



Honoring Our

# Veterans

*Saluting Those Who Served*

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November 11, 2016  
A Special Supplement to

**KENNEBEC JOURNAL  
MORNING SENTINEL**

# Armistice Day: A Veterans Day commemoration

BY LINDA NOVAK

Director/Curator, Old Fort Western

Daniel Savage's Company, a living history reenactment unit associated with Old Fort Western, will celebrate "Armistice Day," a Veterans Day Commemoration, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 11 at Old Fort Western. The event is free and open to the public.

At 10 a.m. members of the Daniel Savage's Company will be present to demonstrate camp life of an 18th Century Revolutionary War Soldier. Daniel Savage, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, led the original Savage Company, 1777-1779. At noon, there will be a short service followed by the raising of the colors and a musket volley. Music will be provided by Phil and Mary Amidon of the Liberty String Band.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. visitors also can enjoy 18th century open hearth and outdoor cooking demonstrations. Coffee, tea, cider and desserts will be offered to veterans. Step into the past and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of the 18th

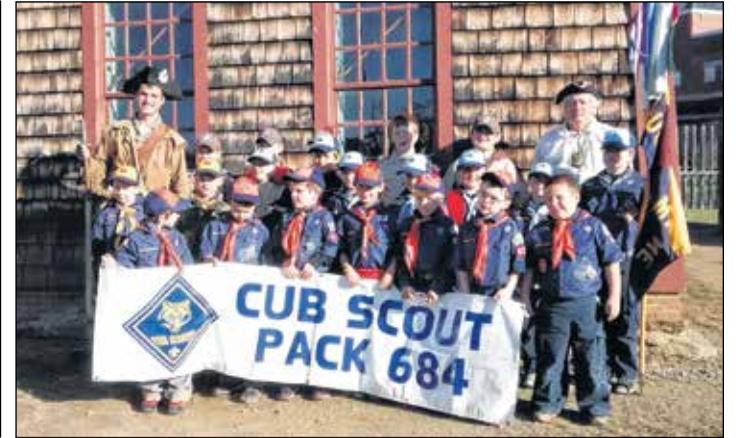


Members of the Daniel Savage's Company will demonstrate camp life of an 18th Century Revolutionary War Soldier at Fort Western on Veterans Day.

century while the country's veterans are honored.

Old Fort Western is the 1754 National Landmark fort, store and house on the

Kennebec River in downtown Augusta. Admission is free on Veterans Day; however, donations are always welcome and used to benefit Old Fort Western's



The cub scouts will be at Fort Western this year for the Veteran's Day Commemoration.

educational programs. For more information call 626-2385 or email [oldfort@oldfortwestern.org](mailto:oldfort@oldfortwestern.org). You can also visit the website at [www.oldfortwestern.org](http://www.oldfortwestern.org).

## Veterans Day honors U.S. service men and women

BY WARREN WATSON

Correspondent

Americans like things big — in their choice of trucks, open spaces, food — even holidays.

They celebrate major patriotic holidays in threes: Memorial Day, Fourth of July and upcoming Veterans Day, to be celebrated on Nov 11.

To some, a celebration is a celebration, but few know that these three patriotic days were set aside for distinct reasons and have very different meanings.

Ryan Lilly, director of the Veterans Administration medical center at Togus, just outside Augusta, considers Veterans Day a red-letter holiday for his staff and patients.

"Veterans Day is an important moment for the country to pause and reflect on the sacrifices of the brave men and women who served the country in uniform, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom," said Lilly, who heads the largest veterans organization in the state. "We see the cost of this sacrifice every single day. We are honored to provide care and benefits to the veterans of Maine, and

**"The Civil War saw approximately 73,000 Mainers serve in the Union Army and Navy, the highest percentage of population of any northern state."**

— RAY LASH, TOGUS

we take our mission to provide them exceptional health care very seriously."

To most vets in Maine, Veterans Day is celebrated in quiet reflection, although some cities and towns — including Augusta, Readfield, Richmond, Waterville, Bangor and Rockport — will remember veterans in a more demonstrable way, with parades, speeches and ceremonies. The largest program will be held in Portland at an 11 a.m. City Hall ceremony. A parade originating at Longfellow Square begins at 10:30 a.m.

In Waterville, a parade from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. will begin and end at the American Legion Post.

Veterans Day is the latest day to be set aside in honor of the country's veterans, coinciding with the end of the four-year World War I in Europe in 1918, called Armistice Day. Many also called

the holiday Truce Day or Remembrance Day in the early days.

Ray Lash, another official at Togus and a military history buff, recalls some earlier history.

"As we celebrate Veterans Day, we are reminded of President Lincoln's charge 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan' as noted in his Second Inaugural Address," Lash said.

Lash added, "The Civil War saw approximately 73,000 Mainers serve in the Union Army and Navy, the highest percentage of population of any northern state. The site of the current VA, Togus, Maine was dedicated by Lincoln in 1865 as the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers — the first in the nation — and has remained true to that mission since being founded."

Togus turned 150 years old this year. Even dates and time are significant in the celebration of Veterans Day. The armistice ending the war was signed at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.

Almost immediately in 1918, some began to make a special observance of the war known as The Great War.

In Britain, Canadian Dr. John McCrae penned a poem inspired by the poppy, a resilient flower that grew in the charred earth of western Europe. His poem, called "In Flanders Fields," written during the Battle of Ypres, became emblematic of the war and the day, Nov. 11.

In the United States, the fateful day became a holiday in 1938.

Other patriotic holidays had unique beginnings. Memorial Day was first celebrated as a way to honor Civil War veterans. July 4 was not at first set as a military holiday, although it has turned out that way.

Residents of Maine and Massachusetts know that there is actually a fourth patriotic holiday, celebrated on April 14. It's known as Patriots Day. That's the day the Boston Marathon road race is held.

# Nonprofit gives the gift of fishing memories to disabled veterans

BY VALERIE TUCKER  
Correspondent

Two friends, both veterans with disabilities, share a driving passion for fly fishing. Together, they have managed to combine their love of the sport and the outdoors with a dedication to support fellow veterans.

Marc Bilodeau and Bob Pelletier have nurtured their fledgling nonprofit, Back in the Maine Stream, into a statewide movement, and they hope to connect with even more veterans, volunteers and donors around the state.

Over a decade ago, both men were involved with Project Healing Waters, a national group that supports veterans through fishing. Since that group could only offer an event in Maine once a year, they decided to take that concept and lead their own fishing trips for other disabled Maine veterans. As a U.S. Marine, Pelletier served in Vietnam, and Bilodeau served in the U.S. Air Force. They downplay their own disabilities, and they use humor to coax fellow veterans out of their isolation and self-imposed limits.

“Our primary function is to aid Maine disabled veterans, but we welcome others,” Pelletier said.

Today, the group has a formal board of directors. They meet with veterans in casual monthly groups in Augusta and Portland for social time and trip planning. People get to know each other at the meetings, and they decide if and when they are ready for a trip.

As a nonprofit, BITMS survives on donations and hundreds of hours of time and energy from supporters.

“Our group doesn’t have any administrative costs because we all volunteer our time,” Pelletier said. “Every penny goes back into these trips, so veterans don’t have to pay to participate.”

Accommodations, equipment, food and other supplies are often donated. Other support comes from individual donations, annual fundraisers, business owners and other groups that want to help.

“We get a lot of help from L.L. Bean,” he said. “We can teach casting and some other skills at their Freeport location.”

Pelletier said trip planning logistics are challenging. They secure lodging, food, and assistance for those with specific physical limits. Participants may have medications that need refrigeration. Others may use equipment that requires electricity. Standard wheelchairs can’t go everywhere; BITMS volunteers hope to fund the purchase of a chair that will have the same rugged maneuverability as a snowmobile or ATV. Veterans are matched with volunteers and fishing guides on each trip, and some veterans have become helpers for others. Many bring a spouse or other family member or a service animal, and everyone becomes



Photo contributed

The nonprofit Back in the Maine Stream organization helps disabled American veterans through recreational fishing. Co-founded by Marc Bilodeau and Robert Pelletier, the group is for veterans who have been sidelined by some degree of physical and emotional trauma. Terri Perry, a U.S. Air Force veteran from southern Maine, went with the annual fishing trip to King and Bartlett Fish and Game Club in Eustis. Volunteers Lane Stoltz (holding net) and Mike May worked as her guides.

**“Our group doesn’t have any administrative costs, because we all volunteer our time. Every penny goes back into these trips, so veterans don’t have to pay to participate.”**

— ROBERT PELLETIER, CO-FOUNDER OF BACK IN THE MAINE STREAM FOR VETERANS

part of a big family on these trips, he said.

Farmington resident and board member Steven Rothert lost his hearing in U.S. Navy demolition work, and he recently retired as an education counselor at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Togus hospital in Chelsea. That’s where he became involved in the BITMS efforts. He speaks passionately about the isolation many veterans experience and the importance of sharing experiences that few others can understand.

“There’s a common thread we all share,” he said. “We make sure we’re all safe, and we make sure any veterans who go on these trips will have everything they need.”

The co-founders said they have seen firsthand the power of veterans helping other veterans. They said they have seen attitudes and lives changed. Most participants have been sidelined by some degree of physical and emotional trauma. Everyone participates according to their individual abilities.

Terri Perry, a U.S. Air Force veteran from southern Maine, has been a regular participant for three years. In September, she went with the annual fishing trip to King and Bartlett Fish and Game Club in Eustis. Volunteers Lane Stoltz and Mike May worked as her guides.

The trips don’t focus solely on fly fishing. Veterans also have gone on hugely popular deep sea fishing, bass fishing and smelting trips. They will start 2017 on New Year’s Day at noon at Fort Halifax in Winslow for the ninth annual Freeze Your Guides event on the Kennebec River.

“Members of Trout Unlimited and others show up and we fish as long as we can stand the cold,” said Pelletier.

Throughout the year, Pelletier and Bilodeau communicate with veterans around the state and are willing to consider meeting locations for those far from Augusta and Portland. They have a Facebook page and website at [www.fairpoint.net/~hamma/Pics/BITMS.htm](http://www.fairpoint.net/~hamma/Pics/BITMS.htm).

## Monthly Meeting Info Box

**Portland: 9 a.m. on the 2nd Wednesday;  
Elks Club; 1945 Congress St.**

**Augusta: 9 a.m. on the 4th Wednesday;  
American Legion Post 205; Route 17/396 Eastern Ave.**

**Donations:  
Back in the Maine Stream  
c/o Marc Bilodeau  
44 Connor Lane  
Poland, ME 04274  
(207) 998-3569  
[info@backinthemainestream.org](mailto:info@backinthemainestream.org)**

# Multiple resources are available for veterans seeking employment

BY WANDA CURTIS  
Correspondent

One of the challenges that members of the military face after deployment overseas is reintegration back into the workforce.

There are multiple resources available to assist veterans in finding employment but many veterans just don't know where to access them, according to Auta M. Main, veterans program manager with the Maine Department of Labor.

Main said the first step in finding out what they qualify for is to register online through Maine Job Link, which can be found on the website [www.mainejoblink.com](http://www.mainejoblink.com).

"They need to register there for the job-matching system that brings together individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking workers, assisting them in finding the right match," Main said. "Also, through that online registration, they can connect to Career Center programs."

Main said that veterans receive many hours of intensive training and experience while in the military. However, she said it is sometimes difficult to translate that into civilian terms when it comes to constructing a resume. She said that 16 veterans' representatives located at the 12, full-service Career Centers throughout the state are available to assist veterans in doing just that.

## Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

According to Main, one program that may assist veterans in furthering their education is the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP). She said that program "provides eligible individuals with access to postsecondary education, training for industry-recognized credentials and support leading to skilled, well-compensated jobs with anticipated high employment demand." She said the CSSP is open not just to veterans, but to qualified members of the general public as well. To find out more about the CSSP, interested individuals should contact their local career center.

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Main said another program that some veterans may qualify for is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). She explained that the WIOA "provides eligible individuals, especially those with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training and support services needed to succeed in the labor market."

## Vocational Rehabilitation

A third program for veterans with physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities is vocational rehabilitation. Main said this program assists people with disabilities



Contributed photos  
Maine's Commissioner of Labor Jeanne Paquette welcomes everyone at the Hire-A-Vet kickoff on Labor Day.

in finding and keeping a job, including options for retraining as appropriate.

## GI Bill® and GI Bill® OJTs

Robert Haley, director of Maine State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education, said that many veterans are familiar with GI Bill® benefits for education. However, he said that many don't know that those benefits can be used not only for colleges but also for approved specialty schools.

"Specialty schools cover a wide range, to include schools such as the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, New England School of Metalwork in Auburn, Jack Mountain Bushcraft in Masardis and Downeast Maritime in Thomaston, just to name a few," said Haley.

According to Haley, some short-term adult education programs that provide



Maine's Adjutant General Farnham offers remarks at the Hire-A-Vet kickoff event designed to raise awareness for veterans seeking employment.

training for marketable skills such as welding and/or truck driving may also be covered under the GI Bill®. He said that although some Maine veterans have chosen to share their GI Bill® benefits with their spouse and/or children, others have used their benefits to retrain themselves to meet the financial needs of their families. Haley said that many veterans have found it difficult to locate jobs that offer wages commensurate with their training and experience when they seek to re-enter the workforce.

The GI Bill® On-the-Job Training (OJT)/Apprenticeship (APP) training program allows veterans to receive training while performing a job and receiving wages. In addition to the wages paid by the employer, Haley said that veterans enrolled in an OJT/APP program also receive a

monthly stipend.

"Approvable OJT/APP programs must be at least six months in duration and may last up to five years in length," said Haley. "Thousands of occupations qualify, both entry-level and management positions."

Haley reported that the GI Bill® OJT/APP program can benefit not only employees but also employers. He said the program can help local employers to recruit high-quality applicants, retain high-quality employees and promote the employer's image within the community as "veteran-friendly."

"Veterans have demonstrated the aptitude needed for being trained in a structured environment," Haley said. He said veterans also possess work traits such as adapting to physical demands, following safety guidelines, working under pressure, setting priorities, and reporting to work on time, which make them valuable employees.

See the website <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill> for more information.

## Hire A Vet Campaign

The Hire A Vet Campaign, initiated in Maine last year, has been very successful. The goal of that campaign is for 100 employers to hire 100 vets in 100 days. Main said that last year 135 employers hired 269 veterans during the 100-day campaign, which lasts from Labor Day until the middle of December.

"Coutts Brothers in Randolph hired two veterans last year, one of whom is a drone operator, which is very similar to what he did in the military," said Main. "This year, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems has hired six veterans and the State of Maine hired at least 16 veterans who are employed in corrections, state police, and IT."

For more information and a list of other local employers who hire veterans, see [www.facebook.com/MaineHireAVet/](http://www.facebook.com/MaineHireAVet/).

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# Center on Aging program produces friends for life

BY AMY CALDER

Staff Reporter

Reprinted from Morning Sentinel  
July 10, 2016 issue

Harry Dixon and Ed Morrissey couldn't be more different, but they get along famously.

Dixon, 93, is a little over 5 feet tall and quiet, although he tells a good story when he gets going. Morrissey is 85 and nearly 6 feet tall, slim and talkative. In fact, he says Dixon tells him he talks too much. Morrissey then laughs heartily.

"We never had a cross word," he said.

We sit in Dixon's Skowhegan kitchen where the two men swap war stories. Morrissey, of Norridgewock, served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War and was a second class dental technician. Dixon was a technician, 5th Class, in the U.S. Army in World War II.

Morrissey is a senior companion to Dixon through the University of Maine Center on Aging program. Dixon left his home in Lewiston over a year ago to live with his daughter, Carol Corson, in Skowhegan, and the adjustment was difficult for him.

Corson, who works long hours at Redington-Fairview General Hospital, called the Center on Aging to see if there was someone who could spend time with her father.

"It was one of the best things I did," she said. "They said, 'I think I have just the guy for you.'"

As a senior companion, Morrissey has spent the last 11 years being a friend to many elderly people from all walks of life. He enjoys them all, but there's something special about Dixon.

"We like the Dairy Queen on Kennedy Memorial Drive in Waterville, don't we, Harry?" he says. "It's \$10 for both of us — hot dog and drink, chips, a soda and a sundae. It's a good deal."

Three times a week, they get together, don their veterans' caps and canes and head out into the world. Sometimes they go to Lake George in Skowhegan or Canaan to hang out. A lot of times they will go out to eat —



File photo

Harry Dixon, 93, of Skowhegan, at left, and his senior companion, Ed Morrissey, 85, of Norridgewock, at Dixon's home.

and they get noticed.

"Sometimes the waitress will just say, 'The check is all taken care of, even the tip, and the person wants to remain anonymous,'" Morrissey said. "Isn't that nice?"

One time at Ruby Tuesday in Waterville, Dixon and Morrissey were sitting at a booth and this guy came by with his wife.

"He puts \$25 in cash on the table," Morrissey said. "He says, 'God bless you guys. Thank you very much for your service.'"

Before we could even say thank you, he was out the door."

They have a great time together. Morrissey has taken Dixon to the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, where Morrissey is a docent. They went up to Anson to visit a guy who does stained glass, and Dixon enjoyed it a lot because he does stained glass work himself; his colorful pieces grace

the walls of his daughter's home.

When Dixon was serving in World War II from 1943 to 1945, he was in the Ordnance Repair Unit, fixing everything from watches to tanks.

"We did trucks and Jeeps and artillery and machine guns," he said.

Dixon landed at Normandy and marched through France into Germany to Berlin. He served in all five battle zones and has five battle stars.

"We went a month without taking a shower, living in the ground in fox holes. We dug them the size of a bathtub so we could sleep in them."

He remembers going to Hitler's castle in the Austrian Alps at the end of the war.

"He had everything there — stone buildings. It was big and had quite a few rooms to it. It was right up in the top of the mountains, big tables and chairs and the best of furniture. He had everything at the time, but he lost everything."

Dixon tells some humorous stories, such as when he first entered the service and told his superiors that he could fix watches. To ascertain whether Dixon was just saying he could repair watches or really could, he got sent to a colonel at base headquarters. The colonel produced a watch whose stem was detached.

"He said, 'What's wrong with my watch?'" Dixon recalled. "I told him the technical points, that a detent screw was loosened up and the stem and crown came out. I wanted to tell him he had a screw loose, but I didn't dare to."

He and Morrissey laugh, but then Morrissey gets serious.

"We sit back in our comfortable chairs, and when these men were over there, it was a long war and it was cold and the guys would be marching, marching and they had minimal food to eat," Morrissey said. "When you were in the service, it was very, very harsh."

He nods to Dixon across the table.

"He's my hero, this guy. He really is. I love him dearly."

Morrissey never went to Korea while

he was in the U.S. Navy from 1951 to 1955, though he served out of the country for a while. He went to dental technician school and worked at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

"Those were solid days — great days for me. I was in Washington, D.C., all the time. I was there at the McCarthy hearings. I heard Joe McCarthy. The whole thing was unreal. It was very interesting. I was a young guy at 18."

Dixon grew up in Lewiston and became a watchmaker. He married in 1946 and had two boys and a girl. His wife died three days before her 60th birthday. He remarried in 2000 and lost his second wife to death three years later.

Morrissey grew up in Taunton and Middleborough, Massachusetts, with two sisters. He attended New England College in Henniker, New Hampshire, and earned a bachelor's degree in liberal arts. He then became a professional fundraiser, working for the March of Dimes, American Cancer Society, United Way and other nonprofit organizations.

He married and he and his wife, Doretta, had six children and lived in Connecticut, New York and Vermont before moving to Norridgewock 20 years ago to be closer to family. Morrissey spends about 20 hours a week being a senior companion.

"It's a good program — it really is," he said. "It's all free. There's no charge. I think it's one of the best programs in the state for helping people. The philosophy behind the program is, we'd much rather visit people in their own homes and keep them there, versus going to a nursing home."

Recently, Morrissey called headquarters and asked for a printout of the clients he has worked with and was surprised at the response.

"They sent me this long list with 45 people on it and it brought back memories. They're all passed now. They're all gone, and I had a chance to really make a difference with those people. We'd go out and do things, just like Harry and me."

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*The Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel asked the Veterans of central Maine to share their wartime stories and photos in celebration of Veterans Day. Other stories in this special Veterans section are from our readers. Thank you to all who contributed.*

# In the eye of the storm

## A lesson in humility

BY ELBERT R. BREWSTER  
Oakland

I don't know how many of us who went to Vietnam in the 1960s remember the General R.M. Blatchford, a troop-carrying vessel first launched in the 1940s. I didn't think of her often. . . usually joking about what a mess she was when she took First Battalion Second Infantry across the Pacific.

Actually, I would never have thought about her again except a new parishioner at our church, Ron Gordon and I were sharing Vietnam stories a few years ago

and he surprised me by talking about going to Vietnam on the Blatchford. He even went back and found her on Wikipedia and shared her history with me. It was interesting, but I was just glad to see that she had been scrapped in 1980.

This past week, however, I had a flashback. I was on the deck of the General Blatchford. We were caught in a typhoon somewhere off the coast of Japan. The wind was howling. The waves were crashing over the ship.



Lots of people were sea sick and I was finding them and giving them sea sick pills to get them through the rolling and rocking of the ship.

What caused the flashback was my telling the story to our congregation at the Smithfield Baptist Church of Jesus and his disciples on the deck of a ship also caught in a storm. The disciples were scared. . . Jesus was sleeping. . . and as I told the story of how scary a storm at sea can be. . . there I was back on the Blatchford.

I was on the Blatchford along with 4,200 (capacity 3,800) other guys going to

Vietnam. We were an Arctic Strike Unit, trained in Massachusetts, and stationed at Fort Devens.

Sometime during the summer of 1965, we began to hear rumors of a possible call-up for duty in Vietnam. No one took it seriously until we were told to dye all our underwear green. That was the first clue. The second was that we took all our equipment, trucks and ambulances and other vehicles down to a wharf in Boston and left them there.

Not too long after this we were loaded,

More BREWSTER, PAGE 7

# CENTRAL MAINE VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Roderick Road  
Winslow, Maine

# VETERANS DAY

## November 11, 2016

Central Maine Veterans Memorial Park wants to thank all those who have helped keep the park looking its best this year. Thank you to The Patriot Riders motorcycle club for keeping the weeds under control again this year. It isn't an easy thing to do. Thank you to the Knights of Columbus for their offer of help at the park.

Thanks once again to Mrs. Bernadette Massey for the use of her hose and water. Thanks also to Connie Mitchell, M.J. Stafford and Pat Poulin who tend the flowers each year. Thank you to Winslow VFW for their donation of flags that proudly fly over the park and also adorn the flowerbeds.

Applications for honor pavers, border stones and benches can be picked up at Winslow Supply Inc., 567 Benton Ave., Winslow, Maine or by calling 873-5608.

Thank you to everyone who purchased stones and benches this year at the park.

*With Total Appreciation To All Who Have Served Our Country*

## Brewster

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

in full combat gear, into a plane at Logan Airport and flown to San Francisco.

I honestly don't have much awareness of how I was feeling through all this. It just seemed unreal. I knew we were going to Vietnam on a ship, but I had no idea what a trip across the Pacific would be like or what we would be doing when we arrived in country. Like I said, we were an arctic strike unit. I even brought along my Arctic sleeping bag, which I actually slept in until we were given better clothing and supplies after we were settled in country in Vietnam.

We spent a week at Oakland army base outside of San Francisco preparing for the trip. I have vague memories of the Red Cross handing out refreshments and all of us getting used to the quarters we would share on the boat.

The Blatchford was overloaded and we were stacked in our deck four or five high in bunks, one on top of the other.

We set sail from San Francisco and made our way out under the Golden Gate Bridge. We ate in a mess hall on our deck, which was two decks down. Officers and NCOs were above us.

We soon got into a routine of getting up, showering, eating, playing cards on deck – and losing all my money in the first week – and in the evenings playing bingo in the mess hall. I believe we did KP. I don't remember holding sick call. I was a medic, kept medical records and stateside drove an ambulance.

Things were going along pretty well. Until about a week and a half out, the ship broke down. We drifted for several days while they worked on the engine (one steam engine supposedly able to travel at 17 knots). It really wasn't a big deal at the time. In fact, it meant we were saved a few days in Vietnam. Not something I was looking forward to.

The problem was the ship kept breaking down. We would go for several days and then stop again. The trip went on and on. At one point while we were sitting on the deck watching the flying fish jump out of the water, word came down that we were near Honolulu. Everyone got really



excited. Maybe we could get off the ship. We were really starting to get on each other's nerves.

I always had a kind of "Holier than thou" attitude because of my religious beliefs. Sometimes, back on dry land when I was stating my opinions of my fellow soldier's morals, we came near to blows. Someone would usually step I and break us up, but on the ship, we were in too close quarters. After one big blow-up (in which I was told to shut up or they would toss me off the deck), I took to avoiding the platoon I was with. I would spend time reading by myself on deck, reading my Bible in my cot, and if I saw them coming, I would walk the other way. This went on for some time until the typhoon hit.

We were at least a month or more into the trip and I thought I had heard that we were somewhere near Japan. But the storm hit us hard and it really scared people. At the same time, because of the length of time we had been at sea, we were running out of supplies. Meals were never really very good, at least for those of us on my deck. Add to this that we had run out of fresh water. If you wanted a shower, you took a cold salt water shower. We were all miserable.

I think it was the misery that took over when the storm hit and the Blatchford began to sway and dip and seemed like it might sink and began to thaw out our attitudes. I took a look at myself and my

way of relating and realized that if we did survive it wouldn't be too long before I really needed to know that my buddies in the unit had my back and they needed to know that I had theirs.

It took some doing, humility on all sides in the midst of that storm to begin to thaw.

It wasn't completely over and there were still some hard feelings when the typhoon finally blew us into the harbor at Okinawa. I remember the first day we were allowed to leave the ship, but stay in the docking area. There wasn't much to see except that right in the middle of the large open space of the dock was parked a PX food truck. We all ran for it and because of the miserable conditions we had lived through, we were all intent on getting a place in line. I was one of the last to get a lunch before the truck was sold out. I took my hamburger and milk shake and went and sat on the dock by myself. Other guys came around to see what I had, but I was really a mess emotionally and told them to bug off and leave me alone. (I was suffering from PTBD – Post Traumatic Blatchford Disorder.) "You only want to be my friend because I got something to eat!" I shouted. Looking back on this, I think how stupid I must have looked and how crazy we all acted.

But, we had been through the "eye of the storm" on the Blatchford and it had taken its toll on us.

Things soon changed for the better. We landed in Saigon, were transported to a staging area, where we dug in and waited for our equipment to arrive.

Other storms were coming. We were soon mortared for the first time and the threat of death made us all stop and assess who we were and what really mattered. I think what really made a change in my attitude was the realization that what my army buddies needed from me wasn't a chronic judgmental attitude. If I did want to share my faith, the best way to do it was to be a friend, share in the tough stuff we all had to do just to survive, and stand with them when we came under fire or had to go on rescue missions to take out the wounded.

Interestingly, the platoon also became a lot more religious as time wore on. We all went to religious services offered by our Chaplain Hagan and often all went to Mass when that was offered. At one point, we even built our own small chapel from the remains of a Vietnamese church that had been destroyed. Vietnam was a painful experience. Not one I want to repeat, but it taught me some really important lessons about where God is when you are in the "eye of the storm," and about what kinds of words and deeds really made a difference when you want to give comfort, or offer advice, or just be a quiet listening presence and help someone find the best in themselves.

# Thank You for all you have done

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# Zetta Nudd was half right and half wrong

## *Soldier remembers D.C. trip, classroom confusion*

SUBMITTED BY CLARENCE F. MCKAY SR.  
Gardiner

Every word in the following story I am about to pen is true. I am a U.S. Army Veteran, World War II and the battle of Saipan in the Pacific Theatre of operations. However, my story begins in 1932.

History was my favorite subject in the 5th grade at Central Street School, Gardiner, Maine. One teacher, Miss Zetta Nudd, taught all subjects. However ancient history and American history were my favorite subjects — and I always had the answers when called on.

Miss Nudd would not call on me until all other members of the class had failed the right answer.

My desk was in the outside aisle next to the walk that separated the 5th and 6th graders — about 10 seats from the front of the room.

One day, Miss Nudd pulled down one of those old oilcloth maps covering the blackboard behind her desk. She proceeded to invite different classmates to the front of the room and show the rest of us where Asia Minor was located. I am waving my hand to let Miss Nudd know that I knew where Asia Minor was. She asked at least a dozen of my classmates and finally came down the side aisle to my desk and, passing me a wooden pointer, asked me to show the rest of the class where Asia Minor was located.

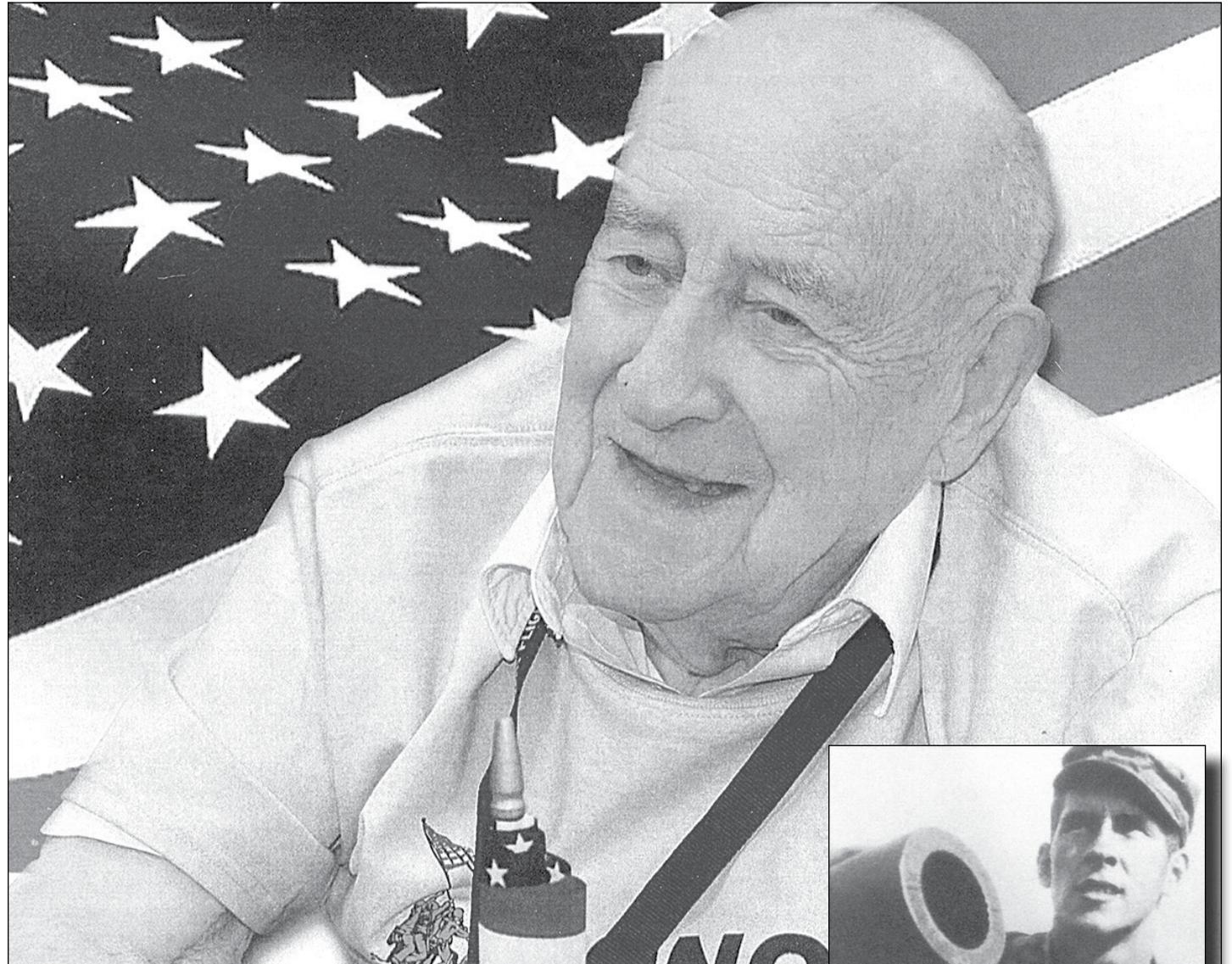
In my enthusiasm to get out of my desk chair, with the pointer in my hand, I slipped and the pointer struck the side of Miss Nudd's head and removed her hair piece. None of us were aware she wore a wig and that she was bald as a billiard ball. I reached down and picked up her hair piece off the floor and returned it to Miss Nudd, who thanked me, went to a mirror in front of the room and placed it back on her head as if nothing had happened.

When Miss Nudd died, I attended her funeral and told this story to her relatives, former students and many friends. It was then I realized she had told her side of the story but never disclosed my name.

As Paul Harvey would say, "This is the rest of the story." I loved to read any story and look at any pictures relative to World War I. One day I was looking at a large photograph of the Tomb of the Unknown American Soldier killed in World War I, but never identified.

Miss Nudd had explained that on special holidays the President of the United States would lay a large wreath on the monument in remembrance of all unidentified American dead of World War I.

I recall Miss Nudd telling me, "Clarence, you are such a smart boy, someday



Contributed photos

Clarence McKay is shown on left in 1944. He traveled to Washington D.C. this summer to attend ceremonies place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

you will be the President and will have the honor of laying a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier."

I never became the President of the United States of America, however, on July 23, 2016 I was one of six veterans of World War II chosen to remember all the unidentified soldiers of World War I by placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

It was a terribly hot day in Washington, D.C with temperatures close to the 100 degree mark, very muggy and a huge crowd of people were present for the ceremonies.

And, my school teacher, Miss Nudd, was partly right and partly wrong. I will never be President of the United States of America. However, I had the honor of laying a wreath at the Unknown Soldier's

Tomb, chosen by 29 brother veterans .

We were veterans from Maine approved by Honor Flight Maine for a trip to Washington, D.C. last July 22, 23 and 24. It was a remarkable journey with a great opportunity to visit the World War II National Memorial, Korean, Vietnam, Marine Iwo Jima, Fort McHenry and Arlington National Cemetery and changing of the guard.

On our arrival in Baltimore on July 23, the airline terminal was crowded with military personnel and hundreds of people waiting to greet us — shake our hands with a "Thank you for your service!"

Each veteran was assisted by a guardian who may or may not have been a relative. One of my 12 daughters, Juanita Fish, was my guardian and spent much



time pushing me around in a wheelchair because of my bad knees and legs.

Whereas I am under the watchful eyes of Hospice, they sent word to Hospice in Washington with an update of my medical needs, etc.

When we were bused from the hotel to

# McKay

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

the World War II Monument, I was dumbfounded to find about 15 members of my family present — children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who had motored by car from Maine to be there to greet me.

We traveled by bus from one monument to another and traveled through the Arlington National Cemetery.

We did not see the late President John F. Kennedy's burial site, which was disappointing to our Maine Honor Guard Veterans.

However, two years following President Kennedy's death, I was in Washington and, having a bit of free time, I went to Arlington Cemetery and took some photographs of his burial site and superimposed a photo of the President above the eternal flame that burns around the clock.

I have made copies of my original and, one of these days, all my veteran buddies on the July Honor Flight Maine will receive a copy.

The Honor Flight Maine was a fantastic experience and I urge any veterans who have an opportunity to participate in a future flight to do so. You will not regret your decision.



*Contributed photos*  
Some on Clarence McKay's family members, left, surprised him at the ceremonies in Washington D.C. Others welcomed him home upon his return to Portland International Jetport.

For all the businesses, organizations, etcetera, who work ever so hard to make these Honor Flights possible, we thank you. And, a special thank you to Laurie Sidliner, who is the chairperson of the Honor Flight Maine committee and is responsible for a special program for old veterans like myself.



## HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES ON VETERANS DAY



# HARTLEY'S

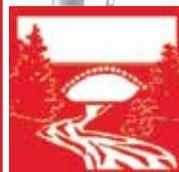
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who are now serving, and  
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dedication and sacrifice.*

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# Tail gunner recalls horror of air combat missions in WW II

SUBMITTED BY DON TUTTLE  
Augusta

★ ★ ★  
**In  
Their  
Own  
Words**

I was a tail gunner on a J Model B-24 Liberator in World War II. I flew 50 bombing missions all over southern Europe. We hit the Ploiesti Oil Fields three times. We bombed the submarine pens in Toulon, France.

We destroyed many vital targets. We hit the Brenner Pass, which was a supply and escape route for the Germans in Northern Italy. We lost bombers every time we bombed the infamous Brenner Pass.

I was shot down on my 40th mission, which was over Brenner Pass. The day before I got shot down, I lost six of my best friends when they took a direct hit while flying in formation beside us. The day before that, three of my buddies were killed. I lost my best and closest friend when he bailed out of our plane and his parachute got hung up on the plane and he went down three miles dangling behind the bomber.

One plane crashed on our airfield and caught on fire. No one got out because some of them were wounded and disabled. You could hear one or two of them crying for their mothers as they were incinerated in the inferno.

On my 40th mission, I bailed out over enemy territory. I was hidden from the Germans and finally rescued by a patrol from the British 8th Army. I went back to flying and flew 10 more missions. I figured I should go home, but I had to go back to flying.

The plane (pictured on next page) is mine and ended up crashing into a mountain when I got shot down.



Contributed photo

This photo was taken when I got back from being shot down on my 40th mission.

I received several awards while flying. I was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds I received on my second mission: The Air Medal with four Oak Leaf clusters; a beautiful Gold Star medal from Greece for destroying gun and troop emplacements over there (twice); the Victory medal; Good Conduct medal; medal with Seven Battle Stars (one for each campaign I participated in) and a medal from Great Britain for fighting in the air war over Europe.

Finally, I was knighted by France and received their oldest and highest award for participating in the liber-

ation of France, the Legion of Honor medal.

I am 92 years old and as I look back on all this death, destruction and fear, all I can say is "War is Hell" and I am lucky to be able to sit here and tell this story.

### My Introduction to air combat

I was sent overseas in World War II to Southern Italy as a tail gunner on a B24 Liberator. We moved into some German barracks, which the American ground troops had captured. I still remember the names of the previous German occupants, which were written on the upper left-hand side of the door inside. They were Hans, Heinz, Horst and Belos. I don't know what their fate was.

We were getting settled in the room when a minor argument started about something which I don't recall. One of my crew members said to me, "What do you know about anything? You're just a potato digger!" Just as he said that, a GI walked past the door, which was open. He heard that remark about me and backed up and asked, "You guys got a potato digger in here?" (Which meant someone from Maine.) He turned out to be one of my old Gardiner school chums who I hadn't seen for a long time. We had a lot to talk about.

He landed in Italy before I did and he was trained as an armorer. His job was keeping the twin 50 caliber machine guns in shape and making sure we had plenty of ammo. He knew my folks well and the rest of my family. His name was Bert Lasselle. What a coincidence to meet him in Italy, and that we were assigned to the same barracks. Not only that, but he was going to be the armorer on my plane.

In July 1944, the third day I was

there, I was going on a bombing mission to Munich, Germany. This target was well known for its heavy anti-aircraft fire.

The shells were exploding all around us. As I sat there in the tail turret watching in horror, I prayed that I would live through all this deadly barrage. I realized that I could get killed any second. There is absolutely no defense against anti-aircraft fire. You have to keep flying straight through it. If you try to maneuver around it, you're not going to hit the target.

Planes were getting hit and going down. Some were on fire. I saw one man headed for the ground with his parachute on fire. One plane to the right and above us took a direct hit and exploded. One minute they were flying along and the next minute there was nothing but metal and body parts dropping out of the sky. It was hell and horror in its purest form. Some ground troops would remark, "You 'fly boys' got it pretty soft."

Just then, a shell exploded below my tail turret. The shrapnel came up through the floor between my legs. I was cut up some, but it took all of the Plexiglas out of the top of my turret. We were over five miles high and it was 40 to 50 degrees below zero. The wind was just screaming into what was left of my turret. I was pretty well dressed and had a heated flying suit, but the cold was just brutal. I was so lucky I didn't get killed. Wasn't my day, I guess. Still had 48 missions to go to complete my tour.

When we landed, Bert came down to look at the plane. He stood there, mouth open, and said, "Holy crap!" Wait 'til I tell your father on you!"

Note: Would you call that GI humor?

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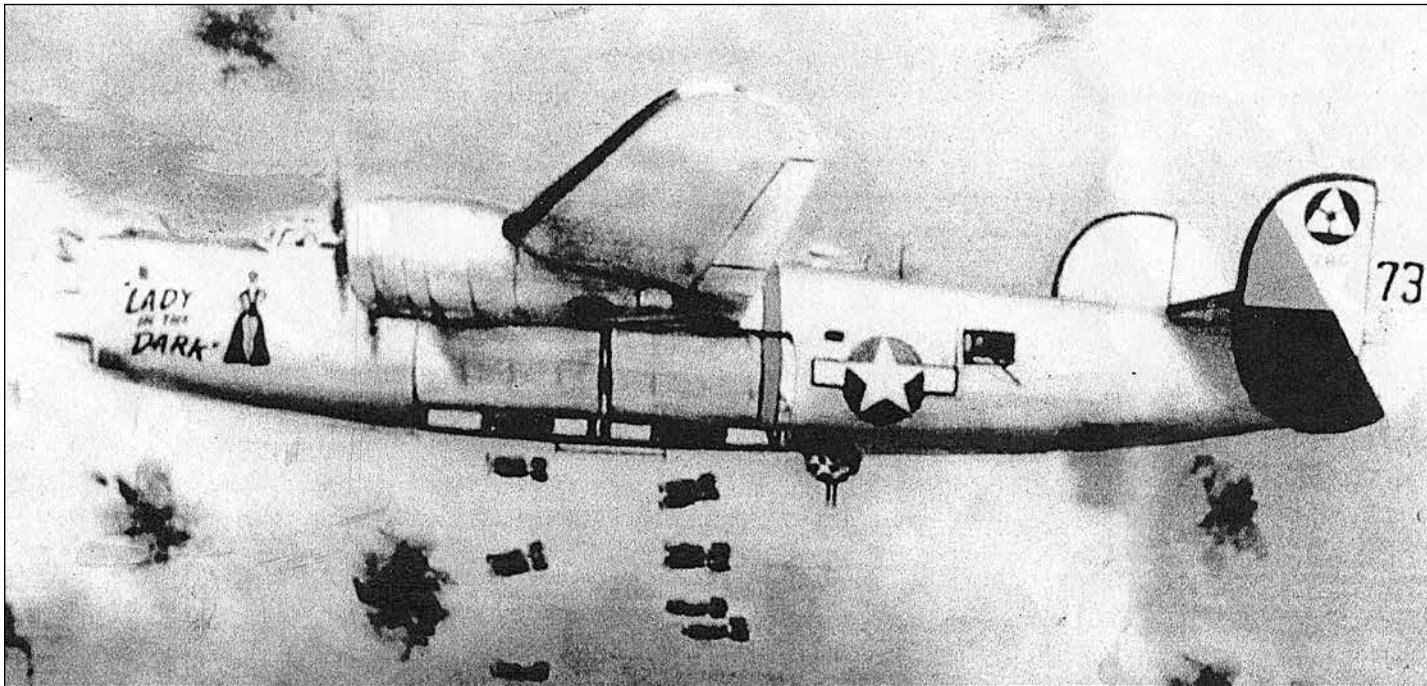
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“The shells were exploding all around us. As I sat there in the tail turret watching in horror, I prayed that I would live through all this deadly barrage. I realized that I could get killed any second. There is absolutely no defense against anti-aircraft fire. You have to keep flying straight through it. If you try to maneuver around it, you’re not going to hit the target.”

**DON TUTTLE**

# Remembering Our Veterans

We pay tribute to heroes, past and present, for unwavering service to our country...

*In Honor Of*  
**Vincent Arsenault**  
U. S. Army



I love you, Dad.  
*Love, Peter*

*In Honor Of*

**Jay Aubin**

1966 – 2003

U. S. Marine Corp

Always in our heart.

*Missed Every Day,  
Love, Mom*

*In Honor Of*

**Raymond H. Bilodeau**

Army Air Corps - 2nd Lieutenant  
August 23, 1923 - November 11, 1999



In Loving Memory  
*From Daughter and Family*

*In Honor Of*

**Sergeant Philip C. Buck**

U.S. Army Air Corp. - WWII  
November 13, 1920 - March 29, 2007



You are in my thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.  
*Sadly Missed by Son, Mike*

*In Honor Of*

**Vance Cayford**

Private First Class



So very proud of you.  
*Love You, Always and Forever*

*In Honor Of*

**Richard S. Choate**

World War II Veteran



*We are proud of your service to our country*

*In Honor Of*

**Robert F. Coughlin**

Chief Master Sergeant



Dad, you were a great man. We're proud of the 30 years of service you gave to our country.  
*Love, Your Family*

# Remembering Our Veterans

*In Honor Of*  
**Kim Wilson Croteau**  
 U. S. Air Force  
 Staff Sergeant, E-4



**U.S. AIR FORCE**  
 Thank you for your dedicated service to our country.  
*With much love,  
 Your Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Guy F. Davis**  
 Air Police Squad,  
 U. S. Air Force and Reserves  
 December 29, 1932 — March 2, 2011



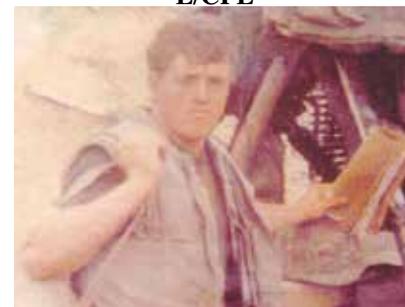
We were always so proud of you, and your service.  
*Love: Wife, Arlene,  
 Children: Patricia, Cindy, RoseMarie, Charlene, Scott and Families.*

*In Honor Of*  
**Harry Dixon Jr.**  
 Tech 5



We appreciate your service and all you went through during WWII.  
*Love, Carol, Gwyn and Families*

*In Honor Of*  
**Francis Frank O. Folsom**  
 L/CPL



We wish we were there when you all came home. Things would have been different. We're grateful for your service and courage.  
*Your Friend*

*In Honor Of*  
**Richard E. Fowler**  
 Airman 2nd Class - Korea  
 October 13, 1936 - January 8, 2010



We're forever grateful and proud of your strength. You're our guiding light.  
*Always Loved, Never Forgotten,  
 Your Loving Family*

*In Honor and Memory Of*  
**Douglas F. Gleason**  
 May 7, 1925 - Sept. 17, 2002  
 WWII U. S. Army & U. S. Air Force  
 Also in Paratroopers



Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together. My prayers will be with you until we meet again.  
*Never forgotten, always loved.  
 Marion and Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**James Grenier**  
 Pvt. U. S. Army - Vietnam  
 January 9, 1948 – May 2, 2016



*In Honor and Memory Of*  
**N. Richard Hallee**  
 Eighth Army Signal Corps.  
 Communications Technician  
 Korean War



Your family thanks you for your service to our country.  
*We love and miss you!!*

*In Honor and Memory Of*  
**George Hamel**  
 Airman 2nd Class - Petty Officer  
 U.S.S. Gilbert Island



**Oct. 24, 1931 - May 29, 2011**  
 On this Veterans Day, a simple thank you for teaching us the value of service, honor and duty. You will always be our hero.  
*Love, Your Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Roger Jones**  
 U. S. Navy Seaman 1st Class



You are loved forever and missed so very much.  
*Love, Marion*

*In Loving Memory Of*  
**Val Labrie, Sr.**  
 July 24, 1924 - November 2, 2002  
 WW II



Still miss you every minute of every day.  
 Loved you yesterday,  
 Love you still.  
 Always have, always will.  
*All My Love, Marion*

*In Honor Of*  
**Roland H. LeClair**  
 CPL, Army, WWII  
 July 23, 1921 - Oct. 9, 1994



It's been 22 years you've been gone. May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.  
*Still Remembered by Kevin & Pat LeClair,  
 Darlene Franklin, Kerry LeClair, Nephew  
 Brandon, Niece Jasmin and her son Mason, too!*

# Remembering Our Veterans

*In Loving Memory Of*  
**Ralph A. Lee**



A proud WWII Veteran!  
*We Love You And Miss You,  
Your Wife Dot and the Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Sgt. Lester Lord**  
Sergeant WWII



We are all proud of you.  
*Love, Your Niece and Nephews*

*In Honor Of*  
**Gregory J. Lumbert, Jr.**  
PFC U. S. Marine Corps



Thanks for your sacrifice, strength,  
commitment and courage.  
*Sadly missed by, Mom, Dad, Family  
and Friends. "We Love You"*

*In Honor Of*  
**Jason Maddocks**  
First Sergeant



Thank you for 25 years of service,  
2 Iraq tours and now  
your service to other veterans.

*In Honor Of*  
**Robert G. Mosher**  
Aug. 24, 1928-April 16, 2012  
USN Chief Petty Officer



Your courage and bravery  
still inspire us all, and the memory of your  
smile fills us with joy and laughter.  
*We miss you and love you always.  
Your Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Joseph T. Perry**  
SGT - U. S. Army



Joey, we are so proud of you.  
Thank you for serving our country.  
Be safe, stay strong.  
*We Love You! Your Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Wilder G. Purdy**  
First Lieutenant



Always Remembered, Always Proud  
*Love, From Your Family*

*In Honor Of*  
**Ernest L. Steward**  
Seaman 1st Class



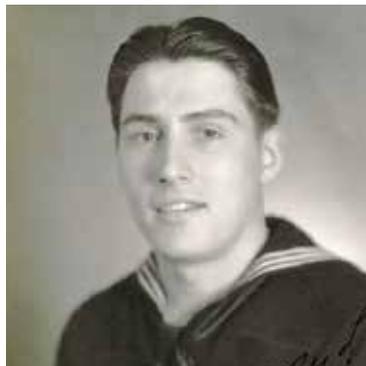
Remembering you with pride.  
*Your Family*

*In Honor and Memory Of*  
**Morris Z. Shapiro**  
40th British Fusiliers  
"The Jewish Legion" World War I  
Fought The Turkish Army in Palestine



*Samuel Shapiro USN*

**Samuel Shapiro**  
P/O 3rd, Navy World War 2  
Military Aide De Camp to  
Governors Ken Curtis and  
Joseph Brennan



*Samuel Shapiro USN*

*In Honor Of*  
**Thomas E. Warren**  
World War II Veteran



*Forever in our hearts*

*In Honor Of*  
**Raymond C. Young**  
Seaman First Class WWII LST524



*In loving Memory  
from his Wife and Family*

# WE SALUTE OUR FALLEN MAINE VETERANS

The following Maine service members have given their lives in defense of freedom since September 11, 2001.

The families of these heroes were presented the Maine Gold Star Honorable Service Medal in recognition of their service member's dedication, duty and ultimate sacrifice while service our state and nation in support of combat operations.

RANK	LAST	FIRST	MI	AGE	CASUALTY	COUNTRY	HOME TOWN	BRANCH
CDR	SCHLEGEL	ROBERT	A	38	9-11-01	PENTAGON	GRAY	NAVY
MSGT	ANDREWS	EVANDER	E	36	10-10-01	QATAR	SOLON	AIR FORCE
LCDR	CLUKEY	ROBERT	E	33	11-3-02	ADRIATIC SEA	ORONO	NAVY
MAJ	AUBIN	JAY	T	36	3-20-03	KUWAIT	WATERVILLE	MARINES
SPC	CUNNINGHAM	DANIEL FRANCIS	J	33	4-4-03	IRAQ	LEWISTON	ARMY
1SG	COFFIN	CHRISTOPHER	D	51	7-1-03	IRAQ	KENNEBUNK	ARMY
SGT	GOLDING	NICHOLAS	D	24	2-13-04	AFGHANISTAN	ADDISON	ARMY
SGT	HOLMES	JEREMIAH	J	27	3-29-04	IRAQ	NORTH BERWICK	ARMY
SGT	GELINEAU	CHRISTOPHER	D	23	4-20-04	IRAQ	PORTLAND	ARMY
SGT	ROUKEY	LAWRENCE	A	33	4-26-04	IRAQ	WESTBROOK	ARMY
SPC	BEAULIEU	BEAU	R	20	5-24-04	IRAQ	LISBON	ARMY
CPT	TRANCHEMONTAGNE	DANIEL	J	32	5-30-04	WASH., DC	PORTLAND	ARMY
CPT	CASH	CHRISTOPHER	S	36	6-24-04	IRAQ	WINTERVILLE, NC	ARMY
SSG	POULIN SR.	LYNN	R	47	12-21-04	IRAQ	FREEDOM	ARMY
SGT	DOSTIE	THOMAS	J	20	12-21-04	IRAQ	SOMERVILLE	ARMY
1SG	JONES	MICHAEL	D	43	3-3-05	FT. DRUM, NY	UNITY	ARMY
SFC	DOSTIE	SHAWN	C	32	12-30-05	IRAQ	LEWISTON	ARMY
SPC	HUMBLE	JOSHUA	U	21	2-26-06	IRAQ	APPLETON	ARMY
SGT	COREY	DAN	A	22	3-13-06	IRAQ	NORWAY	ARMY
SPC	HARRIS	DUSTIN	J	21	4-6-06	IRAQ	PATTEN	ARMY
SSG	KELLY JR.	DALE	J	48	5-6-06	IRAQ	RICHMOND	ARMY
SSG	VEVERKA	DAVID	M	25	5-6-06	IRAQ	UMO STUDENT	ARMY
CPT	DAMON	PATRICK	D	41	6-15-06	AFGHANISTAN	FALMOUTH	ARMY
PFC	SMALL	ANDREW	R	19	8-11-06	AFGHANISTAN	WISCASSET	ARMY
CPT	KEATING	BENJAMIN	D	27	11-26-06	AFGHANISTAN	SHAPLEIGH	ARMY
CPL	LIBBY	DUSTIN	J	22	12-6-06	IRAQ	PRESQUE ISLE	MARINES
SSG	CIRASO	KRISTOFER	R	26	12-7-06	IRAQ	BANGOR	ARMY
SSG	ROSS	ERIC		26	2-9-07	IRAQ	KENDUSKEAG	ARMY

Source: <http://www.maine.gov/veterans/recognition/maine-heroes/gold-star-honor-roll.html>

TO ALL FALLEN HEROES WITH TIES TO MAINE WHO HAVE DIED IN THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM									
RANK	LAST	FIRST	MI	AGE	CASUALTY	COUNTRY	HOME OF RCD.	BRANCH	ME RELATIVE/TOWN
CPL	KENNEDY	BRIAN	M	25	3-20-03	KUWAIT	HOUSTON, TX	MARINES	MELISSA DERBYSHIRE (MOTHER), PORT CLYDE
CW4	HALVORSEN	ERIK	A	40	4-2-03	IRAQ	BENNINGTON, VT	ARMY	HALVOR A. HALVORSEN (FATHER) RICHMOND
LCPL	BRUNS	CEDRIC	E	22	5-9-03	KUWAIT	VANCOUVER, WA	MARINES	GRANDPARENTS BANGOR
SGT	MC MILLIN	HEATH	A	29	7-27-03	IRAQ	CANANDAIGUA, NY	ARMY	ETTA MAY MC MILLIN BIDDEFORD
CW5	SWARTWORTH	SHARON	T	43	11-7-03	IRAQ	VIRGINIA	ARMY	BERNARD MAYO (FATHER) LITCHFIELD
SSG	CHERRY	CRAIG	W	39	8-7-04	AFGHANISTAN	WINCHESTER, VA	ARMY	ROY CHERRY (FATHER) WINDHAM
L CPL	ARREDONDO	ALEXANDER	S	20	8-25-04	IRAQ	RANDOLPH, MA	MARINES	VICTORIA FOLEY (MOTHER) BANGOR
MSG	HORRIGAN	ROBERT	M	40	6-17-05	IRAQ	AUSTIN, TX	ARMY	MARY HORRIGAN (MOTHER) BELFAST
2LT	COUTU	MATTHEW	S	23	6-27-05	IRAQ	NO. KINGSTOWN, RI	ARMY	
SPC	LUCAS	JOSEPH	A	23	12-5-05	IRAQ	AUGUSTA, GA	ARMY	JEFFREY LUCAS SR. (FATHER) WISCASSET
SPC	MERCHANT	CHRISTOPHER	S	32	3-1-06	IRAQ	HARDWICK, VT	ARMY	AMBER BRAGG (DAUGHTER) BANGOR
SPC	SCHNEIDER	MATTHEW	E	23	8-28-06	IRAQ	GORHAM, NH	ARMY	ANDREW E. SCHNEIDER (FATHER) KITTERY
SSG	JACKSON II	WILLIAM	S	29	11-11-06	IRAQ	SAGINAW, MI	ARMY	SISTER, WARREN
SPC	LITTLE	KYLE	A	20	5-8-07	IRAQ	W. BOYLSTON, MA	ARMY	MICHAEL LITTLE (FATHER) NO. BERWICK
MAJ	OLMSTED	ANDREW	A	37	1-3-08	IRAQ	COLORADO SPGS, CO	ARMY	
SPC	TAYLOR	DEON	L	30	10-22-08	AFGHANISTAN	BRONX, NY	ARMY	
SGT	BALDUF	KEVIN	B	27	5-12-11	AFGHANISTAN	NASHVILLE, TN	MARINES	RICHMOND
CPL	GOYET	MARK	R	22	6-29-11	AFGHANISTAN	SINTON, TX	MARINES	PHILIP & NANCY CURRAN (GRANDPARENTS), WESTBROOK

Source: <http://www.maine.gov/veterans/recognition/maine-heroes/fallen-heroes.html>

**We As Elks Will Not Forget...**  
 Here's to the men and women of our armed forces, who unselfishly answered their nation's call. In times of war and times of peace, these dedicated Americans stood ready to fight and die so that democracy might live on.



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# The jungle speaks: South Vietnam

BY SONNY PERRY  
Fairfield

*I heard one night the jungle talk,  
I listened closely to what it said.  
Moonlight glistened off the rain soaked leaves,  
You know you left a lot of people dead.*

*Through rivers, air, sea and ground,  
There are a lot of soldiers that won't be found.  
One day you will feel the hurt I do,  
Go ahead and lace that combat shoe.*

*When daylight comes with its misty light,  
You know you made it through the night.  
Walk and run through my wonderland,  
Where life and death take the upper hand.*

*One day there will be peace for my jungle friends,  
That had no part but never live again.  
I know where the dead are buried here,  
Think back what you did, then wipe away the tears.*

*Two countries fought, but who really won?  
While mothers all over cry for their son.  
What you have found and lost in my land,  
You will take home with you, like a brand on your hand.*

*No son, the battle's not over, and will never be,  
For I see the loss that you will never see.  
My jungle trees drape over their graves,  
You will always think back of the home of the brave.*

*A war was fought and was not won,  
Bringing it home, remember that big red sun?  
When nighttime comes on your back you do lay,  
Sometimes a tear you will wipe away.*

*No son, the battle's not over, it's still in your head,  
Both countries left my jungle and a lot of dead.  
My tears are rain that makes me grow,  
Your tears like mine will not make you grow.*

— Vets will understand this, thanks.



Sonny Perry, U.S. Army, South Vietnam

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# Freedom Bird takes us home

**BY GEORGE F. SMITH**  
*Chaplain, VFW Post 8835  
 Winslow*



*March 15, 1970, 0500 hrs.*  
 Woke up at Bien Hoa Air Base. Shower, shave and all you GIs know the rest. Got dressed in my 1505s – the tan uniform at the time. You're too excited to eat, so a cup of coffee for me was just fine. You pack

up what gear you have in your duffel bag. You go to the airport and check in. Well, that wasn't so bad. The best is yet to come. At the airport hangar for departures — we are lined up and told to dump all our neatly packed duffel bags (for inspection.) Then repack them. Stay calm! Try to relax because you are going home!

We were then told that we might want to change out of our uniforms and into "civis." I didn't have any, so I wore my

1505s. We were advised about all the protesters who were at the San Francisco Airport to "greet" homecoming planes. Nobody seemed to care that we just spent a year in Hell. What can be worse?

At approximately 1100 hrs., you get to watch your "Freedom Bird" land — to take you home. While loading onto the Tiger Airlines "Freedom Bird," it was over 100 degrees. But I didn't feel the heat. My mind was on "Get me out of NAM!" It didn't take long for the "round eye" stewardess to get over 100 GIs loaded. I remember that plane taxiing down the runway and into the air. You can hear a pin drop because we are waiting for something to happen. The pilot came over the intercom and announced that we have just left "NAM." Wow, you should have heard us celebrate — all the way back to "NAM."

I will never forget that day or my brothers who didn't make it home alive. To all on the "Freedom Flight," I say "We made it Home!"



*Contributed photo*  
 George F. Smith, South Vietnam, 1969. Taking a smoke break during an escort for supplies for some Green Berets.

## We Remember

Take a moment out of your day to remember all those who have given so much for the freedom we enjoy today.

**Leo Murphy**

**Patrick Murphy**

**Michael Murphy**

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# Thank you Brothers in Arms

FROM KEVIN P. MORRISSEY  
*Winslow*

**In  
Their  
Own  
Words**

As we approach Nov. 11, I have memories and feelings for Brothers in Arms.

Of nine boys in our family, eight served in our U.S. Armed Forces. David, born with club feet, was unable to serve. Three were in the U.S. Navy, three in the U.S. Army, one in the U.S. Air Force and one in the U.S. Marines.

Marty, the oldest brother, was in the invasion of Sicily. Richard, was part of the occupation of Germany and Bobby spent his tour as a Medical Corpsman at Bainbridge, MD and again at Chelsea Naval Hospital during the Korean War. He is still living at age 88, in Florida.

The rest of us served in peace time. I am taking this opportunity to thank my brothers and all veterans for their service.

Thank You,  
Kevin P. Morrissey



*Contributed photo*

American Legion Post 181, Litchfield, has honored its local WWII veterans this past year. The Post invites the public to its Flag Retirement Ceremony at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11 at the Post at 265 Plains Road. Thank you to all who have served and continue to serve.

# REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

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we honor and give thanks  
to all veterans who served  
and sacrificed to ensure  
our freedom.



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# Togus 150-year history started with action by President Lincoln

*Property was once a hotel resort developed by a granite merchant*

BY WARREN WATSON  
Correspondent

President Abraham Lincoln designated Togus as the site for the nation's first veterans home as the bloody Civil War neared a disastrous end in 1865. Thousands were dead or injured.

The 500 acres of woods and wetlands had been part of Togus Springs, a hotel resort developed by Rockland granite merchant Horace Beals just east of Augusta. It had stables, a pool, a race track, even a bowling alley.

As the war began in 1861, the resort failed. The government purchased the property for \$50,000 as part of Lincoln's plan to build the first National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Togus, in the wake of Lincoln's 1865 death and the war's end, admitted its first veteran on Nov. 10, 1866.

Dozens of other presidents have come and gone since and the VA at Togus eventually exploded into a full-fledged hospital and health center that has served a constant stream of veterans with onsite, online and satellite services that touch the entire state.

Togus turns 150 years old this November amid celebrations and respectful fanfare. It is one of the oldest institutions in one of our oldest states. About 1,600 people are employed there, making Togus one of Maine's largest employers. Hundreds of volunteers pass through its doors weekly.

"Togus has proudly carried the mantle of providing excellent care to our state's veterans for 150 years," said U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, (R-Maine). "Our debt to those who have served our country can never be fully repaid, but this historic milestone is a powerful reminder of our ongoing dedication to do all that we can."

U.S. Sen. Angus King agreed.

"This remarkable milestone is not only an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the important work that's been done there, but also to recommit ourselves to ensuring that every man and woman who wears the uniform is supported and taken care of," King said.

According to VA history compiled by Donald Beattie and others, the original Togus housed around 400 veterans. In 1868, however, a new building program allowed accommodations for 3,000 veterans. In 1870, a 100-bed hospital portion was built.

In its early years, Togus was a destination place for the entire region, complete with picnics, a zoo, golf, Broadway shows, concerts and more. Trolleys ran back and forth to Augus-

ta and Gardiner. The campus grew to become a full-service medical center, matching the needs of generations of veterans in long-term and short-term care.

The campus was self sustaining with a shoe factory and a farm, complete with Maine's first Holsteins.

Life for veterans was organized along military lines until 1930. Veterans wore uniforms and were organized into 150-man companies. Diversions were many, with band concerts, Broadway and vaudeville shows, golf, a beer hall and a deer park.

Togus still is home to Maine's only National Cemetery, which is now closed but accommodates 5,373 deceased veterans.

In 1989, Veteran Administration was renamed to Veteran Affairs and out of those changes came the Veteran Health Administration, which strives to serve veterans in all needs. According to Maine's VA history, approximately 60 percent of medical residents receive some of their training from serving at VA hospitals around the nation.

Today, these hospitals work to improve quality of life, treat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), brain injuries, prevent suicide, and much more. Alongside regular patient care, the VA has opened outpatient clinics and contributes toward medical research.

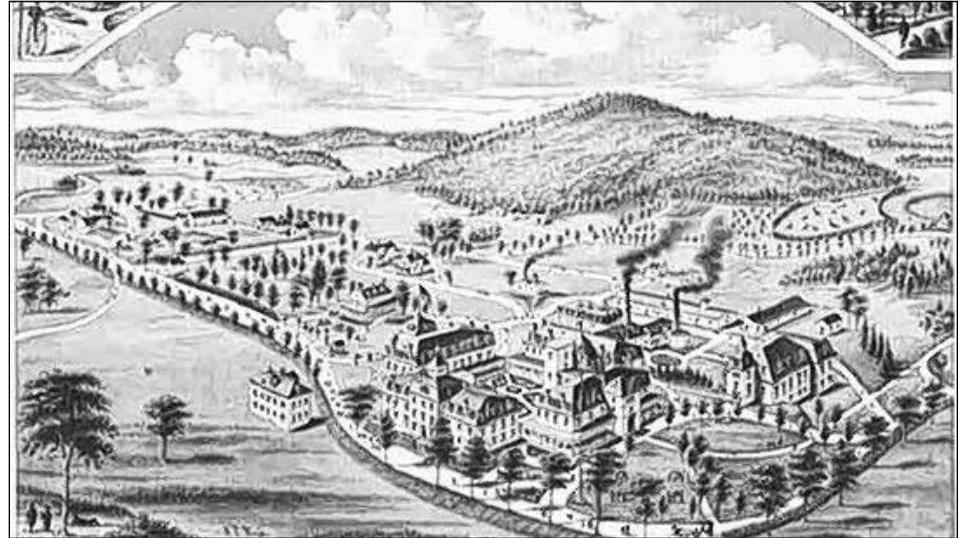
Currently there are eight full-time community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) located throughout Maine, according to the Togus website. Locations include Bangor, Calais, Caribou, Lewiston, Lincoln, Portland, Rumford, and Saco, and three part-time clinics Bingham, Fort Kent, and Houlton.

That kind of change is a constant at Togus. In-hospital clinics are busier and more sophisticated than ever. Doctors and counselors work in a 12-bed hospice. Telehealth services allow for more contact with veterans in their own homes. New counseling centers statewide expedite contact with former soldiers.

In the works is the so-called Fisher House, a domicile where families can reside on campus to be near patients. The VA also is about to build "Cabins in the Woods," so some vets can live on the Togus campus.

This live-in, family approach will be part of its attraction, according to Richard Grant, a veteran, who wrote "The Surprise of Togus" for a May 2009 Downeast magazine article about the facility.

"Togus was meant from the start to be a tranquil, secluded place, a world into itself," Grant wrote.



Courtesy of Togus VA Maine

1885 Birdseye view of Eastern Branch, NHDVS, Togus VA Maine,

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# How to honor servicemen and women

Men and women serving in the military make considerable sacrifices in defense of the United States and its citizens. Such sacrifices can easily be taken for granted by those with no friends or family members serving in the military, but it's important for all Americans to recognize the efforts of both active and veteran servicemen and women.

Honoring active military members and veterans does not have to be an elaborate undertaking. Service members and their families often cherish even the simplest of gestures, and the following are a handful of ways grateful men and women can show their appreciation to active and retired members of the military.

- **Help a neighbor who's on active duty.** Active duty service members can be away from their families for long periods of time, and their absence can make things difficult for their families. Spouses of deployed service members are typically left to manage a household on their own for months at a time. Neighbors can show their appreciation by helping with some chores around the house. Offer to mow a neighbor's lawn or drive a neighbor's kids to school. Such gestures might seem small, but they can go a long way toward alleviating some of the stress that spouses of deployed service members deal with on a daily basis.

- **Support the Wounded Warrior Project.** Many service members sustain physical injuries while deployed. The Wounded Warrior Project works to raise awareness



and enlist the public's help to address the needs of injured service members. Men and women who want to show their appreciation to injured service members can work with the Wounded Warrior Project by volunteering at project-sponsored events or hosting fundraising events such as golf tournaments or community picnics. More information about working with the Wounded

Warrior Project is available at [www.woundedwarrior-project.org](http://www.woundedwarrior-project.org).

- **Write a letter of appreciation.** One of the simplest ways to show your support for service members is to write them a letter expressing that appreciation. If a friend, relative or neighbor is an active service member or veteran, sit down and write a letter telling them how much you appreciate their sacrifice in service of their country, and encourage youngsters to do the same. If you don't know any members of the military, you can work with A Million Thanks ([www.amillionthanks.org](http://www.amillionthanks.org)), a year-round campaign that encourages Americans to write letters or emails or send cards or prayers to U.S. military personnel, past and present to thank them for their sacrifices, dedication and service.

- **Exercise your right to vote.** One of the best ways to honor servicemen and women is to avoid taking the rights they so bravely defend for granted. Members of the military routinely put their lives on the line so Americans can enjoy freedoms that many people across the globe cannot. Voting is one such freedom, so Americans should make it a point to vote every ElectionDay and teach their kids about the responsibility each American has to vote and take an interest in their government. Speak with active and veteran members of the military about their thoughts on proposed legislation and their opinions on how to improve that legislation, taking those opinions into consideration before casting your vote.

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# Veterans Day facts and figures

Veterans Day, once known as Armistice Day, was first celebrated on November 11, 1919, the anniversary of the end of World War I. In 1928, the United States Congress passed a resolution for Armistice Day to be an annual observation, and by 1938, the day became a national holiday.

Differing from Memorial Day in May, Armistice Day, which would be renamed Veterans Day in 1954 under President Dwight Eisenhower, pays tribute to veterans who survived various wars. Memorial Day commemorates those veterans who lost their lives.

Americans celebrate Veterans Day, while residents of Great Britain, Canada and Australia celebrate Remembrance Day. Those who want to learn more about Veterans Day can consider the following facts.

- According to the American Community Survey, there were 19.3 million military veterans in the United States in 2014. Of those, 1.6 million were female.
- California, Texas and Florida comprise the states with the largest number of veterans, equalling one million or more.
- Veterans consist of people who served in the military. This includes the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Veterans serve in times of war and peace.
- The word "veteran" comes from the Old English language and means "old, experienced soldier." The first use of the word was documented in 1789.
- Although many veterans are working, and the av-

erage annual income of male veterans is \$37,000, some veterans continue to be unemployed. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall unemployment rate for veterans rose to 7.6 percent in January 2013. The unemployment rate of post-9/11 veterans or those who participated in the Gulf War reached 6.2 percent.

- Upon retiring or being discharged, veterans may need help acclimating to life outside the military. The Department of Veterans Affairs says about 30 percent of Vietnam War veterans have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.
  - Between 1971 and 1977, Veterans Day was celebrated on the fourth Monday in October. It was changed back to its original date, November 11, in 1975 when President Gerald Ford signed bill S.331 into law. The change went into effect beginning in 1978.
  - An American soldier was buried at the national cemetery in Arlington on November 11, 1921. His identity was unknown, and the gravesite is known as the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier." A guard from the Society of the Honor Guard stands watch over the grave each year on Veterans Day, and the president or another high-ranking member of the government places a wreath on the grave.
- Veterans Day occurs each year on November 11, marking the end of World War I. The day has evolved into a celebration and remembrance of the heroism of America's brave soldiers.



## *Thank You Veterans for your service and sacrifice.*

*We honor all the men and women who have  
served on Veterans Day and every day!*

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# How to give back to veterans

Members of the military serve their country proudly, often sacrificing the luxuries of home and time spent with their families to do so. When veterans return home from training or deployment, many people want to show how much they appreciate the sacrifices made by the men and women of the military, but don't know the best way to share that appreciation.

Donations to a veterans' charity is one measure of support the public can offer. Many charities work to serve the needs of veterans. The Wounded Warrior Project provides rehabilitation, counseling and activities for veterans who were wounded during service, while Homes for Our Troops remodels homes or builds them for troops who were injured and need their homes remodeled as a result of their injuries. The USO provides a variety of services for veterans and can always use donations or volunteers.

Another way to help veterans is to assist with their pets. Some dogs and cats get left behind when troops are deployed or forced to move. Volunteering to foster a pet until a soldier returns is another way to give back. Some military service dogs can be injured or trauma-



tized during battle. Working dogs can be rehabilitated or adopted upon returning home.

According to the organization Veterans, Inc., veterans are more at risk of becoming homeless than those who do not serve in the military. Some causes of homelessness include lack of education and transferable skills after returning from military life. Physical and mental health issues can make finding work challenging. Some veterans may cope with trauma resulting from their deployment by leaning on drugs and alcohol, and that can interfere with their ability to get and/or keep jobs. Individuals can help veterans by opening their homes to friends and family members who may need a temporary

place to stay. Encourage veterans to embrace job training programs or seek therapy if necessary.

Providing support to military personnel both past and present can mean a world of difference. Correspond with veterans through mail, email or text messages. Operation American Soldier establishes connections between civilians and troops so that all soldiers receive daily mail, whether it's a care package or letter of thanks.

Other simple ways people can give back to troops is to personally thank them for serving their country. Share time with veterans and ask to spend time listening to their stories and experiences.



## Honoring the Best & the Bravest

For their courage, hard work and dedication to their country, we salute the men and women of our Armed Forces past and present. It is because of their sacrifice that America remains the land of the free, and we thank them for protecting our citizens and our country.

Wishing all of our veterans and soldiers a very happy Veterans Day.



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# Gardiner-based group seeks local support for Wreaths Across America program

BY JIM KEENAN

Past Commander  
American Legion Post 4, Gardiner

On December 17, 2016 more than 240,000 graves at Arlington National Cemetery will be adorned with Maine-made wreaths. This will mark the 25th anniversary of this remarkable endeavor to Remember, Honor, and Teach.

From a humble beginning of 5,000 leftover wreaths furnished by the Worcester Wreaths Company of Columbia Falls, Maine to 1 million wreaths in 2016, this outstanding program now includes over 1,100 locations in all 50 states and in 24 countries around the world.

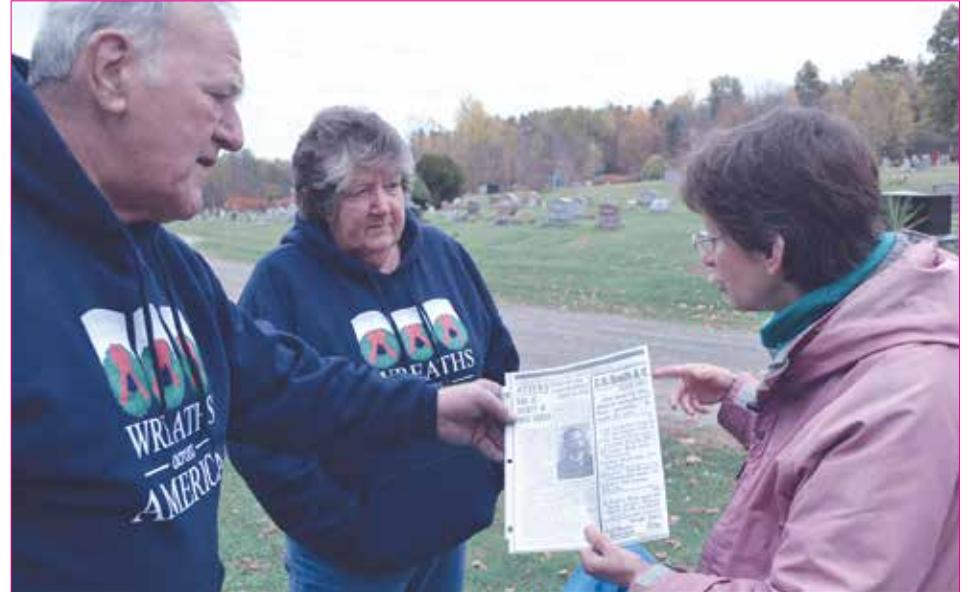
In 2015, a small group of Gardiner area citizens, with the support and generosity of many community businesses, organizations and individuals were able to provide funds to remember more than 200 veterans in our local community. This too is a humble

beginning. We are striving to raise even more funds as time goes on so that all veterans and their families one day will be remembered and honored.

At the present time there are more than 500 veterans resting in Gardiner area cemeteries and more in neighboring communities. We would like to encourage all citizens of the greater Gardiner area to become more knowledgeable of this program and possibly become involved or become a supporter of Wreaths Across America.

Information and ways to participate can be obtained by contacting Wreaths Across America, address P.O. Box 249, Columbia Falls, ME 04623 or [info@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:info@wreathscrossamerica.org). Videos also are available at Wreaths Across America's YouTube channel.

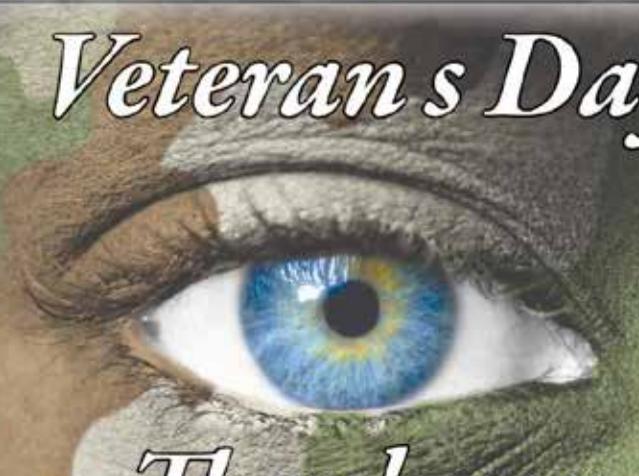
For local information, and if you would like to get involved please contact Jim at 582-6530. If no one answers, leave a message with your phone number and your call will be returned as soon as possible.



Nancy P. McGinnis photo

Anne Cough shows Jim Keenan and Terry Hunter a copy of the Kennebec Journal obituary for Gardiner resident Charles O. Wadsworth, who is buried with other family members in the Oak Grove Cemetery.

## Veteran's Day



## Thank you for your service!

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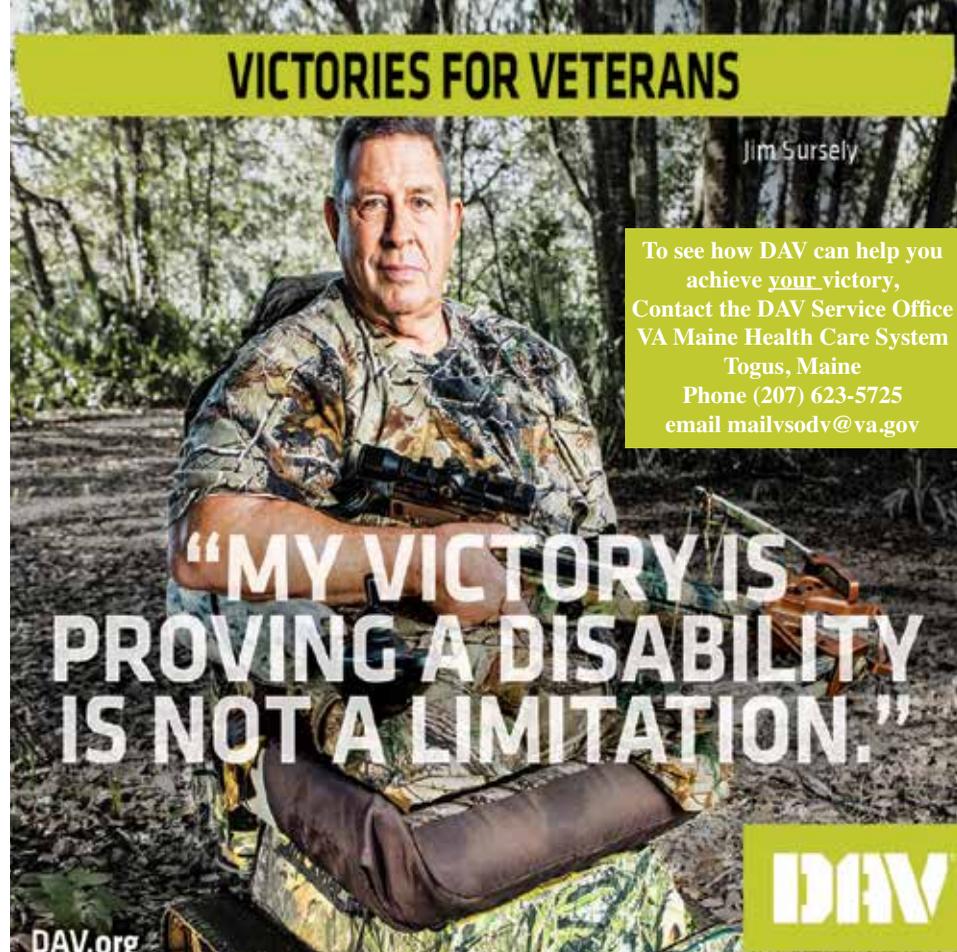
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# War brings surprises, turmoil and heartbreak

BY KENNETH L. LINDSEY  
*World War II, DDAY,  
 Age 92, Augusta*

The narrative of “my day at the beach” began the day representatives from the military visited Barre High School to recruit candidates for their special college programs.



The U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force were the big winners and I believe I was the lone volunteer for the Army Specialized Training Program, or “ASTP.”

Being a Liberal Arts type with an aversion to math and science, I had opted for “Military Government.” Shortly after graduation, I reported for duty at Fort Devens and awaited assignment to the ASTP.

The experience at Devens was exactly as our classmate, Francis Sokol, so ably described it in a previous edition of Larry’s Newsletter, but then everything went haywire.

## Wrong way

As the troop train sped westward, the front cars were intended to go to Fort Hood, Texas for Military Government basic training and the rear cars to Fort Benning, Georgia for Engineering. Wouldn’t you know — the railroad cut the darned train one car too soon, so some 30 of us Military Government types ended up in Engineering in Georgia!!! We received three months of Infantry Officer’s basic training and then some 200 of us were sent to Northeastern University in Boston for an accelerated Engineering program.

Seven months later, in late March, the entire ASTP was suddenly terminated and thousands of us in universities all across the nation were abruptly transferred to Infantry Divisions. I found myself in Company E, 101st Infantry Regiment, of the 26th “Yankee Division,” then on maneuvers in Tennessee. Shortly after the maneuvers were completed and we were at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, a call went out for anyone from the terminated Engineering program to “volunteer” for a “top secret” mission. Ignoring all the warnings to “never volunteer for anything” in the Army, I raised my hand. Shakespeare said it well, “Oh, woe is me!”

Sworn to secrecy (“any violations would result in Court Martial subject to the death penalty”) the small group of 25 or 26 of us “volunteers” was secretly transferred to Fort Pierce, Florida, where we underwent a crash course in Ranger training that was quite obviously designed for an assault on an enemy-held beach. Some of us were deemed not physically able to be Rangers, but able enough to be “Special Engineers.” Thereby hangs the tale.

## Crossing the ocean

Late in May, I believe it was the 24th or 25th, we were put aboard a train for

Camp Shanks, New York, where we boarded a ship for “destination unknown.” Ten days later we found ourselves just off shore from Dartmouth, England. I have never seen so many ships, before or since, tossing and bouncing about in the roughest waters churned up by a horrific storm. I had experienced seasickness for the three middle days of the voyage over, but had recovered, and have been seemingly immune since. (Sign of the cross; knock on wood, etc.)

To our great surprise, we were transferred to a nearby ship, which turned out to be the HMS Prince of Wales, a World War I freighter, not the famed Battleship of the same name. We were immediately assigned to the 1st Engineer Special Brigade as replacements for some of the 749 Americans killed at Slapton Sands during a German attack on a beach landing exercise some weeks earlier.

It was dark, stormy and oh, so dreary. I ended up assigned to a unit with no one I had known before. I think the spiritual says it best, “I felt like a motherless child.” We were told we “would be hitting the beach” on the 5th so the next hours were spent being oriented to the task at hand and what my specific duties would be.

I was issued a waterproof pouch of plastic explosives, which was to be strapped to my chest for the purpose of blowing up any obstacles encountered on the way to the beach (part of the top secret training at Fort Pierce). For some reason, unknown at the time, we got an extra day of instruction, and “D-Day” would be on the next day, the 6th. It was a dark and foreboding time; I was scared. I felt all-hollow inside and I really wanted to go home. Not to be.

Very early the next morning the old ship rumbled and quivered into motion. I peered out a porthole and saw nothing but darkness with raindrops still pelting the glass. We were served a breakfast of reconstituted dried eggs and Spam, but I could eat hardly a bite. As the old ship pitched and swayed, we were being lined up for disembarkation and given last minute instructions.

## Going ashore

What seemed like hours later, we felt the ship slowly come to a standstill. The deafening sounds of Navel bombardment and Air Force bombing, along with the sounds of hundreds of ships on a stormy sea, filled the air. Then came the long dreaded moment. The order to go over the side and down the nets into the bobbing and pitching “Higgins boats” was shouted. My turn came, and only God knows how I made it. I struggled down the net one shaky step at a time, weighted down with all the equipment, but my full attention was focused on that pack of explosives strapped to my chest!

I would guess we were in those Higgins Boats for at least two hours or more. I was not seasick, but my stomach churned and I was “sick at heart” Could I do all that was expected of me? Would I fail in some way? What would it be like to die?

Suddenly my thoughts were interrupted by the realization that the floor (or deck if you were Navy) was awash with the eggs and Spam served some hours before! The stranger next to me took out a pack of cigarettes and with trembling hands lighted one, and turning to me said, “Have a smoke lad,” I thought, why not, I may not live through this day, and it might deaden the presence of the recycled breakfast at our feet. At best, it made it somewhat easier to jump into the water when at long last the front ramp dropped and someone shouted, “NOW!!!”

I found myself nearly waist deep in churning salt water as I struggled to stay on my feet and fall in place in a single line of engineers heading for the beach some 100 to 150 yards ahead. Exploding shells from shore batteries and machine gun and mortar fire splashed in the water about us. Some men went down, but we were firmly instructed to stop for no one as we had a job to do, and helping the wounded or dead was someone else’s job. I remember a huge splash just to our left, followed by agonizing shrieks of pain, and the water falling down on us. Keep going, I thought, and then I stepped into a hole and nearly fell head first into the water, but just managed to grab the fellows pack in front of me and regain my footing. He didn’t appreciate it as it nearly upended him as well.

As we went ashore, the older Engineers were taking care of the remaining obstacles so I came up on the sands of Utah Beach soaking wet, weighed down physically by all my equipment, and mentally by the ever present question of my capability to measure up to the demands of actual combat. My pack of explosives was intact and still strapped to my chest. It was now about 7:30 a.m.

## Digging for mines

Once on the beach, Colonel Caffey assigned the 237th Engineer Battalion of the 1st Special Engineer Brigade the task of clearing land mines from the beach and surrounding areas. I ended up with E Company of the 8th regiment of the 4th division at La Grande Dune. I was soon flat on my stomach probing the sand ahead of us with a bayonet, very gingerly, I might add. When a mine was detected, I would put up a marker and, as instructed, leave the removal of it to “older and more experienced” engineers. That was O.K. by me! Remember, I still had enough explosives strapped to my chest to blow a crater the size of a swimming pool in that beach! Everyone around me were total strangers, and I knew no one by name. We all answered to the same name, “Hey, Soldier!” Talk about feeling all-alone as well as “being a stranger in a strange land”

Many 4th Infantrymen were being brought down by land mines found all over the place, but I was now called to help clear the way to La Dune and Causeway Number Two. A few hours into this detail, an Engineer approached me from behind and asked if he could have some Plastique. I could hardly wait to unstrap

that pesky pouch and hand the whole kit and caboodle to him. I felt a ton or two lighter!

There was a war going on around me, but I was so intent on my task of probing for deadly mines, I knew very little about what was going on just a few feet in either direction. Just before reaching the causeway, I was relieved when a Sherman tank came up from behind, but was disappointed when it went on by and soon lost its left tread when it struck a mine just a short distance ahead. Should have waited for me, I thought, but when those tankers climbed out of that Sherman to survey the damage, I just kept quiet and continued gingerly probing the roadside for more mines.

Just after the tank episode and just before the Causeway No. 2, the 8th Infantry unit, and I with them were diverted to the East and Causeway No.1.

Later that afternoon we reached the village of Pouppeville where a fierce battle took place before we got control of the town. I didn’t see them, but heard that elements of the 101st and 82nd Airborne who had landed during the night arrived and help drive the Germans from the area. Later that afternoon as we were slowly advancing toward Ste. Mere Eglise, sniper fire suddenly dropped two of our men. One was an 8th Infantry G.I. and the other a fellow 237th Engineer. It just happened and I dove for cover behind a bush with my rifle in firing position to my front.

## A human connection

Suddenly I saw a German soldier drop from a tree directly in my line of fire. All I had to do was squeeze the trigger and my rifle fired and the soldier went face forward to the ground. I knew he had to be the sniper, so I rushed forward and grabbed the back of his belt and rolled him over. To my utter surprise, he was just a blond kid with fuzz on his face! He apparently wasn’t old enough to shave! As I stared down at him in stunned surprise, he grabbed my arm and said in German what I understood as “Please help me.” — and then his eyes rolled back in his head and he was gone. I felt sick; it was the most horrible feeling I had ever experienced. Thou shalt not kill. Kill or be killed. God help us both. It seemed like forever since leaving the Prince of Wales somewhere around 3:30 or 4 a.m. in the early morning darkness. Falling shells, mortars, machine gun and rifle fire, Shouts for “Medic”, would this next mine be the one to explode in my face, all followed by more of the same. More and more German prisoners seemed to be around as the day wore on. They seemed almost happy to be marched back toward the beach and away from the fighting. I later learned that the majority of German troops in our area were from a Georgian (U.S.S.R.) unit of anti communists who were fighting with the Germans and didn’t seem too eager to die for Germany.

After the battle for Pouppeville we

# War

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

were diverted toward Ste. Marie du Mont where a real firefight was taking place for control of a pivotal crossroads. Up to the moment when I had felled that sniper, I had been regarded as "That greenhorn college kid," but now found myself being used alongside the Infantry and called off the line only when more mines were suspected.

We had fought all day in soaking wet uniforms and soaking socks, which had become mud and grime during the 10 hours since landing on the beach and crawling most of the way on my stomach, probing the ground for land mines. It was at Ste. Marie du Mont that the 8th Infantry hooked up with units of the airborne divisions and the landing felt more secure. After securing the village, we moved on to Boutteville, and finding little resistance, headed for some higher ground just east of Les Forges where we dug in on a defensive perimeter, not quite reaching our stated objective of Ste.

Mere Eglise where elements of the 101st Airborne were waiting for us. We were now some seven miles from Utah Beach. Twenty-seven Engineers did not live to see this night and 129 had been seriously injured detecting and/or deactivating various types of land mines.

### Post Script

I was to spend the next 82 days attached to the 8th regiment of the 4th Infantry Division engaged in the liberation of the Cotentin Peninsula. When General Patton's Third Army was formed, I was transferred, as promised, back to E Company, 101st Infantry on Aug. 25, where we crossed France in two months. On Nov. 8, in an historic assault on Mount Ste. Jean (Hill 310) in the Province of Lorraine, I was awarded the Bronze Star. On Nov. 20, while leading an attack on a heavily fortified Quarry in the village of Bougaltroff, just short of the French-German border, I was wounded, and after spending the next eight months in various Army hospitals recovering, was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge and Purple Heart, and given a disability discharge. I returned to Barre on June 9, 1945.



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Contributed photo

WWII and Vietnam Family Veterans:  
 Top: Philip Corbett , WWII ARMY Combat veteran, Served in the South Pacific, Doing well at 90 Years old.  
 Below: Bill Corbett - Vietnam USAF Veteran, Flight crew, Also well at age 65.

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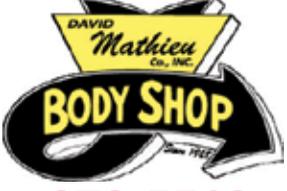
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