient must have served outside the continental U.S. but within the American Theater of Operations for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days.



### Medal of Honor Recipients by Battleground

Battleground	Medals Awarded	Percentage
France	62	29
Italy	48	23
Germany	46	22
Belgium	18	8
Europe (air war)	15	7
Romania	7	3
Sicily	5	2
Holland	3	1.5
Morocco	3	1.5
Tunisia	3	1.5
Luxembourg	2	1
South Atlantic	1	.5
<b>Total in ETO</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>100</b>



## 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY IN EUROPE

World War II was aptly named. As battles raged around the globe, U.S. troops first arrived in Europe in 1942, captured their first enemy-held territory on the continent in 1943, famously invaded France in 1944 and forced the Nazi surrender in 1945. Here's an overview of how the Allied forces won the first phase of the biggest war in world history.

### First U.S. Troops Arrive

On Jan. 26, 1942, members of the 34th Infantry Division became the first GIs to arrive in Europe at Ulster, Northern Ireland.

### Clearing North Africa

From Nov. 8-11, 1942, Allied forces landed in Algeria and Morocco as part of *Operation Torch*. The Tunisia Campaign ended in victory on May 13, 1943, allowing the Allies to turn their focus to Italy.

### First U.S. Strike on Germany

On Jan. 27, 1943, U.S. bombs hit Wilhelmshaven in the first all-American attack on Germany.

### Sicily Captured

On Aug. 17, 1943, the Allies took the island of Sicily off the coast of southwestern Italy. The air campaign began May 14 and the ground attack started July 9.

### Crossing the English Channel

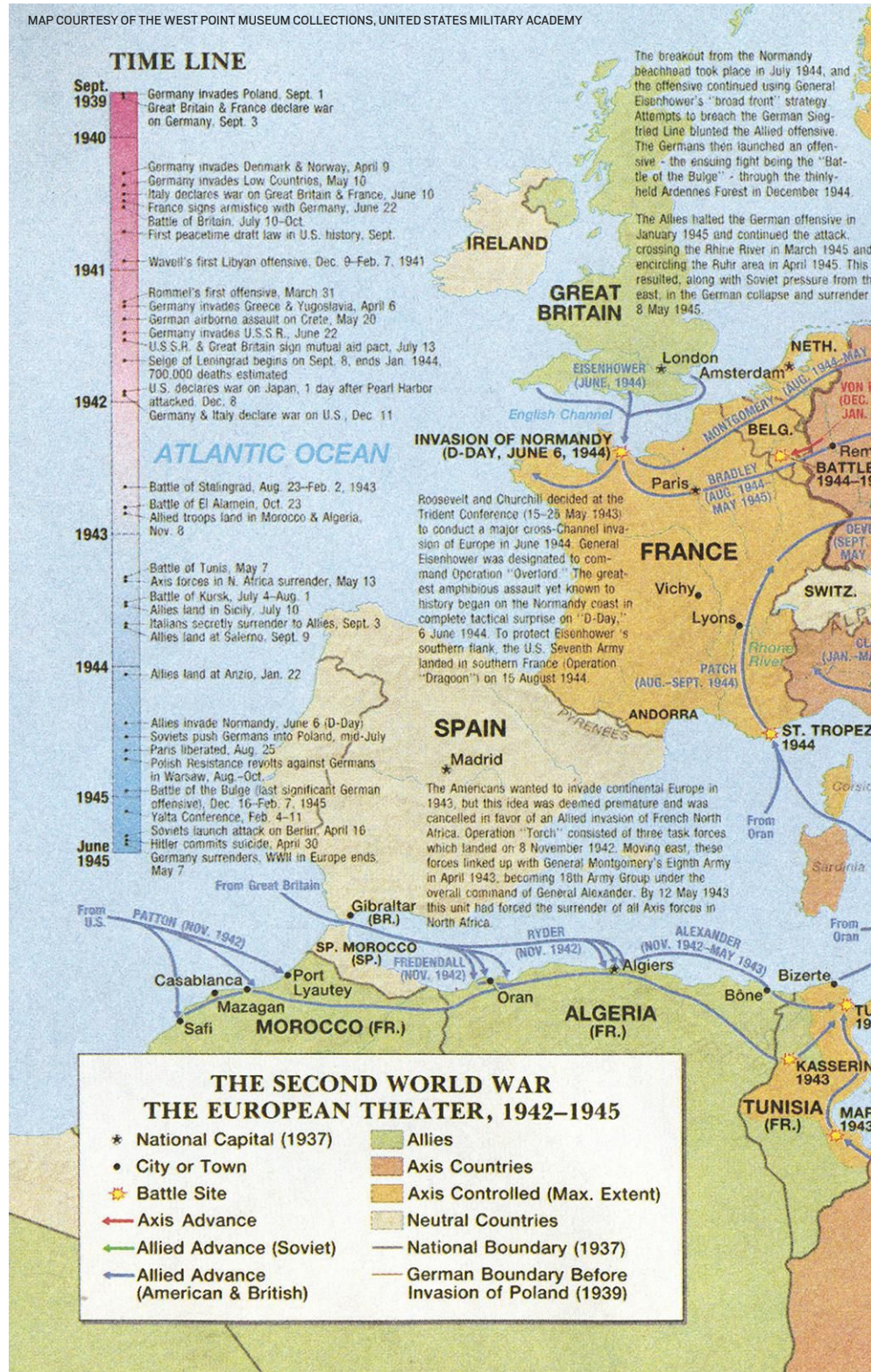
On June 6, 1944, Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, kicking off *Operation Overlord*. The Normandy Campaign would last until July 24.

### Paris Liberated

On Aug. 25, 1944, GIs from the 4th Infantry Division's 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron were the first Americans to enter the city.

### Battle of the Bulge

From Dec. 16, 1944, to Jan. 25, 1945, some 600,000 GIs participated in the largest battle in American history. Fought in Luxembourg and Belgium, the battle, part of the Ardennes Campaign, turned back the last significant German offensive of the war.



### Americans and Soviets Link Up

On April 25, 1945, near Torgau, Germany, on the Elbe River, U.S. soldiers from G Co., 273rd Inf. Regt., 69th Inf. Div., met up with troops from the Soviet Union.

### Victory in Italy

On April 29, 1945, German forces surrendered unconditionally in Italy, ending the war there. The surrender became effective May 2, 1945.





## Victory in Europe Day

On May 7, 1945, in Reims, France, Germany officially surrendered, ending the fighting in western Europe. Fighting in eastern Europe would last another day.

U.S. Army Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's chief of staff, signed for the Allied Expeditionary Force at Reims and demanded, per Ike's orders, that the surrender be unconditional.

## Last Shot Fired in Europe

On May 7, 1945, near Klenovice, Czechoslovakia, Army Pfc. Dominic Mozzetta of B Co., 1st Bn., 387th Inf., 97th Inf. Div., fired the last round at a German sniper.

## Last Hostile U.S. Deaths in Europe

On May 8 in Pernek, Czechoslovakia, German ordnance killed eight GIs of the 101st Inf., 26th Inf. Div.

## GIs Faced 200 Days of Combat on Average

Divisions varied widely as far as time in combat. For instance, the 3rd Infantry Division went into action in November 1942. The 13th Airborne Division arrived in France on Feb. 6, 1945, but was never deployed in combat. Maximum time in combat for the average infantryman was 200 days.

## Infantry Bore the Brunt of Battle

During WWII, the U.S. Army deployed 68 combat divisions to the European Theater of Operations. Those infantry, armored, airborne and mountain divisions suffered 78 percent of all Army casualties sustained in the theater.

The infantry, by far, absorbed the greatest percentage of casualties, accounting for 80 percent of the Army's total killed in action. While only 14 percent of the Army's total overseas strength, the infantry suffered 70 percent of all battle casualties. Riflemen equaled 68 percent of an infantry division's manpower but accounted for 95 percent of its casualties.

The 3rd Infantry Division suffered the most KIAs of any U.S. division in the ETO, with more than 5,500 combat deaths. All told, 19 Army infantry divisions counted more than 2,500 KIAs each from their ranks.

In comparison, the 3rd Armored Division and the 101st Airborne Division — which had the most KIAs in divisions from those two combat arms — counted less than 2,200 each. The 10th Mountain Division suffered 953 combat deaths and 3,134 wounded.

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# 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY IN EUROPE

## REMEMBERING THOSE WHO PAID THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION



The Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium is the final resting place for 5,329 Americans, many of whom died fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. Located in the village of Neuville-en-Condroz, some 12 miles southwest of Liège, the cemetery served as the central identification point for GIs killed in Europe.

### Infantry Divisions with the Most Casualties

Division	Combat Deaths	WIA
3rd Infantry	5,558	18,776
4th Infantry	4,854	17,371
29th Infantry	4,786	15,541
9th Infantry	4,504	17,416
1st Infantry	4,280	15,208

### Armored Divisions with the Most Casualties

Division	Combat Deaths	WIA
3rd Armored	2,126	6,963
1st Armored	1,428	5,168
4th Armored	1,356	4,551
2nd Armored	1,183	4,557
7th Armored	1,098	3,811

### Airborne Divisions with the Most Casualties

Division	Combat Deaths	WIA
101st Airborne	2,090	6,388
82nd Airborne	1,951	6,560
17th Airborne	1,382	4,904

Source: *Order of Battle, U.S. Army World War II* by Shelby L. Stanton

### Total U.S. Casualties in Europe

Service	Combat Deaths	WIA
Army/Air Forces	177,549	472,742
Navy	5,793	6,077

*Editor's note: Much of the information in this article was originally published in Faces of Victory, Europe: Liberating a Continent, VFW's official account of WWII in Europe.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. NAVY



The cruiser *USS Savannah (CL-42)* was shelling targets at Salerno, Italy, on Sept. 11, 1943, when a radio-controlled guide bomb penetrated the Number 3 gun turret and exploded below decks, killing 197 sailors and wounding 15.

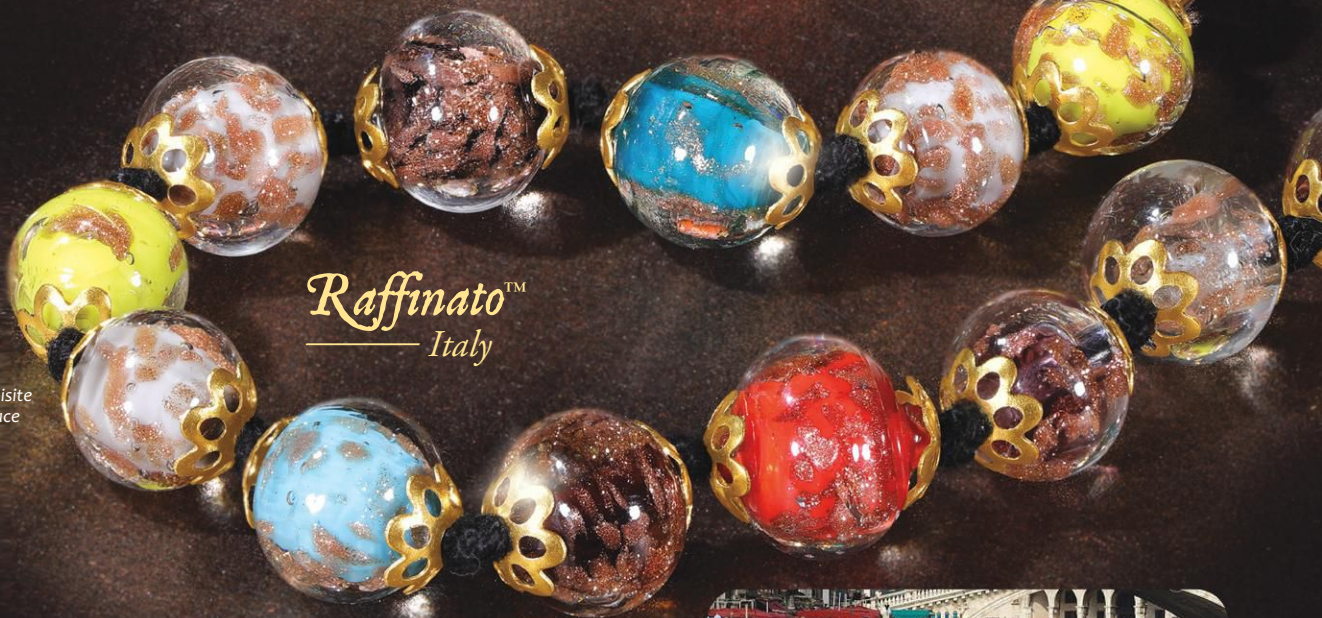
## Navy Sacrificed at Sea

While most of the U.S. Navy's attention during WWII was focused on the Pacific Theater, sailors fought and died in Europe, too, accounting for 16 percent of all U.S. fatalities there. Listed below are some of the ships that sustained large death tolls in single incidents.

Ship	Cause	Place	Date	Killed
<i>USS Warrington (DD-383)</i>	hurricane	Bahamas	Sept. 13, 1944	251
<i>USS Maddox (DD-622)</i>	bomb	Sicily	July 10, 1943	210
<i>USS Rowan (DD-405)</i>	torpedo	Salerno, Italy	Sept. 10, 1943	202
<i>USS Savannah (CL-42)</i>	bomb	Salerno	Sept. 11, 1943	197
<i>USS Leopold (DE-319)</i>	torpedo	Iceland	March 10, 1944	171
<i>USS Buck (DD-420)</i>	torpedo	Salerno	Oct. 9, 1943	166
<i>USS Atik (AK-101)</i>	torpedo	off Virginia	March 27, 1942	141
<i>USS Turner (DD-648)</i>	explosion	Ambrose Light, N.Y.	Jan. 3, 1944	120
<i>USS Frederick C. Davis (DE-136)</i>	torpedo	North Atlantic	April 24, 1945	115
<i>USS Reuben James (DD-245)</i>	torpedo	North Atlantic	Oct. 31, 1941	115



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# VFW CELEBRATES A DEEP TAPESTRY OF MILITARY MEMORIALS

Here's an update on some current and future veteran  
memorials across the country.

BY DAVE SPIVA

**M**any efforts to memorialize war veterans who have fought throughout U.S. history have brought a rich blend of war memorials across the country. Many of those memorials are dedicated to specific groups, such as Native American and Seabee veterans.

Here is an overview of some of the memorials dedicated to war veterans and their families.

## NATIONAL DESERT STORM WAR MEMORIAL

The final concept for the National Desert Storm War Memorial was unveiled in December. The memorial's site is set for the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

According to the National Desert Storm War Memorial's website, the goal for the memorial is to create a monument that:

- Educates visitors about the historical events of operations *Desert Storm* and *Desert Shield*.
- Identify and illustrates the historical significance of the 34 nations that helped liberate Kuwait.
- Shows the unique environment and battle conditions service men and women experienced in the war.
- Teaches visitors the historical significance and accomplishments of the operations.

For more information about the National Desert Storm War Memorial, visit [www.ndswm.org](http://www.ndswm.org).



The Ambassador of Kuwait in Washington D.C., Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left), shakes hands with Scott Stump, CEO and president of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association, on Feb. 24 in Washington, D.C. Kuwait pledged \$10 million to help build the National Desert Storm Memorial on the National Mall.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL DESERT STORM WAR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION





**LEFT:** An artist's rendering of the U.S. Capitol as seen through the National Native American Veterans Memorial's "Warriors' Circle of Honor." The memorial dedicated to all Native Americans who served in the U.S. military is to open on Veterans Day in Washington, D.C.

**BELOW LEFT:** The Seabee Memorial is located at the Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. The Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association, which built the Navy Seabee monument in 1974, provides scholarships for children and grandchildren of Seabees.

## NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

The dedication ceremony for the National Native American Veterans Memorial is set for Veterans Day 2020 (Wednesday, Nov. 11). Its site will be located at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C.

The memorial's advisory committee co-chair Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a former U.S. senator and member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, said it is "important" to recognize Native Americans' service to the country.

Native Americans have served in the armed forces since the Revolutionary War and continue to serve in the military at a higher rate than any other ethnic group, according to the NMAI.

"We have so much to celebrate," said Campbell, a Korean War veteran and life member of VFW Post 3631 in Aurora, Colo. "Like so many others, I was compelled to serve to honor the warrior tradition that is inherent to most Native American societies — the pillars of strength, honor, pride, devotion and wisdom."

For more information about the National Native American Veterans Memorial, visit [www.americanindian.si.edu/nnavm](http://www.americanindian.si.edu/nnavm).



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SEABEE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ASSOCIATION

## SEABEE MEMORIAL

The Seabee Memorial is located at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. The monument was sculpted by Felix de Weldon, most famously known for creating the Marine Corps' Iwo Jima Memorial.

The Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association built the

1972, according to Dan Miller, chief development officer of the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association.

For more information about the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association, visit [www.seabee.org](http://www.seabee.org).

## GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM MEMORIAL

As of February, the location of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial has not been determined. The memorial's foundation is waiting for a decision by Congress as to where the memorial will be built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The Commemorative Works Act of 1986 typically requires Congress to wait 10 years after the official end of a war before considering a memorial in the nation's capital. But creation of the GWOT memorial was granted a waiver by Congress and President Donald Trump in 2017 through the Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act. The law authorizes the building of the memorial even though the Global War on Terrorism is an ongoing war.

The founder of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation is Andrew Brennan, a life member of VFW Post 3945 in Pittsburgh.

For more information about the Global War on Terrorism Memorial, visit [www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org](http://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org).



**A view of the Washington Monument from Constitution Gardens, a proposed site for the Global War on Terrorism Memorial in Washington, D.C. If made into law, the *Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act* would place the memorial in one of three proposed areas — Constitution Gardens, West Potomac Park or the JFK Hockey Fields — on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.**

BIGSTOCK PHOTO





**LEFT:** The USS Arizona Memorial Gardens at Salt River is located near Scottsdale, Ariz. The memorial, which honors the 1,177 sailors and Marines killed aboard the ship during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, was dedicated on Feb. 22.

**BELOW LEFT:** Gold Star family members and others attend the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument dedication ceremony on Nov. 23 in Biloxi, Miss. The monument honors families of service members who died while serving in the military.



PHOTO BY KEMBERLY GROUE/U.S. AIR FORCE

## USS ARIZONA MEMORIAL GARDENS AT SALT RIVER

Located near Scottsdale, Ariz., the USS Arizona Memorial Gardens at Salt River was dedicated on Feb. 22.

Opened by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona, the memorial is dedicated to the 1,177 sailors and Marines killed on the *USS Arizona* (BB-39) during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941.

For more information about the Arizona memorial, visit [www.discoveralriver.com/uss-arizona-memorial-gardens-at-salt-river](http://www.discoveralriver.com/uss-arizona-memorial-gardens-at-salt-river).

## GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Dedicated on Nov. 23, 2019, a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument was dedicated at the Guice Veterans Memorial Park in Biloxi, Miss. The memorial honors the families of service men and women killed while serving in the military.

For more information about the Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments, of which 60 have been dedicated in 45 communities, visit [www.hwwmohf.org/monument-projects.html](http://www.hwwmohf.org/monument-projects.html). ★

EMAIL [dspiva@vfw.org](mailto:dspiva@vfw.org)



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH FRASER/ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

## FULL HONOR BURIALS AVAILABLE FOR ALL MOH RECIPIENTS AT ARLINGTON

Military members who received the Medal of Honor are now automatically eligible for a funeral with full military honors and an escort at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

Such a funeral includes:

- Body bearers or pallbearers.
- Firing party.
- Bugler.
- Presentation of the U.S. flag.
- Military marching element and band.

Before the change last year, only military members who made the rank of E-9, CW-4, CW-5 or O-4 and above, as well as those killed in action, were eligible to receive military funeral honors with funeral escort provided by the deceased's military service.

For more information about who is eligible for burial at Arlington National Cemetery, visit [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil).

**ABOVE:** Marines from the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., conduct military funeral honors with funeral escort for U.S. Marine Corps Col. Werner Frederick Rebstock on Nov. 13, 2019, at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Full honors such as this are now available to Medal of Honor recipients regardless of their rank.

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The new Advanced HearClear™ HCR3 rechargeable hearing aid combines advanced technology with a low price to provide you with outstanding value.

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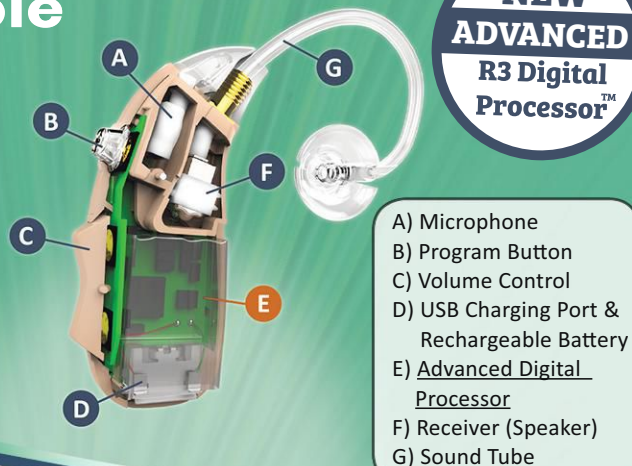


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- ✓ **100% Money Back Guarantee**
- ✓ **4 Programs** for different listening situations

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Your brain is designed to use both ears working together. In fact, studies show that you may be able to **hear up to 3 times better** in noisy situations when using two hearing aids. Buy a pair for the best results and maximum savings!



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**Simple.  
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**Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aid - For Only \$229!\***

The new HearClear™ HCR3 Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aids features **advanced 3rd generation digital technology** at an unbelievably affordable Price! The HCR3 is packed with the same key technologies that all high end digital hearing aids share while leaving out the extra bells and whistles that increase cost and require expensive adjustments. This **helps you hear better, while saving you a lot of money.**

Your new HearClear HCR3 hearing aids work at a fraction of the cost of name-brand hearing aids, and you won't have to keep changing the batteries! You will love the discreet, comfortable, lightweight Open-fit design. The HCR3 is pre-programmed for most moderate to significant hearing losses, so you won't need professional appointments to make costly adjustments. **It is shipped directly to you and will help you hear better right out of the box!**

You can spend thousands for an expensive hearing aid, or you can spend just \$249 for a hearing aid that is great for most hearing losses (**only \$229 each when you buy a pair – hear up to 3 times better than wearing just one**). We are so sure you will love your hearing aids that we offer a **100% Money Back Guarantee - Risk Free** if you are not satisfied for any reason.

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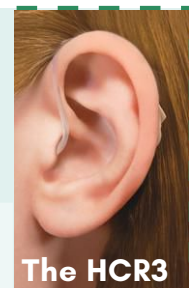
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# ★ A FINAL SALUTE ★

VFW magazine presents this memorial listing in tribute to the 44 U.S. troops who died overseas in 2019. It includes troops killed in combat and non-hostile incidents.

## AFGHANISTAN

### Deaths to Enemy Action

#### ARMY

- **Sgt. 1st Class Dustin Ard**, 2nd Bn., 1st Special Forces Grp. (Abn.), Hyde Park, Utah
- **Sgt. 1st Class Elis A. Barreto Ortiz**, 82nd Bde. Support Bn., 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Morovis, Puerto Rico
- **Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Beale**, 3rd Special Forces Grp. (Abn.), Carrollton, Va.
- **Spc. Joseph P. Collette**, 242nd Ordnance Bn., 71st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Grp., Lancaster, Ohio
- **Master Sgt. Luis F. Deleon-Figueroa**, 1st Bn., 7th Special Forces Grp. (Abn.), Chicopee, Mass.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Goble**, C Co., 1st Bn., 7th Special Forces Grp., Washington Township, N.J.
- **Master Sgt. Jose J. Gonzalez**, 1st Bn., 7th Special Forces Grp., La Puente, Calif.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy W. Griffin**, 3rd Bn., 1st Special Forces Grp. (Abn.), Greenbrier, Tenn.
- **Sgt. James Gregory Johnston**, 79th Ordnance Bn., 71st Ordnance Grp., 48th Chemical Bde., Trumansburg, N.Y.
- **Pfc. Brandon Jay Kreischer**, B Co., 1st Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Stryker, Ohio
- **Sgt. 1st Class Will D. Lindsay**, 2nd Bn., 10th Special Forces Grp., Cortez, Colo.
- **Sgt. Cameron Meddock**, A Co., 2nd Bn., 75th Ranger Regt., Spearman, Texas
- **Spc. Michael Isaiah Nance**, B Co., 1st Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., Chicago, Ill.
- **Master Sgt. Michael B. Riley**, 2nd Bn., 10th Special Forces Grp., Heilbronn, Germany
- **Sgt. Maj. James G. Sartor**, 2nd Bn., 10th Special Forces Grp. (Abn.), Teague, Texas

#### MARINE CORPS

- **Cpl. Robert Hendriks**, Weapons Co., 2nd Bn., 25th Marines, 4th Marine Div., Locust Valley, N.Y.
- **Sgt. Benjamin Hines**, Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 25th Marines, 4th Marine Div., York, Pa.
- **Staff Sgt. Christopher Slutman**, Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 25th Marines, 4th Marine Div., Newark, Del.

### Deaths by Non-Hostile Causes

#### ARMY

- **Spc. Miguel L. Holmes**, 1st Bn., 118th FA Regt., 48th Inf. BCT, Hinesville, Ga.
- **Sgt. 1st Class Elliott J. Robbins**, 10th Special Forces Grp., Ogden, Utah
- **Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kirk Fuchigami Jr.**, 1st Bn., 227th Aviation Regt., 1st Air Cav Bde., 1st Cav Div., Keaau, Hawaii
- **Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Knadle**, 1st Bn., 227th Aviation Regt., 1st Air Cav Bde., 1st Cav Div., Tarrant, Texas

## ARABIAN SEA

### Death by Non-Hostile Causes

#### NAVY

- **Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Slayton Richard Saldana**, Helicopter Sea Combat Sqdn. 5, Carrier Air Wing 7, aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), Manassas, Va.

## GERMANY

### Death by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Spc. Abinezer Berihun Gebeyehu**, 3rd Sqdn., 2nd Cav Regt., Seattle, Wash.

## GUAM

### Death by Non-Hostile Causes

#### NAVY

- **Machinist's Mate 2nd Class James Ray Dyer**, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5, Scott City, Kan.

## IRAQ

### Death by Enemy Action

#### MARINE CORPS

- **Gunnery Sgt. Scott A. Koppenhafer**, 2nd Marine Raider Bn., Marine Forces Special Operations Command, Mancos, Colo.

### Deaths by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Sgt. Nathan G. Irish**, 25th Support Bn., 1st Stryker BCT, Billings, Mont.
- **Spc. Michael T. Osorio**, 3rd Armd. Bde., 4th Inf. Div., Horseshoe Bend, Idaho
- **Spc. Ryan Dennis Orin Riley**, 2nd Bn., 32nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (Air Assault), Richmond, Ky.

## ITALY

### Death by Non-Hostile Causes

#### ARMY

- **Pvt. Peter Cimino**, 1st Bn., 503rd Parachute Inf. Regt., Danville, Ky.

## JAPAN

### Deaths by Aircraft Crash

#### NAVY

- **Aviation Electrician Airman Jordan C. Cook**, Strike Fighter Sqdn. 102, Atlanta, Ga.
- **Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Chase Edwards**, USS Wasp (LHD-1), Euless, Texas

## KUWAIT

### Deaths by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Sgt. Holli Bolinski**, 657th Transportation Detachment, Pinkneyville, Ill.
- **Sgt. William Friese**, 821st Eng. Co., 1092nd Eng. Bn., 111th Eng. Bde., Parkersburg, W.Va.
- **Spc. Jackson Johnson**, 657th Transportation Detachment, Hillsboro, Mo.

## QATAR

### Death by Non-Hostile Causes

#### AIR FORCE

- **Staff Sgt. Albert J. Miller**, 736th Aircraft Maintenance Sqdn., Richmond, N.H.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### Death by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Spc. Clayton James Horne**, 351st MP Co., 160th MP Bn., Atlanta, La.

## SOUTH KOREA

### Deaths by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Pvt. Claytun Cepeda**, A Co., 602nd Aviation Support Bn., 2nd Aviation Regt., 2nd Inf. Div., Yigo, Guam
- **Staff Sgt. Nicholas M. Scalzo**, 3rd Armd. BCT, 1st Cav Div., Selma, Ore.

#### AIR FORCE

- **Staff Sgt. Alexander Mitchell**, 19th Air Support Operations Sqdn., 93rd Air Ground Operations Wing, Weston, Idaho

## SPAIN

### Death by Non-Hostile Cause

#### NAVY

- **Lt. Kaylie Ludwig**, USS Arlington (LPD-24), Oak Park, Ill.

## SYRIA

### Deaths by Enemy Action

#### ARMY

- **Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Farmer**, 3rd Bn., 5th Special Forces Grp., Boynton Beach, Fla.

#### NAVY

- **Senior Chief Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) Shannon Kent**, Cryptologic Warfare Activity 66, Pine Plains, N.Y.

### Death by Non-Hostile Cause

#### ARMY

- **Pfc. Michael A. Thomason**, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 101st Abn. Div., Lincoln Park, Mich.

FA=Field artillery

BCT=Brigade Combat Team

*Editor's note:* If there are other troops missing from this memorial listing, send their name, unit information, hometown and cause of death to [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org).

# ATTENTION VETERANS!

## BY THIS TIME TONIGHT

### This Could Be Your New Bathroom

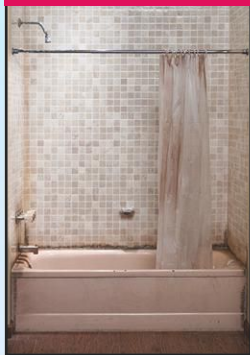


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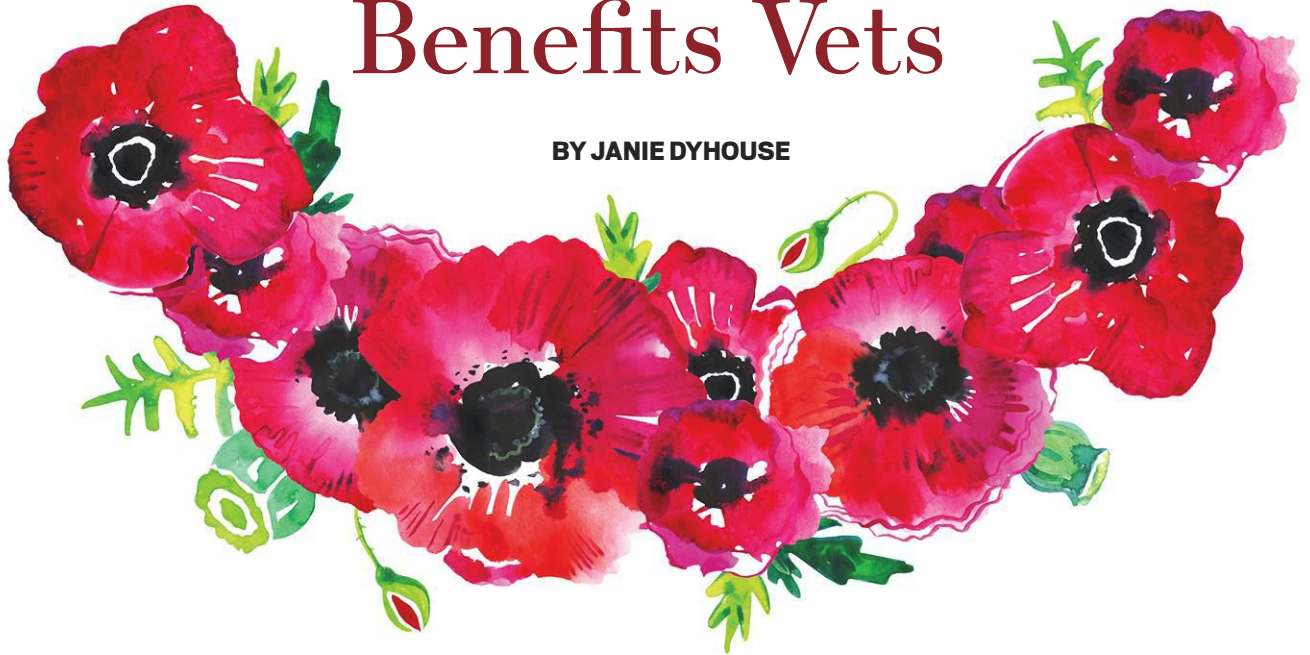
State licenses for authorized dealers available at [www.SafeInTheShower.com](http://www.SafeInTheShower.com)





# ‘Flower of Remembrance’ Benefits Vets

BY JANIE DYHOUSE



*For nearly 100 years, VFW’s Buddy Poppy program has supported disabled veterans as well as families at VFW’s National Home.*

Since 1922, VFW has been distributing “the flower of remembrance,” or Buddy Poppies, as the blood red artificial flowers are now known.

The Buddy Poppy has enjoyed popular support since its inception. U.S. presidents have worn poppies pinned to their jackets by girls from VFW’s National Home for Children. And in the 1940s and 1950s, Hollywood actresses became “Buddy Poppy Girls,” including Jane Wyman, Doris Day and Natalie Wood.

Assembled by disabled veterans at four locations around the U.S., VFW’s Buddy Poppy program provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home For Children. The veterans assembling the poppies also receive compensation from the program.

May is a banner month for poppy distribution, particularly around Memorial Day. Be sure to let us know about your Post’s Buddy Poppy distribution this month. Email your hi-res photos to [jdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:jdyhouse@vfw.org).

EMAIL [jdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:jdyhouse@vfw.org)



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK BELL

**ABOVE:** Jack Bell, VFW Post 5491 Commander Ben Boccia, Stop and Shop Customer Service Manager Amy Brennan and Rich Dunne gather last year in Mahopac, N.Y., during the Post’s Poppy distribution.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAWN DACTLER

**LEFT:** Actor Sam Elliott, right, visits with VFW life member Greg Arnold in May 2018 at the Market of Choice in West Linn, Ore., during Post 1324’s (Oregon City, Ore.) Buddy Poppy Drive. Elliott, known for his roles in “Roadhouse” and “The Big Lebowski,” donated an unknown amount to the drive.

## BUDDY POPPY FAST FACTS:

The first official Buddy Poppy of 1923 was presented to President Warren G. Harding by the New York Yankees’ Babe Ruth.

VFW members distribute more than 8 million Buddy Poppies a year.

Disabled veterans assemble Buddy Poppies at four assembling centers:

- West Virginia Home for Veterans, Barboursville, W.Va.
- Kansas Soldiers Home, Fort Dodge, Kan.
- Temple Texas VA, Temple, Texas
- White City Oregon VA, White City, Ore.

The Buddy Poppy is the official memorial flower of the VFW.

# Better Than CBD For Pain?

Do you suffer from **arthritis, sciatica, sport injuries, or any other acute or chronic pain symptoms?**  
You'll want to read this right now! We've all tried various pain creams on the market with superficial results at best.

**WELL, I'VE DISCOVERED A MIRACLE TOPICAL THAT REALLY WORKS AND IT'S GOT THE SCIENCE TO BACK IT UP!**



**Kim Lawson**  
Advice,  
research,  
writer,  
healthy living

## ASK THE EXPERT

### Q. Dear Expert,

I live with chronic aches and pains, but I prefer to avoid prescription drug side effects. I've read conflicting information about CBD for pain relief, but it's hard to know what's fact vs. fiction ... is there a safe solution that's quick and effective with real science behind it?

- Tom

### A. Dear Tom,

Great question - you're not the only one wondering the same! In fact, I'm asked that question so often, I felt compelled to research it, especially with all the talk surrounding CBD these days. You'll be happy to know I found the answer - you want something called "BCP" which works synergistically with CBD. You can find them BOTH in an OTC pain relief topical called **LEFA**™.

**Read on to learn why BCP combined with CBD is being touted as BETTER THAN CBD ALONE for topical pain management by so many experts.**

Due to an old sports injury, I also experience chronic and acute pain while trying to avoid drugs. So, when a friend recommended that I try **CBD**, I immediately researched it, and **THAT'S WHEN I DISCOVERED LEFA.**

**LEFA** combines the proven pain relief effects of menthol, with the ground-breaking holistic benefits of a **particular blend of panoramic botanical hemp oil. The science behind this blend has never been seen before - its unique oil is bountiful with naturally occurring phytocannabinoids, including CBD and the less famous but more potent BCP!**

*While CBD may be the most widely-known phytocannabinoid, BCP (Beta-Caryophyllene) is SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN to be a POWERHOUSE in MANAGING PAIN! <sup>1</sup>*

**BCP feeds receptors in the body, INSTANTLY triggering an anti-inflammatory response, and SIGNIFICANTLY SOOTHING SORE, STIFF MUSCLES AND JOINTS!**

The BCP in **LEFA's** unique formula also helps amplify the impact of its other vital anti-inflammatory ingredients such as Boswellia, MSM, Arnica, Curcumin and yes, CBD!

This makes the panoramic hemp oil in **LEFA** scientifically and clinically superior for pain than products touting CBD alone.

Plus, **LEFA** has been specially formulated for **DEEP** penetration - that means faster, targeted relief on contact!

I was also impressed with the smell. Most pain creams smell awful – **LEFA's** relaxing botanical aroma dissipates within seconds of application, leaving skin feeling soft, not greasy – **SO YOU CAN TAKE LEFA ANYWHERE and USE IT ANYTIME! LEFA IS TRULY AN ANSWER FOR PAIN SUFFERERS!**

After trying **LEFA** just once, I was sold! I use it for my sports injury and my father uses it for his arthritis. We love it and now only use **LEFA FOR TOPICAL PAIN RELIEF**. Here's the best news of all: I'm pretty sure you can still get a **FREE MONTH SUPPLY** of **LEFA** with your order by calling **1-800-541-8948**, or by visiting **www.LefaRiskFree.com**. Plus, **LEFA** is backed by a **30-Day Money Back Guarantee!** So, I highly recommend you call now while **FREE** supplies last. Your joints and muscles will be glad you did!



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(\$59.99 Value)

\*see Reader's Note

## READER'S NOTE:

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# SHOWCASING VETERANS #STILLSERVING

**VFW MEMBERS' COMMITMENT TO SERVICE TRANSCENDS THE MILITARY, AND MOST VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. VFW LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN EARLIER THIS YEAR TO RECOGNIZE THEIR ENDEAVORS.**

**BY JANIE DYHOUSE**

It's no secret that veterans have a penchant for community service. To bring attention to and honor the continued commitment of such service, VFW launched the #StillServing campaign in February.

In fact, a 2018 Volunteering in America Report by the Corporation for National and Community Service found veterans volunteer 25 percent more time, are 17 percent more likely to make a monetary donation and are 30 percent more likely to participate in local organizations than civilians who never served in the military.

"This awareness campaign showcases how veterans continue a life of service and how their ongoing contributions are positively impacting our society," VFW Adjutant General Kevin Jones said. "We are doing this to recognize and show respect for veterans' service from active duty and beyond."

Using the hashtag #StillServing, veterans are encouraged to share their stories of continued service on social media.

VFW urges all to visit [vfw.org/StillServing](http://vfw.org/StillServing) to learn more about the campaign, make a shareable image honoring veterans in their lives, watch videos of VFW members making a difference and see a collection of user-generated content.

"Now is the time to capitalize on positive progress and turn the spotlight to our members and the many ways veterans are continuing to serve and make their communities better," Jones said.

Here's a glimpse at a sampling of VFW members who have shared their stories with #StillServing.





From left, Aleksandr Morosky with Post 7788 in Milford, Conn., and Kristina Keenan of Post 605 in Paris, France, relax with other volunteers at a Habitat for Humanity build in January in Washington, D.C. Morosky and Keenan are just two examples of vets who are #StillServing in their communities.

## NAME: KRISTINA KEENAN

**Military Service:** Served six years in the Minnesota Army National Guard, and deployed twice to Bosnia (2003 and 2004) with the 634th Military Intelligence Battalion.

**VFW:** Post 605 in Paris, France

"When I moved to Washington, D.C., I signed up online with Habitat for Humanity to be a construction volunteer. The homes they build make it possible for families in need to be able to own a home, and much of the labor is provided through volunteers and the supplies provided through partner organizations. It has been a great way for me to get to know more people in my city as well as give back to the community."

## NAME: DYLAN CONLEY

**Military Service:** Currently in the Army Reserve. Deployed to Kuwait and Iraq with the 371st Sustainment Brigade from June 2017-March 2018 and Kosovo with the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from October 2018-July 2019.

**VFW:** Post 7687 in Chesapeake City, Md.

"My full-time job is with Warriors Helping Warriors, a non-profit started and operated by my father, Kevin Conley, and grandfather, Bill Conley. We house homeless veterans and work with them on navigating the VA, showing them the different programs out there to help

them and also with other life skills to prevent them from ending up homeless again when they leave our program. My father was in Afghanistan from January to December 2010 with the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team."

## NAME: BROOKLYNNE MOSLEY

**Military Service:** Based in United Arab Emirates and Jordan, she did multiple tours between 2005-2012 in the Air Force. Working on a tanker aircraft, she refueled planes over Afghanistan and Iraq.

**VFW:** Post 7397 in Lenexa, Kan.

"I'm still serving through encouraging civic engagement and advocacy for underrepresented groups. We are our best when we have diversity of ideals and life experiences. We also are our best when the average person can be engaged in the process at all levels. Service does not end when you take off your uniform. The Air Force and my upbringing taught me that when you can help make someone's life better, you do it."

## NAME: CRAIG WILCOX

**Military Service:** Served in the Air Force from 1989-2013 in combat communications. Multiple deployments to the Middle East between the Persian Gulf War and OEF and OIF; three deployments after Sept. 11, 2001, including Manas, Kyrgyzstan, Tallil and Balad, Iraq.

**VFW:** Post 4600 in McHenry, Ill.

"I'm serving the residents of Illinois State Senate District 32, working to preserve the strong feeling of community that exists all across this great nation and that I found in McHenry, Ill. America offers freedom, hopes and dreams. Strong communities foster that development and growth of strong citizens, so being involved in protecting that tradition and ensuring its future means a lot to me."

## NAME: SUSAN SMITH

**Military Service:** Served in Korea from 1998-1999 at Kunsan Air Base with the Air Force 8th Supply Squadron. In total, she served in the Air Force from 1980-2001.

**VFW:** Post 7843 in Duncanville, Texas

"Since retiring, my husband and I have done mission work in Zimbabwe, Africa, where we helped build 18 wells for clean drinking water and also with an after-school program for at-risk youth in North Carolina. Our company, Logistics LLC, delivers blessing bags to the homeless in Los Angeles County, Calif." 🌟

EMAIL [jdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:jdyhouse@vfw.org)

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

America's veterans are #StillServing in communities across the country and around the world. Join the campaign to honor our heroes and bring their continued service to the forefront. These simple actions will mean so much.

### WATCH THE VIDEOS



Share them and spread the word.

### SHARE A STORY



Tell how you or someone you know is #StillServing.

### REQUEST A DECAL



Proudly show your pride in veterans who are #StillServing.

### POST TO SOCIAL



Make a #StillServing image you can post to your social media and encourage friends and family to join you.





VFW-SVA (Student Veterans of America) fellow Katherine Cassell — life member of VFW Post 12101 in Henderson, Nev., and SVA liaison to VFW's Department of Nevada — pitches her fellowship program project to Ray Kelley — the majority staff director of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and former VFW National Legislative Services director — on March 2 during the VFW Legislative Conference in Arlington, Va. The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program gives student veterans a chance to be an advocate for veterans' issues.

## 'REBEL' STUDENT VETERAN BRINGS HER EXPERIENCE TO WASHINGTON

*A VFW life member working on her master's degree took part in the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program on Capitol Hill in March. She says her degree will help her serve fellow veterans after her graduation.*

**BY DAVE SPIVA**

Each year, VFW members from across the country gather in the nation's capital for the VFW Legislative Conference. Since 1949, the conference has provided an opportunity for the organization's leaders and activists to speak with policymakers of their respective states.

In recent years, VFW has provided the same for student veterans. The VFW-SVA (Student Veterans of America) Legislative Fellowship program gives student veterans the opportunity to advocate with VFW on issues important to veterans.

"The VFW prides itself on working with our student veterans nationwide

to help build tomorrow's leaders," VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz said.

This year's 10 fellows met with the nation's lawmakers and administrators responsible for implementing veterans' policies in Washington, D.C. One of those students was Katherine Cassell, who served in three different military services during her 18-year career. She retired in 2015.

### WORKING ON CAPITOL HILL

Cassell enlisted in the Air Force in 1997 and was discharged in 2000. She also joined the Navy Reserve and served from 2003-06. She then joined the

Army in 2006, where she served until her retirement. She deployed twice to Iraq with the Army's 1st Combat Aviation Brigade from 2007 to 2008 and from 2010 to 2011.

After her retirement, Cassell started attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and joined the University's SVA chapter, Rebel Vets Organization. (See p. 42 of the October 2019 issue of VFW magazine for a story about the chapter's involvement with VFW.) Cassell also is a life member of VFW Post 12101 in Henderson, Nev., and the SVA liaison to the VFW Department of Nevada.

Cassell said she learned about the

VFW-SVA fellowship through other VFW members, who repeatedly urged her to apply. She was persuaded to do so last year and was selected as one of the student veterans to participate.

The students, all VFW members, took part in the 2020 VFW Legislative Conference on Capitol Hill in early March. Each fellow submitted a policy proposal to address a veterans' issue through legislative action.

The students worked on one of four veterans' policy areas:

- Ensuring student veteran success on campus and in the workforce.
- Improving health care and benefits for veterans.
- Easing veterans' transition from military to civilian life.
- Identifying and solving other challenges of service members and their families.

## ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS

Cassell plans to graduate from UNLV in 2022. She is working towards a master's degree in public administration with an emphasis in nonprofits and veteran advocacy. Cassell said her motivation to obtain the degree is to be able to

help veterans and be more involved with advocacy and legislation.

"I look at our country as a whole and what we need, and I realize that our veteran and active-duty population is small," Cassell said. "If we can't even take care of that portion of the country, how are we going to be able to maintain our country as a whole?"

Cassell said that once a military veteran transitions, there are several resources available to them, such as VA health care and veterans service organizations. However, there is no follow-up from the military to ensure that the veteran is successful in their transition plans. She added that the military does not have any statistics that show programs such as TAP (transition assistance program) is helping veterans with their transition from military life.

"I've talked to many veterans across the U.S., and a lot of them say that there should be a government-funded source that veterans can access to get information on benefits such as education, health care, employment and housing," Cassell said. "It would be great if there was a phone number veterans could call to get all that information."

For her fellowship proposal, Cassell introduced a plan that would give veterans a resource to learn more about the benefits available for them and to ensure a successful transition.

"The call centers that the Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment has was the basis for my proposal," Cassell said.

"A resource like that should be open to all veterans. This would involve expanding the ability of all the call centers put in place for wounded warriors."

While not government funded, VFW's Member Service Center offers helpful advice and can be reached by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

Being a part of the VFW Department of Nevada and UNLV, Cassell said that she has taken the opportunity to show younger veterans who are currently serving or who recently left the military the benefit of joining VFW and being involved in veterans' advocacy.

"A lot of them don't know about VFW," Cassell said. "I see SVA students as the future leaders of VFW and our country. If we stay involved with those student veterans, we are showing what our organization can offer students." ★

**EMAIL** [dspiva@vfw.org](mailto:dspiva@vfw.org)

## 2020 VFW-SVA LEGISLATIVE FELLOWSHIP CLASS

Since 2013, VFW has aligned with the Student Veterans of America, an organization based in Washington, D.C. SVA is committed to the welfare of military veterans and ensuring they are supported in their transition into higher education. SVA supports more than 1,500 school chapters and more than 700,000 military-affiliated students.

This year's fellows were:

- Tom Baker, Navy veteran, Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz.
- Katherine Cassell, Army retiree, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

- Carl Chen, Air Force active-duty service member, Trident University International.
- Clifton Clevenger, Army veteran, Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas.
- Ashley Dent, Air Force veteran, New York Institute of Technology in New York City.
- Sasha Georgiades, Navy veteran, Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu.
- Blake Hite, Navy veteran, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

- Matthew Jenkins, Marine Corps veteran, University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla.
- Randy Purham, Army active-duty service member, American Public University.
- Jack Ratliff, Army veteran, University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla.

Student veterans interested in the fellowship can visit [www.vfw.org/community/student-veterans-of-america/student-fellowship](http://www.vfw.org/community/student-veterans-of-america/student-fellowship) for more information.





# Weight Loss Benefits Overall Wellness

**VA's MOVE! Program is a proven resource for veterans seeking to lose weight and improve health.**

**BY JANICE PHELAN**

**R**eaching and maintaining a healthy weight is a significant step toward improving overall health. Among Americans, the obesity rate has been on the rise for several decades, with more than one-third considered obese.

“Excess weight affects most organ systems in the body, so there are several benefits of having our body weight in a

version of the program for individuals who prefer to manage their weight on their own. Weight loss medications and bariatric surgery are treatment options that may be offered to veterans who have tried MOVE! but continue to struggle with being overweight or with weight-related issues.”

Making the decision to lose weight and developing a plan are essential to success.

modifications based on your medical history,” she added. “There is no one-size-fits-all approach that will work for everyone, but in general, it’s important to set ourselves up for success by giving some thought to how we set up our goals and action plans.”

Informing your doctor of any medications, including over-the-counter supplements, is also essential, Elchoufi said, as medications might need to be adjusted to avoid potential complications such as unsafe drops in blood pressure or blood sugar.

Quick fixes or weight-loss programs that sound too good to be true should be avoided, she added.

“Fad weight loss plans are not sustainable and can sometimes be unsafe,” Elchoufi said. “Also, beware of over-the-counter supplements that promise to ‘boost metabolism,’ ‘melt fat,’ etc. These may contain stimulants that are not safe in some individuals and can interact with certain medicines that you may be currently taking.”

She added that understanding the causes of obesity and how it affects good health is important.

“Obesity is a chronic disease — it’s not a character flaw,” Elchoufi said. “Weight regulation is not as much a matter of ‘willpower’ as it is a matter of complex interactions between chemical messengers in the body (hormones) which are released by the brain, the adipose tissue (fat cells) and the digestive system. These hormones work together and are influenced by many factors, including genetics, our physical environment, our social setting, sensory cues and more.”

For more information on VA’s MOVE! Program, visit [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov).

**EMAIL** [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org)

*Janice Phelan is a freelance writer based in Lee's Summit, Mo.*



healthy range,” said Dr. Maycie Elchoufi, medical director at Humana Inc., who is certified in internal and obesity medicine. “The good news is that even modest weight reduction has been shown to produce significant health benefits.”

A proven resource for veterans is the VA MOVE! Weight Management Program, Elchoufi added, which includes several formats as well as MOVE! Group Sessions.

“These are clinician-led groups that meet regularly and follow a structured format for weight loss,” she said. “There also is a MOVE! mobile app

“Sometimes, the hardest part is getting started, especially if we’ve tried to lose weight previously and maybe we were not as successful as we had wanted, or we had some success initially, but then regained the weight, which is very common,” Elchoufi said.

Individuals with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, lung problems or joint issues should check with their doctor before beginning weight-loss or exercise programs.

“They may have recommendations on nutrition plans or physical activity

# VETERAN WITH CHRONIC LUNG CONDITION GETS TREATMENT AND FINDS HOPE

Alex is proud to have served in the U.S. Air Force. During those years, he protected his country and learned a lot about teamwork. Long after Alex's service, his Air Force training holds strong, and he is still committed to teamwork. Today, his team consists of his family and medical practitioners.

Like many people with chronic lung conditions, his symptoms crept up gradually. When he had difficulty breathing accompanied by uncontrollable coughing, Alex went to the doctor. He was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, a progressive condition that causes scarring in the lungs. Everyday chores became difficult, and walking to the mailbox tired Alex, even with supplemental oxygen.

## Searching for Options

In an effort to find effective treatment, Alex's daughter and her husband teamed up. During their research, they found an innovative option: cellular therapy from Lung Health Institute.

Alex chose cellular therapy early in his treatment journey because he wanted the best chance of slowing down the progression of his chronic lung condition. He also wanted the most aggressive option available, opting for 2 sets of 2-day treatments.

## Alex's Life After Treatment

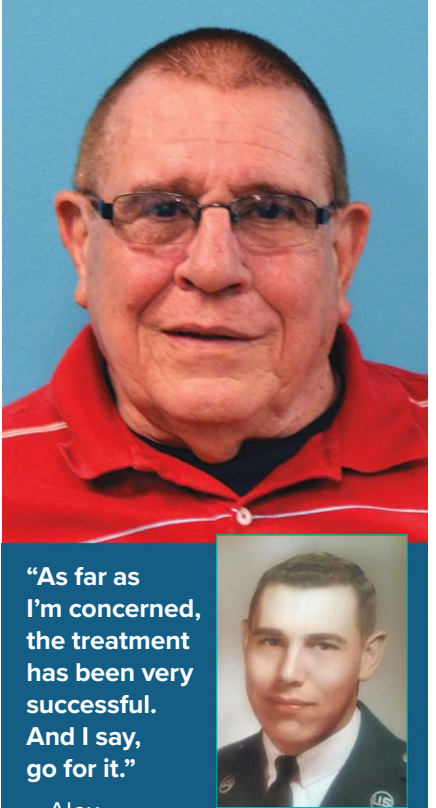
Soon after his first treatment, Alex noticed improvements. He was able to take a walk and he had more stamina. His second 2-day treatment offered Alex compounded results. His family and medical team have seen the positive changes in him. He was able to visit a park with his grandchildren and didn't plan on using his walker. Not only is Alex able to walk with more ease and complete everyday tasks, he's able to do more with less oxygen.

Not one to be idle, Alex has even taken a job driving patients to and from a treatment center in his area. Recently, a client who's familiar with Alex was worried that he forgot to put his oxygen back on. He assured her that he was OK because he doesn't always need to use oxygen since receiving cellular therapy.

## Find Hope for Chronic Lung Conditions

Lung Health Institute focuses exclusively on treating chronic inflammatory lung disease and has provided more than 8,000 treatments.

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**"As far as I'm concerned, the treatment has been very successful. And I say, go for it."**

— Alex,  
Proud Air Force Veteran and actual Lung Health Institute patient<sup>^</sup>

our patients report positive outcomes sustained at 1 year after treatment.\* There is hope for a better quality of life.



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\*For more information, go to [theLungHealthInstitute.com/Results](http://theLungHealthInstitute.com/Results).

<sup>^</sup>Each patient is different. Results may vary.

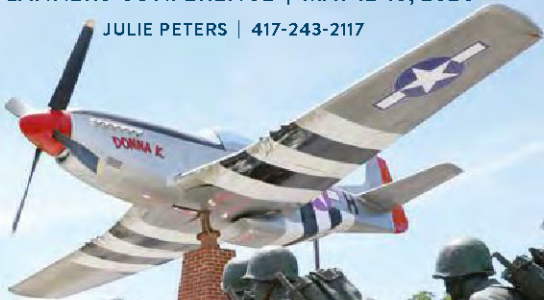
The Tampa, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Nashville and Scottsdale Lung Health Institute locations are accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, go to [theLungHealthInstitute.com/locations](http://theLungHealthInstitute.com/locations).



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A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing a grey crewneck sweater. He is coughing, with his right hand held up to his mouth and his eyes squeezed shut. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

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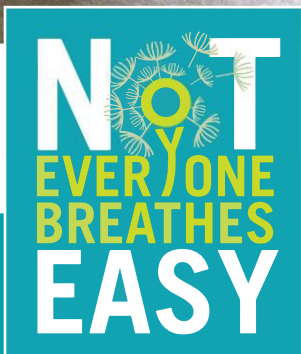
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# 'We Wanted Them to be Educational'

**A VFW Post in Washington state raises \$13,000 to build monuments for two local MOH recipients. The granite structures are located at the medal recipients' respective high schools.**

**BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.**

**I**n the town of Puyallup, Wash., where the jagged white peak of Mount Rainier looms over the valley, the legacies of two local Medal of Honor (MOH) recipients was cemented for good.

With incessant lobbying and more than \$13,000 raised by VFW Post 2224 in Puyallup, about 10 miles southeast of Tacoma, both homegrown MOH recipients received their due in the form of monuments unveiled at their respective high schools in town.

The ceremonies, albeit held separately between 2018 and 2019, welcomed a slew of state and locally elected officials, local media outlets and dozens of veterans from around the state.

The first memorial sprouted in the fall of 2018 at Puyallup High School, commemorating the valor of Army Lt. Victor Leonard Kandle during World War II. The 1939 alumnus earned his MOH for his heroic action in October 1944 against Nazi forces in France, but died in combat two months later, leaving his widow, Marigene, to accept the medal in 1945 during a ceremony in San Francisco.

"Although the Puyallup community mourned his death at the time, there had never been any permanent recognition of him in his hometown," said John C. Taylor of Post 2224. "He had been largely forgotten."

The Post raised \$6,000 in just two months with help from community organizations, local residents and individual veterans. With approval from the Puyallup School District, the Post celebrated the monument over Memorial Day Weekend in 2018, strategically placing it in an open area in front of the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN C. TAYLOR

main entrance to the high school for all to see.

"We wanted it up front so each day as students pass by these monuments, they will see how their community honors its heroes and their extraordinary service," Taylor added.

And it wouldn't be the Post's last effort to bring awareness.

A month after Post 2224 started raising money for Kandle's monument, President Donald J. Trump awarded another local high school graduate the nation's most prestigious combat medal for his extraordinary heroism in combat against Taliban forces in Afghanistan.

Retired Army Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer, a 1997 graduate of John Rodgers High School, became the next in line to receive his own monument, something Post 2224 didn't want to wait another 73 years to do.

The Post's effort earned more than \$7,000 that covered the monument and travel expenses for Shurer and his family to attend the dedication ceremony on Dec. 6, 2019.

Both of the black granite monuments



**ABOVE LEFT:** Retired Army Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer received an MOH for his heroic exploits in combat against Taliban forces in Afghanistan in 2008. Shurer was celebrated on Dec. 6, 2019, at his memorial unveiling by VFW Post 2224 at John Rodgers High School in Puyallup.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The memorial for Army Lt. Victor Leonard Kandle at Puyallup High School features his engraved portrait.

have the men's portraits engraved above their background and a detailed history of their acts of valor that earned them the MOH.

"Since they would be on school grounds, we wanted them to be educational," Taylor said of the monuments. "It's important to enhance students' knowledge and appreciation of what service in the armed forces can mean." ★

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# The Invention of the Year

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Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough... a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM WOODS

Charter members of VFW Post 12187 and Department of North Carolina representatives in Mooresville, N.C., last June at the Post's first meeting. The town had not had a VFW Post for more than 10 years. With an active veterans community, it seemed a fitting location to start up a Post.

## Energize Your Department with New Posts

From starting new Posts to merging with others, leaders are actively working to raise awareness of VFW within communities across the country.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

While the number of VFW Posts worldwide has declined in recent years — there are more than 6,100 Posts today — new ones continue to crop up, according to Corey Hunt, associate director for VFW Membership's Post Development and Revitalization.

"We are seeing some really great work in the field," he said. "What is so good about this is the recharged efforts of VFW's commitment to community."

VFW's Department of Mississippi is one such case of new development. Danny Williams, the state's adjutant/quartermaster, said three Posts were started in the past year.

"We have an aggressive membership chairman in Hugh Long," Williams said. "He attends so many events and quite often he encounters a vet without a Post in his or her hometown. He will simply ask if they would like to start a Post and just like that, the process is started."

Williams said to start a new Post, you must have 25 members. Of those, 10 must be new members. He has had success in recruiting transfers from the at-large membership list. He sends a letter and application to each at-large member in the vicinity of where the proposed new Post will be.

There are times, Williams said, that

he hears about a Post having trouble getting a quorum or other issues affecting the membership.

"When that happens, we get the word out to all members to show up to a meeting," Williams said. "Sometimes they just need a bit of encouraging to get involved and turn things around."

Williams cited a Post in Boonville, 115 miles east of Memphis, Tenn., which was on the brink of going defunct about two years ago.

With some effort, the Post got new officers in all positions and made All-American the next year. The Post commander went on to become District commander the year after.

"Our new Posts are all doing really good," Williams said. "And right now we are working on opening two additional Posts and hope to get those up and going next year."

### NEW POST MEETS IN COFFEE SHOP

In Mooresville, N.C., about 45 minutes north of Charlotte, veterans gather every Thursday morning for free coffee at Richard's Coffee Shop.

Named for Vietnam veteran Richard Warren, who started the Welcome Home Veterans Living Military Museum, the coffee shop is now home to members of VFW Post 12187.

According to Tim Woods, Department of North Carolina's chief of staff and certified national recruiter, the town of Mooresville has not had a VFW Post for the past 10-12 years.

"North Carolina's Jr. Vice Commander Russell Chambers and myself started visiting the coffee shop every week," Woods said. "The veterans there really welcomed us. It wasn't hard to get members to start the Post."

With more than 40 members less than one year after the Post held its first meeting last June, Woods said the membership is a good mix of different generations.

"Each room at the museum is dedicated to a different era, too," he added. "It's a really nice place for the VFW to get to meet."

Warren died in 2009 from complications due to agent orange, but his memory lives on through the veterans in Mooresville.

If your Post has undergone a revitalization, we want to hear about it. If it's something members are contemplating, Hunt encouraged all to check out the New Post Development and Revitalization Guide at [www.vfw.org/membership](http://www.vfw.org/membership). Log in to MyVFW to access the guide.

"This guide contains everything you need to know for starting a new Post," Hunt said. "Or for struggling Posts, there is a wealth of information, including helpful hints in each section." ★

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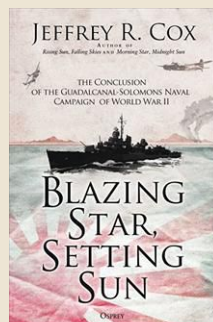


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## STAFF PICK

**Blazing Star, Setting Sun**

By Jeffrey R. Cox

This masterful account of a vital five months of bloody World War II battles in the Pacific gives fresh insight into the Guadalcanal and Solomon Island campaigns — a key turning point in both the Pacific Theater and WWII as a whole.

Jeffrey Cox's analysis and attention to detail of even the smallest events are second to none. But what truly sets this book apart is how he combines this microscopic attention to detail, often unearthing new facts along the way with an engaging style that transports the reader to the heart of the story, bringing the events on the deep blue of the Pacific vividly to life.

*Osprey Publishing*

panic as deep as the South China Sea. The letters contained in this book were written from the viewpoint of an H-13 Loach helicopter crewmember. *Cedar Knoll Press*

**Crisis in Baghdad**

By Gregory L. Marston, life member, VFW Post 175, Doylestown, Pa.

The book sets out to provide combat leadership in an environment of risk aversion, which characterized the atmosphere in Baghdad, Iraq, in September 2006. During a time of great adversity in Iraq, this book serves as a primer in how to provide proper leadership when the stakes are high, as they were in Iraq during 2006. This true story is about making critical decisions that would reduce the potential for casualties or loss. *Self-published*

**117 Days**

By Mike Hardy, VFW Post 41, Loveland, Colo.

The book is a firsthand account of 19-year-old draftee Mike Hardy as he fought on the front lines of Vietnam in 1969. In order to capture all his experiences, the author sat down with his eldest daughter, Marie Burghard, to record the experiences. The result is a recollection of the 117 days that Hardy spent in Vietnam. *Self-published*

**Coffins of Tin**

By J.C. Handy, life member, VFW Post 9914, Highland, Mich.

This Vietnam War novel follows Mitch McCasey, a 19-year-old drafted into the U.S. Army despite an exemption from combat duty. At Da Nang Mortuary, his job is to handle mangled remains and deal with the smell — a constant reminder of how frequently death arrives. Among the carnage, McCasey often struggles to maintain a semblance of sanity. *Sheridan Books Inc.*

**Abby and the Old Guy**

By Robert Quinn, VFW Department of New York

This novel follows Matt Flynn, a 61-year-old Vietnam War veteran, and his growing relationship with a young woman nearly 10 years after losing his wife. Unable to sleep properly and devoted to his job as a lawyer and financial advisor, Flynn meets the young woman, Abigail McKay, a barista at his favorite coffee shop. Both go from small talk to delving into a conversation that blossoms into an improbable love story. *Self-published*

**Letters From Lee: One Man's Story of Vietnam**

By Lee Heckman, VFW Post 5767, Wisner, Neb.

It's been over 40 years since the author was called upon to fight in Vietnam. Although he has spent the years since in a peaceful Nebraska town, his nights are battles with PTSD that often ring up the war like waves of

**Hilltop Doc**

By Leonard Adreon, VFW Department of Missouri

This memoir is written by a Navy corpsman who fought his way through the Korean War. After 60 years of silence about his experiences, the author now tells the story of what he witnessed from a foreign land plagued by war. *Self-published*

**Vietnam Abyss**

By Michael J. Snook, VFW Post 846, Overland Park, Kan.

The book is about the inspiring true story of Michael J. Snook, a Vietnam veteran who served in the U.S. Army and, after returning home from the war, descended into the darkness of PTSD. Developing severe alcoholism and ending up in a psychiatric ward for veterans, Snook fights through PTSD after encountering an "Angel," which helps him fully recover and become a born-again Christian and certified minister. *Southwestern Legacy Press*

VFW magazine's "Book Corner" features select books written by VFW members. If you have written a book or an e-book bearing an ISBN or ASIN, contact the magazine for guidelines at [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org) or by mail at: VFW magazine, Book Corner, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO, 64111. The subject of the book must relate to the military or veterans.

# CBD Shocker: 94% Is Wasted Without Just One Ingredient

## New CBD technology delivers 15X more relief

**BREAKING NEWS** Royal Palm Beach, FL — Users of a new breakthrough CBD technology are reporting astonishing results.

"I feel instant calm, and I'm sleeping better now than I have in years. Day or night, I carry this with me for whenever I need it," says Rachel H.

CBD is sweeping America. It's transforming the way we support joint health, improve mood, and get better sleep.

No fewer than 12,782 studies have found that CBD supports better health in 295 ways. That's 295 different health benefits — just by taking CBD alone.

But researchers at the New York University School of Medicine have made a shocking discovery.

They report that without this new approach to taking CBD, **94% of this "miracle molecule" is wasted.**

### CBD's Life-Changing Health Benefits

Millions of Americans age 50+ are reporting miraculous results from using CBD.

And peer-reviewed studies by scientists at prestigious medical institutions like Oxford, Johns Hopkins and the Salk Institute confirm CBD's ability to support:

- Healthy neural stem cell growth to give you a "young again" brain
- Healthy blood pressure
- Comfortable joint function
- Healthy pancreatic b-cells, to promote healthy insulin levels
- Healthy heart
- Healthy blood sugar

But you won't get these life-changing results by taking just any CBD oil on the market today.

The NYU researchers found that when CBD oil was administered, only 6% of it actually got past the cell membrane. In other words... 94% of the CBD was completely wasted.

It did not get to our cells... where all the real health effects happen.

That's why our team has spent the last 24 months working on something very important: a way to do what all CBD oils fail to achieve.

And that's to get the maximum amount of CBD inside our cells... in a fraction of the time.

And now they've done it. They've developed a new technology that unleashes total CBD relief... **15 times more**, to be exact. Instantly. With a single 1-second spray.

The choice is clear: you can get some help for mood, discomfort or appetite using regular CBD oil. Or you can get nearly 300 remarkable benefits that will change your life — thanks to this unique CBD technology.

And the best part? This technology...

- Has no side effects
- Needs no prescription

So whether you're already taking CBD — or just thinking about trying it — you need to know about this new discovery.

"With one spray, I [felt calmer] and slept through

the night, which has not happened in a very long time," says Kris R. "I'm very excited about using this product going forward."

### Why So Much Excitement About CBD?

Why is CBD such a powerful health rejuvenating tool? For years, researchers searched for the answer.

Finally, in the early 1990s, they made a remarkable yet overlooked discovery. It's called the endocannabinoid system — the hidden cellular network in your body that's designed to work with CBD.

This cellular network exists in our brains, nervous systems and peripheral nervous tissue — almost everywhere in our bodies. And it's made up of receptors that bind specifically to cannabinoid molecules like CBD, enabling these compounds to penetrate the cells.

This system promotes "homeostasis" — restoring our body's functions to their natural, healthy state. This is how cannabinoids — found in the hemp plant — work wonders.

And the most powerful, proven compound in the hemp plant is CBD.

Cannabinoid receptors play a significant role in regulating many bodily functions like sleep... discomfort... appetite... mood... memory... and many more.

Over time, though, after years of exposure to toxins, our internal cannabinoid production suffers from burnout. We become deficient in these vital compounds.

And we no longer produce the necessary amount of cannabinoids we need to maintain our health, vitality and well-being.

As a result, our memory fades, our metabolism slows, our immune system weakens, joint discomfort becomes more frequent, our mood sours and our sleep worsens.

In short, we become unhealthy and aged.

This is why cannabinoids — like CBD — are so important. They recharge the cannabinoid system when our internal mechanisms slow down, helping our bodies to their healthy, youthful state.

One researcher compared it to "turning back the molecular clock."

### How It Works

A new formula combines three new technologies to maximize CBD's health rejuvenating potential, starting with "Nano CBD" for maximum cellular absorption.

It's called **Cool Relief**.

First, **Cool Relief** shrinks the 2,000 nanometer molecules found in most CBD oils to just 80 nanos. No bigger than a grain of sand. This is important because it's all that can fit in your cell membrane. Any more gets discarded.

This nanotechnology gets 1,500% more CBD past the cell membrane... rejuvenating your cells to their young, healthy state.

Second, **Cool Relief** adds vaporizing technology for lightning-fast absorption that delivers CBD to your cells



in seconds after swallowing.

Finally, every bottle of **Cool Relief** contains a lab-confirmed 310 mg of high-potency CBD, giving you the same amount used in the clinical studies. A CO2 process extracts pure CBD from the hemp plant while eliminating toxins, impurities and chemicals.

The three technologies in **Cool Relief** transform a healthy plant compound into a superior health rejuvenating technology... one that supports "young again" heart, eyes, brain, lungs and more.

### Overnight memory reboot...

Lilly H., age 92, had age-related memory loss, was confused, occasionally falling down and couldn't speak clearly. She often spent her days lying in bed.

After trying "Nano CBD," everything changed — overnight! Lilly says, "I know it sounds crazy, but it seems like I was given back a life."

### Healthy blood sugar in 7 days...

David M., age 69, worked to have healthier blood sugar for 25 years. He tried exercise, eating right and just about everything else — and nothing worked.

After stumbling on to "Nano CBD," he enjoyed deep, refreshing sleep, healthy joints and healthy blood sugar levels — in just one week!

### Back discomfort gone in 1 week...

Kelly H., age 49, reports that despite trying everything for her back aches and mental stress over 20 years, nothing worked.

Then she found "Nano CBD" — and ended her 20-year battle with back discomfort and mental stress — in just one week. "I have so much more energy," she says. "I'm a different person."

### How to Order Cool Relief Today

Right now, the only way to get this powerful combination of technologies that maximize CBD absorption is by ordering the breakthrough **Cool Relief** formula.

To secure bottles of this unique formula, buyers should contact the Toll-Free Health Hotline at 1-866-246-5568 within the next 48 hours. This formula is not available in stores yet. The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to the customer.

We feel so strongly about this product that we offer a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. Just send back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days of purchase, and we'll send you your money back. The Hotline will be open for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number will be shut down to allow us to restock.

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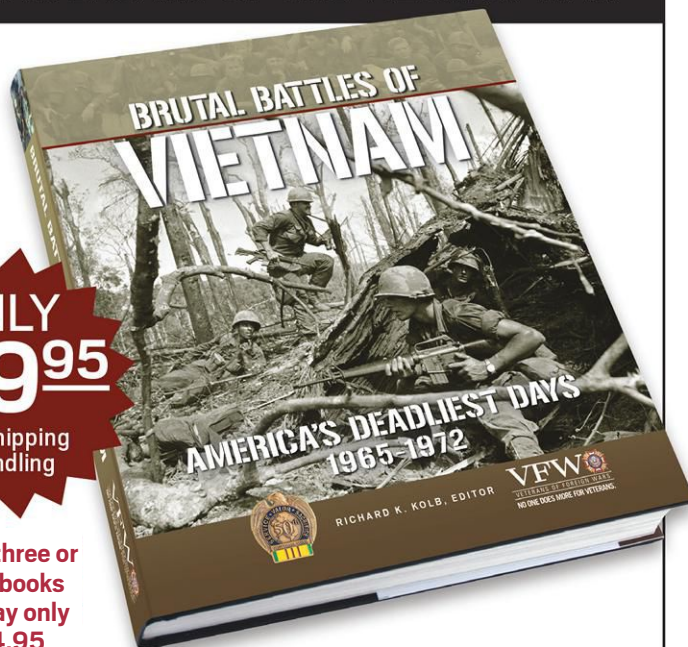
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## REUNIONS AND CLAIMS

### REUNIONS

To publicize your unit's reunion, email [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org). Submit at least four months in advance of reunion date. VFW members only.

### AIR FORCE

366th Gunfighters, all units and sqdn.: Branch Davis (904) 721-3275; gunfighters2020@comcast.net  
Aerial Delivery Section, Travis Air Force Base, Calif.: Ron Gentle (585) 872-6314; rgentle@rochester.rr.com  
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### ARMY

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132nd Hercules and 178th Boxcars: Bill McRae (770) 843-3973; www.132ashc.org  
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### NAVY

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USS Point Defiance LSD-31: Mike Doto (406) 491-9308  
USS Preston DD-795: Robert Werner (703) 860-0420; rm\_werner@hotmail.com  
USS Robert E. Peary DE/FF-1073: Mike Black; lmblackb4u@gmail.com  
USS Rupertus DD-851: Alan Lewis (914) 443-5496; alewis@hvc.rr.com  
VF-213, Black Lions: Mary Kennedy (314) 703-2829; evelyn498@att.net

### CLAIMS

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#### Air Force

**Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 1969-70** - Seeking Tim Shawver, who served with me to substantiate a claim. Ret. Master Sgt. George Liebegott (620) 488-2736

#### Army

**2nd Div., Military Police, Aviation Group, Camp Casey, South Korea, Sept. 1972-Oct. 1973, and Fort Sill, Okla., Oct 1973-July 1974** - Seeking anyone who served with me to substantiate a claim. Eddie S. Hatfield (304) 475-2559; constructionhatfield@yahoo.com

**HQ Co., 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Div. and 35th Inf. Div., An Khe, Vietnam, 1970** - Seeking anyone who served with William "Bill" C. Kundo, combat medic. He received a Purple Heart near An Khe. Widow Peggy Kundo; peggykundo@gmail.com





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# Marine Carried His Guitar to Iraq

An Iraq War vet who is now a celebrated outlaw country music star uses his talents to reach the masses in a unique way.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

**L**ike any honky-tonk prodigy, Gethen Jenkins found the guitar at a young age — if not by chance, then by circumstance.

With few ways to weather the frigid gusts that often ripped through Galena, a rural Native American village deep in the Alaskan tundra, an 8-year-old Jenkins turned to strumming chords on his father's old Gibson guitar after the pair moved from Huntington, W.Va.

Jenkins, a Marine Corps vet, and his father, an Air Force veteran who at the time had been stationed at Galena Air Force Station near the Yukon River, soon bonded over playing and listening along to bluegrass and whiskey-soaked honky tonk songs.

"Growing up with my old man listening to Hank Williams Jr., Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard and others like them, that was the kind of stuff that spoke to me," Jenkins remembers. "I didn't choose any kind of music, but this was just the kind that spoke to my heart."

The influence that bluegrass and honky tonk had on Jenkins' tentative years set the foundation for what has become a flourishing country music career.

Jenkins, who now lives just outside of Orange County, Calif., cemented his name in country music's outlaw subgenre with fervor, collecting accolades along the way that include California Country Awards' "Best Male Vocalist" and "Best Album" in 2017, along with *LA Weekly's* "Best Outlaw Country Artist" in 2018.

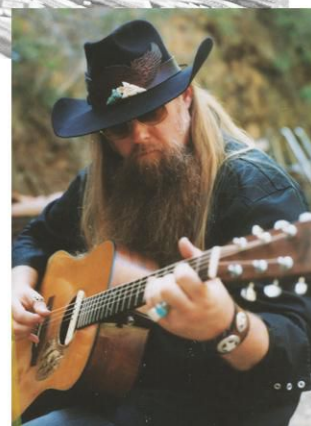
"It's been a blessing, but I'm just here to write the songs I've got inside of me," Jenkins said. "The relationship between the listeners and the music is what I feed on."

Jenkins' music, often celebrated by the masses as much for its considerable depth and meaning as for the passion in which it's delivered, resonates especially



**ABOVE:** Gethen Jenkins is an award-winning singer-songwriter born in Huntington, W.Va., and raised in a rural Native American village in Alaska. He served for eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps, which included a deployment on Jan. 28, 2003, to Kuwait and later Iraq, where he served for six months.

**RIGHT:** Gethen Jenkins, pictured playing his guitar, has won multiple awards as an outlaw country music star. California Country Awards presented him with "Best Male Vocalist" and "Best Album" honors in 2017. The Marine also received *LA Weekly's* "Best Outlaw Country Artist" award in 2018.



close with the veteran population, too.

Citing his music and military experience as the two things he most cherishes about himself, Jenkins often aims to bridge the gap between both for an audience aiming to do the same.

"It's hard to cross that bridge because they're two completely different things, but I'm fortunate to be able to do it," Jenkins said. "I'm proud to link that part of me that served my country with the kind of music that brings me happiness."

The former Marine, who served for eight years as an engineer and marksmanship instructor, spent his first two years stationed on Okinawa, Japan, and later served another six at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Jenkins also served in the Iraq War, being part of the first wave of Marine engineers who deployed on Jan. 28, 2003, to Kuwait and later Iraq, where he spent six months.

"During that time, I played any chance I got," he remembers. "I managed to sneak my guitar in-country, so

when we'd get back to the rear each night, I'd play in my barracks room along with 50 or 60 of us Marines just hanging out."

The camaraderie among his fellow veterans is another area that Jenkins holds dear to his heart, and one he continues to celebrate. He said he often finds himself visiting VFW Posts while on tour, sharing stories with its members over hot dogs and music.

"It's an exchange I really enjoy," Jenkins said. "I travel a lot, but in just about any major town I'm in there's a VFW Post. In each one, you're guaranteed to meet good people and make friends."

Jenkins' ongoing tour with his band is slated to cover most of the United States in 2020. Tour dates can be found at [gethenjenkinsmusic.com](http://gethenjenkinsmusic.com)

"Expect to see me in a town near you," Jenkins added. "I'm going to be beating the streets pretty hard, spreading my music across America." ★

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