


**THE KISKI VALLEY
VETERANS AND PATRIOTS
ASSOCIATION**

Presents

HONOR

in the Kiski Valley



For those Veterans who chose
to remain anonymous...

Thank You!

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A word from the author...

There is a quote that I’ve pondered a thousand times that simply states when the student is ready, the teacher will come. It suggests that we learn our lessons all in due time, and that all things unfold according to their own time and purpose.

In the same spirit that the quote suggests, the idea for this memorial publication was born. The willing and necessary people to bring it to fruition somehow manifested, despite the fact that those people were, for the most part, complete strangers to one another.

Tom Gallovich and I met almost accidentally after a photography class I planned to take was cancelled at the last minute. Two weeks later, the class was re-scheduled with Tom as the new instructor. For whatever reason, a friendship between the two of us developed, and today I consider him a very close and dear friend. Tom’s relationship with Al was equally as “accidental”. Always looking for new subjects for his paintings, Tom stopped at the Giant Eagle store in Leechburg to ask manager Al Pulice if he could photograph the lobsters in his tank. To make a long story short, Al realized Tom’s artistic talents very quickly and bridged them to his involvement in the Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association. Tom is ultimately responsible for creating the organization’s website, as well as photographing various events on the organization’s behalf. Undoubtedly, Tom and Al fed off of one another’s enthusiasm for new projects. Originally, Al thought of creating a calendar with a few pictures of area veterans. Each time he talked to Tom however, the idea grew into something larger until it finally resulted in the full-fledged memorial book you hold in your hands today.

With Tom willing to handle the daunting task of designing the entire book from start to finish, all that was needed was someone to fill in the words, so to speak. That’s where I came in. Having never done a project of this nature, I was extremely hesitant at first. I don’t consider myself overly patriotic, nor do I have much tolerance for politics. But I love a good story. For that reason, I would have forever regretted if I hadn’t accepted the invitation. It is the people who make up the heart of this book, and they are the sole reason the experience of writing it was so worthwhile for me. Each and every one of those I interviewed touched my heart in a way I will never forget. So thank you to all of them for enriching my life with that experience. Thanks also to Tom for urging me to follow my heart, where the love of writing took up residence as a young girl and has stayed ever since.

With gratitude,
Jennifer Kane

About The Design

The design of this book represents the many styles and formats of photos and information I received. The submissions included photos only, bios only, photos and bios, along with numerous graphics and memorabilia. Great care was taken not to change the original integrity of this material. All photos remain in their exact original format and content. No photograph was cropped in any way. The following color key will help designate the material as submitted:

Blue Block - Biography only
Orange Block - Photograph only
Blue and Orange Block - Biography and Photograph

Dedication

May this book portray a just salute to all Kiski Valley Veterans who preserve our freedom on a daily basis. Through their courageous and heroic deeds our borders remain safe. The following is a collection of their biographies and photographs. To those who wish to remain anonymous we Thank You!
...and to the men and women who sacrificed the most, we will never forget.

A special Thank You to my father and mother (Nicholas and Sylvia). Their never-ending help and support gives me the opportunity to complete such projects.

To our author Jenn, we could not have done it without you. Through your gift of words these personal and important stories will now be on record for everyone to witness.

Thank You All...

Tom Gallovich
Vandergrift, Pennsylvania

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Back Cover: Purple Heart, Water Color by Tom Gallovich
Photographs: Page 4,12, 18, 26, 70, 244 by Tom Gallovich

Foreword

You might think there is only one reason to publish a book like this, and that would be to honor veterans of a given community. However, there is another good reason to do so: to remind those of us that have never served in the military to take the time to thank our veterans for the freedom that we enjoy in this great land of ours. Hopefully this book will help identify some of those heroes in the Kiski Valley that served so unselfishly for us.

I would also hope that this book might serve as a reminder of how special the Kiski Valley truly is. Although I am not from the Valley, I can say from first hand experience that this is a community where people truly care for one another and are willing to help one other at any cost.

Patriotism is another large part of this community's composition and may be deeper here than any other part of this country. Service to country and sense of duty to fight for freedom has been a tradition in this valley since the Revolutionary War, and still runs strong today. In order to give a sense of what a large part this valley plays in the overall contribution to our current war, this small community has lost four of it's heroes in Iraq of the 3,900 total lost to date.

We need to make sure that those heroes that have made the ultimate sacrifice, along with all the others from this community that have served our country, are honored for their duty and sacrifice, and never forgotten.

Acknowledgements

- Many thanks to Jennifer Kane and Tom Gallovich for their countless volunteer hours that made this book possible.
- Thanks to Laura, Rick and Kelli at the Leechburg Giant Eagle photo lab for making sure that we received copies of all the veteran's photos.
- Thanks to Jan at Century 21 for making sure that we received all veteran's submission forms.
- Thanks to my daughter Elise for her help.
- Thanks to the folks at the Vandergrift VFW for allowing photos to be taken.
- Thanks to Kathy, Michelle, Jacki and Cal at the Leechburg Giant Eagle for their work on the "Wall of Honor".
- Thanks to the Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association for their time and effort.
- Thanks to the individuals and the local businesses of the Kiski Valley and elsewhere for their support in building the War Memorial.
- And most of all, thanks to our veterans, our heroes!

Al Pulice
Leechburg, Pennsylvania
December 2007

The Veterans Memorial Beginning

Random acts of kindness are highly under-rated. We fail to appreciate the magnitude of their power to transform and bring about necessary change. Take, for instance, the creation of the philanthropic organization known as the Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association. One man's simple effort to perform a random act of kindness in appreciation of a local veteran's service spawned the entire organization, and from it came a ripple effect that is certain to continue onward.

Rick Ohl works at the photo lab inside the Giant Eagle store in Leechburg. Having met Rick, it is safe to say he is a soft-hearted individual with a real sense of gratitude to all those who have served in our military forces. The decision he made one day to offer to pay for a local veteran's photos as a statement of thanks was something many people might not think twice about. But the truth is, it was this singular act that inspired Giant Eagle Manager Al Pulice to organize an effort to show the same appreciation Rick had shown, but on a grander scale to all area veterans. The result was the formation of the Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association (KVVA), a growing group of former servicemen and patriots who have gotten together to recognize and appreciate the efforts local soldiers have made throughout history and continue to make today.

KVVA was formed in September of 2006 with the intention of paying tribute to veterans of all branches of the military. From its inception, the group has met monthly to discuss fundraising and ideas for events scheduled each Memorial and Veterans Day. The first such celebration was set to take place on November 11, 2006. Pulice planned to erect and dedicate a flag, and also supply lunch for a potential one hundred area veterans. Fellow member and president of the organization, John Gibson, himself a retired reporter, submitted a story about the upcoming event to the local newspaper. It was this story that caught the eye of Don Ryan, an area businessman and developer, who had his own plans of erecting a monument in honor of area soldiers who were killed in Iraq. Ryan thinks of his as a family oriented business; having learned that one of his employee's sons was killed in action served as an impetus for all his plans. "Sometimes war doesn't hit home until we know someone personally who has been impacted by it" says Ryan. He adds that men and women shouldn't have to wait thirty years to be memorialized, which helped hasten his attempts to join forces with Pulice and the others to get the memorial built ASAP.

What Ryan figured would take a month to schedule meetings and get the ball rolling actually amounted to a few mere minutes, just long enough to state his intentions and have Pulice respond with an enthusiastic "Let's do it!" According to Ryan, "Everything just fell into place." As a matter of fact, it seems that providence worked in their favor all along.

Before plans for construction of the memorial could begin, the first Veteran's Day celebration took place. It included a free veteran's lunch with flag dedication, and was more of a success than they had planned. The event attracted more than four times the amount of veterans than expected.

The Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association includes over twenty dedicated individuals and continues to grow. Members are both male and female and include a member of the township planning committee, as well as a Major in the Air Force. Everyone is enthusiastic about honoring and showing recognition to the high concentration of veterans in the area. According to both Ryan and Pulice, support for the effort was overwhelming. "The American Legion and VFW guys were on board right away. We didn't have to try and convince anyone to get involved."

Fundraising for the Iraq War memorial began January of 2007. The outpouring of support from the community was phenomenal. In a few months time, the group raised over \$60,000 for the effort. They acquired architectural services to design the plans and broke ground on March 21, 2007. Ryan, as project manager, served as the group visionary. As one member recounts: "Don was standing over there on an old stump in the bare land asking us to try and imagine aspects of the future memorial." In less than four months time, they didn't have to call upon those skills of imagination any longer. The entire effort, from start to finish, had been completed. Theirs became the first Iraq War memorial in the country and has received national recognition.

The official dedication ceremony took place on Memorial Day 2007 and was attended by a crowd of more than twelve-hundred people. When asked about the extent of organization for the event, Pulice had this to say: "When I think about how all these people came together and how everything lined up, it's just amazing."

The event included bagpipe music, a dove-release and country singer Chely Wright. Later in the evening there was a vocalist singing acappella, fireworks, and a hillside luminary display spelling out the word "Honor". According to Pulice, many people played a part in bringing together what resulted in a very moving ceremony. Rick Ohl adds, "It was a huge bonding experience for the community. We were like one big family that day."

According to Ryan, "This is a very tight community. I think patriotism is everywhere, but it runs a little deeper here in the Kiski Valley."

Overall, the organization received approximately \$20,000 worth of in-kind donations; things such as architectural services, the concrete to build the memorial, and the sound equipment used for the dedication ceremony were all donated. And for those who didn't donate something of monetary value, there were plenty who donated their time. If we were to ask the members of KVVA who is responsible for building the Iraq War Memorial in Allegheny Township, all would undoubtedly reply that it was the spirit of the community that was the monumental force behind it.

Perhaps another factor helping to ensure the group's success can be credited to the fact that the discussion of politics was considered irrelevant during the entire process. Their mission was solely to pay respect to area veterans. As Ryan said, "Politics virtually never came up between any of us, and because of that, our effort was never about being pro-war or anti-war."

When considering the future role of the Kiski Valley Veterans and Patriots Association in the years to come, it is unquestionable that the organization will continue to thrive. The group is comprised of many fervent supporters who deeply believe in showing gratitude for the freedoms all Americans have been given. Ryan proclaims himself as "being married to the memorial for the rest of my life" while Pulice views his role as ensuring that the effort stays alive by creating new ideas to honor the heroism and sacrifices of our military personnel and families.

When asked if he finds himself constantly preoccupied with this task, he answers "Absolutely. It's turned into an obsession"a very noble obsession indeed.



The Kiski Valley Veterans Memorial
Allegheny Towne Square
Leechburg, PA 15656

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Paul L. Black
World War II

1

Those Who Gave

The Ultimate Sacrifice

Antonace, John Jr.

Hometown: Lower Burrell

Date of Birth: 9/22/1949

Branch of Service: Marines

War or Conflict: Vietnam War

Date of Service: June 1967

Unit: 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Division

Rank: Lance Corporal

Awards: Purple Heart, Vietnam Service Medals

Service Related Injury: Killed in Action

John Antonace was born September 22, 1949. His parents are John and Nancy Antonace. He has two brothers, Michael and Nicholas, and a sister Denise. John graduated from Burrell High School. He was living in Lower Burrell when he enlisted in the Marine Corp. and attained the rank of Lance Corporal. John's tour of duty began on February 7th, 1968. He was eighteen years old at the time of his casualty on July 7, 1968. He served as radio man in Quang Tri, South Vietnam where he was killed by artillery fire. John was a man of great character and is missed and loved by all who knew him.



Joseph Bloch

Hometown: Brackenridge

Date of Birth: 04/13/1917

Branch of Service: Naval Air Reserve

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 2/17/1941 - 12/5/1943

Unit: Scouting Squadron Ten, U.S.S. Enterprise (10/16/42 - 5/1/43)

Battles/Campaigns: Solomon Islands, Santa Cruz Islands, Rennel Islands

Rank: Lieutenant

Awards: Air Medal, U.S.S. Enterprise Presidential Unit Citation

Service-Related Injury: Killed during air training mission over Maui



Edward W. Catlos

Hometown: Kelly Station

Date of Birth: 6/29/1929

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Korean War

Date of Service: 6/3/1951 - 10/15/1952

Unit: Company I, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Division

Battles/Campaigns: Triangle Hill

Rank: Private First Class

Awards: Purple Heart, Korean Service Medal, Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman Badge

Service-Related Injury: Killed in Action, 10/15/1952, Korea

Edward Catlos was the son of Michael and Mary (Bringer) Catlos. He graduated from Leechburg High School in 1948 and was employed at Allegheny Ludlum Steel.



John William Dinga

Hometown: North Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 12/23/1920

Branch of Service: Air Force

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 4/12/1942 - 5/25/1943

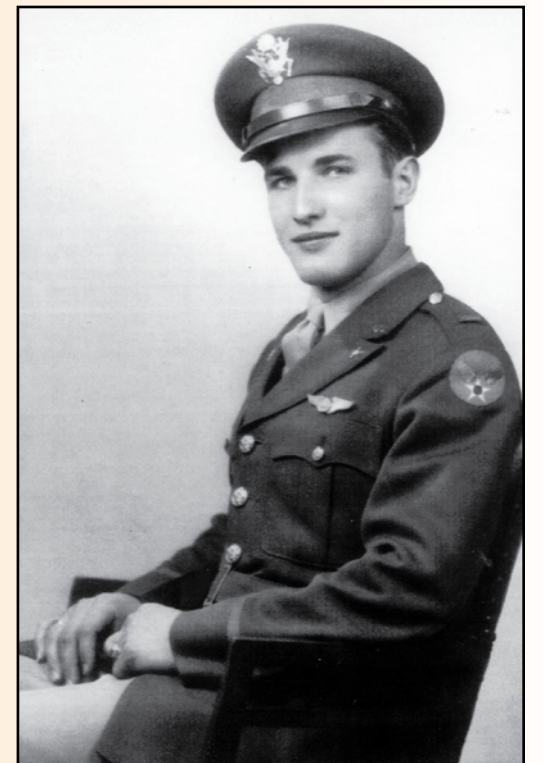
Battles/Campaigns: Invasion of Italy (Sicily)

Rank: 2nd Lieutenant

Awards: Purple Heart

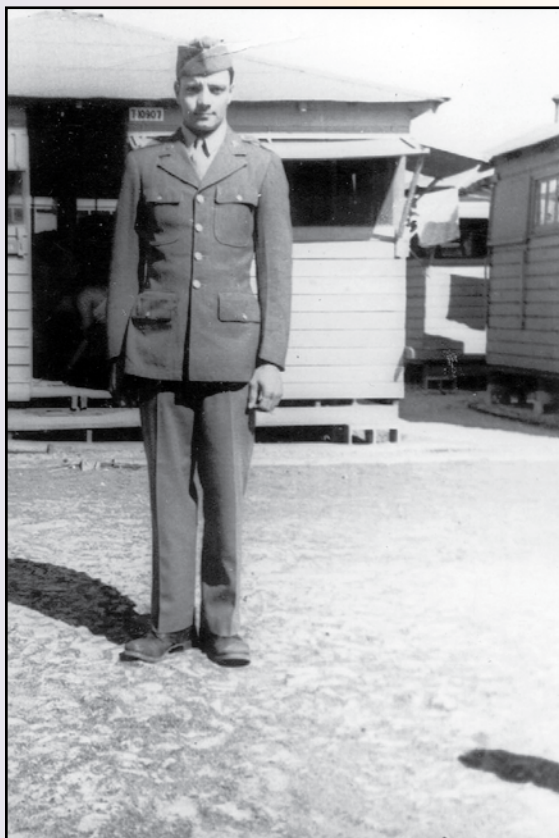
Service-Related Injury: Killed in Action (5/25/1943)

Lt. Dinga graduated from Vandergrift High School and attended Penn State University prior to enlisting in the Air Force Officer Candidate School. After being commissioned a 2nd lieutenant, he acted as a navigator on a B-17 bomber, was stationed in North Africa and participated in the invasion of Sicily. His plane was shot down over Messina Bay in the Mediterranean Ocean. He was declared MIA for one year and was then officially declared killed in action. Lt. Dinga was an intelligent, compassionate, hard working young man with a great sense of family.



Lloyd L. Marsili

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/24/1919
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943-1945
Unit: Infantry
Rank: Private
Service Related Injuries: Killed in Action



John Alexander Black

Hometown: Black's Hollow, Spring Church
Date of Birth: Unknown
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Civil War
Date of Service: 1861 - 1864
Unit: 14th Pennsylvania Calvary
Battles/Campaigns: Various battles in Virginia
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Unknown
Service-Related Injury: Died at Andersonville Prison Camp, April 15, 1864

Joseph Kardos KIA Vietnam



Stevon Booker

Interview with mother on page 31



Joshua Justice Henry

Interview with mother on page 38



Joseph C. Proch

Hometown: Avonmore
Date of Birth: 2/17/1923
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/7/1944
Unit: Company F, Regiment 317th Infantry, 80th Division
Battles/Campaigns: Bettledorf, Germany
Rank: Private
Awards: European-African-Middle Eastern medal, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, WWII Victory Medal, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII
Service-Related Injury: Killed in Action

Joseph Proch was wounded on February 18, 1945 while loading a bazooka to take out a German tank. He was transported to a hospital in Luxenbourg, where he died the next day.



William Sturges

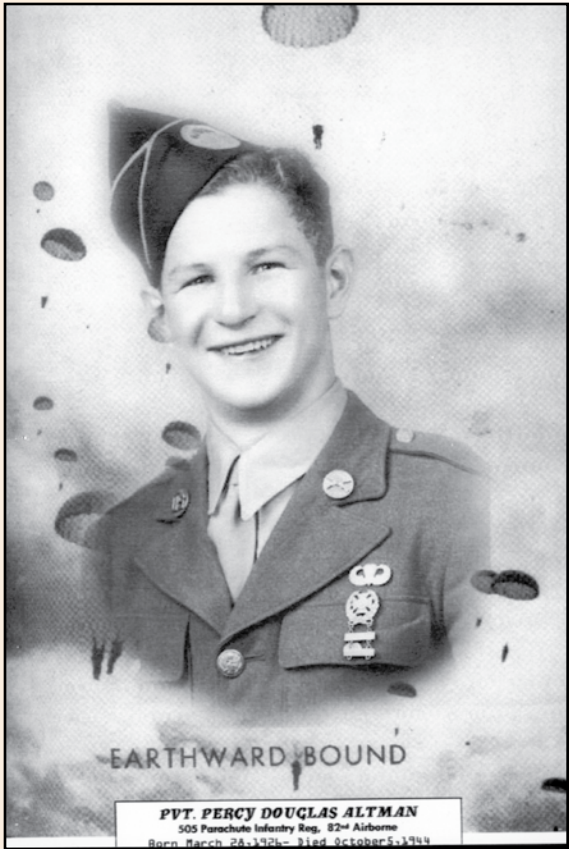
Hometown: Spring Church
Date of Birth: 1/17/1980
Branch of Service: Army National Guard (4 years); Army Reserve (2 years)
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: June 1998 - January 2004
Unit: B Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry
Rank: Specialist
Awards: Army Service Medal, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge
Service-Related Injury: Killed in Action



Percy Douglas Altman

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 3/28/26
Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 8/21/1943
Unit: 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy; Horst, Holland
Rank: Private
Awards: 2 Bronze Service Stars, Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Died on the battlefield

Percy Douglas Altman was a bazooka man with the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. At the age of 18, he was killed while trying to secure an enemy position near Horst, Holland. He was awarded 2 Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart and numerous other awards.



Lonny D. Wells

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/10/1975
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 7/27/1996
Unit: 1st Batt. 8th Marine Regiment, 3rd Platoon, B Company, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: E5 SGT
Awards: 2 Meritorious Unit Commendations, 2 Certificates of Commendation (individual awards), Letter of Appreciation, 2 Meritorious Mast, 2 Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, 3 Overseas Service Ribbons, NATO Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Killed in Action





Fred J. Segorek
Korean War

2

Interviews with Veterans and Their Families

Joseph Bloch



Andy Bloch was just a boy in the 1930's when his brother Joe began his acclaimed sports career. He never really had the opportunity to get to know his brother due to the fact Joe was twelve years older and spent little time at home. As an adult, this left Andy with a burning curiosity about his brother's life. He gathered bits and pieces of his athletic, as well as military career, but needed to learn more. Together with his wife, he set out to do some research and find whatever information he could about the brother he hardly knew.

The Bloch's have always enjoyed traveling by RV, and while on one of their trips, they decided to make a detour in order to do some research. Since Andy knew Joe had been in the Navy Air Corp, they were directed to the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. to obtain air records. While there, Andy requested all records for Air Group 10 aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise during World War II, specifically during the Battles of Santa Cruz, Guadalcanal, and Renell Islands. As he was looking through these records, two gentlemen walked into the room. One of them announced to the clerk that he was writing a book and wanted to request records for the Enterprise carrier during the battles of....you guessed it---Santa Cruz, Guadalcanal and Renell Islands! To say the least, Andy could not believe his ears. Just minutes before, he himself had requested those very records and now held them in his hands. He walked over to the man and introduced himself saying "I just had to meet you. My name is Andy Bloch. Who are you?"

The man immediately took his hand and responded, "The next thing you're going to tell me is that Joe Bloch was your brother." Such unlikely circumstances are what started the long and lasting friendship between Andy Bloch and his brother's former Navy comrade, Hal Buell.

As it turned out, Hal and Joe Bloch had known each other well. They had flown in the same air group. They served on the same tour of duty. In San Diego, he and his wife even lived in the same apartment building as Joe! It's almost as if meeting Hal was (dare I say?) destiny. At any rate, Hal proved to be the missing link to provide the inquisitive Andy with all the personal details he never would have been able to obtain through military records alone.

Lieutenant Joseph J. Bloch was trained to be a U.S. Navy pilot and expert dive bomber at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Texas. On September 10, 1941, he was commissioned a naval officer with the rank of Ensign in the Naval Reserve. He was assigned to active duty on February 5, 1942 with Scouting Squadron 10 in San Diego, California. There he received advanced training, including scouting and dive bombing with carrier landings and take-offs. Additional training with the SBD-3 took place at Barber's Point, Hawaii.

Assigned to the U.S.S. Enterprise on October 11, 1942, they proceeded to the South Pacific area. In November they made it to the Guadalcanal area and began attacks against thirteen Japanese ships attempting to reinforce their garrisons on Guadalcanal Island. All of these Japanese ships were sunk. Air reports indicate that Ensign Joseph J. Bloch scored a direct hit on an enemy vessel in this convoy. In May of the following year, Lt. Bloch received the Air Medal for meritorious achievement as a pilot of a Scout Bomber against Japanese naval forces.

Lt. Bloch's tour of duty aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise ranged from October 16, 1942 - May 3, 1943. During this time, he participated in three major battles: the Battle of Santa Cruz (October 10, 1942), Battle of Guadalcanal (November 13-15, 1942), and Battle of Renell Islands (January 30, 1943).

There were countless flights patrolling waters near and around the Solomon Islands to reinforce the Marines who had already re-taken and were fighting to keep the island. When the U.S.S. Enterprise suffered a damaging hit, Joe's squadron was temporarily relocated to Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. The airfield was constantly being bombarded with planes from Truk and New Guinea during the day, and Japanese warships coming down "The Slot" (a body of water that runs through the middle of the Solomon Islands) at night. It was the U.S.S. Enterprise with Air Group 10 and its supporting forces who turned the tide in the Solomon Islands. This led to the later reclamation of New Guinea and other islands, which ultimately resulted in winning the war against the Japanese in the Asiatic Theatre.

Bombing Squadron 10 was re-formed at Seattle, Washington for a second tour of duty on July 1, 1943. At this time, Joe was made Flight Officer of Air Group 10. On December 4, 1943 while on a routine training flight in Maui, a mechanical problem arose with Joe's plane. It began to weave out of control and went into a downward spiral. As was protocol, whenever the weaving started, the rest of the formation he was leading pulled away. No one saw him crash or hit the water. Since it was very early morning and still dark, it was presumed that he had crashed into the sea. The remains of the plane, his body and the body of his gunner were never found. Joe was only 26 years old at the time of this accident off the coast of Maui.

In addition to the fortuitous meeting of his brother's shipmate (Hal) and hearing his first-hand stories, Andy had yet another remarkable twist of fate concerning information relating to his brother. On a trip to his daughter's home on the West Coast (again traveling by RV), he and his wife decided to find a campground where they could sleep for the night. They determined that the only campground within fifty miles was at Las Cruces, New Mexico. It was a Saturday night. They had planned to get dinner, sleep for the night and drive the rest of the way to their daughter's house in the morning.

During dinner that evening, the waitress asked them if they were in town for the celebration at the college, of which they knew nothing about. She explained New Mexico A&M dedicated a memorial to all its former students who had died during their service in World War II. When the Blochs got back to their motor home and turned on the television that evening, there was a news anchorman talking about the same memorial dedication. But much to their surprise was a picture of Joe Bloch on the television screen! Nevertheless, they didn't leave the next morning, but instead went to the college to see what they could find out.

The memorial displayed pictures of the all students who had served, 126 in all. There in an alcove on the left side they found Joe Bloch's picture on the wall. (He had received a sports scholarship and remained there until joining the Navy Air Corps.) The amazing thing to Andy Bloch was that out of all 126 former students being honored, why was the one picture chosen to represent the story on the news the picture of his brother? Not only that, but what were the chances that he would be traveling through the same town, on the very same day of the celebration, AND happen to see the news broadcast?

Andy Bloch is a sweet, sensitive man and devoted husband. He admits that he and his wife of 46 years live a carefree lifestyle that isn't for everyone. At a moments notice, they will pack some food and clothes, hook up the car and hit the road in the RV. "We don't make long-range plans. That's not the Blochs!"

Perhaps Andy's free spirit is the reason why he has repeatedly found himself in the right place at the right time. Regardless of what one believes concerning the unlikely circumstances he has found himself in, whether coincidence or divine intervention, one thing does seem indisputable: In order for miraculous things to happen, we have to first believe in their possibility.

In the case of Andy Bloch, being open to unlimited possibility meant getting a second chance at something he missed out on many years earlier: getting to know his much loved, big brother Joe.

Stevon Booker

From the outside, Freddie Jackson's home is like the many others that line the narrow street on which she resides in the small town of Apollo. But take two steps through her front door, and one is surrounded with a palpable spirit that is the living memory of her son, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Stevon A. Booker. Ms. Jackson's home is a shrine, and I had the privilege of a guided tour through the pictures that line her walls, the cabinet that houses her son's proudest achievements, and the shelves overflowing with mementoes and notes of condolence from around the world; evidence of humanity's true capacity for love and support in our hour of greatest need.

We begin our tour seated together on the floor in front of her curio cabinet. She carefully brings each object out to show it in greater detail. I am amazed at this woman's capacity to be kind rather than bitter at the hand of such loss. I feel honored just to be in her company, bearing witness to such strength, love and pride.

The first thing she shows me is her Gold Star for Mothers, a small gold and purple pin given to all mothers of children who have been killed in action during their military service. Although the Defense Department actually issues the pin, there is an organization called American Gold Star Mothers (formed in 1928) that consists solely of mothers who wish to offer support for other women who find themselves in the same unthinkable situation of losing a child during war time. In the past, they also offered care to hospitalized veterans recuperating far away from home. The organization was named after the gold star that families hung in their windows in honor of a deceased veteran.

Sergeant Booker earned many medals, among them the Silver Star, which Ms. Jackson informs me, is the third highest achievable medal in the military. Beside that sits his Bronze Star and Purple Heart, along with numerous others.

As we move on, we come to the original combat hat Stevon was wearing the day he was killed. This we don't touch, but just stare at sitting peacefully behind the glass. She explains how it had been her first impulse to have it cleaned because it was covered in sand, but then she realized that along with the sand, it also carried the scent of her son. She decided to leave it untouched. I find myself feeling thankful for that decision, secretly hoping the closed curio will allow his scent to linger for a very long time.

Next she shows me a small bit of rubble from the Twin Towers; a humble reminder of what made it necessary for her son and many others to head overseas in defense of America's freedom.



From there we keep moving around the walls; room to room. Her collection is immense. She shows me a book that bears the account of Steve's cross over into Baghdad--the last mission he was a part of. It is inscribed by its author with a personal note to Ms. Jackson. Later while on my own, I found passages in that book that offered a glimpse into the dedication Stevon must have had for his men, as well as the high esteem with which they regarded him.



Stevon was a Tank Commander with the Third Mechanized Infantry Division. He was killed by enemy fire April 5, 2003 during the above mentioned raid into Baghdad. He was also a veteran of the Persian Gulf War.

After graduating from high school in June of 1987, he went into the service in September of the same year. It was solely his decision to enlist, although at times during his military career, he'd consult his mother for her opinion when he'd get discouraged. She always answered the same way, telling him that she couldn't make decisions for him, but whatever made him happy, also made her happy. Ms. Jackson did, however, enforce one rule in her house when he came home on leave--

-to attend church with her. "That's the only request I ever made of him. I can't even put into words how proud I was." Stevon took great care when donning his military uniform. According to his mother, he'd use a ruler to measure exactly where his medals should go and it took nearly an hour to get everything perfected before they could head out the door. Upon entering the church, all heads turned. "He truly was a hero. I am so very proud," she says.

Our focus turns to present day and we talk just a bit about the war that continues to go on. I ask what Stevon might have said about the quality of life he witnessed in Iraq. She said he stressed that there is no human being alive who should have to live under such conditions. When asked what position her son would take on the war today, she replies, "I believe in my heart that he'd go over and do it all again if he could. He really believed in the work they were doing over there."

Communication with him while in Iraq, of course, was limited. He would write letters home, not just to his mother, but also to his grandmother and to his mother's best friend, whom he referred to as "his second mother". Even though he was the one in harm's way, he was concerned with how everyone else was doing, or if they needed anything. This was his characteristic unselfish way. Ms. Jackson remembers him calling home right before going into Operation Iraqi Freedom, but the connection was poor. He managed to tell her he would call her back another day, right before the connection was lost. That was the last time they spoke, in March of 2003.

No one ever considers the possibility that we, as parents, will outlive our children. And according to Stevon's mother, no person who hasn't lived through losing a child will ever know the personal anguish it brings. She goes on to relay the following story...



"I had a dream that I got a phone call saying that my son had been killed. In the dream, I saw it all as plain as day. When I woke, I sat straight up in bed." She confided in her friend about the dream, who in turn tried to put her mind at ease by telling her that the military doesn't deliver bad news by telephone anymore; they come in person.

As horrible as it is to imagine, one month later Ms. Jackson did receive that unwelcome knock on her front door, opening it to find that her worst nightmare had indeed come true. "In my heart, I believe [the dream] was the Lord trying to prepare me. It's amazing, but it's the truth."

Stevon's funeral was attended by over 500 people. He has been memorialized on many occasions and in many towns. His own community put forth great effort to remember its first fallen soldier in Iraq, also lending a tremendous amount of support to the family during those very difficult first days. In other area events, he was inducted into the Hall of Valor at Soldiers and Sailors Museum in Pittsburgh, and in Aberdeen, Maryland, a military building was dedicated in his name.

They say time heals all wounds. And Ms. Jackson will tell you that she isn't as sad as she used to be, but special days such as Stevon's birthday or Mother's Day are still very difficult for her. She explains how even though she may not be focused on the day, her heart is sure to remind her.

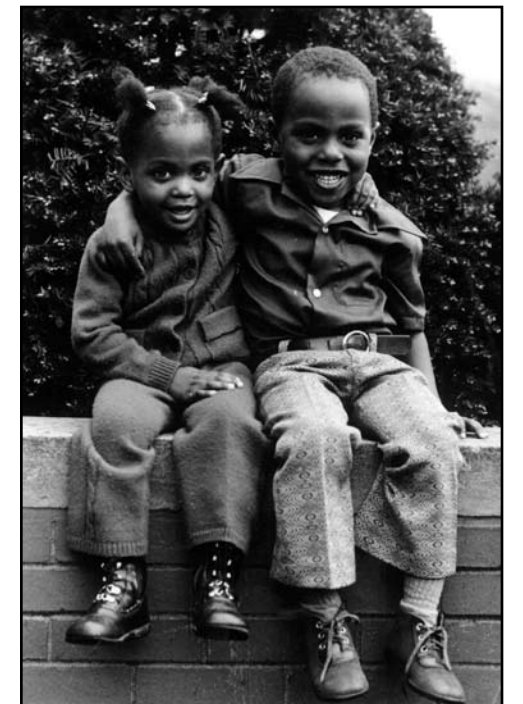
Although Stevon didn't have any children of his own, that didn't keep him from loving them. His "lady friend", Michelle, is herself a soldier serving in Iraq and also the mother of two daughters. Upon his passing, Michelle traveled to Pennsylvania to meet Stevon's family, bringing her daughters along.

Ms. Jackson recalls (with a huge smile on her face) that first meeting:

"The girls were sitting on the couch and when they first saw Stevon's sister, one of them said 'Mommy, she looks just like Book!' That's what they called my son---Book. And you know what? To this very day those girls still call me Gram."

Though none of us ever know what lies beyond the next bend in the road, of one thing we can be certain: Even in times of immense loss, hope never fails to rise again, bringing with it new life and new love to carry us forward.

Just ask Gram...



Ronald Boyden



Though it sounds like the name of a famed rap musician, Rice Paddy Daddy is the name Army veteran Ronald Boyden lightheartedly used to refer to himself when I sat down to talk with him about his lengthy military enlistment that included two tours in Vietnam.

According to Ron, the Army was good to him and there is little he would change of his twenty year long military career if he had it to do all over again...except maybe Jungle School. The worst two weeks of his life were spent in Panama, learning combat techniques in the jungle. Ironically, when he arrived in Vietnam after training, he wasn't stationed in the jungle, but was instead sent to the Delta, which consists mainly of rice paddy and water; hence the nickname, Rice Paddy Daddy. (The cultivation of rice has been part of the Vietnamese culture for thousands of years and most Vietnamese still make their living from working the land in this way.)



Ron entered the Army in 1958 on the strict counsel of his father, a WWII veteran, who left him little choice in the matter. "You're going!" was the way he put it. At seventeen years old, Ron probably never imagined that he'd spend a significant portion of his life as a soldier, or earn a whole host of medals which include two Bronze Stars. "It was a beautiful twenty years, except for a few bad times in Vietnam," he said.

Ron had two tours of duty in Vietnam. "The first time I wanted to go. But once you get over there, you realize pretty quick 'this isn't something I want to be doing.'" Imagine his enthusiasm when he realized he was being sent back a second time. "I cried like a baby," he said.

His career included various operations during the war in Vietnam where he served as a platoon sergeant. An event that sticks in his mind happened one night in a helicopter after the pilot refused to land because they had started taking fire. Ron was kicked out while still at a high altitude, along with another soldier right at his back. "We didn't know where we were. We were lost until morning...that was a terrible night."

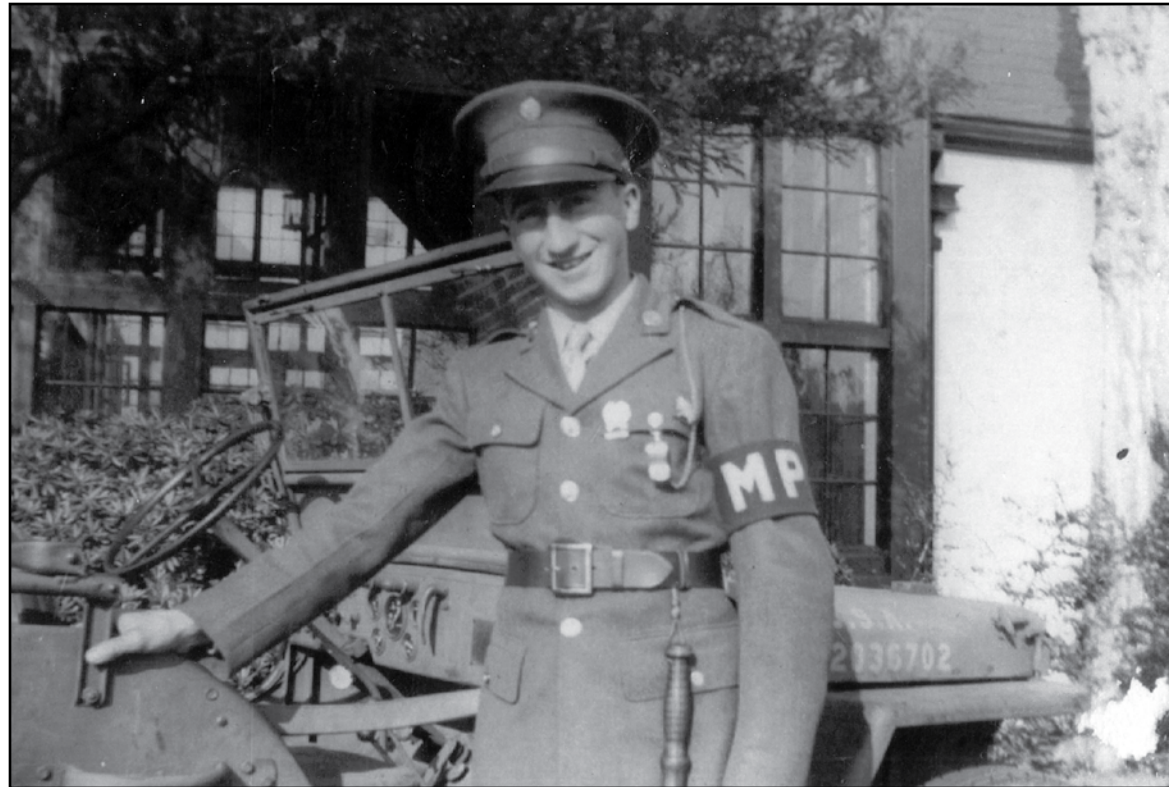
The story of the way he earned a Bronze Star also stands out in his memory, for obvious reasons. "We were sleeping in tents the one night when we got hit with mortar. I started helping get guys dusted off, meaning getting guys to the medic chopper to take them back. You try to get to the berm, to keep anyone from coming toward you, but I got hit with some shrapnel, so I ended up falling and landing down in a waste hole! But the guys pulled me out. A shower took care of all that."

Ron served in Vietnam during 1968-1969. During his last three months there, his commanding officer told him he had done an excellent job and then asked him to open a mess hall in the field. Apart from the time in Vietnam, his career also involved being a drill sergeant at Fort Riley, Kansas; a correctional facility for soldiers gone AWOL, where they were trained and sent back to active duty.

Ron's military career ended in 1978. His last years were spent serving as a mess sergeant. "Cooking was my trade and that's what I like to do. I don't like fighting."



Gabe Bruno



Gabe Bruno came to the U.S. from Italy in 1936 as a fourteen year old boy. His family settled in Vandergrift, Pennsylvania. Six years later he was drafted into the Army and trained as a Military Policeman. He was sent to Hollywood, California where he patrolled the Hollywood Canteen, a nightclub devoted to servicemen. Through its doors walked many Hollywood stars committed to entertaining the troops. To a twenty-year-old small town boy, the job was probably the best he could have asked for. Gabe remembers meeting many stars of the day, including Betty Grable, Errol Flynn and Roy Rogers. As a matter of fact, one of his most prized possessions is his military belt with 27 signatures from various Hollywood stars.

According to Mr. Bruno, Ms. Grable could dance the night away, not taking a break until she reached the point of exhaustion. Gabe would then escort her to a back room where an attendant waited to fan the star. When she regained her strength, she'd hit the dance floor again, sometimes doing this three times in one night.

But the glamour of those Hollywood days became distant memories 18 months later as war casualties mounted, making replacement troops necessary. Gabe was transferred out of Military Police and shipped overseas on the Queen Mary, headed for the German border during World War II.

On November 12, 1944, he found himself engaged in the Battle of the Hurtgen as a member of the 28th Infantry Division. Two of what he calls the most frightening days of his life came when a lieutenant assigned ten men (Gabe was one of them) to the forward post to hold the Germans back. They were instructed to hold their positions at all costs. Gabe and two other soldiers were eventually sent for more ammunition. When they tried to return, they found themselves encircled by Germans and machine gun fire, killing one and wounding the other two. Gabe was shot three times and left lying in a ditch. When the Germans found him, they first demanded any cigarettes he had in his possession. Afraid, he replied they could have them but they'd have to divide them up themselves because he "didn't want to make any enemies." The German soldier's reply is one Gabe will never forget: "There are no enemies; we are only here to kill each other."

At this point, after just four weeks of combat, Gabe found himself a prisoner of war and would remain one until the end of WWII. He was taken to a POW camp for questioning then shipped to Stalag 2A, north of Berlin.

The trip to Stalag took four long days, during which time their train was bombed by American planes and they were denied food and water. Finally arriving at their destination and not knowing whether he could survive the night, he went around to the other soldiers to see if he could barter something in return for food. A British soldier was willing to give him a turnip for his gold fountain pen.

"My stay in the POW camp was probably better than what some other prisoners had to endure" he said. In anticipation for the Battle of the Bulge, the Germans stole all the Americans uniforms and Gabe was furnished with a Belgium uniform. On account of his uniform and his thick Italian accent, it was assumed he was an Italian POW. Because of this, he was allowed to go into town almost at will.

Although everyone had it rough, the Polish prisoners had it particularly rough, as they were not allowed to receive any Red Cross parcels. Food in the camps was scarce. Most often, large amounts of "tree flour" (saw dust) was added to meals, presumably to make the food go farther. Once, Gabe and one of his fellow inmates decided to put together a meal for some of the Polish prisoners. Since cigarettes were the normal currency for bartering, he went into town and traded the cigarettes for pasta. He used SPAM (from Red Cross parcels) and made meatballs. Because he couldn't get tomatoes, he made a "sauce" out of the liquid from the SPAM. The meal did wonders to lift the spirits of the men, many incarcerated at that point for over five years.

Another interesting feat Gabe was responsible for was smuggling a secret radio into the camp which allowed the Americans to communicate with their military superiors in London. He had gone into town and bartered for the radio, along with a goat, which he butchered. He hid the radio in the hollowed-out chest cavity and smuggled it into the camp chapel, where he hid it below the tabernacle. During services, men could listen to broadcasts from London.

While imprisoned, Gabe was sent to the infirmary where he met an Italian doctor. They soon began communicating in their native tongue and before long Gabe became part of the staff, working as an interpreter.

In May, 1945, it appeared that the American troops who had already captured Berlin would come to their rescue; however, it was the Russians who eventually liberated the soldiers of Gabe's camp. He was officially released from the service January 3, 1946.

As it stands in his memory, the military career of Gabe Bruno is divided into two very distinct parts: the beginning, which contains those almost surreal days filled with excitement and fond memories; and what came later: the wounded, suffering man who made the realization of what war is really all about.

Joshua Justice Henry



"It's like you build this big puzzle. You get all the pieces in, but then you lose a piece and nothing else will fit in its place. No matter what you do, you can't make another piece that fits. So you end up living your life completely differently, without that one part you know is always missing."

-Perry Henry, mother of Army Specialist Josh Henry

There is an ancient belief that says prior to being born, we choose our parents and the conditions into which we are born; presumably for the purpose of fostering the most spiritual advancement. According to this belief system, Earth is one giant classroom where every day we practice our lessons via the interactions we have with others. Although we all share responsibility in aiding each other's development, it is our parents who seem to have the most potential impact on our growth. They instill in us those core values that form the very foundation of all we go on to believe.

The day I met Perry Henry was September 20, 2007; the third anniversary of her son's death. Joshua Justice Henry had been an Army Specialist with the 1st Infantry Division and served in Germany and Kosovo before going on to Iraq in January of 2004. He served on over 200 combat missions and was part of Alpha Company's only qualified sniper team. Although he had already fulfilled the terms of his enlistment, Josh extended his enlistment because of loyalty to his comrades; he couldn't allow them to go to Iraq without him. He ended up transferring out of tank duty and onto ground duty. Sadly, it was during this time that he was killed when his convoy came under attack near Sharqat.

As Perry imparted Josh's youthful, fun-loving personality, I could instantly see where it came from. In the short time I sat with her, she herself proved to be open-minded and still very much filled with a love of life. Despite it being the anniversary of Josh's passing, she wasn't focused on the sad note on which his life had ended, but instead smiled as she relayed the good memories they shared as a family. She was particularly glad for the extra opportunities he had been afforded while in the Army's service, like skiing in the Alps for the weekend, and seeing parts of the world most people his age never would.

According to his mother, Josh was loving and fun; "a big jokester" as she described him. He had plans of becoming an elementary school teacher after his time in the service had been fulfilled. He loved kids. Often he'd ask his family to send treats for the Iraqi children in his care packages. Apparently, guys like Josh had a good reputation among the kids of Iraq. The kids knew which soldiers had a soft spot for them, and they'd yell out their names as the soldiers passed through town.



As a testament to his funny personality, she showed me a series of pictures of Josh with some Iraqi children. One of the young girls was wearing a beaded headdress. In the next picture Josh was posing with all the kids, and by the third picture he was hamming for the camera with the pink beaded dressing on his own head. It is heart-warming to think that he was able to bring



some joy and laughter to the lives of children who are commonly robbed of their innocence amid the deplorable conditions they live.

As she told me more accounts of his antics, (like the way the two of them would dance spontaneously around the kitchen together), I got the impression their connection went beyond the typical mother-son relationship, to one of deep friendship and mutual respect.

Perry told me it was surprising to see Josh on his first leave from the Army. "When he came home from Basic Training, I couldn't believe what I saw. It's like the Army fine-tuned him." On one particular morning, he knocked on his mother's door and asked her to go to breakfast with him. "All of a sudden, he was paying for breakfast and holding doors open for me." Not only had the Army changed his physical stature, but it was obvious it had also impacted his character.

Perry always said her goodbyes at home, electing to allow other family members to take Josh to the airport or bus station when it was time for him to return. "I remember the last time he left; he got into the car, then back out again. He kept coming back six or seven times to tell me he loved me, which was really odd because he'd usually just say his goodbye and ask me not to cry. So there he was bawling like a baby, while I had to hold it all in. But [not crying] was something I promised him. As soon as he left, I was just a mess."

Goodbyes were always difficult. It seemed there was so much to say but little time to say it. "I remember I had gotten him snacks and juice for him to take in his backpack," says Perry. "I stood there one minute telling him to remember to be on guard over there [in Iraq] and do whatever he had to in order to protect himself. Then the next thing I told him was 'and don't forget to shake your juice before drinking it.'"

Perry and my conversation then turned to her belief in a divine plan for everyone's life. The Henry's had been living in a rural farmhouse when one day it caught fire and was destroyed. They needed to relocate the family as quickly as possible and as it turned out, an apartment directly across the street from Perry's friend opened up. "It's like it all happened for a reason because soon after that, the whole tragedy with Josh happened. Rather than being way out there on the farm alone, I had my best friend right across the street. It's weird when I think about how things worked out like that."



The support the Henry's received from the neighborhood was amazing. It was a Monday evening when they received the news about Josh, and by 9 pm that same evening, the entire street turned out to show their support. People continued to come by all week long, bringing food and offering their sympathy.

On one particular day, Perry was going through a stack of cards that arrived in which there was one with no return address. It had an American flag sticker on the back, but had no signature. Inside was a poem that stated 'I'm alright and I'll see you again some day'. She took comfort in the anonymous card, believing that indeed Josh was alright and in time they would see one another again. Despite her own emotional battle, she had to focus on carrying out Josh's wish; he had designated his mother as the person to deliver his eulogy in the event of his passing. It was this poem that Perry used the day of his funeral. At that time, she publicly thanked whoever may have sent the card. The poem seemed like an answer to prayer, arriving at just the right time.



If the theory of choosing our parents is indeed true, I can see why Josh would have chosen Perry. She mirrored remarkable strength for him in life and continues to do so to this day. She instilled in him a zest for living, while remaining a loving, devoted parent. Because of her, Josh was able to be confident in all his endeavors, as both a soldier and a civilian. He was able to live vibrantly and truly inhabit all the days of his short, but spirited life.



Speaking of incidents of timing, when Josh was just a boy, he and his father played a game that involved shooting rubber bands. As a tribute to that childhood memory, Mr. Henry deposited a large rubber band in the casket of his son (which drew some strange looks from those who didn't understand the meaning!) But the even stranger thing was, from that point on, rubber bands started turning up in their home everywhere! Rubber bands were not an item that Perry stocked in her house, so it seemed odd that so many turned up. It even carried over to her close friends finding them in the most unlikely spots of their home (one of which was wrapped around the wheel of their lawnmower.) "I know Josh isn't physically placing these rubber bands in the house, but I do think it's another sign from him."

More than three years after the death of her son, Perry admits she is a changed person and looks at life differently. "I used to be one of those people who thought of Memorial Day as a picnic and a day off work. I'm not like that anymore. We should be so thankful for the freedom we

have in America. I'm very proud of Josh, and that's something that helps me to be strong; because I want him to be as proud of me as I am of him."

Charles Hrobak

Some stories go forever untold. They remain under lock and key, rigidly secured in the memory of those who've managed to survive them. Yet sometimes these stories slowly begin to escape the deep recesses of memory. Snippets of detail begin filtering through years of concentrated denial. We cannot force their emergence, nor do we know why after fifty years of repression, they begin to penetrate the silence that held them hostage for so long.

Charles Hrobak is a survivor. Though this triple Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipient doesn't say much, there aren't too many people with enough stamina to make it through not just one horrific war, but two. And that's just the beginning of his story...

At just nineteen years old, Charles entered the Army as an Infantry soldier during World War II. Within two years, he reached the rank of sergeant. According to him, "There was no one left." His whole company, which normally consists of 3-5 platoons, was completely annihilated except for the half dozen men who were left. Because of that fact, he was quickly made an assistant squad leader after only twelve weeks in the Army. He joined his men in France with just 10 weeks of training, and would travel all over Germany and Austria as well during the years from 1944 to 1946.

After World War II ended, Charles returned home and became a coal miner. In 1949, he was drafted for service in the Korean War at the age of 24. He entered the Army again as a private but proceeded to achieve the rank of Sergeant with the 7th Infantry Division.

By late November of 1950, an end to the war seemed close at hand. Allied troops had advanced deep into North Korea and were ready to unite the north and south under one government. But what they weren't prepared for were the hundreds of thousands of Communist Chinese soldiers that poured into Korea, crossing the border at the Chosin Reservoir. American troops and those of our allies were forced to retreat, suffering heavy casualties along the way. It was during this Battle at the Chosin Reservoir that Charles Hrobak was captured by Chinese Communist Forces and taken as a prisoner of war. He had been in Korea for only 3 months at that point.

Because the 7th Infantry Division was so short on men, ROK (Republic of Korea) soldiers had to be added to the ranks to fill out the division. The ROK soldiers that Charles had under his command were very poorly prepared for war; most had never even fired a gun. They were taken off the street and added to the ranks of the American GI's. "They didn't speak English and didn't even know how to hold a gun," he said. "We had to teach them everything. That was a bad war..."



Though he didn't reveal many details, I learned that Charles was captured with a group of U.S. Marines and British Commandos. When I asked if his entire unit was captured, he states sullenly that almost the entire unit was killed. In a valley, surrounded by Chinese Forces, a major in the Marines (name not given) offered surrender of certain troops--Charles' included--in exchange for pardon of a truckload of Marines. As it turned out, the Chinese didn't keep their end of the deal; they took their prisoners and proceeded to blow up the truckload of Marines anyway.

Charles was one of approximately eighty captives who were marched through the ice, snow and dark of that November 30th night in 1950. They were forced to march for thirteen straight days before reaching the prison camp. It happened to have been the coldest winter on record when Mr. Hrobak was captured, with temperatures plummeting to 30 degrees below zero.

At one point on the march, the men tried to carry one of their comrades who had both his legs blown off. At normal temperatures, he would have been at risk of bleeding to death, but the extreme cold caused the blood in his extremities to freeze, or at least halted the bleeding. The brutal Chinese eventually put an end to soldiers assisting other soldiers. While marching, if one of them couldn't make it anymore, he was left to die or was executed on the spot. The rest of the men were forced to keep walking. Many of the soldier's feet froze and resulted in their toes literally falling off.

Once they reached the prison camp, they were lined up and assigned a detail. Various jobs needed done in order to keep the camp running. Charles was assigned the job of cook, which was probably one of the better ones. Death detail was the worst, for obvious reasons. It required burial of bodies of the many who succumbed to disease or malnutrition while in the camp. Bodies couldn't be properly buried because the ground was so thoroughly frozen, so they'd lay them on top of one another. At night the Koreans, who were extremely poor, would steal the clothes right off the dead men's backs.

The prison camp itself was similar to an old single story school building surrounded by guards. There was no heat, or electricity for lights, even though the temperatures were frigid and darkness fell early during the winter time. The prisoners were malnourished, living on sorghum (a grain used to feed cattle), turnips, soybeans and a very small amount of dry rice. Often the food was infested with bugs or maggots. Some of the bugs would float to the top during the cooking process, but most were cooked right into the meal.

Those in the prison camp on the brink of starvation and death would sometimes call out "if I could only have some peanut butter...I could make it" (or Coca-Cola, or whatever former luxury they dreamed of.) Then they'd lie down and die. Uncomfortable at remembering such things, Charles adds with fortitude "It was good enough. I survived."

The men may have survived, but just barely. There were no doctors or medical supplies to take care of the wounded and disease-infested men. If they were lucky enough to have been captured with a medic in their group, at least he had some medical knowledge, though no supplies.

Every day the men went out on wood detail where they were made to carry their body weight worth of wood back to the camp. This wood was used for heat for the Chinese and to fuel the fires for cooking.



Prior to capture, Charles remembers a man named Smitty who had been severely shot and wounded, losing both his arms and legs. Because his chance of survival was so slim, he was left behind to die. As fortune had it in his case, when the Marines came through at the end of the battle, they rescued Smitty. The unbelievable part is not just that he survived, but that he ended up sharing a hospital room with Charles' brother, Frank.

Frank Hrobak was an Army Corporal who had been wounded in the head by sniper fire. In conversation one day at the hospital, Smitty said to Frank that he once knew another man by the name of Hrobak who had been taken as a POW. Though it was unclear to him whether Charles was still alive at this point, just hearing of his whereabouts gave Frank and his family some hope for Charles' survival.

After approximately two years in the camp, Charles was permitted to write letters home, putting his family's mind more at ease. Because all letters were screened by the Chinese, soldiers were limited on how much they could write.

Communist indoctrination was another one of the tactics used in prison camps. Men were taken outside to stand in the freezing weather for hours at a time while the Chinese preached Communism as the true form of government. It has been speculated that this was done more for its propaganda value than for winning converts, though 21 American POW's elected not to return to the U.S.

Charles' camp contained 286 prisoners. For the first year or two, the British and Turks shared the same camp along with the Americans, but were later separated according to nationality. Privates and officers were also separated.

Charles Hrobak was held as a prisoner of war for 33 months and 11 days. When asked how he kept his faith that whole time, he replied "They would have had to shoot me dead before I'd have given up." He explained his view that the way a man was raised seemed to have a lot to do with how he fared in the prison camp. Charles was a coal miner and accustomed to adverse conditions. He also had the experience of World War II to his credit. At 24 years old, he was considered a 'senior' compared to some of the 16 year olds he'd been imprisoned with.

Charles was one of the last prisoners to be released. The 6'2", 126 pound soldier passed through the gates at Panmunjom on September 5, 1953; number 96 of the final 100 waiting for release. To this day, his feet still burn and ache, and he experiences a whole host of other problems that can be attributed to the harsh years he endured as a prisoner of war.

Undoubtedly there is much of Mr. Hrobak's story that has been left unsaid. Though it may seem short on personal details, bear this in mind: Sometimes it takes just as much courage to face our past as it does to originally have endured it in the first place.



Robert Jasper

It might be said that the start of Robert Jasper's military career can be attributed to an argument with the girl who would one day become his wife of sixty years.

Robert met Val Jean Young in sixth grade and dated her the entire way through high school. With the start of World War II, most of the young men at that time had already quit school to join the military. So after one determinative argument in 1943, Robert followed suit by quitting school and signing up for the Army. (The argument evidently didn't last long; the two were engaged in Texas, prior to his being shipped overseas, and eloped after his return home from the Army in 1946.)

He considers it advantageous that it happened that way because he became part of the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion, where as the youngest man, he was treated "like a king." At just seventeen years old, he passed all the necessary tests driving the M-10, M-18 and Half-Track. Because his vision required eye glasses, he wasn't selected for reconnaissance missions overseas (on account of potential glare from his eye glasses,) but instead was put into maintenance. There he drove tank and later hauled kitchen truck.

Mr. Jasper was a Technical Corporal stationed in various places in Rhineland and Central Europe and participated in the Battle of the Bulge. "After they unlocked everyone, then they pushed our outfit in; right at the tail end of it. I won't take credit for having been [in that battle] though, because those guys had it pretty rough..."

Lying in foxholes during rain and snow resulted in frostbite for many men. It was not at all uncommon to wear the same shoes and socks for a month without ever taking them off. When it came to digging foxholes, Robert considered himself lucky. At 5'6" and weighing only 110 pounds, he was small enough in stature to lie in the deep ruts created by tanks that had driven through. "Those other guys had to dig their holes, but I often already had one made for me."

Though most of Mr. Jasper's war memories are not ones he prefers to remember, he does reflect upon the German civilians as being wonderful people. "They weren't like the people we're fighting with in this current war [in Iraq]. All the women treated us very good. We'd dance with them in the evenings, and then go out and fight all night long. We'd sleep during the day then the girls would take us out again the next evening. Thinking back, those were the good old days. But the night time.....that was the time for fighting."

Mr. Jasper's awards include the Good Conduct Medal, American Theater Service Medal, EAME Theater Service Medal w/2 Bronze Stars, WWII Victory Medal and five Battle Stars. He was discharged from the Army February 4, 1946.



Jean Leech



Jean Leech knew from the time she was in first grade that she wanted to be a nurse. That intense desire, coupled with her compassion, led to a very successful and satisfying civilian, as well as military career during World War II.

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, Jean Leech was still in nursing school with three years to complete and state boards to take. After her graduation in 1944, she enlisted in the U.S. Army Nurse Corp. There was no doubt that she and several of her classmates would join the war effort. “Besides,” jokes Jean, “that’s where all the boys were!”

Jean grew up in Oakmont as the only child of an artistic father who painted signs, as well as developed logos and designed lettering for various newspapers and publications. Jean’s mother worked as a mathematician for a local furniture store. Because it was rather uncommon for women to work during that era, Jean had several adoptive mothers in the neighborhood who kept an eye out for her. The time she spent alone helped her develop into the independent young woman she later became.

Though she is now 84 years old, her mind is as sharp as a pin and she was able to recount many stories on the afternoon I visited her. It is easy to imagine what an energetic young girl she must have been, judging from the spirited grandmother she is today.

Despite it being an era of little opportunity for women, Jean’s mother encouraged her to attend college. So upon graduating from high school, she entered training at St Margaret Hospital. After she enlisted in the Army, she received Basic Training at Fort Meade and then went on to Indiantown Gap for overseas service training. Her unit was designated as a replacement unit for nurses who had already long been in the field. However, by the time training was complete, the war effort was slowing down. Since they weren’t urgently needed overseas, she worked at Fort Meade on the prisoners ward. These were the men who had gone AWOL or otherwise committed some type of crime. Many people were not aware of how many German prisoners were in the states at that time. Though she mostly worked on the American prisoner’s ward, there was one German prisoner Jean remembers caring for. He was put in a private room with a guard posted outside because he was known for his connection to the Nazis. Jean learned much about daily German life by taking care of him. Many of the American prisoners were unhappy with her for taking such good care of the German, but her role as a nurse treating human beings, despite their nationality, was always superior to anything else. As she told them, “He is a patient and I am a nurse. It is my duty to take care of him.” She did, however, admit that she derived satisfaction one day when this same German patient asked to see a newspaper. He was sure the Germans would win the war. She handed him the

newspaper with the headline sprawled across the front page: “Yanks take Cologne!”

Jean talked about the day they received their assignments for where they would be stationed. She wanted to go to Pasadena, California because her mother had friends who lived near there; however, there were many more nurses than there were positions available at Pasadena. Jean happened to be near the end of the line, so she figured she didn’t have a chance of being picked. The officer walked past all the other girls and came straight to her. She was the first one picked for Pasadena. Jean has always felt that she lived a charmed life and that someone had been watching over her. She believes that person to be her mother, who passed away during her final year of nursing school.

Though her main concern as a nurse was caring for the sick and maimed, Jean often found herself in the role of social coordinator. One day a soldier from one of the tank units approached her and said he had several soldiers in his unit who wanted dates. Could she coordinate the women from her unit? So Jean asked him to make a list of names as well as how tall each man was. She then matched each man with a date for the evening.

Weekly while at Fort Meade, the nurses were shown films that highlighted the injuries and casualties the men received while in the field. Jean remembers one such viewing when one of her classmates recognized her boyfriend as one of the soldiers in the film. She screamed aloud when suddenly he was shot and fell to the ground. She had witnessed his death on film.

Since WWII took place before the civil rights revolution, the black female soldiers had their own barracks separate from the whites. They also had guards posted outside the barracks at night. Jean also remembers racial discrimination toward a group of RNs who were Native Americans. One of the lieutenant’s names was Lieutenant White Rabbit. On one particular day, a major came in needing treatment, but refused being cared for by the Native American nurse. Jean had some spunk, so she promptly told the officer that he had no rank on hospital grounds; that Lieutenant White Rabbit was an officer in the United States Army and that he would do as she instructed him. Needless to say, the officer consented to treatment.

From Fort Meade, Jean was sent to Fort Jackson, S.C. The style was such that women set their hair in pin curls. Evidently, being in the service did not stop the women from being in fashion. They simply set their hair with bobby pins beneath their helmets. But because of the sweltering conditions in South Carolina, their scalps would sweat. Jean developed a scalp infection from the rust that developed on the bobby pins in her hair. She was admitted to the hospital and put into isolation. At this time, all her belongings were packed and ready to be sent on the ship that would transport them to Pasadena, CA.

Jean wasn’t released from the hospital in time, and her entire unit left without her. She recalls the band music playing outside her window, as the hospital was right across the street from the train station. She cried and cried over being left alone without one familiar soul left. After she was given a clean bill of health, she boarded the ship which was basically a floating hospital with a huge red cross painted on the side. There were permanent doctors and nurses stationed on board. The ship was used to transport replacement troops over, and the return trip brought back the wounded. On the way to Pasadena, they docked in New Mexico but weren’t permitted to leave the ship due to dysentery, etc. That didn’t stop them from having a good time though. The locals would come out on the floating docks to meet the girls. Jean can recall the parties as bottles of tequila were passed through the ship’s port holes.

Donald Lobaugh

It was believed at that time that they were being sent to Hawaii, however that didn't prove to be the case because the ship was reportedly not seaworthy enough to make it. (Rumor had it that this same ship was used to transport mules during World War One!) So Pasadena, CA ended up her final destination. There they took up residence in the Vista Del Arroyo, which was an upscale hotel that had been converted to a hospital during war time. Not only had she managed to avoid the harsh conditions of working in the field, but the quarters where the nurses stayed were luxurious honeymoon suites! Jean worked mostly on the maternity ward while there, as this was needed for the wives of the many soldiers serving in the armed forces at the time.

Jean was discharged from Camp Beale, California in May, 1946. She worked as a night nursing supervisor at the hospital in New Kensington. One night one of the women she worked with, Martha, asked her if she'd be interested in going to the nurse's alumni dance with her uncle. Jean was still a young woman and pictured this man as being much older, so she declined. Then one day when there was no bus service to Hyde Park, Jean rode along to Martha's house. It was then that Jean finally met Martha's uncle, Bob. The year was 1946. She was invited to stay for dinner and was seated to the right of Bob. He was very superstitious of her. At one point, she asked him to pass the salt. He handed it to her directly, rather than setting it down on the table in front of her. Martha's mother said it was at that moment that she knew "he was a goner." That dinner is one Jean will never forget, as it resulted in a 53 year marriage to Bob and produced four children as well.

After marriage, Jean left her nursing career in order to stay home and raise her children. However, at the age of 51, she decided to return to the career she loved so much and accepted a position with a local doctor's office. She loved every day of the twenty-two years she served as an office nurse and probably would have continued working had he not closed the office at retirement. Working as his nurse was such a pleasure that she would have worked for free.

We spent some time talking about her generation and particularly about the role of women in that time period. Though women did go to work in the factories during WWII, once the men returned from the war, they were forced to revert back to the limited role they played as housewives and mothers. "It was hard for everyone to re-adjust. The women got used to making the decisions at home and doing everything themselves. It was a big adjustment to turn it over, just like that. But it was worth it to have the men back home."

Jean feels very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve her country and still gets goose bumps any time she hears the Star Spangled Banner. She is thankful for the rare opportunity to have gone to nursing school. "I always felt fortunate to have had people behind me who didn't hold me back. All I ever wanted to be was a nurse. I believe I was a good nurse. I was just born to be one."

Today, George Junior Republic has a slogan on their website that states, "We never stop believing." The reform school for boys was started in 1909 by William Ruben George with the dream of providing troubled youth the guidance, education and skills necessary to become productive citizens of society.

Donald Lobaugh could have indeed been described as one such troubled youth. He was one of eight children his mother was struggling to raise on her own since his father had been killed. Growing up with very little money and no male authority figure, Donald soon turned to a life that did anything but please his mother. Skipping school and smoking cigarettes was bad enough, but when Donald was arrested for car theft in 1940, his mother was at her wit's end. Having lived in the Freeport area, he was taken before the judge in Armstrong County who ruled that he be sent to George Junior Republic, a reform school for boys in Grove City, Pennsylvania.

He arrived September 12, 1940, with a big attitude and little sign of intention to cooperate. After six weeks of his contentious behavior, the school superintendent decided it was time something was done to try and control him. Although the way he decided to handle it back in 1940 is almost unheard of today, nevertheless, he turned the sixteen year old over his knee and "gave him a good spanking." No doubt this had little effect on Lobaugh, but what the superintendent did afterward certainly did impact him. He took the time to have a long talk with him and then took him to see a movie. Afterward, they shared ice cream sodas. It was his attention and kindness to the boy that undoubtedly impacted the change in Lobaugh's subsequent behavior, which resulted in his eventually becoming an excellent student and leader in school government.

Lobaugh tried to join the Army, Marines and Navy but because the armed forces were not in the habit of accepting those with police records, he was rejected by all three. It was only after the same school superintendent reassured military officials of Lobaugh's character that he was permitted to enlist in the Army.

He left George Junior Republic on February 11, 1942, four days after his 18th birthday and attended Basic Training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia. After 17 weeks, he was assigned to an engineering battalion. He subsequently volunteered for Army Jump School where he earned his Paratrooper's Wings. Thereafter he was assigned as a replacement infantryman with the 32nd Division and by early May of the same year, arrived on the coast of Aitape, New Guinea.

After weeks of vicious combat in the jungles of New Guinea, on July 21, the Japanese encircled and cut off a platoon of forty American soldiers, one of them Lobaugh. After assessing the situation, Lobaugh approached his sergeant with the idea that one man could keep the Japanese distracted enough to allow the rest to break through to safety. He then volunteered to be that one man.

Crawling close to the enemy line, he hurled a grenade toward the Japanese troops, exposing himself in the process. He then rushed the enemy, shooting the entire time he advanced. Lobaugh was repeatedly shot, but continued to move forward. According to a private in the same platoon, he knew he didn't have a chance of surviving. It was his own conscious decision to sacrifice his life in order to give the 39 others a chance to live. As a result of his selfless action and absolute bravery, all the men in his platoon reached safety.

Lobaugh was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor, the military's highest honor, by his commanding officer in the field. In May, 1945, the award was presented to Donald's mother in his honor.

Donald Lobaugh's story started with what anyone might have viewed as a grim outlook for his future. But one man's willingness to take the young boy under his wing diverted his life from one of crime and strife, to one that resulted in becoming far more than just a functioning citizen of society. The boy others destined as just another juvenile delinquent certainly proved otherwise. Lobaugh grew into a young man of character and amazing courage, who willingly made the ultimate sacrifice for the lives of his comrades and the freedom of his country. PFC Donald Lobaugh, only 20 years old at the time of the heroic act that cost his life, is proof that a little faith in someone certainly can go a long way.

Andy O'Leath



We live in a modern world where the advance of technology not only has changed the way we conduct our daily lives, but also has changed the way in which we wage war. Never before have we seen the degree of sophistication in the arsenal of weaponry that is available today. Currently, victory over the enemy is almost synonymous with annihilation of the enemy. And though we've been killing each other since the beginning of time, never before have our so-called enemies so greatly lacked the simple sanctity for human life that is evident in our current adversary in Iraq. For that reason, the manner of fighting to which our soldiers must submit is different from the conflicts of the past in which our fathers and grandfathers fought.

Army Specialist Andy O'Leath, the youngest veteran I interviewed, entered the service in February of 2001, at the age of 23. For him, enlisting was a way of getting away from ordinary small town life and a way of acquiring new skills. After Basic Training at Fort Knox, he was stationed at Fort Irwin, California as part of a Military Intelligence unit which trained other soldiers in preparation for deployment to Iraq. The National Training Center at Fort Irwin is comprised of 80 sq miles in the Mojave Desert which provides rugged surroundings and realistic challenges necessary for developing skills needed in Iraq and other foreign territory. Training usually consisted of 15 days camping out in the desert, while the remaining 15 days of the month were spent in classroom instruction.

Andy's unit planned and executed missions based on potential real-life scenarios of those that happen every day in Iraq. For instance, in order to teach proper procedure during travel by convoy, fake IEDs (improvised explosive device) that produced sound and flash were set up along roadways to illustrate the danger that could be encountered when proper procedure was not followed. Andy informed me that in Iraq, convoys always travel down the middle of the roadway for the simple fact that it is difficult for terrorists to dig up a concrete road to install a bomb, but very easy to do so beside it.

Maintaining the proper position / distance, as well as how to deal with other motorists, is another part of the protocol soldiers are trained to follow. This is crucial as terrorist techniques become more adaptive and varied. Insurgents will pay people to become “Sunday Drivers” whose purpose it is to slow down the pace of traveling military convoys long enough to detonate a chain of explosives. In a country with very low wages and a high rate of unemployment, terrorist jobs become appealing to decent but desperate human beings who are just trying to feed their families. In order to give an idea of the poverty that exists there, the Wall Street Journal reported that the median annual income in Iraq before the war started was equivalent to about \$700; that figure has drastically decreased since.

The U.S. military has posted signs along roadways that states all motorists must pull over to allow passage of military vehicles. Failure to comply means that first a verbal warning is issued via sounding the horn. If compliance is still not achieved, soldiers are to fire warning shots, called “grazing”, until the motorist yields. When what must have been a slight look of horror crossed his naïve interviewer’s face, Andy states “Pulling the trigger is part of being a soldier. When your job is to save the lives of everyone in that vehicle, you don’t sit still.” The purpose of TCPs (Traffic Control Points) is for random searching of vehicles. They are set up with staggered spike strips, set in a zigzag pattern. Traffic is monitored by light armored tanks. Common items found in the trunk of the random car in Iraq include wire, switches and other bomb-making devices. Passing through these checkpoints without stopping is next to impossible, since the decreased speed required to navigate through the course is also slow enough to give soldiers ‘a clean shot’, should that course of action become necessary. Suspects are taken into custody, questionable contents are confiscated, and the detainees are taken back to the post where they are questioned and turned over to the National Police Force.

The National Police Force is comprised of local men trained by U.S. Forces. Because of the high unemployment rate in Iraq, men turn out to do the job but it doesn’t come without high risk. Many are killed by insurgents before they are even given the chance to don the uniform, as police recruitment stations are often the target of frequent bombings.



Conditions in Iraq demand that soldiers must quickly learn to adapt their instincts and gain a hyper-awareness where Kill or Be Killed is the mantra. According to Andy, complacency kills. In America, if we are driving down the road and hear an explosion, our first instinct is to hit the brakes and look around to see what happened. “You have to shake that kind of reacting in the military,” he says. “You got to push through [what they call] the kill zone; 700 meters past the last explosive device. The same is true of a soldier walking down the street on a dismounted patrol....he doesn’t look around when he hears an explosion; he finds cover. You have to change everything you know. Our job was to continuously train soldiers to change these every day reactions.”

Another dangerous and unpredictable scenario often see in Iraq are protests. It is never known who the next suicide bomber may be. It could be a twelve year old boy, or a pregnant woman. Normal instinct would allow the typical American to perceive neither of these two persons as a threat because 1.) Children are always seen as innocent in our culture; and 2.) It’s natural for us to think a pregnant woman would protect the life of her unborn child. However, neither of these beliefs is founded in real Iraqi life. The terrorists count on our naïveté. Part of the training Andy helped supply was staged mock demonstrations where an “innocent” was planted in the crowd with a fake bomb strapped to his/her body. According to Andy, it is imperative that absolutely everyone be seen as a potential threat.

The Geneva Conventions are a set of treaties dating back to 1863 that outline recognized standards of international law during wartime. “The Iraqis don’t follow Geneva Convention,” Andy adds. “There is no honor in the way they fight. But we, as Americans, still must stand by it and follow the rules of the game. They live without any law or order; it’s complete mayhem. Everything is corrupt.”

Though he had already fulfilled his service agreement, one of his comrades whom he had become close friends with, had time left to fulfill on his enlistment and was being sent to Iraq. Because of this fact, Andy extended his contract, becoming part of the 2nd Division of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and deployed to Iraq in 2005.





It seemed incredulous to me that after managing to fulfill his enlistment without any major injuries to himself, he volunteered for service in a land as volatile as Iraq for the sole sake of a friend. “I wanted to be there,” he said. “I cared for him. He was being assigned to an Infantry battalion, and we weren’t Infantry soldiers to begin with. Infantry is the front line. Had it played out differently, if he would have been part of a different unit that had more protection, maybe I wouldn’t have gone...” he said.

As it turned out, Andy and Dave became even better friends once they got to Iraq. When one was assigned to a mission, the other one always volunteered for the same mission. It was their way of looking out for one another. Together they made the best of everything they did. Though Andy has brothers, there was something about Dave that he just clicked with. As he explained, “Our driveway in California [while at the National Training Center] was 36 miles long. At the end of it was a truck stop, so we’d end up driving the whole way to Barstow just for a cup of coffee. When we’d get the weekend off, we go to San Francisco or Las Vegas. Most guys didn’t want to do that kind of stuff because of the distance. How many people can you hop in a car with and endure a road trip like that? Most would find excuses---he has bad breath, or won’t stop talking, or doesn’t like the same kind of music as me. So you got to find someone you click with, and Dave was that guy.”

When not taking suspects into custody, on patrol, or any of the other various missions they were given in Iraq, Andy functioned as an air conditioning mechanic, while his buddy Dave worked as a generator mechanic. The two cross-trained one another, so they always kept themselves busy. Conditions in the desert were as bad as we might imagine, especially the intolerable heat. The highest temperature Andy was able to record was 144.5 degrees. Because the human body is not meant to withstand such extreme heat, the soldiers must stay well hydrated and are trained in starting IV’s, should their water supply run short or the need for increased hydration otherwise arise.

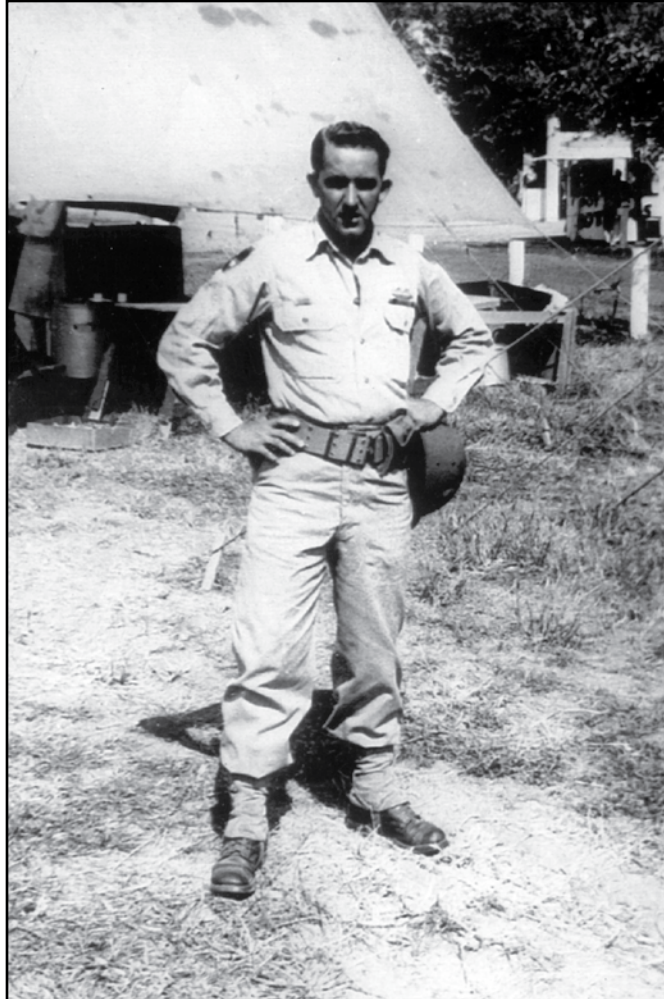
According to Andy, being a good soldier doesn’t take a special breed of man, but it does take an acceptance of his role. “The military isn’t the Boy Scouts,” he adds. Still, I couldn’t help but wonder if the manner he was forced to temporarily live might produce a very cynical view of life once he was discharged. He assures me that the discipline he learned while in the Army was a good frame of reference for growing up. “The military is gearing us for the job we have to do. I came away with a heightened awareness and respect for weapons, [knowing] they are always the last means of defense.”

I decide to press Andy with one final question...“What about peace?” “Life is what we make it,” he replies. If there is peace in your every day life, then you will be wealthy. If everyone lives like that, then we might have a chance.” He goes on to say that no army on the face of this earth can ever demand peace, or bring into being the state we all say we desire but do little to promote. This brings to mind something Dorothy Thompson said, an American journalist active in Nazi Germany during the 1930’s: “They have not wanted Peace at all; they have wanted to be spared war -- as though the absence of war was the same as peace.”

By the conclusion of our interview, I realized that the young man who sat before me not only thought deeply about the presence of war and peace in our world, but much more importantly, he thought about his own contribution to both those extremes. And if this world is ever going to change, that is an endeavor we all must be willing to undertake.



Angelo Pomatto



Merrill's Marauders was the popular name given to the U.S. Army's 5307th Composite unit active in the Asian Theatre of World War II in 1944. They were also known by code name Galahad. This distinguished unit penetrated deeply into enemy lines in Japanese-held Burma, overcoming constant struggles against harsh, jungle terrain; stifling heat and humidity; insects and leeches, as well as the diseases that ensued.

PFC Angelo Pomatto, a life-long resident of West Vandergrift, was only twenty years old when he served as a combat infantryman in the famed unit of General Frank D. Merrill. Angelo felt called to military service after hearing a radio report about the brutality of the Bataan Death March earlier that same year. So in October of 1942, he decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. Having been young and inquisitive about the Japanese, Angelo eagerly answered President Roosevelt's call of volunteers for a "dangerous and hazardous mission". The top secret organization with its spearhead intentions was a collaborative idea between President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Volunteers came from all over the United States, as well as from the jungles of Panama and Trinidad; others were veterans of the Guadalcanal and New Guinea Campaigns. Angelo reports that some were even recruited prisoners from Fort Leavenworth, receiving pardon in exchange for service in the dangerous campaign.

The newly formed unit arrived in Bombay, India on October 31, 1943. From there they proceeded into the dense jungles of central India where secret training operations were conducted.

The terrain in Burma proved itself to be extremely hazardous. Not only did they have to traverse the mountains, but they also had to penetrate through the deep, almost impassible jungles. Because they didn't have any vehicles, all supplies were carried on their own backs or by mules. Supplies arrived via airdrop. Before the campaign was over, the men had walked over 1000 miles through the rugged terrain. The combat in Burma lasted from late February until August, 1944.

In their beginning, Merrill's Marauders had almost 3000 men in its ranks. Angelo informs me that there were three main operations they took part in. The first of their missions was to hasten the enemy's withdrawal south of Walawbum by cutting the supply lines to forward troops. This decreased their numbers to approximately 2500. The second mission was Shaduzup and Inkangahtawng. It resulted in a loss of 450 more, most due to wounds and illness. With 2000 men left in their ranks, they proceeded to the third and last mission, seizing the airfield at Myitkyina. Only 1300 of the men reached the airfield, the majority of them suffering from disease and needing evacuation to medical facilities. By the time the airfield was taken, only 200 of the original 3000 Merrill's Marauders remained.

Despite the unimaginable conditions they were forced to tolerate, Angelo fondly reminisces about the "Spirit of Burma". He has many albums filled with photographs and mementos that outline the adventure of a lifetime.

He recalls a time when he was forced to jump into some uncovered graves in order to find cover. "That was a tough one," he said. "But my guys said, 'Do it. They're not going to bite you--they're dead!'" Just then U.S. forces bombed the enemy and the entire hill shook, but Angelo and his comrades survived.

Another time was right around Good Friday when they found themselves surrounded. There were two other companies stationed a considerable distance away, but they were outnumbered by the Japanese 8:1. "You know what I called that?" he asked. "Custer's Last Stand! They had a whole regiment; we only had a company! By the time the reinforcements got there, it was practically all over."

This same week, Angelo's unit was hit hard with artillery. Angelo and his buddy jumped into a foxhole for protection. When it was all over, both men crawled out and Angelo realized he had gotten hit in the arm. "A little scratch," he called it. Holding up his rifle in its sling, he realized the entire rifle was blown to bits. "Now why am I here?" he asks. "It was a miracle!"

It was rather common that soldiers would often strip the slain Japanese of their guns and swords, keeping them as personal souvenirs. On one occasion, Angelo and one of his buddies surrounded a Japanese soldier. His buddy took the pistol and then extracted the beautiful sword from its holder. It was some prize.

Though killing the enemy was part of their job, Angelo remarks: "I got tears in my eyes the first one I got. But the guys said to me 'What's the matter with you? Pearl Harbor---remember Pearl Harbor!'" Though Angelo enjoyed the adventure he met in Burma, "once you start seeing blood, you were wishing you were out of there," he said. Though many men felt the same way, they had no alternative but to stick it out.

Ed Saul

During one of their missions, they had been pinned down by Japanese forces for sixteen days. They had no water or food and very little ammunition. They were preparing to pull out but the Japanese were already on their tail. Then the shooting started. His buddy got hit in shoulder, so they headed for the hill...that's when the shooting really started. The U.S. Air Force came to their rescue with two B-38's. "I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the Air Force," said Angelo.

Angelo had a nickname in the service. Because he was young in both appearance and actual years, the men called him Babyface. "Hey Babyface, when are you gonna start shaving?" they'd tease.

Cigarettes were a hot commodity in the service. Even though he didn't smoke, Angelo saved his ration and would trade them for food.

"I could get all the food I wanted," he said. "Canned peaches, all kinds of fruit, pork n' beans, Spam. All the guys would laugh! They were my good buddies though.."

Angelo also had the opportunity of encountering Burmese primitives, commonly referred to as jungle headhunters. These people evidently retreated to the depths of the jungle to escape Chinese and India rule, but proved to be wonderful allies to our soldiers.

Mr. Pomatto was discharged in November of 1945 and worked at Allegheny Ludlum Steel thereafter. As "one of those shy guys", he didn't have a girlfriend until he was 23 years old. As a matter of fact, he met his wife on a blind date. She admired a ring he had gotten in Calcutta, India. After two months of dating, she announced that she wanted to wear his ring, to which Angelo replied, "Ok, wear it." After two more months of dating passed, (perhaps she thought Angelo was too much of a gentleman to ever make a move?) this same girl announced that she was making an official marriage proposal to him. That suited Angelo just fine. According to him, "I had already fallen for her."

Three men in Angelo's company received the Medal of Honor for their efforts. General Frank Merrill suffered his second heart attack during the last phase of the Burma campaign before finally contracting malaria, which led to his death.

The Marauders have the extremely rare distinction of having every member of the unit receive the Bronze Star Medal and in June 1944, the unit was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation. Angelo himself received many medals, including the Chinese Government Memorial Medal, American Campaign Service Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Infantry Badge; and of course, the Bronze Star and Distinguished Unit Citation.



Ed Saul was a small town farm boy from Apollo who, prior to his Army enlistment, hadn't seen much of the world. As a matter of fact, he had rarely been out of Westmoreland County. He didn't particularly enjoy school and by the age of 16, convinced his parents to allow him to quit in order to work as a truck driver and a farm worker.

Saul had a brother-in-law who was a pilot in the military and it was he who convinced him to enlist in the Army Air Force immediately. As a farmer's son, he could have gotten deferred from the draft, but instead he willingly enlisted. As was the case with so many other young men during that time, he considered it an exciting, new adventure for a boy not yet 18 years old.

Ed Saul enlisted in the Army Air Force in December of 1943 and became a Staff Sergeant with the 19th Bombardment Group. Throughout his military career, he flew 13 missions from Guam to Japan; one of which stands out in memory...

It was during their eleventh mission over Japan that their B-29 plane was damaged during hostile enemy fire. When attempting to land back in Guam, the landing gear failed to come down and they knew they were in for a rough ride. Without the aid of wheels, Saul's plane had to make a "belly landing", skidding 9/10 mile on the runway before finally stopping. (Note the enclosed picture: the bent propellers resulted from making contact with the runway.)

"What was always amusing to me about that story" says Mrs. Saul, "was that the discipline in the military was such that prior to my husband pushing the lieutenant out of the plane, he said 'Pardon me, Sir', and then gave him a shove! The lieutenant laughed about that for as long as he lived."

On Saturday afternoons during the war, NBC Radio in Chicago broadcast a program called "The Army Hour". The show functioned to keep up the morale of families who waited back home. It was on this show that the captain of Saul's crew was interviewed about their irregular landing. The interview stressed that the danger of explosion upon landing had been avoided due to the foaming of the runway. However, what was not mentioned during that interview was the fact that one week before another plane made the same type of belly landing, but no one managed to survive. Today, Mrs. Saul's mementos include a taped account of that 1945 broadcast, as well as diaries from the top turret gunner and navigator of her husband's crew.

As is the case with so many aging World War II veterans, only three of the twelve men who flew together as part of the 19th Bombardment Group remain. According to Mrs. Saul, her husband's crew mates came from all over the country. The tail gunner was from Berlin, Pennsylvania and the bombardier was a college student from Florida. His life was perhaps changed more than the other young men's because had it not been for the war, he would have been a Major League pitcher. The captain was considered 'an old guy' (at the age of 28) and always called the younger men "his boys". The group blended together very well and was like a band of brothers.

Ed Saul received numerous medals for his service, including an Air Medal w/3 Clusters, Good Conduct and Overseas Medal. After his military career ended in February 1946, he finished his high school education and in 1948, married his wife, Edwardine. Together they raised a son and a daughter. He worked as a coal stripper until 1957, at which time he established the RED.E.MIX Concrete business with his wife, which they operated for forty years.



William Sturges



William Sturges arrived in this world during a major snowstorm that rendered the roadways from the family home in Spring Church to the hospital in New Kensington almost impassible. As a matter of fact, his laboring mother was not completely confident that they would arrive at the hospital in time and considered that her son might make his debut in the backseat of their automobile. But as it turned out, they made it in time and Linda Sturgess delivered a healthy baby boy. Days later upon discharge from the hospital, the new family made the same snowy trek back home on roads that were still barely traversable.

That same little boy grew into a quiet, young man who had a loving rapport with children. Throughout his short life, he repeatedly found himself surrounded by children, whether as a volunteer junior camp counselor, a bicycle builder for the less fortunate, or an American soldier handing out lollipops to the children of Iraq. He was a loving and caring individual who could rarely be seen without a smile; however, he did have a run-in with the police while still a boy...

The amusing story starts like this: Once while working as a math tutor for the children in the neighborhood, he chose roller skating as his mode of transportation. It just so happened that a state policeman passed by while Bill was en route. Because roller skating is not permitted along highways, young Bill was 'pulled over', though not arrested. The policeman took him back to the neighbor's house and called his mother stating that he "had William in custody." From that day on, the family teased him endlessly anytime he went out the door with his roller skates.

As a student, Bill was at the top of his class. Because he had plans of pursuing a degree in Computer Programming, he saw the Army as an opportunity to earn money for college. Although his parents would have funded his education, he was the type of person who preferred taking care of things for himself and was more interested in helping others than being helped himself. Although he was somewhat of a loner, Bill was a young man beyond his years in maturity and wisdom. "He had his friends, but he was much more of a leader than a follower" says his mother, Linda.



Bill first entered the Army Reserve in June of 1998 then switched to the regular Army in August of 2000. It was at this time that he was married then transferred to Texas to be with his new bride, who was also enlisted. Bill was happy when he left home that last time because he knew he was going to be near his wife. He felt he could protect her that way. Both eventually were deployed to Iraq; he as part of the 9th Cavalry, and her as an Emergency Medic.

Most of his time was spent in the field and required being awake for long periods of time. When the soldiers came in, they just wanted to sleep, though some leisure time activities occasionally took place and included games and card playing. Since they weren't in a place equipped with showers, cleaning up was limited to what could be managed with a container of baby wipes.

Bill was bothered by the conditions in Iraq, namely the way young girls were treated. According to his experience, once girls reached a certain age, they were required to submit to the males of society, or risk being beaten. "He said [the girls] were just so innocent; it was heart-breaking," states his mother.

Linda only got to talk to her son twice while he was stationed in Iraq. Once was on Christmas Day, but the connection was very poor. He had another opportunity to call again on New Years Day (2004), which ended up being the last time she heard his voice. He was killed in action later that same month in a car bomb explosion in Khalidiyah.



Linda informs me of Bill's close friendships with some of his fellow soldiers. As a matter of fact, some of those same men died in the vehicle explosion that took her son's life. "They were really close; like brothers," she says.

Bill earned a Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman's Badge, among others. "It is just a shame that these boys have to wait until something bad happens before they receive these awards. I think they should get recognition just for being there."

When I ask her how losing her son may have affected her patriotism, she replies "Well, you still have those [tough] days. We've lost a couple of good friends. We're not taking any of our flags down until all our kids come home."

Army Specialist William Sturgess was more than a son to his mother. He was also a friend. Even though his years on this earth were not long, he was one of those people who constantly put others first and was always willing to listen to a friend in need.



On January 17, 2004, Bill turned 24 years old while serving in Iraq. Just one week later was the tragic explosion that took his life. Ironically, on the day his body was returned home for burial, there had been a horrendous snowstorm in the region that made travel equally as difficult as the day he came into this world. Linda recalls, "It seems really odd that it was the same as the day he was born. It went from a very happy event to a very tragic one, but the weather was exactly the same."



Joseph Swast



How often have any of us ever thought about what might remain most memorable in our lives if we were fortunate enough to live 99 years? "That's an awful long time" says West View Manor resident and World War II veteran, Joseph Swast.

But if anyone would know, it would be Joe. This sweet, smiling, one-year-shy-of-a-century-old vet doesn't look a day over seventy and is alert and very cordial as he informs me of his long civilian career as an area butcher and Army career as a mess sergeant during World War II.

Being a butcher and a mess sergeant, I guess it isn't any wonder that a large portion of our interview kept coming back to the topic of food. I must admit I was a little intimidated beforehand; aware of the potential of being bombarded with what was sure to be a whole plethora of military knowledge. But Joe seemed to have fonder memories to share with me, namely, about food.

Not having foreseen this dietary diversion our interview would take, I did my research ahead of time on World War II, and namely, the famed Battle of the Bulge of which Joe was a part. I read horrific accounts of combat in rugged, snowy terrain and freezing temperatures. I expected to hear the worst from him as he relayed his experiences to me. But Joe and I found ourselves talking not about the demanding existence of soldiers during that phase of World War II, but instead talking about entrees and appetizers. We chatted casually about the proximity of certain good restaurants, discussing the menu and finding out that we are not alone when it comes to filling up on appetizers and taking the meal home.

Amidst our dialogue on delicacies, I did manage to find out that Joe was drafted when he was 34 years old. “Just under the wire,” as he says. “One more year and I wouldn’t have gone.” He recounts the story of how he made the choice between Army and Navy:

“A bunch of guys went down to the old post office building in Apollo for their physical. The recruiter asked if we wanted Army or Navy. ‘If you go Navy, you leave tomorrow; Army, you got 2 weeks.’” Joe replied without hesitation, “Give me the Army.”

Joe was a Sergeant who started out at Camp Meade and went on to Camp Edwards. He boarded the Queen Elizabeth (along with 20,000 other men) bound for Scotland. From there he eventually journeyed to England, then across the English Channel to France, Holland, Belgium and Germany. He doesn’t say much about the battle that has been coined The Bloodiest Battle of World War II. The only remark he made was “We had some trouble there.” Trouble indeed...

On December 16, 1944, it came as a total surprise when Hitler forced an invasion across the Allied front from southern Belgium to Luxembourg. Our men were outnumbered ten to one in some areas. By Christmas, the Germans had advanced 50 miles into Allied lines creating a deadly ‘bulge’ into our defenses.

The men battled in sub-zero temperatures. With equipment not suitable for such extreme conditions, men fought against weather almost as forcefully as they fought against the enemy.

Joe remembers the heavy snowfall and sleeping outside in double sleeping bags in an attempt to keep from frostbite. He informed me that sometimes they would have the luxury of coming into a town and taking over an entire hotel for sleeping and cooking purposes.

As more and more men died in battle, replacements had to be found. Often times training was cut short for new recruits, and those injured were returned to the front lines before they were physically ready. By the time the Battle of the Bulge ended in late January 1945, nearly 80,000 Allied soldiers were killed, seriously injured or captured.

One of the worst experiences of his time in war was being in the villages while trucks passed by devoted to picking up the bodies that littered the streets. “They would throw them on the truck like logs or something; hundreds of them. It was scary.” The memory clearly haunts him still, as he quickly changes the subject back to one with fonder memories--his duties as a mess sergeant.

Joe functioned as both a soldier in the field “shooting the big guns”, and also as head cook. “We cooked for about 1200 men and I was in charge of it all. The captain came along one day and said ‘Hey Swast, you’re in charge here. Any trouble, come see me.’”

That order made Joe responsible for 4 mess sergeants and 20 cooks, working day and night. While in the field, it was necessary that they kept three garbage cans of water boiling at all times, fueled by a gasoline fires underneath. Everything had to be kept clean in order to safeguard against food-borne illness. “That was a job in itself. It was different out there, but we managed.”

Joe was mostly responsible for feeding Headquarters, which was comprised of the military officers. When afforded the luxury of cooking in hotels, they used huge vats in the basement which enabled them to cook 25 hams at a time. All food either came out of a can or was frozen. Meat came in 60 lb boxes and was sliced into manageable portions. For the men in the field, there were only field rations—non-perishable food products packaged like Cracker Jack. Sometimes they’d contain small tin cans of meat, but even then, it had to be eaten cold.

Although he could be quoted as saying “War is hell all the way around”, for the most part Joe considers the three years he spent in the military to have been a great experience. He informs me he was lucky enough to never have been wounded and thus never received a Purple Heart. When I ask him about the other medals he is sure to have earned, he replied that he “couldn’t really remember, but seems to recall there being a few from the Battle of the Bulge.”

I wonder if it is really forgetfulness, or if he is just being modest. After all, he had no difficulty remembering the three pairs of wooden shoes he bought in Holland in 1945, and the way locals clunked around in them with ease. Perhaps memory is indeed selective...

If it wouldn’t have been for the draft, Joe says he wouldn’t have enlisted in the Army, claiming “that’s not my cup of tea.”

As the interview winds up, I had to ask him his secret to staying so young after all these years...

“Good whiskey and wild women!” he replies with a hearty laugh.

Although he is joking, at this point in our conversation I can’t help but imagine his long life to be like one gigantic plate that always had room for a second helping. As memory goes, I guess sometimes we cherish yesterday’s meal; sometimes we prefer to forget it. But as we are eating, we can’t help but experience the flavor of whatever has been put on our plate.

I could have easily talked for another hour with this vibrant soul, but go figure--It was lunch time! And believe me, I knew better than to get in the path of his wheelchair on its way to the dining room!

Edwin Albert Zimmerman



Edwin Albert and George Washington Zimmerman

In 1832, a man by the name of Daniel Zimmerman bought a parcel of land in Allegheny Township, one mile south of Leechburg. The property contained 216 acres and was purchased for a mere \$1400. He built a two-story brick home in which he raised his family. The house still stands today, although no longer in the possession of the Zimmerman family. Jacob and George Washington Zimmerman were two of Daniel's sons. Jacob became a Lutheran minister and George became a farmer, managing a portion of his father's land.

On September 5, 1864, George enlisted in the Army for a term of one year. He served as a private in Company B, 6th Regiment, PA Heavy Artillery Volunteers. No other war has claimed more American lives than the Civil War, with deaths numbering over 600,000, and injuries amounting to over 375,000. A high percentage of soldiers died from infection that occurred after being injured in battle, since there was no knowledge of bacteriology or antibiotics at the time. Such was the fate of George Washington Zimmerman, who became ill in February of 1865, while at Camp Reynolds. He was

transported to Augur Hospital near Alexandria where he died from a streptococcal infection.

More information remains about his nephew, Edwin Albert Zimmerman, also from Allegheny Township. Born in 1849, he joined the Army at the age of 15, serving as a drummer boy. Boys were regularly recruited as drummers during war time. It was seen as a position of glory, and boys often ran away from home to join the ranks. Teenage boys performing this important role in battlefield communications freed up the men for combat duty. Although age restrictions were in place, they were very often ignored, and boys as young as 10 or 11 years old could be found in the thick of battle.

Surviving family records indicate that Edwin Zimmerman had an ardor for writing and enjoyed keeping a diary. Because of this, much of the history of his life was preserved. Among his daily accounts is a discussion of the imminent threat of war prior to the attack on Fort Sumter in April of 1861. He also wrote numerous letters to his family during his months of service defending the North.

A simple, yet poignant diary account illustrates the young boy's passion for the unionization of the states and the future of America. It was written April 3, 1864, just prior to his enlistment in the Army:

I am 15 years old this day. United we stand; Divided we fall. One Country. One People. One Destiny.

On Tuesday, August 30, 1864, Edwin bid family and friends goodbye and headed off to war. He became a private in Company H of the 6th Regiment, PA Heavy Artillery.

A month into his service, he sent a letter to his father to indicate that "he liked soldiering very well and was more content than when in school." But he also spoke of the limited rations soldiers received, as well as the dangerous involvement in guarding the railroad from the Rebels. As is probably the case with any soldier during war, he also appealed for continued letters and expedient response from family and friends.

In a subsequent letter to his brother, it's apparent that he is reflecting back on more peaceful days: "We had bully times back then, but I guess I didn't know that as well as I do now." Edwin undoubtedly felt honored to be a part of the war and reminds his brother of the value of a life whose days are not reduced to the monotony of feeding the livestock and cleaning the stables, but rather of "battling for what is right."

Having seen the effects of battle, in a later letter to his grandfather, he speaks about the lack of reason found in war. We can only speculate if he was speaking generally, but one exclusive aspect of the Civil War was that it had the potential of pitting brother-against-brother or father-against-son, depending on each man's state of residence.

Much correspondence of the same continued between Edwin and his family until the end of the war. Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9th, 1865 and a few days later, Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theater. Edwin returned home from the war on June 13th, 1865.

Having lived through the brutality of war, sadly, Edwin succumbed to what was suspected to be tetanus and died April 5th, 1868; a mere 2 days after his 19th birthday.

Through Edwin's many letters and diary entries we are given a view of the Civil War through the eyes of a soldier, still himself a boy. He wrote with passion concerning America, and joined the ranks of those who helped ensure her mission of becoming One Nation under God.

Edwin's drum still survives, and is in the possession of descendants of the Zimmerman family.



William E. Sweitzer Jr.
Vietnam War

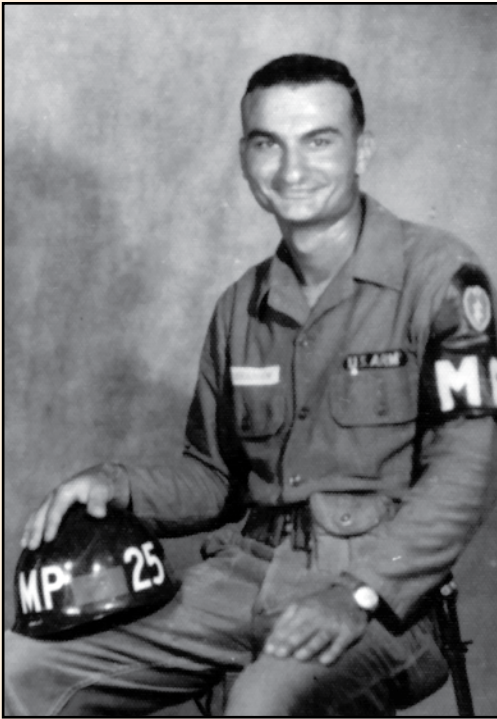
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Biographies and Photos

Mitchell G. Abraham

Hometown: Ambridge
Date of Birth: 2/7/1943
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 10/28/1964 - 10/ 20/1966; (4 additional years Army Reserve)
Unit: 25th Military Police Company, 25th Infantry Division
Rank: SP-4
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Attleboro, Rolling Thunder
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Combat Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Certified Expert Rifleman.

Mitch Abraham served with the 25th Division in Hawaii from 1965 to 1966 as both a combat field MP and on post at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, Hawaii. In January 1966, he shipped out with the entire 25th Division on the U.S.S. Pope to Vung Tau, Vietnam. 1st 2nd and 3rd Brigade drove to strategy area to the new base camp Cu Chi, just northwest of Saigon. It became famous for the 75 mile underground tunnel complex built by the Viet-Cong.



Anthony “Tony” Adamik

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/6/1922
Branch of Service: Coast Guard
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 9/6/1943 - 2/26/1946
Unit: Troop Transport
Battles/Campaigns: Okinawa
Rank: Seaman First Class

Tony Adamik attended boot camp in Alameda, CA; Beach Patrol in Port Orford and Port Angeles; and Water Front Patrol in Astoria, OR. He was then transferred to Camp Shoemaker in Stockton, California. He boarded the General W. M. Black which transported the 77th Pennsylvania Division to Honolulu. He attended Amphibious Warfare School and was assigned to LST 831 on which he made several trips through the Panama Canal transporting troops to the Pacific. He also participated in the Easter Sunday invasion of Okinawa. He continued to transport troops throughout the South Pacific and Japan until his discharge February 26, 1946.



Patricia J. Ameno

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/17/1951
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: April 1971 - November 1982
Rank: Boatswains Mate, 2nd Class (E-5)
Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Expert Pistol, Expert Rifle

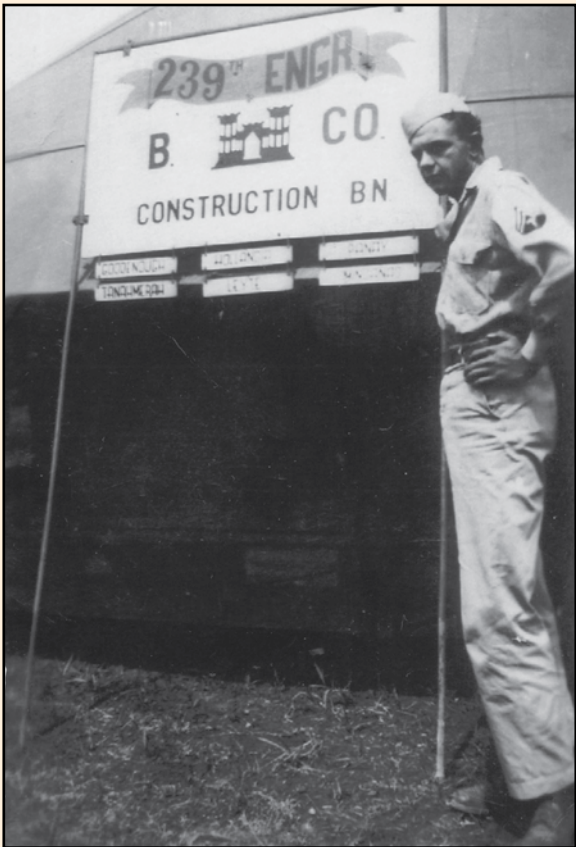
Patricia was the first female Boatswains Mate in Europe.



Louis Altman



Merle Anthony



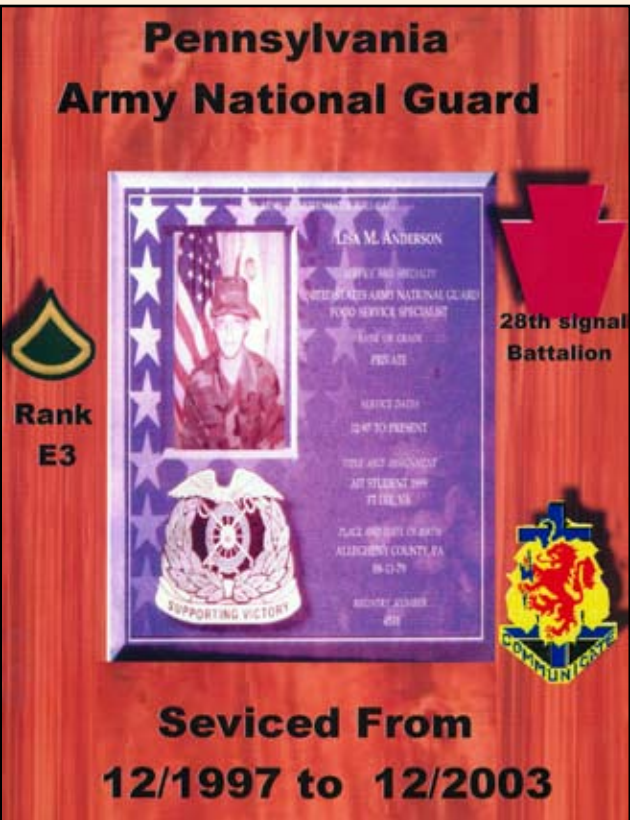
Edward Earl Artman

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 12/20/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: February 1944 - June 1946
Unit: U.S.S. Philadelphia and Merchant Marine ships
Rank: Gunner Third Class
Service-Related Injury: Hearing loss

Edward Artman was in dangerous waters in the Suez Canal and the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, Arabian, and Red Seas for approximately seven months.



Lisa Anderson



James Allera

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 11/05/27
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Post World War II
Date of Service: 2/7/1946 - 5/18/1948
Unit: Medical Corp
Rank: T/5 Corporal
Awards: Good Conduct Ribbon

James Allera served during the post-World War II era caring for the returning wounded from overseas. As an 18 year old lad who had never been away from home, he found it to be very rewarding and an experience all young men should witness.



John Bafik

Jerry Baylor

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 12/30/1946
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: May 1966 - June 1970
Unit: D Company, 7th Engineer Battalion
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal

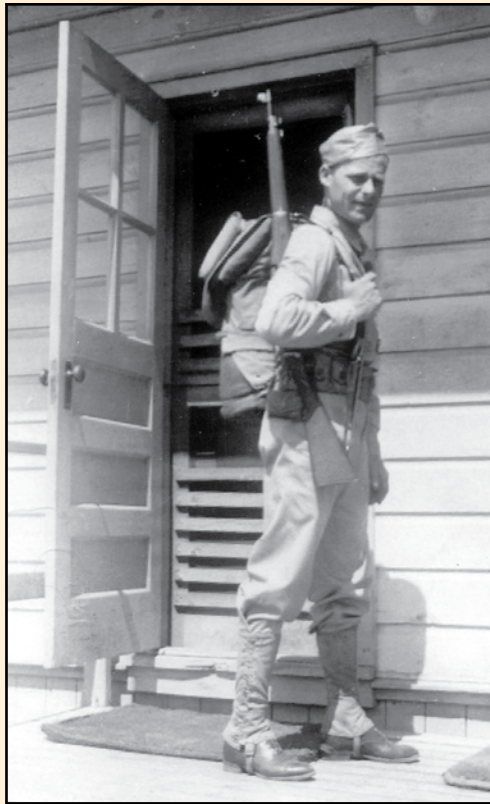
Jerry Baylor served in Vietnam as a Combat Engineer from 1966-1967. He worked with mines, booby traps, and sweep teams, as well as guided new bases in building bunkers and fortifications.

Joseph F. Baka

Hometown: Leechburg; Charleroi
Date of Birth: 1/10/1937
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: August 1955 - October 1977
Unit: Submarines, Amphibious, Naval Air Forces
Battles/Campaigns: TET Offensives
Rank: YNC (E7)

Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

Joe Billock



Harold Dean Barclay

Joseph F. Azzarone

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 11/6/1923
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/21/1943 - 1/19/1946
Unit: Infantry Regiment, M Company, 38th Division
Battles/Campaigns: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign, Philippines Liberation
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal w/3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon w/1 Bronze Star, World War II Victory Medal

Joseph F. Azzarone served in the Army from August 1943 until January of 1946. He fought in World War II during the Asiatic Pacific Campaign and the Philippine Liberation. He used a better part of his life to defend his country, making many friends and losing many more along the way. He fought for the freedom and liberty we enjoy today.



Virgil J. "Skip" Bashline

George V. Belles

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/26/1948
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1967 - 1969
Unit: 1st Marine Air Wing, Bravo Company
Rank: E3
Awards: Sharpshooter
Service Related Injury: Disabled; Agent Orange complications

After returning from Vietnam, George Belles worked at Allegheny Ludlum for a total of 32 years. He married Debbie Cook in 1976 and they have a son and grandson.

George enjoys his family, church and community activities.



Rudolph F. Baynar

Hometown: Ford City
Date of Birth: 12/7/1915
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 5/16/1941 - 8/7/1945
Unit: 550th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company Field Artillery
Battles/Campaigns: CO33 & 40 WD45, Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, Central Europe
Rank: Tec 3
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Service Medal, EAME Service Medal w/6 Bronze Service Stars

Rudolph Baynar graduated from Ford City High School in 1935. While in the Army, he was a mechanic, 3rd Echelon, performing field maintenance on all types of vehicles. He also made unit replacements and overhauled assemblies. On October 10, 1946, he married Mary Malec and together they had three daughters and two grandchildren.



Sylvester A. Begolly

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/17/1914
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1/30/1942 - 1/28/1946
Unit: A Company, 18th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: N. Africa, Sicily, England, France, Belgium, Germany
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Purple Heart w/Oakleaf Cluster, Silver Star, Bronze Star
Service-Related Injury: 6/15/1944 and 10/8/1944

Syl was born in 1914 and lived in Vandergrift all his life. He married MaryLou Makowski and had one son, Monsignor Michael Begolly of Mount Saint Peter Church in New Kensington. He served his country proudly and was wounded valiantly defending our freedom.

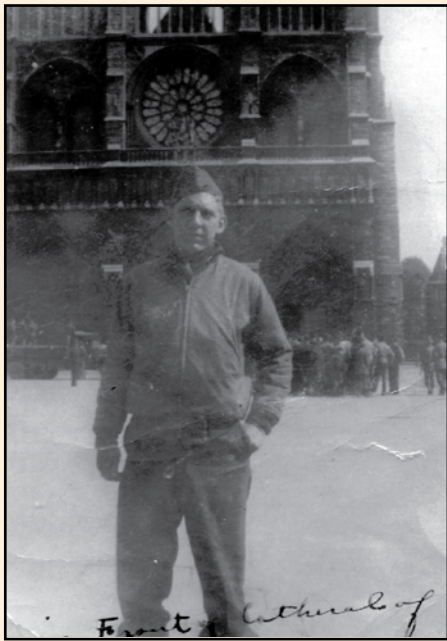
Paul L. Black

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/15/1929
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 9/18/1946 - 9/17/1949
Unit: 1st Marine Division, Aircraft Fleet Marine Force, Western Pacific
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, China Service, WWII Victory Medal

Floyd G. Bertelle



Cpl. John R. Bernatt



Andrew A. Bisaha



Mark Bramlet
US Navy 1983 - 1987



Pete Blanciak

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/10/1918
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Unit: 6th Fleet, U.S.S. Finch and U.S.S. Johnson
Battles/Campaigns: Atlantic and Pacific
Rank: Seaman 3rd Class
Awards: Navy Occupation Service, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, 1939-1945 Star, Atlantic Star, Pacific Star

Pete Blanciak was born in North Vandergrift in 1918. He was married for 57 years to Rose (Yurchick) Blanciak. He worked for 38 years at U.S. Steel in Vandergrift and is a father, grand-father and great-grandfather. He is a member of Vandergrift Golf Club, Kiskiminitas Watershed Association, Austin Costello Sportsman’s Club and the Federation of Fly Fishermen. He enjoys fishing, fly tying, golf, gardening, camping and attending his grandson’s hockey games.



Stephen Blanciak

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/4/1922
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: WWII
Date of Service: 3/27/1943-5/17/1946
Rank: SK 2/C
Awards: Pacific Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, American Theater Ribbon, Victory Medal



Thomas A. Blanciak

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 1/18/1946
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1968 - 1970
Unit: 6th Special Forces Group (SFG), Fort Bragg, NC; 5th SFG, Na Trang, Vietnam
Rank: Specialist 5
Awards: Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Bronze Star, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Parachute Jump Wings

Thomas Blanciak was born in Vandergrift in 1946 and now resides in Leechburg. He has been married to Christine (France) Blanciak for 39 years and is both a father and a grandfather. He graduated from High Point College, NC and worked as a shift manager for U.S. Steel for 32 years. He is a member of the Vandergrift Golf Club, Kiskiminitas Watershed Association, Austin Costello Sportsman’s Club, Vandergrift VFW and the National Rifle Association. He enjoys fly fishing, fly tying, golf, camping, crossword/Sudoku puzzles and all sports.



Frank Bodnar

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: July 28, 1922
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Purple Heart



Robert J. Bodnar

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 11/11/1960
Branch of Service: Marines
Date of Service: 12/28/1978 - 12/27/1984
Rank: Sergeant E5

James A. Bodnar

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: December 1945
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1963 - 1967
Unit: 1st Marine Air Wing; MCRD, Parris Island
Rank: Sergeant E5

H. Lloyd Black

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 4/8/1892
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War I
Date of Service: 1917-1919
Unit: East Company, 320th Infantry, 80th Division
Battles/Campaigns: St. Michael, Meuse, Argonne
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Left leg injured.

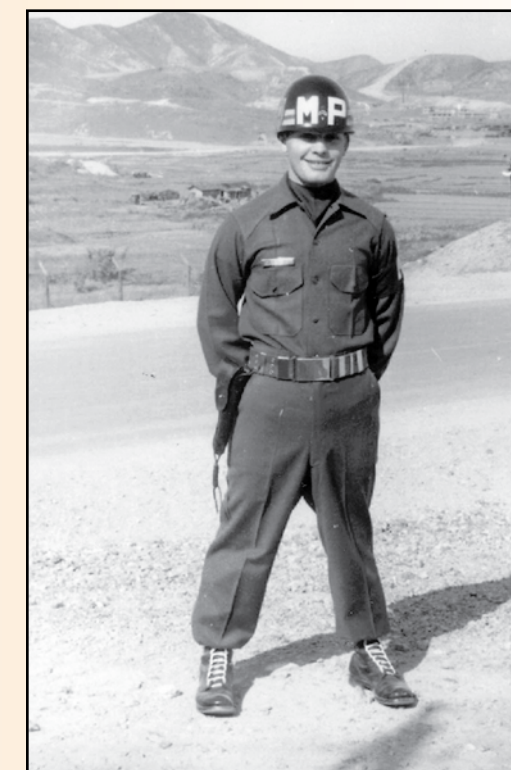
Harry Bodnar

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: September 1924
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: April 1944 - October 1944
Unit: MCRD, San Diego
Rank: Private First Class



Robert "Dutch" Berberich

Hometown: Munhall
Date of Birth: 2/15/1933
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: March 1953 - March 1955
Unit: Military Police
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation



Henry J. Bitar Jr.

Hometown: New Kensington
Date of Birth: 3/15/1938
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
Date of Service: 5/17/1960 - 3/31/1998
Unit: 339th General Hospital / 339th CSH
Rank: O6

Henry Bitar was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in an early commissioning program while in Dental school. Upon graduation, he was commissioned a 1st Lieutenant in the Dental Corp. He served two years active duty at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In July of 1963, he was assigned to 317th MedDet-Dental Service; and in 1965 to the 339th General Hospital. He was promoted to Col-06 in August of 1980, and retired at age 60, March 31, 1998.



Aloysius Raymond Bolcar

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/12/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 3/25/1943 - 3/16/1946
Unit: 1635th Engineering Construction Battalion
Rank: Technician 5th Grade (Corporal)

Al Bolcar enlisted to fly in the Army Air Corps. After basic training, he began pre-flight indoctrination. As the war in the Pacific intensified, the Army decided to move a large number of men from the flight training pipeline to fill critical needs in the Infantry. As ordered, Al joined the Army Engineers and headed to the Pacific. He served on Okinawa and Ie Shima, departing the Pacific Theater in February of 1946. He was discharged from service one month later.



Tracey M. Braymiller (Stoughton)

Hometown: West Lawn, PA
Date of Birth: 1/29/1968
Branch of Service: Coast Guard
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 1987- Present
Unit: 5th Coast Guard Dist., USCG Station, Hampton Roads, VA
Battles/Campaigns: Desert Storm, Desert Shield, War on Terror
Rank: Petty Officer First Class
Awards: National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal



James Andrew Bolcar

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/2/1949
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Desert Storm (1991); Operation Allied Force (Serbia/Kosovo 1999)
Date of Service: 6/9/1971 - 5/1/2000
Unit: Numerous Medium Attack Squadrons and Aircraft Carriers
Rank: Captain

Jim Bolcar graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1971 and was designated a Naval Aviator in October, 1973. He flew the A-6 Intruder aircraft from various aircraft carriers and commanded Attack Squadron 35 in 1988/89. He was the Executive Officer of the Aircraft Carrier USS America (CV 66) during Desert Storm and commanded USS Nashville (LPD 13) in 1995/96. In his final assignment, he commanded Amphibious Squadron Two in 1998/99 and participated in the NATO-led Operation Allied Force. He retired from the Navy in May 2000 and lives in Virginia Beach, VA.



William B. Beatty

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/30/1983
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Date of Service: 2/17/2004 - 2/17/2005
Unit: 458th Engineer Battalion
Rank: E5
Awards: Army Achievement Medal

William Beatty enlisted in the service in order to join the many family members who preceded him. "Engineers lead the way"

Henry L. Bucci

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/6/1914
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/25/1942 - 10/2/1945
Battles/Campaigns: Africa, Italy, France, Germany
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, 6 Battle Stars, WWII Victory Medal



Ronald V. Boyden

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 9/18/1941
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: December 1958 - December 1978
Unit: Infantry
Rank: Staff Sergeant E-6
Awards: 2 Bronze Stars, Combat Infantry Badge

Ronald Boyden had a twenty year Army career; ten years of which he served as a Drill Instructor. He was also a jungle expert and retired as Dining Facility Manager. He continues to serve as a volunteer at the V.A. Hospital.



Gino Michael Bottegal

Hometown: Avonmore
Date of Birth: 11/27/1930
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 4/24/1952 - 4/9/1954
Unit: 109th Hospital Division, Salzburg, Austria
Rank: Sergeant

Gino Bottegal is the eldest of three sons born to the late Assunta Maccagnan and Fiori Bottegal. He was born November 27, 1930 and spent his youth in Avonmore, until he was drafted into the Army in 1952. He married Betty Jane Liska in 1958 and moved to East Vandergrift where they raised 2 daughters. He retired from Mine Safety Appliances after 38 years of service and now has 4 grandchildren.



Corey Borello

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/22/1986
Branch of Service: Marine Reserves
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: 10/2/2007 - Present
Unit: 4th Marine Division Truck Company
Rank: Lance Corporal



Louis Bopp



Lawrence Murray Burns

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/17/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Unit: 480 Motor Ambulance Company
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of the Bulge
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: European/African/Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, WWII Army of Occupation Medal, American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal

Lawrence Burns graduated from Vandergrift High School in 1942 and Penn State University in 1947. He married Twila Kennedy in 1945 and is the father of 5 daughters. He also has 6 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. He is retired from U.S. Steel in Vandergrift as a Division Supervisor in Production Planning, and is a 71 year member of Vandergrift Presbyterian Church.

Sam A. Cagna

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/23/1940
Branch of Service: Navy
Date of Service: 7/23/1958 - 8/1961
Rank: E5



Martin Peter Chovanes

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 8/26/1920
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: August 12, 1942
Unit: Medical Technician
Rank: Corporal

Savino Cagna

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1885
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Unit of Service: Cavalry
Rank: Private First Class

Stanley J. Debick

Hometown: Avonmore
Date of Birth: 4/4/1926
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: September 1944 - June 1946
Unit: 10th Armored Division
Battles/Campaigns: Central Europe / Rhineland
Rank: T/5
Awards: European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal
Service Related Injury: Hearing loss

Michael J. Budziszewski

Hometown: Sharpsburg
Date of Birth: 2/18/1982
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Date of Service: 1/1/2003 - Present
Unit: 959th Engineer Company
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of Al Kut, Battle of An Nasiriyah, Battle of Baghdad
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War of Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
Service Related Injury: Right Ankle Surgery (tendon damage)

Michael Budziszewski never thought he would be called to fight, but he was proud to serve his country and defend our freedom.

Jonathan Bucher

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 1/17/1986
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)
Date of Service: March 2005 - January 2007
Unit: 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division
Battles/Campaigns: OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom)
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, 6 WOTEM, Overseas Service Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, NATO, NSR, Afghanistan Campaign, Army Forces Reserve Medal, NCOD, National Defense Service Medal

Jonathan Bucher joined the military a week after his 17th birthday. He completed training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and NCO Training at Forts Dix and Indiantown Gap. He was deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan in March of 2005. He is currently enrolled at Penn State University and has goals to commission after graduation

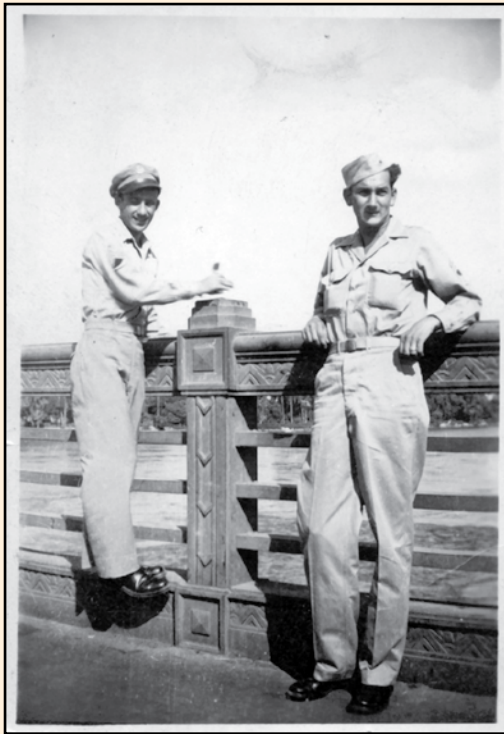
Victor C. Buyny

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 4/21/1917
Branch of Service: Coast Guard
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 9/18/1942 - 2/6/1946
Unit: USCG Manned LST829
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Theater
Rank: Boatswains Mate-PO 1st Class

Victor Buyny was born on April 21, 1917 in East Vandergrift. On September 18, 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard as an Apprentice Seaman and served on the USCG Manned U.S.S. LST 829 as Boatswains Mate 1c / Master at Arms. He was honorably discharged on February 6, 1946. The U.S.S. LST 829 was built in August 1944 by the American Bridge Company in Ambridge, PA. During World War II, it was assigned to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and participated in assaults in the Phillipines, Ie Shima, Toka Shika Shima, Geruma Shima and Okinawi. It was also used to transport troops to Nagasaki and Nagoya, Japan. The U.S.S. LST 829 landed the first troops to invade and secure Japanese colonial soil in World War II.



Henry Cecchi



Nathaniel Cake



Albert Catlos

Hometown: Kelly Station

Date of Birth: 1/11/1924

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 8/18/1944 - 5/31/1946

Unit: 317th Regiment, 80th Division

Battles/Campaigns: Ardennes, Central Europe, Rhineland

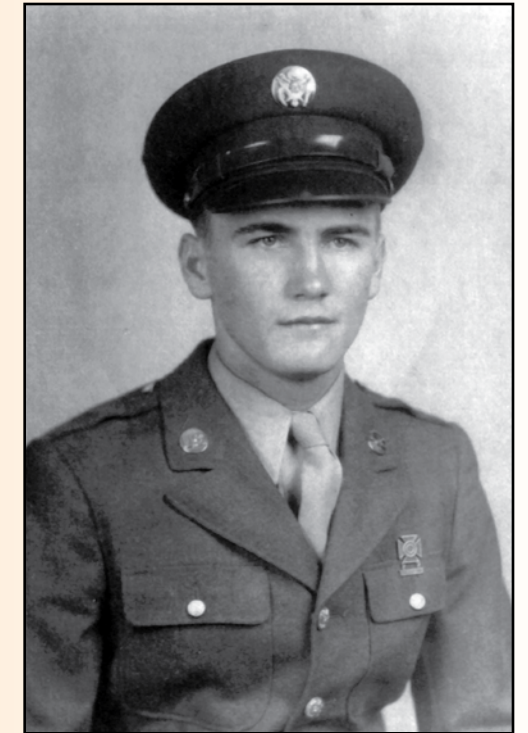
Rank: T5

Awards: EAME Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII

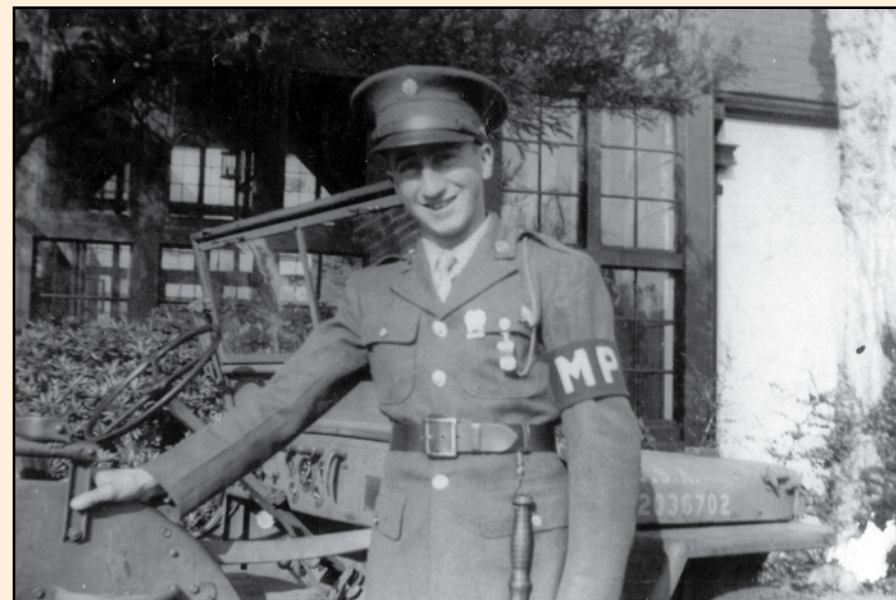
Victory Medal, Purple Heart, 3 Battle Stars

Service-Related Injury: Wounded temple area

Albert Catlos was the son of Michael and Mary (Bringer) Catlos. He was employed at the Schenley plant of Joseph S. Finch and Co., retiring with 41 years of service, in 1984. He was then employed part-time as a maintenance man at the New Kensington campus of Penn State University. Albert was a member of Forks-Zion Lutheran Church in Gilpin Township where he served on church council and several committees. He was also a volunteer at the Leechburg Food Bank and a Boy Scout leader for over 13 years.



Gabe Bruno



Milan Catlos

Hometown: Kelly Station

Date of Birth: 3/25/1921

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 7/22/1942 - 10/30/1945

Unit: 99th Field Artillery Battalion (Battery A)

Battles/Campaigns: Triangle Hill

Rank: Private First Class

Awards: SWPA (Southwest Pacific Area) Theater Ribbon,

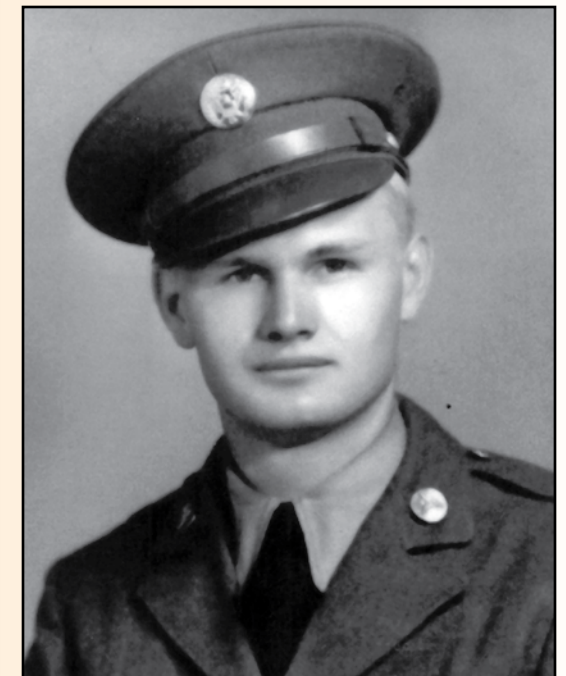
New Guinea Campaign Star, Philippine Liberation Medal

w/2 Bronze Stars, Bismarck Archipelago Campaign Star,

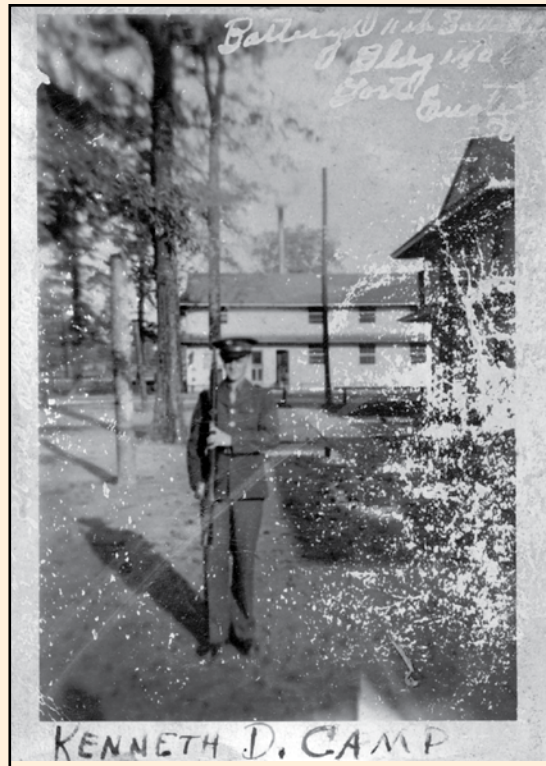
Southern Philippine Campaign Star, Luzon Island Cam-

paign Star, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Arrowhead

Milan Catlos was the son of Michael and Mary (Bringer) Catlos. He was employed and retired from Allegheny Ludlum Steel.



Kenneth D. Camp



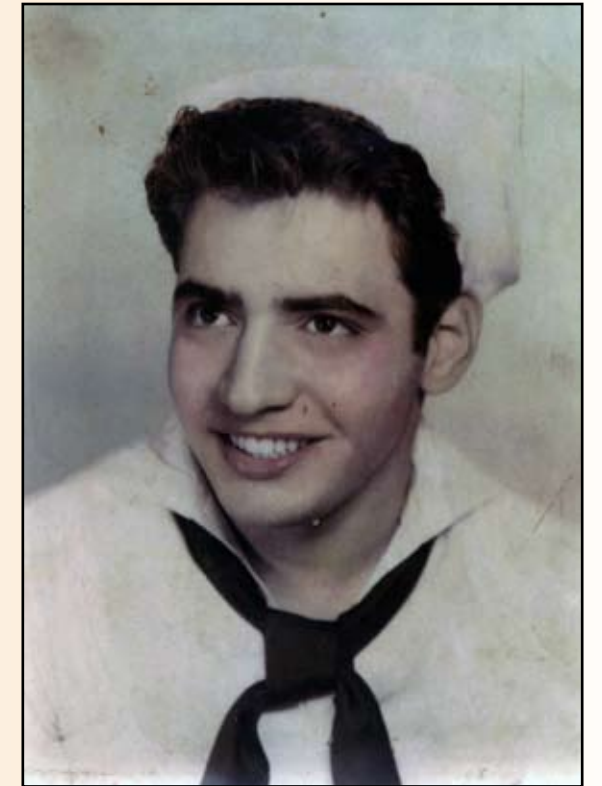
Thomas Chapman



Anthony M. Ceraso

Hometown: Vandergrift
 Date of Birth: 9/22/1925
 Branch of Service: Navy
 War or Conflict: World War II
 Date of Service: 12/4/1943 - 5/25/1946
 Unit: Hospital Corps
 Battles/Campaigns: Guam, Eniwetock, Okinawa
 Rank: PHM 2/c
 Awards: ALNAV 131-46, Pacific Theater Ribbon w/1 star, American Theater Ribbon, WWII Victory Medal

Anthony Ceraso graduated from Hospital Corps School, He served at Norfolk Naval Hospital; Aviation Medicine School at US Naval Air Station, Anacostia, DC; and Naval Hospital at Parris Island, South Carolina. He served as a Hospital Corpsman for the 1st Marine Air Wing in Okinawa.



Mario E. Cecchetti

Hometown: Arnold
 Date of Birth: 8/11/1927
 Branch of Service: Marines
 War or Conflict: Vietnam War
 Date of Service: 8/1/1945 - 7/31/1971
 Rank: Captain
 Awards: Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Commendation Medal w/1 Star, Meritorious Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation w/1 Star, Vietnam Service Medal w/4 Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/Device, WWII Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal w/1 Star, Good Conduct Medal (8 awards), Meritorious Mast, Certificate of Commendation



Charles J. Cibik

Hometown: West Leechburg
 Date of Birth: 10-26-1917
 Branch of Service: Navy
 War or Conflict: World War II
 Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
 Unit: Seabees

Charles Cibik lived in West Leechburg all his life. He was Chief of Police there for many years. He retired from Allegheny Ludlum and was a loving father.



Tony Chiampo



Scott E. Clark

Hometown: Greensburg
 Date of Birth: 8/20/1977
 Branch of Service: Army Reserve
 War or Conflict: Homeland Defense (stateside)
 Noble Eagle
 Date of Service: 9/15/2001 - 10/31/2002
 Unit: 307th MP Company
 Rank: Specialist E4
 Awards: Army Achievement Medal

Scott Clark has been in the Reserves for over six years. He is married and employed as a teacher. "I followed my father and grandfathers into the service to do my part"

Leon R. Claypool

Hometown: Natrona Heights
 Date of Birth: 8/2/1933
 Branch of Service: Navy
 War or Conflict: Korean War
 Date of Service: 7/16/1952 - 7/16/1956
 Rank: FP2
 Awards: Navy Occupation Service Medal



Anthony R. Di Menna

Hometown: Vandergrift
 Date of Birth: 10/23/1930
 Branch of Service: Air Force
 Date of Service: January 1950 - December 1954
 Rank: Staff Sergeant



Jack L. Cockroft

Hometown: Ford City
 Date of Birth: 1/6/1948
 Branch of Service: Army
 War or Conflict: Vietnam
 Date of Service: 7/10/1967 - 7/9/1970
 Unit: 73rd Transportation Company
 Battles/Campaigns: Saigon; all over Vietnam
 Rank: SP4
 Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal w/Device, Sharpshooter Badge, Expert Badge

Jack Cockroft graduated from Elderton High School in 1967. He married Mary Baynar on March 18, 1983 and has one daughter. He completed over 32 years at Allegheny Ludlum as a Crane Operator. While he was in the service, he completed the National Safety Council Defense Driving Course. He worked as an underwater welder and a 44K20 Marine Hull Repairman, Welder, Cutter and Fitter.



Clifford Coleman

Hometown: Allegheny Township
 Date of Birth: 6/15/1925
 Branch of Service: Navy
 War or Conflict: World War II
 Date of Service: 6/11/1943 - 3/22/1946
 Rank: Ptr.-2C

Clifford Coleman was the loving husband of Louise Wasson and father of three children. He retired from Allegheny Ludlum and was very active in Mt. Hope Church of God, Allegheny Township.



Leland Howard Clepper

Hometown: Apollo

Date of Birth: 2/19/1926

Branch of Service: Navy

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 5/14/1943 - 2/22/1946

Unit: U.S.S. Yosemite

Battles/Campaigns: American Campaign, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign, Philippines Liberation Campaign

Rank: Coxswain - Petty Officer 3rd Class

Awards: World War II Victory Medal

Leland Clepper served aboard the U.S.S. Yosemite from her shakedown cruise in the Caribbean until the war ended in Japan. He returned to Apollo where he married Helen Clark. Lee worked at a number of jobs until he found his calling as an auto mechanic, first at Bush Ford, and later at Ravotti Lincoln Mercury. He was a baseball coach, Scout leader, and most importantly, a good husband and father. He is greatly missed by all those who loved him.

Orlando V. Colecchi

Hometown: Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 8/12/1926

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Post-Korean War

Date of Service: 1956 - 1958

Unit: 9th Division Army Band

Rank: Corporal

Orlando Colecchi was known to many in the local community as "Bee Murphy". His musicianship was his career. After his Army service he was in partnership with his brother in Murphy's Music Store in Leechburg and also performed in the Johnny Murphy Orchestra. He organized bands for the local Veteran's Day parades for many years.



Gilbert Cramer



Scott Deluisio



Matthew C. Coulter

Hometown: East Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 8/24/1983

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Iraq; 3 tours Afghanistan

Date of Service: June 2000 - Present

Unit: 2 Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173 Airborne Brigade, Vincenzo, Italy

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Awards: numerous

Matthew Coulter joined the U.S. Army Split-Op program and completed basic training between his junior and senior years of high school. He graduated in 2002 from Kiski Area High School and was married to Tabby Weagraff on June 17, 2006. She currently teaches in the Charlotte, NC school district and the couple plan on making their home in North Carolina. Matthew has moved steadily through the ranks and is a dedicated and proud member of the U.S. Army Airborne.



John L. Cullen

Hometown: Allegheny Township

Date of Birth: 7/6/1942

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Vietnam

Date of Service: July 1968 - July 1971

Unit: Army Dental Corp

Battles/Campaigns: Vietnam conflict,
1969-1970 Long Binh

Rank: Captain

Awards: Bronze Star

Service-Related Injury: Agent Orange
complications



John Cullen was born in 1942 and is a graduate of Munhall High School. He attended the University of Pittsburgh, first receiving a B.S., then a degree in Dentistry. He married Lucinda Schaeffer from Vandergrift and has 6 children. John has worked as a dentist in Freeport since 1971.

Joseph C. Dixon

Hometown: Leechburg

Date of Birth: 7/7/1944

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Vietnam War

Date of Service: 1963 -1966

Unit: 101st Airborne

Rank: Specialist E4

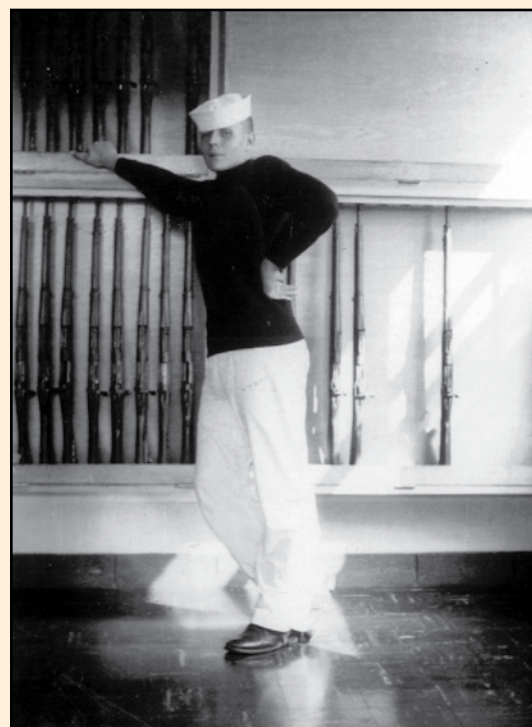
Joseph Dixon grew up in Leechburg and graduated from Kiski High School in 1963. He has been married for 42 years, has two sons and one granddaughter. He is now retired and enjoys fishing, hunting, NASCAR and country music.



Larry Creighton



Fred Coleman



David Dixon

Branch of Service: Merchant Seaman

War or Conflict: WWII

Glenn Dixon

Branch of Service: Navy

War or Conflict: WWII

Henry Dixon

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: WWII

James Dixon

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: WWII

Paul T. Dixon

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: WWII

William D. Dixon

Branch of Service: Army

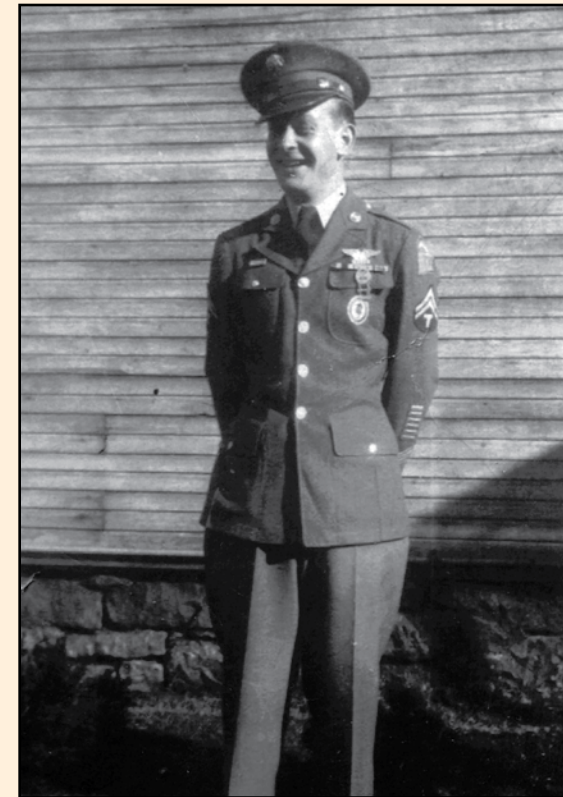
War or Conflict: WWII

Daniska Brothers

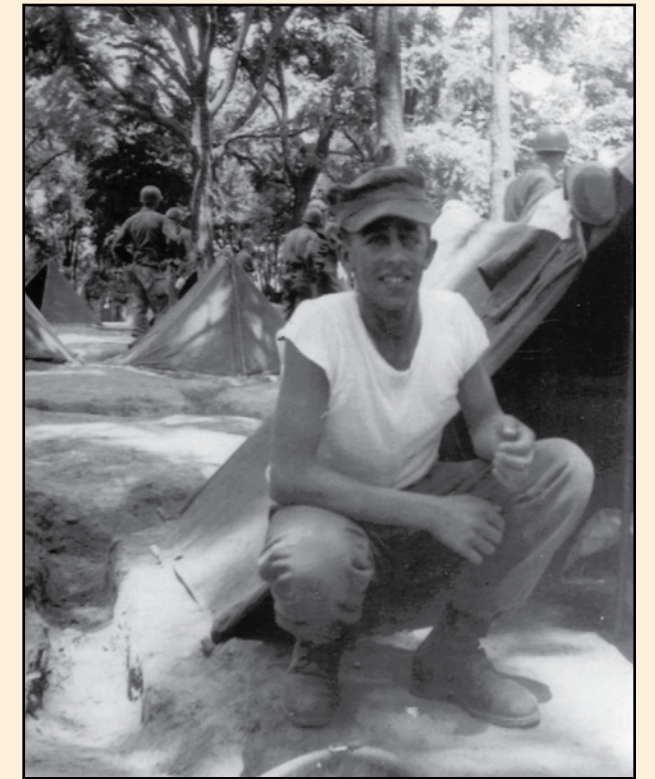
All drafted into the US Army. L to R John, Michael, George, Stephen served in WW II, and Paul served in Korea.



Charles L. Crow



James H. Cuffia



John G. Daniska

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/23/1915
Branch of Service: U.S. Army Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 3/29/1944
Unit: U.S. Army Air Force 15th and 1st AF
Rank: S/SGT Flight Engineer B-24 Bomber
Service-Related Injury: Lost sense of smell and hearing



Bill Debiasio



Bill and Don Debiasio



Roy Devilling



Arthur G. Duppstadt

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/28/1924
Branch of Service: U.S. Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 11/15/1942 - 10/20/1945
Unit: 358 Fighter Squadron, 365 Fighter Group, 8th Air Force
Battles/Campaigns: Europe
Rank: 1st Lieutenant
Awards: Distinguished Flying Cross, (4) Air Medals
Service-Related Injury: MIA 8/28/1944 - 9/15/1944 (EVADEE)

Arthur Duppstadt was pilot on 38 missions in a P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft. An EVADEE was a term given by military officials to airmen who managed to elude capture.

Donald W. Devilling

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/8/1918
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: July 1941 - November 1945
Unit: 2539 AAF
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct, Victory Medal, American Theater Medal

Sidney Elder

Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War

Shawn M. Dunlap

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 5/1/1968
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 2/24/2003 - 1/2004
Unit: 307th Military Police
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: E5
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Driver's Badge, National Defense Service Medal

Shawn Dunlap joined the Army in 1986 as an Engineer and then moved over to Military Police. He is currently employed for a block laying company and is proud to serve his country.

Anthony J. Defilippi

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 10/12/1941
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1964 - 1970
Unit: Quartermaster Corp
Rank: Captain
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Medal, Marksmanship Awards

Anthony Defilippi has been husband to Carol (Smail) Defilippi for 43 years. They have a son, John; and daughter, Kathryn. Mr. Defilippi acquired his Masters Degree from the University of Pittsburgh and retired as a Chemistry teacher after 35 years. During his military service, he served as Platoon Leader, Executive Officer and Company Commander.

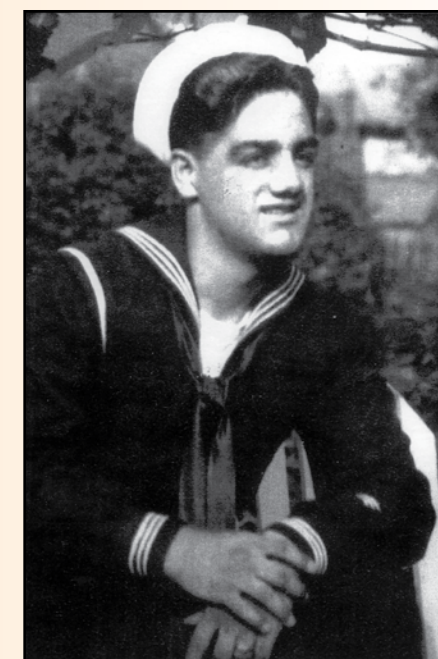
He is currently President of Leechburg Borough Council, and is now in his 40th year. In the past he has served as President of Armstrong County Association of Boroughs, PA State Association of Boroughs and PA Councilman's Association. He also served as Post Commander of Legion Post 266. He's won many awards for his service, including Elk's Citizen of the Year award and the Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Local Government.



Anthony D. Disabato

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/15/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Rank: Radioman 3/C
Awards: (COMSERPAC) Commander Service Pacific

Anthony Disabato trained at Great Lakes Naval Air Station. He worked in the administration building at Pearl Harbor.



Joseph Paul Dinga

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/3/1922
Branch of Service: U.S. Air Force;
Special Forces
War or Conflict: World War II, Berlin
Crisis, Korean War
Date of Service: 1942 - 8/14/1966
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Theater
of Operations, Berlin, Korea (twice)
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Many, including WWII Victory
Medal, Korean Service, and United
Nations Service Award

Sgt. Dinga enlisted in the Air Force
after graduating from Vandergrift
High School. He fought in World
War II, first as a tail gunner, then as
a Radio Operator with Special Forces in the Pacific. He was dispatched to Germany during the
Berlin crisis and served on reconnaissance missions to Korea twice during his long career. While
serving there, contact was made with his younger brother, Stephen, also serving in Korea. They
received official clearance and were able to meet. Sgt. Dinga succumbed to heart failure at 44
years of age and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, where he’s likely “swapping war sto-
ries with his buddies”.



Stephen Richard Dinga

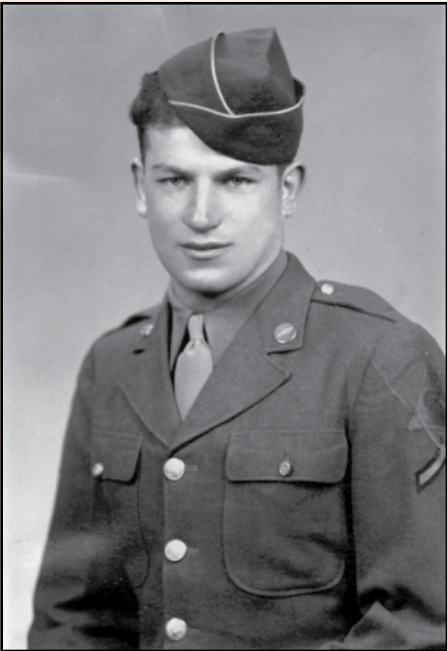
Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/6/1929
Branch of Service: U.S. Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1949 - 1951
Battles/Campaigns: Pusan Perimeter, Korea
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: UN Defense, UN Offense, CCF Intervention, 1st UN
Counteroffensive

Sgt. Dinga, graduate of Vandergrift High School was the
youngest of three brothers and a family oriented man. He
enlisted in the Air Force, attended Basic Training at Lach-
land AFB, training in Biloxi and then off to Korea where he
served as a Signalman. He fought in the Pusan Perimeter.
This gentle, soft-spoken man was not obligated to enlist,
having lost one brother in the Sicilian Invasion of WWII and
another serving simultaneously in Korea. He felt obligated
in doing what was right and protecting American freedom.
Sgt. Dinga returned home a totally different person from
when he left and died of heart failure at the age of 44.
(Dinga Brothers, L to R Joseph S/Sgt and Stephen S/Sgt Korea 1951)



James A. Cuffia

Hometown: West Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/21/1921
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 10/23/1942 - 5/3/1946
Unit: 12th Armor, 92nd Cavalry, Rcn Sq.
Battles/Campaigns: Rhineland, Central Europe
Rank: Corporal
Awards: EAME Theater Ribbon w/2 Bronze Battle Stars,
Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Leg wound 4/8/1945



R. W. Dunmire



William K. Elliott

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 5/21/1926
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 5/19/1944 - 7/2/1946
Unit: Registered Publications Issuing Office
Rank: SK 3/c

Boot Camp, Camp Perry, Williamsburg, Va
Temporary Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco
R.P.I.O. (Registered Publications Issuing
Office) Manus, Admiralty Islands
R.P.I.O. Tacloban Leyte, Philippines
R.P.I.O. Guiuan Samar, Philippines
Discharged to Bainbridge, Maryland

Frank L. Elefante

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/8/1922
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: September 1940 - August 1975
Unit: Various ships and submarines
Battles/Campaigns: North African Invasion
Rank: Captain
Awards: Meritorious Service Award, plus many others

Frank Elefante enlisted in the Navy in September of 1940. He served on the U.S.S. Philadelphia and attended U.S. Naval Academy and graduated in 1946. Among his classmates was the future president Jimmy Carter. He served on Mine Sweeper for 2 years and attended Submarine School where he served on the U.S.S. Perch, U.S.S. Segundo and Blackfin. He taught at Naval Academy for 3 years, was Executive Officer on U.S.S. Thornback, then became Commanding Officer on the U.S.S. Quillback. He was Special Project Officer in Washington, DC; Logistics Officer ComSubPac in Hawaii; Naval Plant Representative at General Electric Ordnance Systems in Pittsfield, Mass; Defense Contracts Administrative Service in San Pedro, California. He currently resides in Hawaii.



Henry L. Elefante

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 4/8/1926
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 6/17/1944 - 4/30/1946
Unit: 3rd Armor Division
Battles/Campaigns: Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe
Rank: T/5 Cpl.
Awards: Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, (3) Campaign Medals
Service-Related Injury: Wounded 2/28/1945 in Cologne, Germany

Henry Elefante was drafted June 17, 1944 and spent 5 months in Basic Training at Fort Knox. He was scheduled to go to the South Pacific in December of 1944, but his orders were changed due to the need for tanker replacements at the Battle of the Bulge. So he was sent overseas on the Queen Mary on New Years Day, 1945 and became active during the last week of the Battle of the Bulge. He served as a Light Tank Driver until the end of WWII, spending 16 months overseas and being discharged April 30, 1946. Henry was the commander of local DAV #36 in 1966 and VFW #566 in 1993.



Tom Faust



Glen Hall



John Fantino



Kenneth E. Farrar



Robert H. Fiscus

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 10/22/1926
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II, Korean War
Date of Service: 1944-1946;
1950-1952
Unit: 33rd Infantry Division,
298 Trans. Truck Co.
Battles/Campaigns: Luzon,
Philippines and Korea
Rank: Master Sergeant
Awards: Asiatic Pacific
Campaign Medal, Philippine
Liberation Medal, WWII and
Korean Victory Medals
Service Related Injuries:
Spent 100 days as a patient in
U.S. Army hospital



Arnold John Ferrando

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 3/25/1928
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1950 - 1952
Unit: 3rd Armor Division



Arnold Anthony Ferrando, PH.D

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 12/29/1956
Branch of Service: Army Aviation
Date of Service: 1978 - 2001
Unit: Aviation
Rank: Lieutenant Colonel
Awards: Meritorious Service Medal w/2 Bronze Oak Leaf
Clusters

Commissioned June of 1978
Armor Officer, Fort Hood, Texas; 1978 - 1980
Flight School, Fort Rucker Alabama; 1980
Fort Rucker Flight Commander, Bde S-3; 1980 - 1984
Commander, Medical Detachment, Atlanta, Georgia; 1985
81st ARCOM Safety Officer; 1987 - 1992
7/6 Cav Sqdrn S-3; 1992 - 1994
Bde S-3, 1st Bde, 75th Div; 1995 - 2001
Retired LTC in 2001 after 23 years of service



James Eric Ferrando

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 5/19/1959
Branch of Service: Army Aviation
Date of Service: 26+ years
Rank: Colonel
Awards: Senior Army Aviator Badge, Army Aviator Badge,
Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Meritorious Service
Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement
Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal,
National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve
Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components
Overseas Training Ribbon, Indiana Distinguished Service
Medal, Indiana Commendation Medal, Indiana Military
Volunteer Emblem, Indiana Freedom Medal

Promotion to LTC; 4/01
Action Officer, Army Operation Center Pentagon;
11/04 - 4/02
Executive Officer, Avn Bde 38ID(M), INARNG; 4/02 - 12/02
Commander, 2-238th General Support Aviation; 12/02 - 2/04
Commander, Aviation Brigade; 2/04 - 2/07
Promotion to COL; 2/05
J6 Director of Information Management, Joint Forces Headquarters, Indiana; 2/07 -
Present





Anthony G. Dettore



Airman in First Force To Be Cited by French

Sergeant Anthony G. Dettore, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carmine Dettore of 507 Linden street, is a member of the first U. S. Army Air Force unit to receive decorations from both the American and French governments in this war.

Sergeant Dettore, aged 21, is serving with the Twelfth Air Force B-26 Marauder group at a Mediterranean bomber base. His unit recently was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palm by the French government for precision attacks on bridges in support of the French ground forces in Italy.

Oldest medium bomber outfit in

the Mediterranean theater, the group was cited in an order by General Charles DeGaulle commending an entire Marauder wing. Before its citation by the French the Marauder group held two citations from President Roosevelt for the accuracy of its attacks on Rome and Florence railyards.

The local airman who was trained in Florida and North Carolina, has been overseas 15 months. He already holds the Air Medal for meritorious achievement.

Two brothers, Private Nicholas and Michael Dettore, are serving with American forces on Guam.

Anthony Ebio

Hometown: Seattle, WA

Branch of Service: Air Force

War or Conflict: Iraqi Freedom

Date of Service: 1999 -

Anthony Ebio is an Aerospace Maintenance Craftsman (Crew Chief) on the B-1 Bomber. He has been deployed to Diego Garcia, Germany, England and Malta, Italy.



Lawrence H. Fishel

Hometown: Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 3/9/1926

Branch of Service: Navy

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: June 1944 - June 1946

Rank: Seaman 1st Class

Brian T. Fitzpatrick

Hometown: Pittsburgh

Date of Birth: 10/15/1973

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: 5/2/2002 - 1/1/2004

Unit: 307th Military Police Company

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom

Rank: Sergeant E6

Awards: Army Commendation Medal, 2 Army Achievement Medals, 18th MP Brigade Combat Patch

Philip A. Foster

Hometown: South Park

Date of Birth: 5/9/1980

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: 2/15/2003 - 2/15/2004

Unit: 459th Engineer Company

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom I

Rank: E5

Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation

Philip joined the Army Reserve while attending college and was deployed to Iraq for OIF. He was trained as a combat engineer but transferred to a bridge company for deployment. He is currently in college studying history and plans to teach at the high school level or higher.

Guy W. France

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 2/12/1900
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War I
Unit: Company D, 2nd Ammunition Train
Battles/Campaigns: Aisne, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne
Service Related Injuries: Arthritis of Spine

Guy France lied about his age in order to join the Army. Because he could ride a motorcycle, he was made a courier who delivered messages. Near the end of war, he drove the company’s car. Mr. France passed away August 16, 1980.



Ray France

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 1/28/1925
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Unit: Company C 15th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Invasion at Anzio Beach, Europe, North Africa
Rank: Private
Awards: Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation, EAME Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII, Commemorative Medal of the Entrance of the Allied Army in Naples 1st October 1943
Service Related Injury: Shot in Via-Cisterna, Italy by a sniper. He spent the next year in the hospital with an open upper arm wound that left him 50 % disabled and no feeling in rest of his arm



Ray France was born in Spring Church in 1925 to Silas and Mary (Wensel) France. He had a twin brother, Claude. Mr. France had 2 daughters, as well as grandchildren. He worked for 24 years as a foreman at SH Bell Company in Braddock and retired in 1986. He then drove bus for Roenigk’s and retired from there in 1999. He was a member of the Jeanette American Legion, Vandergrift VFW and Lazy Acres Campground. He loved traveling, working on cars, reading and eating at local restaurants.

Claude France

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 1/28/1925
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - January 1946
Unit: Company B, 175th Infantry, 29th Division
Battles/Campaigns: D-Day Invasion at Omaha Beach, Siege at Bastone
Rank: Private
Awards: Bronze Star Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, EAME Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII, Sharpshooter Badge and Carbine Bar

Claude France was born in Spring Church in 1925 to Silas and Mary (Wensel) France. He had a twin brother, Ray, and a loving companion of 29 years, Josephine “Alex” Stone. Mr. France had 2 daughters, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He worked for 44 years as an operator MGO line, Allegheny Ludlum, retiring in 1990. He was a member of the Jeanette American Legion, Vandergrift VFW and Lazy Acres Campground. He enjoyed camping, playing cards and his dog, Tiger.



Robert C. France

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/8/1921
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943-1946

Robert France served stateside teaching sailors to swim and later went to carburetor school. The war ended before his deployment overseas.



John C. Cooper Jr.



Joe Franz



Ronald Goodsell



Silvoe Fasano



Frank M. Gervasi

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/15/1919
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1/31/1942 - 10/2/1945
Unit: Company A, 16th Infantry, 1st Division
Battles/Campaigns: Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, France, Belgium, Germany
Rank: M/SGT
Awards: POW Medal, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, 3 Presidential Unit Citations
Prisoner of War: 4/30/1943 - 5/9/1943
Service-Related Injury: Wounded in France

Frank Gervasi was involved in the first wave in Africa-Sicily-"D-Day". He was wounded July 28, 1944, while in France. He was a Prisoner of War in Africa and participated in seven campaigns.



Ronald E. Frank

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 11/8/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/5/1943 - 10/24/1945
Unit: 9th Infantry Division, 47th Infantry, D Company
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy, North France, Battle of the Bulge, Rhineland, Central Europe
Rank: Squad Leader
Awards: Combat Infantry Badge, Presidential Citation, Bronze Star
Service-Related Injury: Crushed disc causing temporary paralysis, Trench foot, concussion

As the youngest member of his company, Ron was known as “Junior”. He had the privilege of serving with experienced veterans of the 9th Infantry Division that had already seen action in the African and Sicilian Campaigns. Barely 18 years old, Ron joined the Army and arrived in England in time to participate in the Normandy invasion. The “9th” proudly defended our country in eight campaigns, five of which included Ron. The small neighborhood that he grew up in---“on top of the hill” in Leechburg sent 18 young men to war at that time, 15 of which returned...Lest we forget.



Cyril N. Grupac

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/23/1923
Branch of Service: Army Air Corp
War or Conflict: World War II
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Theater



Frank J. Grupac

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/3/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/30/1943 - 4/3/1946
Battles/Campaigns: European and Pacific Theaters



Herbert Horne



Timothy A. Gabriel

Hometown: New Castle
Date of Birth: 12/31/1982
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 2/25/2003 - 1/15/2004
Unit: 307th MP Company
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: Army Commendation Medal with Valor

Timothy Gabriel joined the Army in 2000 and will end his service in 2009. He is a student at Penn State University.

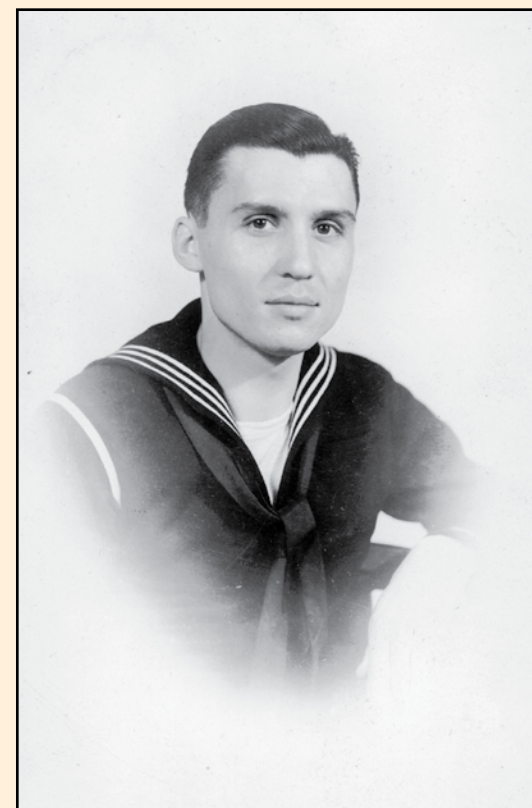
David F. Grimm

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/12/1946
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 10/1/1968 - 5/21/1970
Unit: 25th Infantry Division
Battles/Campaigns: Iron Triangle
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: 2 Bronze Service Stars, 2 Army Commendation Medals, Air Medal
Service-Related Injury: Agent Orange exposure

Tony “Hooks” Gallovich USS Belleau Wood.
With mother Ann and father Frank.



Frank Gallovich



Robert J. Herrman

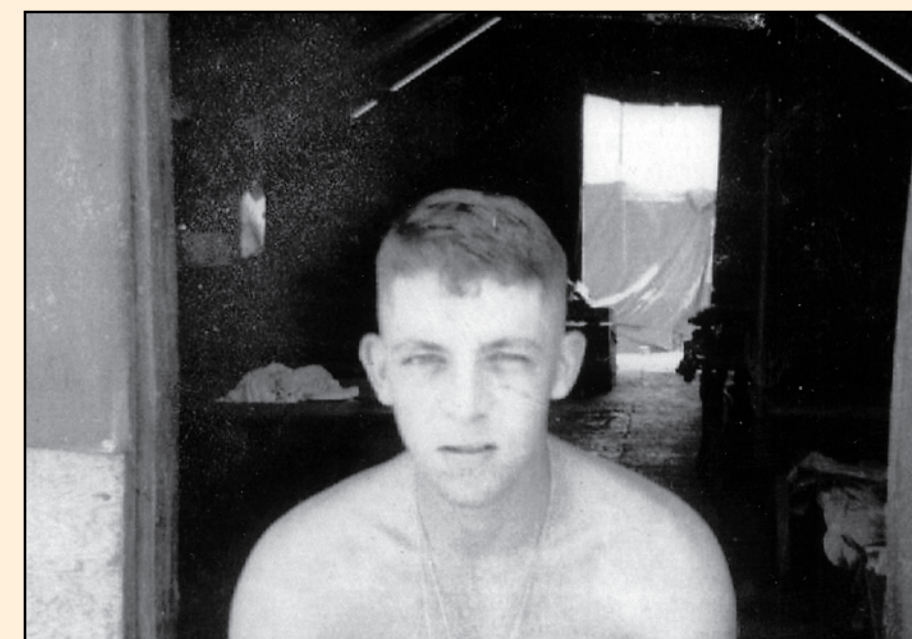
Hometown: Normalville
 Date of Birth: 1/29/1975
 Branch of Service: Army Reserve
 War or Conflict: Iraq War
 Date of Service: 1/14/1994
 Unit: 307th MP Company
 Battles/Campaigns: Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom
 Rank: Staff Sergeant
 Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal
 “For the soldiers who have gone before, for those who will not; I will commit to Honor, Duty and Country that we may succeed in our endeavors in battle.”

John Kenneth Hollis

Hometown: Apollo
 Date of Birth: 6/4/1948
 Branch of Service: Army
 War or Conflict: Vietnam
 Date of Service: 1968 - 1974
 Unit: Combat Engineer
 Rank: E5

John Hollis did construction work on roads, airstrips and bridges. After being discharged, he worked in the Apollo Mill, restaurants, construction and most recently, at Unifirst and Allegheny Textile. He has been married to Sandra Starr Stitt for 33 years.

James Gradwell



David C. Hill

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 7/25/1952
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 2/26/1971 - 8/31/1993
Unit: 101st Airborne Division
Battles/Campaigns: Consolidation I and II.
Rank: Chief Warrant Officer CW2
Awards: Meritorious Service, Army Commendation, Army Achievement, National Defense, Vietnam Service Medals, Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm



David Hill, originally from Allegheny Township, married Debra Crofutt from North Apollo and served in the U.S. Army from 1971 until retirement in 1993. Overseas assignments included South Vietnam, Germany and South Korea. He served as an Aircraft Crewman on UH-1 Huey and CH-47 Chinook helicopters during the Vietnam Conflict assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. He performed post-conflict service as a CID Special Agent involved in worldwide felony criminal investigations for Dept. of the Army until retirement. He attended Scotland Yard’s Metropolitan Police Detective Training School in Hendon, England as a student of forensic science.

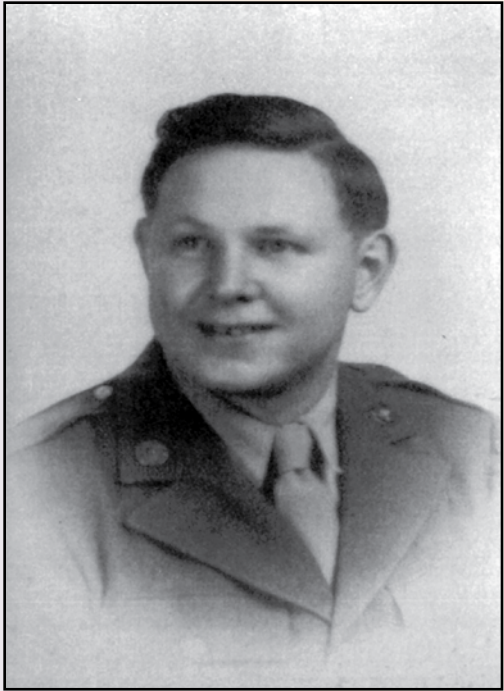
Harry J. Games

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 4/4/1926
Branch of Service: Navy Reserve
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: April 1944 - December 1945
Unit: Patrol Boat Unit
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Campaign, New Hebrides Islands
Rank: Seaman First Class (E3)
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal



Albert I. Fulton

Hometown: Lewistown
Date of Birth: 1/29/1921
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: March 1945 - January 1947
Unit: 44th Air Force HQ
Rank: Private First Class
Mr. Fulton served most of his time in the Air Force in Germany.



C. “Smiley” Grantz

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 6/20/1931
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 7/23/1951 - 7/22/1955
Rank: SH2



Patrick A. Jyachosky

Hometown: Uniontown
Date of Birth: 9/24/1970
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: December 2003 - February 2005
Unit: 1004th General Supply Company
Rank: SSG E6
Awards: Army Commendation Medal

Patrick Jyachosky has been in the military since 1993. He has three children: two boys and one girl. In his civilian career, he has been in sales for eleven years. He never thought his unit would get deployed to Iraq, but they all came home safely. “I don’t consider myself a hero; I consider it my job.”



Marshana Harris

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/4/1986
Branch of Service: Air Force
Date of Service: 2004 - 2006
Unit: 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment
Rank: Airman

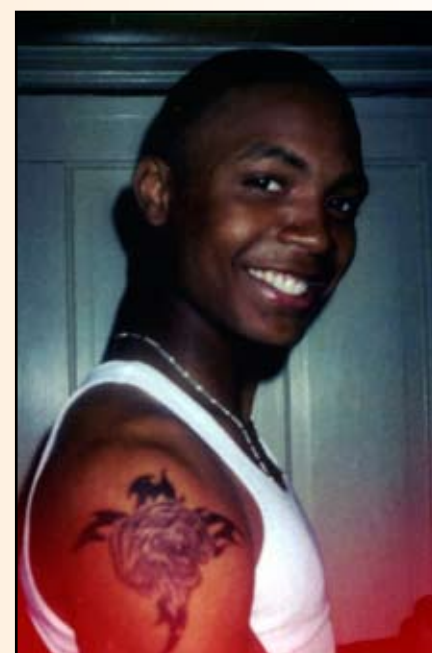
Marshana was a cheerleader at Kiski Area High School. She enlisted in the Air Force in Aircraft Armament Systems while a senior. She is currently enrolled in the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. She lives in Texas, where she met her fiancé, Anthony Ebio, who also serves in the Air Force.



Errick Harris

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/31/1980
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: June 1998
Unit: 82nd Airborne, B. Company, 2/325 Air II Bravo Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo
Rank: SSG

Errick Harris is a graduate of Kiski Area High School. He started basic training four days after graduation and re-enlisted just before the events of 9/11. He did not regret the decision and is proud to serve his country.



William A. Haggerty Jr.

Hometown: Brackenridge
Date of Birth: 5/24/1968
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: December 2003 - March 2005
Unit: 458th Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: 3 Army Commendation Medals, 3 Army Achievement Medals, 3 Good Conduct Medals, 2 Overseas Service Medals.

William Haggerty is a 1987 graduate of Highlands High School. He served for ten years active duty as a light and heavy wheel mechanic stationed at Fort Hood, Fort Knox, and Fort Greely before enlisting in the Reserves in 1996. He continues to serve with the 340 Engineers in New Kensington.



Clair A. Held



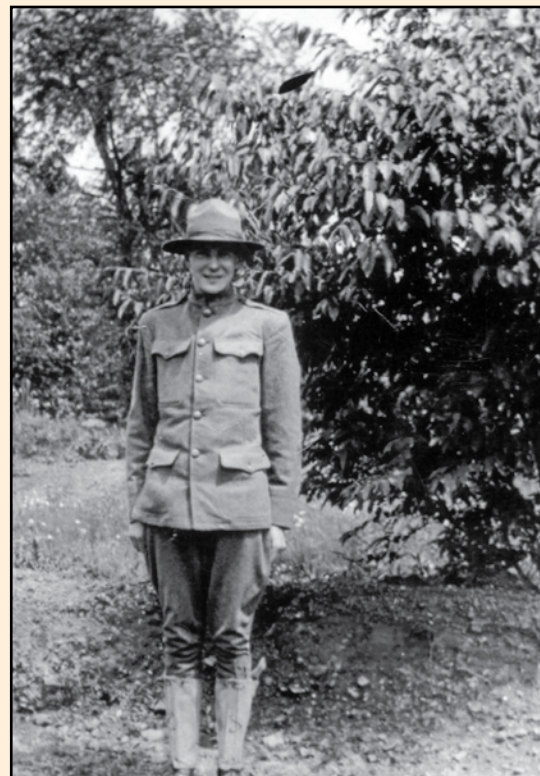
Michael Ionadi



Richard Hepler



Harry H. Hepler Sr.



William Hepler



J.A. "Nick" Kepics

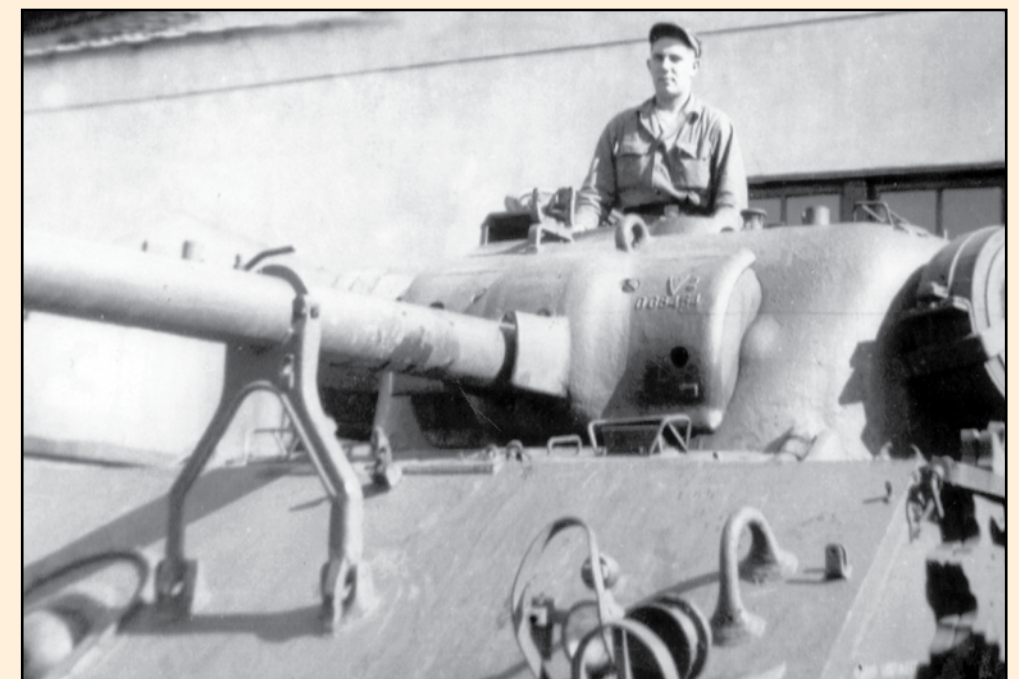


Harry H. Hepler Jr.

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/27/1924
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II and Korea
Date of Service: 1942-1945; 1951-1954
Unit: U.S.S. Suwannee, U.S.S. Wisconsin
Battles/Campaigns: 14 battles
Rank: Radarman 2nd Class
Awards: European African, Asiatic Pacific, WWII
Victory, Korean, United Nations,
Presidential Unit Citation



Walter Hooks



Ray Held

May 20th 1977 US Navy 3/77
to 3/80 Operation Specialist
USS Spigle Grove Virginia
Beach, VA.



Lewis Lawhorn, Sr.

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 5/3/1947
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: June 1967 - April 1970
Unit: 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division
Battles/Campaigns: 1968 TET Offensive
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Action
Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Gallant Cross

Lewis Lawhorn is a Kiski High School graduate.
He is married, has two children and is a retired
PA State Constable.

Clayton Horrell

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/23/1923
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943
Rank: Unknown



Thomas E. Haley

Hometown: Allegheny Twp.
Date of Birth: 11/7/1934
Branch of Service: Naval Reserve
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: November 1951 -
November 1994 - 43 Years.
Unit: Hospital Corps
Rank: Command Master Chief Petty
Officer E-9
Awards: Navy Achievement Medal,
National Defense Medal and others

Garett M. Haugh

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 6/6/1978
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 9/2/1996
Unit: KIL0 3/12
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on
Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism
Expeditionary Medal

Garett Haugh joined the Marine Corp immediately
after high school. He is married with three children
and is currently stationed at Camp Pendleton,
California.



Shawn Haugh

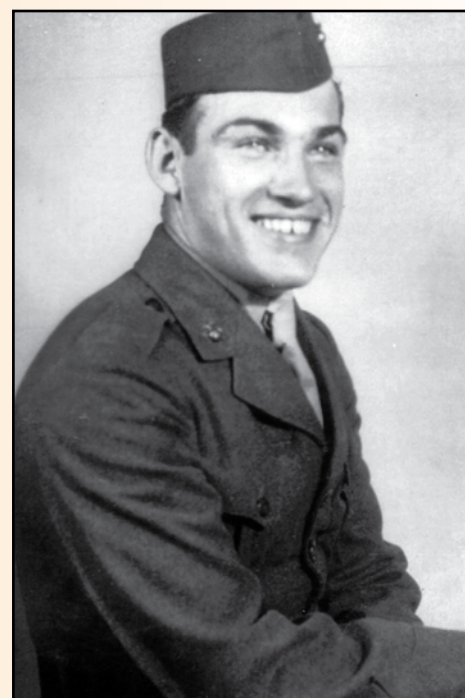
Date of Birth: 10/6/1950
Branch of Service: Marines; USAF National Guard
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: June 1969 - June 1971, October 1987 - April 2008
Rank: Chief Master Sergeant (E9)



Warren D. Horrell

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 2/15/1927
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: March 1945 - March 1948
Unit: Fleet Marine Force, Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Dropped "A" Bombs;
never saw action
Rank: Private First Class

Warren Horrell thanked God later in life that he never saw combat. In his own words, "We though we would never make it."



Raymond G. Hunter

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/21/1941
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: June 1959 - June 1979
Unit: Flight Engineer, Aviation Administration, Mechanic
Rank: E6
Awards: (5) Good Conduct Medals, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal



Auburn G. Horrell

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/25/1939
Branch of Service: Navy
Date of Service: 9/5/1956 - 9/4/1960
Unit: U.S.S. Macon CA132
Rank: P.O. 2nd (E5)

Jerry L. Long

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/18/1941
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Cuban Missile Crisis
Date of Service: 1961-1965
Unit: U.S.S. Saratoga and U.S.S. Intrepid
Rank: Second Class Petty Officer

Sylvan W. Israel

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 3/2/1926
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1946
Battles/Campaigns: South Pacific
Awards: Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: yes



Frank Hrobak

Hometown: Russellton and Acmetonia
Date of Birth: 8/19/1928
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1950 - 1953
Unit: 7th Cavalry
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Purple Heart

Frank Hrobak was the first Valley soldier to be wounded during the Korean War.

Jack U. Horrell

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 6/29/1925
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/2/1943 - 12/1945
Unit: Attached to 1st Marine Division
Battles/Campaigns: Peleuiou-Ulithi Philippines
Rank: Buck Sergeant
Awards: South Pacific and Leyte in Philippines

Jack Horrell was plane captain of Night-Fighter Squadron, flying an F6F fighter with radar.

Ronald D. Horrell

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 3/15/1939
Branch of Service: Army
Unit: Medic
Battles and Campaigns: Tour of duty included Cuba and Korea
Rank: Specialist 4

Paul D. Huth

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/27/1926
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: August 1945 - October 1946
Unit: Motor poll
Rank: Corporal

Lester Jones



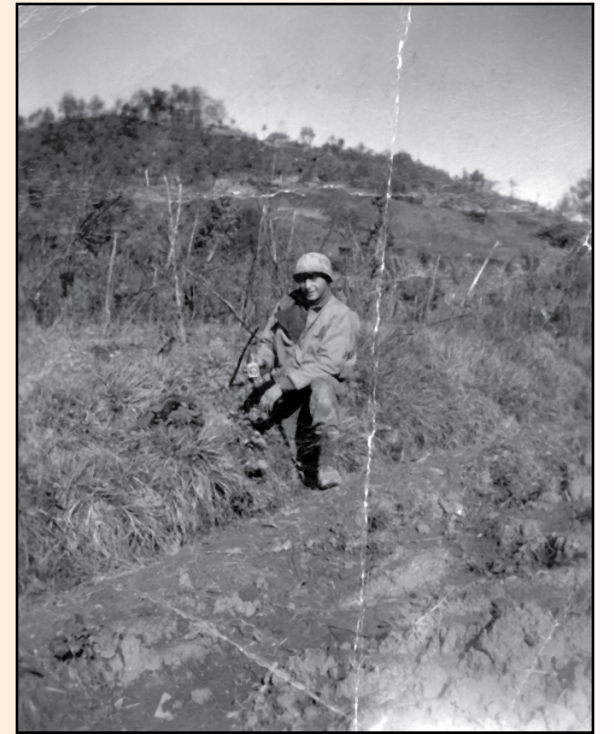
Steve M. Kanas Sr.

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/6/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: March 25, 1943



Battles/Campaigns:
Rome-Arno Campaign,
Po Valley (Northern
Apennines), N. Africa
Rank: Tech 5

Awards: 3 Bronze Stars, European-African Campaign Medal,
Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal



Marshall V. Klingensmith

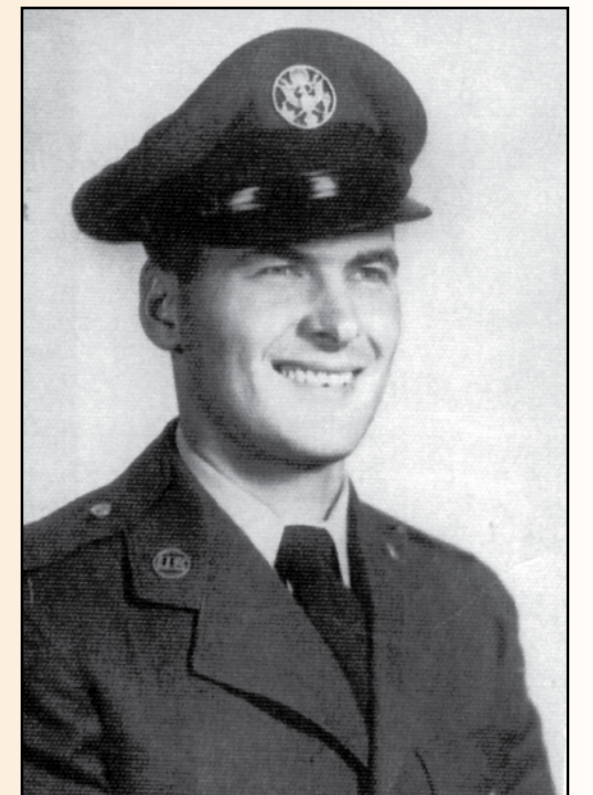
Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 5/21/1921
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/23/1942 - 11/3/1945
Battles/Campaigns: Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, Sou Philippines
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Purple Heart, Philippine Liberation Medal, Arrowhead, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Medal
w/3 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal
Service-Related Injury: Wounded in action in the Philippine Islands, March 26, 1945

Marshall Klingensmith was born in Logansport, Bethel Township. He was the son of Archie and Ora (Fennell) Klingensmith. He married Dorothy E. Armagost on June 2, 1942 and had 2 sons. Marshall served with the 542nd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment in the Pacific Theater and received the Purple Heart during the Philippine Liberation Campaign. He lived in Vandergrift for 37 years and was employed as a Research Technician and Federal Mine Inspector for the Federal Bureau of Mines from 1970 until 1986, when he retired.

Joseph John Kasecky

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/26/1930
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: March 1951 - January 1955
Unit: 29th Fighter Interceptor Squad
Rank: Staff Sergeant

Thanks to the G.I. Bill, Joe attended the University of Pittsburgh after honorable discharge from the Air Force. He graduated in June of 1958 with a Bachelors degree in Electrical Engineering. While going to school, he worked for Allegheny Ludlum where he stayed until his retirement in 1997. Joe married Marian Fletcher of Ortonville, MN in 1955. They raised three children together. Sadly, he passed away in 2007.



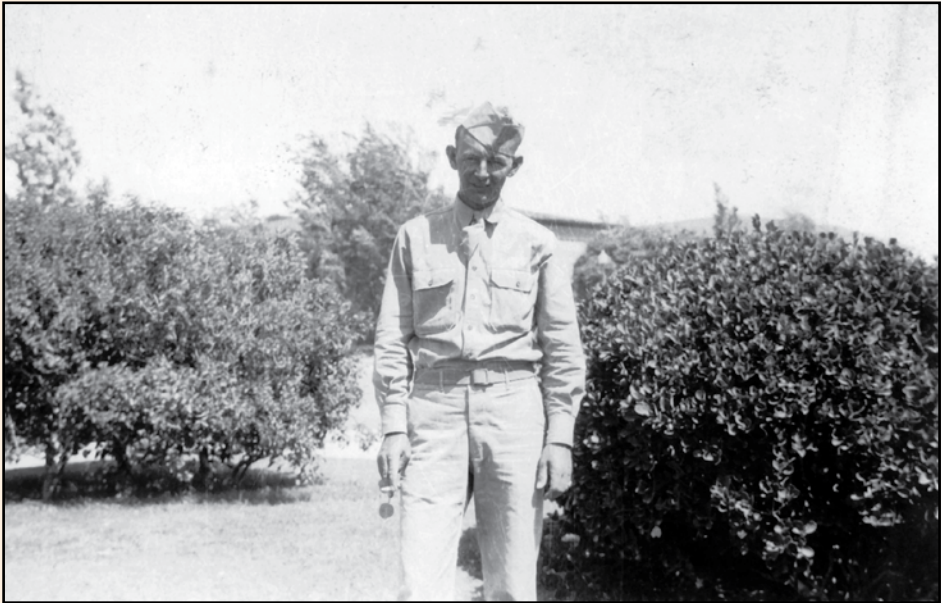
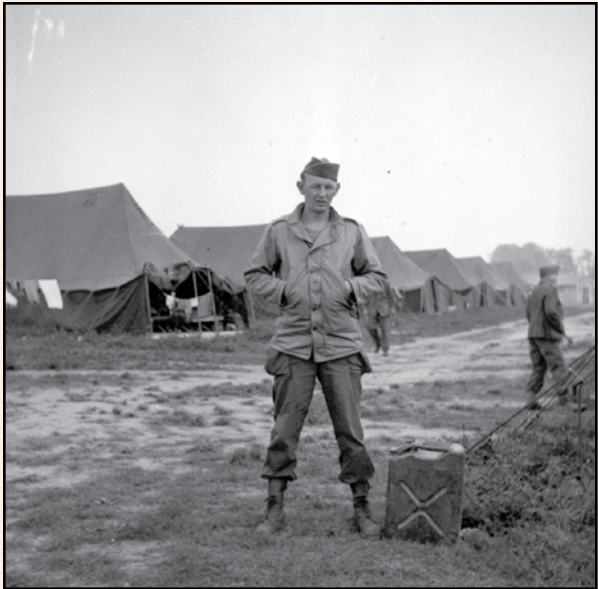
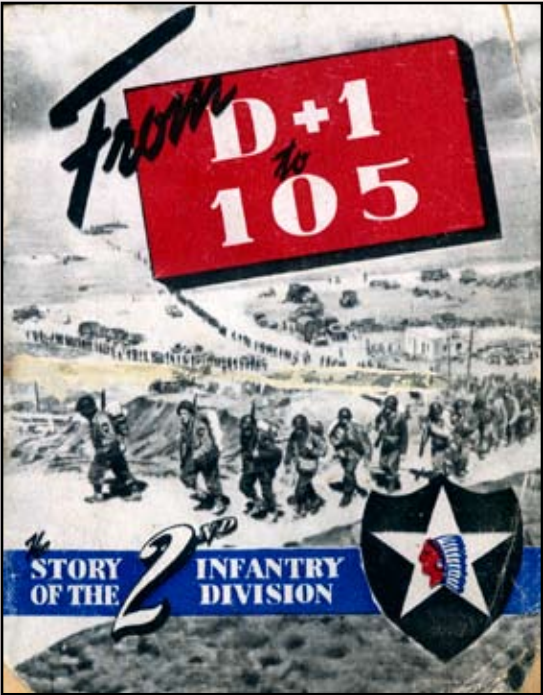
Walter W. Kehrer

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 7/16/1909
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Unit: 741 Tank Battalion
Rank: T-5

This article was extracted from the edition of The Stars and Stripes, dated Wednesday, February 7, 1945.

“The Distinguished Unit Citation and special commendations by an Infantry Division and a Corps Commander have been received by this unit for its fight throughout the continent.

Landing on D-Day with the First Infantry Division, the unit’s direct fare support enabled the Infantry to secure and hold some of the more bitterly defended sectors. The battalion was rehabilitated by Lt. Col. Robert N. Skaggs of Los Angeles, while moving. In the Battle for Hill 191, the 741st Shermans played an important part in supporting the Second Inf. Division. It was here that Sgt. John Brewer of Trenton, Tenn., first used a tank dozer to bury an enemy machine gun complete with crew. During the recent break though in the Ariennes, the battalion held the “hot corner” at Rochearth in support of the Second Inf. Div. and did not yield a good of ground until ordered by higher quarters to retire to better defense positions. The battalion claims 27 tanks destroyed in this action.



Chuck Johnson

Hometown: Arnold
Date of Birth: 6/8/1947
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 9/6/1966 - 7/14/1969
Unit: 101st Airborne Division
Battles/Campaigns: TET and other battles
Rank: SP5
Awards: Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal,
Parachute Badge, Vietnamese campaign awards



Chuck Johnson went to Vietnam on December 7th, 1962 with the entire 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He spent most of his time in the I Corps mainly at Camp Eagle, and some time spent at Bien Hoa. After 18 months in that country, he was ready to come home on July 14, 1969.

Ronald Eugene Klingensmith

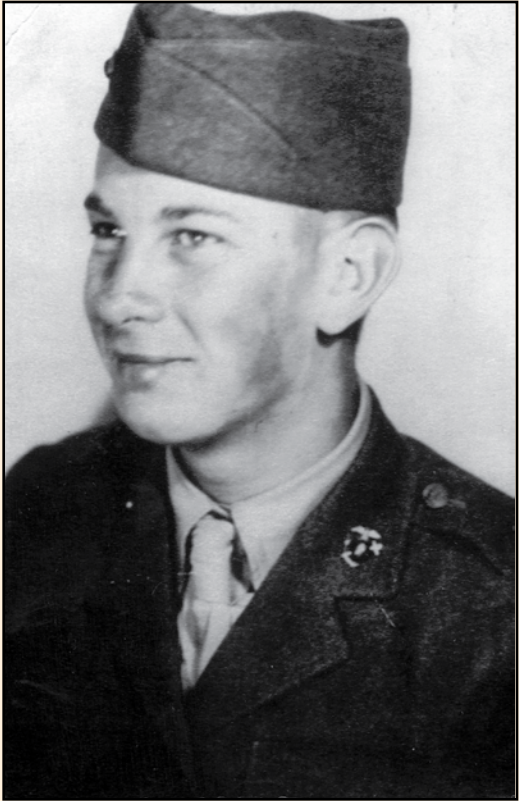
Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 12/17/1929
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1948 - 1951
Unit: Airborne Infantry, 101st Airborne Division
Rank: Corporal; also an MP



John C. Kimmel



Victor Kolish

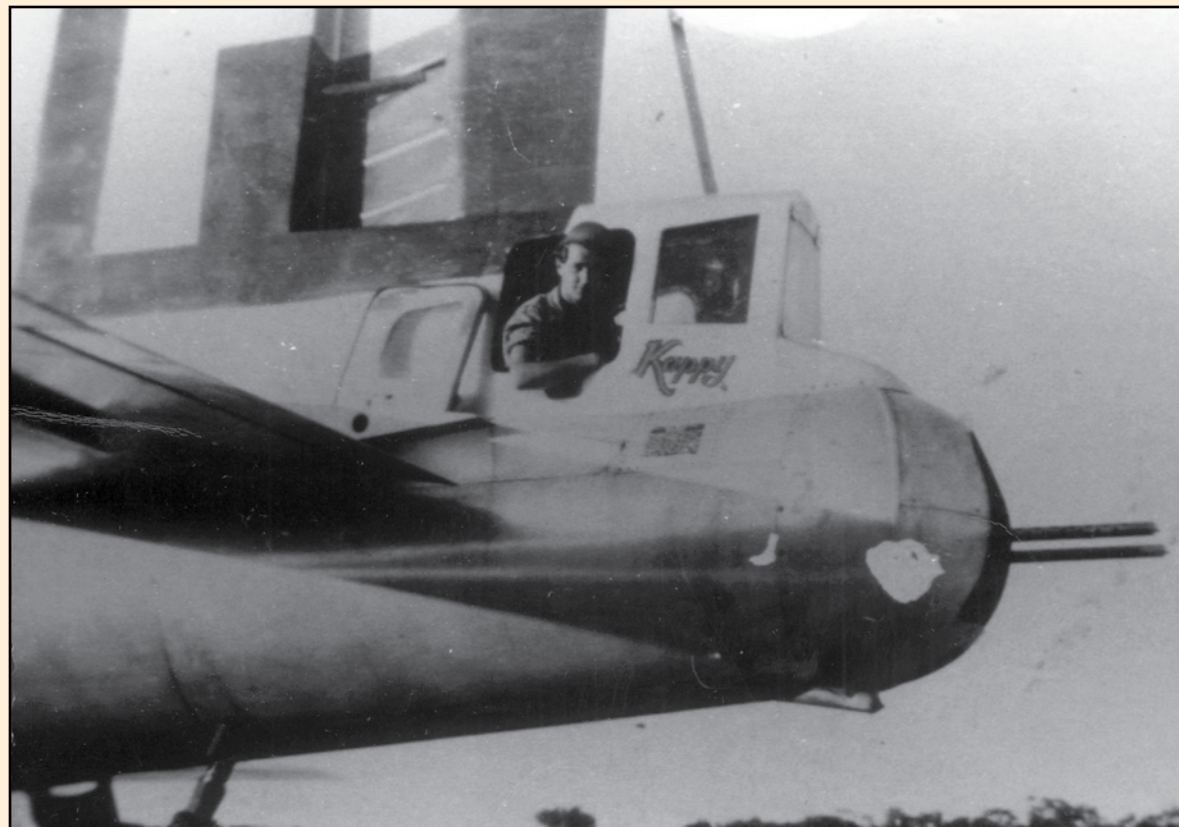


Alvin D. Kern

Hometown: New Castle
Date of Birth: 9/28/1965
Branch of Service: Army / Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 12/3/1990 - 5/17/1991
Unit: 212th MP Company, 14th MP Brigade
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Southwest Asia Service Medal, 3 Service Stars, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Medal

Alvin Kern actively served nearly ten years as an Army Radio Teletype Operator and Military Police Squad Leader. He served in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq during 1990-1991. He was honorably discharged in June 1993 and found employment with the U.S. Postal Service, where he continues to work. In October of 2005, he enlisted in the Reserves as an MP and is serving with the 307th MP Company, New Kensington.

Bernard Kaplin



Bernard Kaplin - 20th Air Force, 39th Bomb Group, Guam



Gregory P. Kandravy



549th Military Police Co. Panama Canal Zone

Dean Kearney



William Kepple



Robert W. King

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 8/3/1931
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: June 1949 - December 1952
Unit: 1955 AACs Sqdn MATS
Rank: S/SGT
Awards: Korean Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Commendation Medal, UN Service Medal



Robert King was born in Edmon, PA and graduated from Bell Twp High School in 1949. He enlisted in the Air Force in June 1949 and went to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas for Basic Training. From there he went to Radio Mechanics School at Scott AFB, IL. He served at Itazuke AFB in Kyushu, Japan. He returned to the U.S. in 1952, married and had 2 children. He retired from Alcoa Research in 1993 after 40 years of service.



Grant Kunkle



Russel Kiro



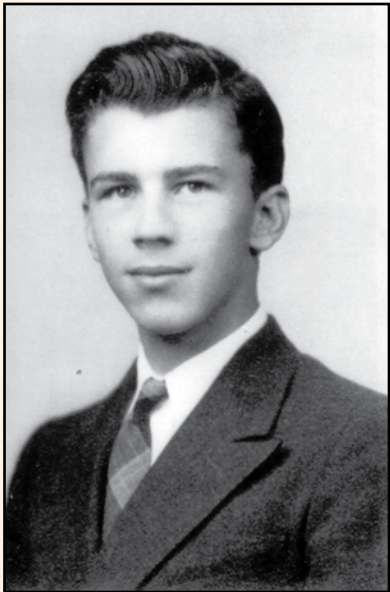
Ernest L. Lingenfelter

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 2/18/1920
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II



Edward M. Kromka Sr.

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/27/1926
Branch of Service: Army Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 12/2/1943 - 11/24/1946
Unit: 17th Reconnaissance Squadron (B)
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon, Army of Occupation Medal (Japan), WWII Victory Medal, A.A.F. Tech Badge with Mech. Bar



Lewis H. Klingensmith

Lewis W. Klingensmith, 79, of Largo, Fla., formerly of Leechburg died Friday, Nov. 7, 2003 at Freedom Square Nursing Center, Largo.

He was born Nov. 20, 1923 in Leechburg to James A. and Alice F. (Walters) Klingensmith.

Mr. Klingensmith was a coal miner for the Hicks Coal Company at its Hungry Hollow Mines, Gilpin Township.

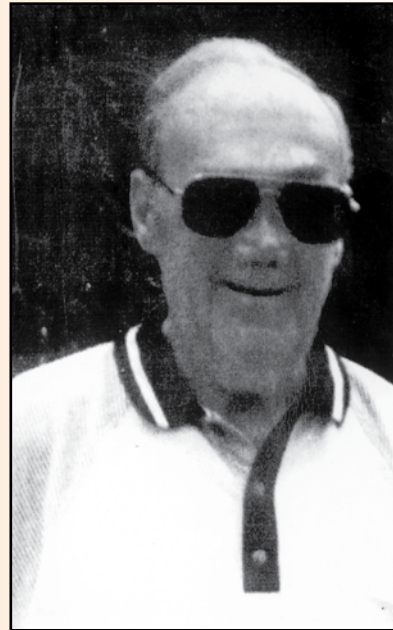
He Attended Mount Joy School. An Army Veteran, he served during World War II, receiving the Purple Heart for wounds received in the Battle of the Bulge.

He was a member of the Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Largo Fla. His other memberships included the DAV of Pinellas Park, Fla.; Military Order of The Purple Heart, VFW, Blind Veterans Association and American Legion, all of Largo, Fla.; and past commander of the Leechburg VFW.

His hobbies included fishing, gun collecting and he was an avid Cber with the handle of "Cookie Man".

He was a resident of Largo, Fla. For the past 26 years, previously living on Second Street in Leechburg.

Survivors include two brothers, C. Howard Klingensmith of Apollo and Richard M. Klingensmith of Brookville. (Text from Florida newspaper article).



W. J. Lace



Jonathan R. Hinkle

Hometown: Portersville

Date of Birth: 5/30/1977

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: February 2003 - January 2004

Unit: 307th MP Company

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Awards: 2 Army Commendation Medal, Combat Action Badge

"A worthwhile cause."

John W. Koleny

Hometown: Springdale

Date of Birth: 6/17/1929

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Korean War

Date of Service: June 1951 - May 1953

Unit: Headquarter Company, 313 Engineer Construction Group

Rank: Corporal

John Koleny attended Basic Training at Indiantown Gap, Medic training at Ft. Sam Houston, and Surveying School at Ft. Bevoir, VA. He served in Verdun, France in Airfield Construction.



John Klazon, III

Hometown: Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 5/21/1942

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Vietnam

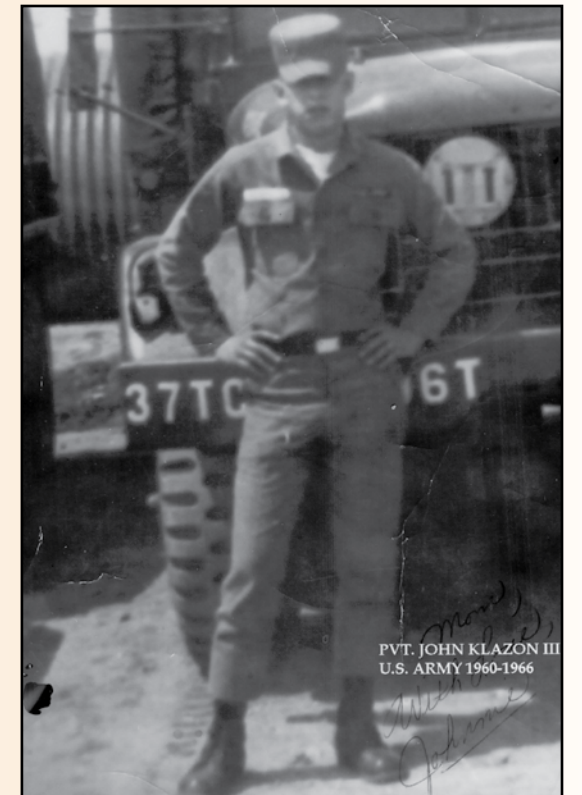
Date of Service: October 1960 - November 1966

Unit: Transportation

Rank: Private First Class

Awards: Expert and Marksman Rifle Badges

John Klazon entered the Army in October of 1960. He attended Basic Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and AIT at Fort Benning, Georgia. He spent his time overseas as a Heavy Truck Driver M.O.S. in France and Germany.



Bernadine H. Kukalis (Voyten)

Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 9/25/1952 - 9/24/1955

Bernadine Kukalis studied military justice and stenography at Norfolk, Virginia from December 1952 - March of 1953.



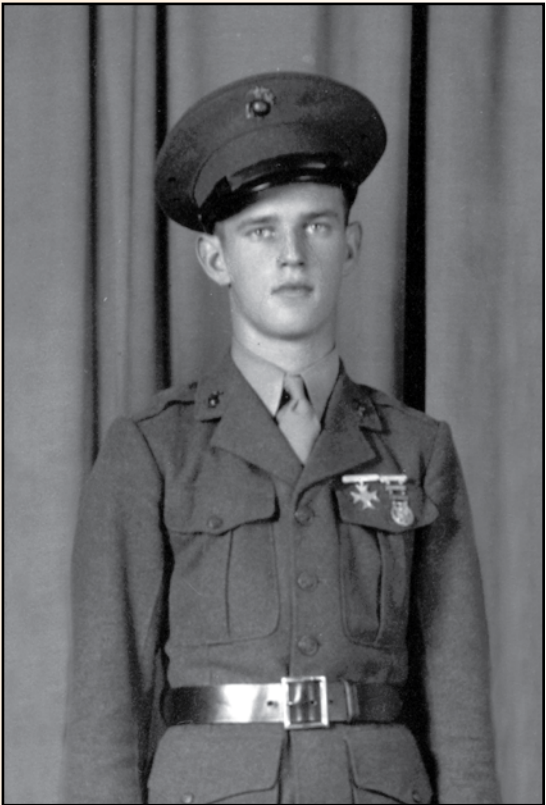
She worked as a secretary and thereafter as head of fraudulent enlistments at the Court Martial Office at Parris Island from March 1953 to September 1955. She was also a cheerleader for the Parris Island football team.



George J. Kukalis

Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Korean War

George Kukalis received the Letter of Commendation for saving the life of a pilot whose plane crashed and burned on base. He spent nine months in the hospital for injuries sustained and received disability.



Mark A. Kukalis

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: June 6, 1959
Branch of Service: Navy
Rank: HT3

Mark Kukalis attended welding school at Philadelphia and served with the U.S. Navy Special Forces from 1978-1981. From 1979 to 1980, he served on the U.S.S. Shreveport LPD12 in the Mediterranean. Mark trained with the Navy Seals in California and specialized in underwater welding. He passed away on October 25th, 2006.



Debra Lynn Lichtenwalner (Kukalis)

Branch of Service: Navy
Rank: RM2
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, Letters of Commendation, Navy Achievement Medal

Debra Lichtenwalner attended Boot Camp in Orlando, FL and "A" School in San Diego, CA. From 1979-1981, she served at the naval station in Rota, Spain (NCS); 1981 at Argencia, Newfoundland (NCS); 1981-1983 at Jacksonville, FL (NAS); 1983-1984 at San Diego, CA (C-7 School COMSYSTECH); 1984-1986 at Wahiawa, Hawaii (NAVCAMS EASTPAC)



NECS: 2371 Computer Deck Operator 2318 Technical Control Operator
2372 Computer Deck Supervisor 2319 Technical Control Supervisor

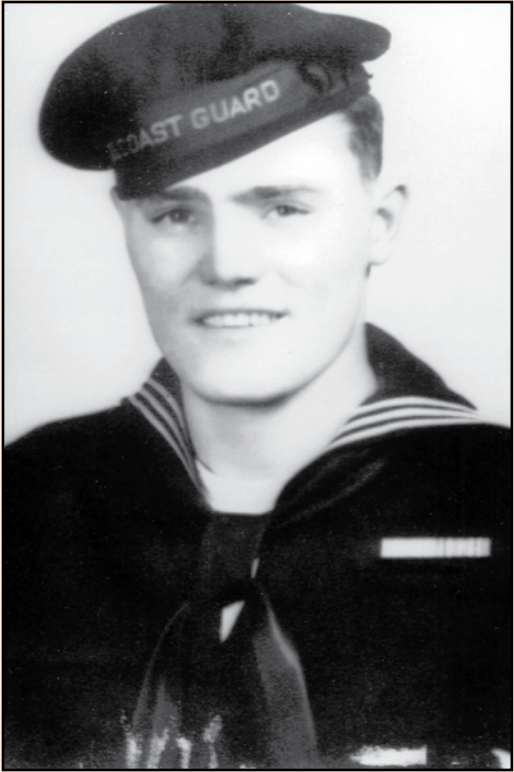
Leonard Lattanzi

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 2/10/1928
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 2/4/1946 - 12/5/1947
Rank: S 2/C
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Theater Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal

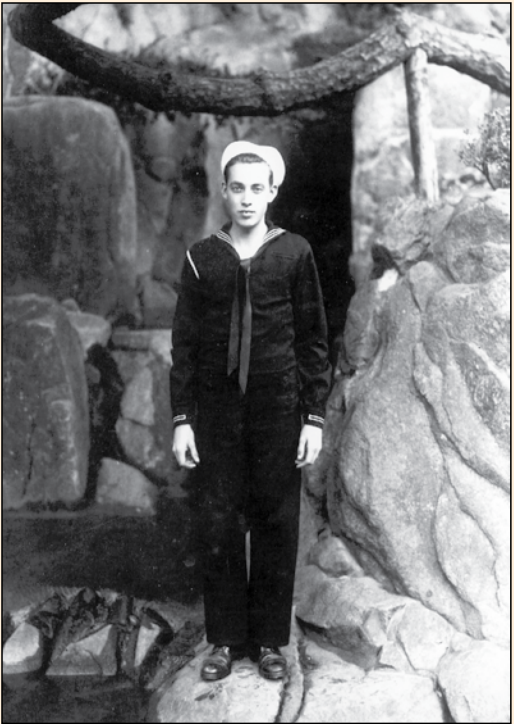
Leonard Lattanzi was the son of John and Mary (Bucci) Lattanzi and attended Vandergrift High School. He served at Camps Peary and Shoemaker, and also in Japan, China, Guam, Panama and Pearl Harbor aboard the U.S.S. Larsen DD830. He was married to C. Jane Hansen of Leechburg on October 14, 1948. Leonard retired from US Steel, Irwin Works after 43 years, and is also a retired volunteer with the Vandergrift No.2 Fire Department. He is a member of the Westmoreland County Firemen’s Association, as well as a lifetime member of the Vandergrift VFW.



Joe Leone



Charles Lern



Gregory A. Lattanzi Jr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/5/1970
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2004 - April 2005
Unit: A Co., 1-77 ARBN, Task Force 1-18
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: SPC (E4)
Awards: Operation Iraqi Freedom, Global War on Terrorism Medal



Gary A. Lasher

Hometown: Apollo
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: February 1968 - August 1969
Unit: 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armd. Czv. Regt., 9th Infantry Division
Battles/Campaigns: 1968 TET Counteroffensive, Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase 5 and 6, 1969 TET Counteroffensive
Rank: Specialist 5th Class (E-5)
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/4 stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/60 Device, Distinguished Unit Citation, Army Commendation Medal w/V Device, 3 Overseas Bars, Marksman Badge; Rifle, M-14, M-16, Pistol



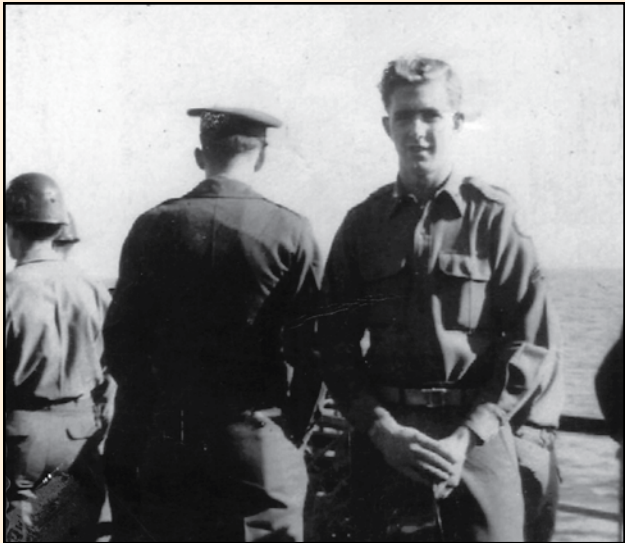
Larry J. Laurinatis

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/8/1942
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Dominican Republic
Date of Service: 1/21/1964 - 1/20/1966
Unit: 206th Signal Co (LB), attached to 50th Signal Battalion (AbnC)
Battles/Campaigns: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Rank: Sergeant E-5
Awards: Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Expert Qualification Badge/Rifle

Larry Laurinatis was born in Leechburg and graduated with the class of 1960. He attended Indiana State Teachers College then entered the Army in 1964 where he was schooled in Communications. He became Supervisor of Switchboard Operations and served in Santo Domingo in 1965. He married Judith Wetovich in 1968 and is the father of a son and daughter. He retired from Allegheny Ludlum Brackenridge in 2001.



James R. Means



Robert J. McAfee

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/2/1954
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: February 1972 - December 1974
Unit: 8th Infantry, “Patty’s Gang”
Rank: SP4

Robert McAfee enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve and defend his country. He finished his service with an honorable discharge.

Kenneth Eugene Kurten

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/5/1930
Deceased: 2/2001
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
War or Conflict: Korea
Status: Honorably Discharged
Date of Service: July 1948- July 1950
Unit: 3rd Infantry Division
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Presidential Honor Guard



Jean A. Leech (Magee)

Hometown: Oakmont (formerly Hyde Park for 54 years)
Date of Birth: 9/7/1923
Branch of Service: U.S. Army Nurse Corps
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 3/3/1945 - 5/23/1946
Rank: Second Lieutenant
Awards: WWII Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal

Although Jean’s time in the Army Nurse Corps was short, not having graduated until 1944 from St. Margaret Hospital, it was an exciting and meaningful part of her life. Not only did she care for our American soldiers, but also Prisoners of War from Germany and Italy. Working with nurses from all over our country, she gained fresh outlooks on the same problems. She has always felt grateful for the opportunity to serve her country. Jean’s nursing career ended at the age of 73, after 22 years as an office nurse.



John J. Mago

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 12/28/1922
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 10/6/1942 - 12/20/1945
Rank: Boatswains Mate Second Class
Awards: American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/1 Silver & 3 Bronze Stars, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/ Bronze Star, Navy Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon w/2 Bronze Stars, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, Honorable Service Lapel Button



Steve A. Mago

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 8/25/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 11/22/1943 - 5/20/1946
Unit: Navy Air Force
Rank: S1/C/AMM and Gunner
Service Related Injuries: Teeth knocked out

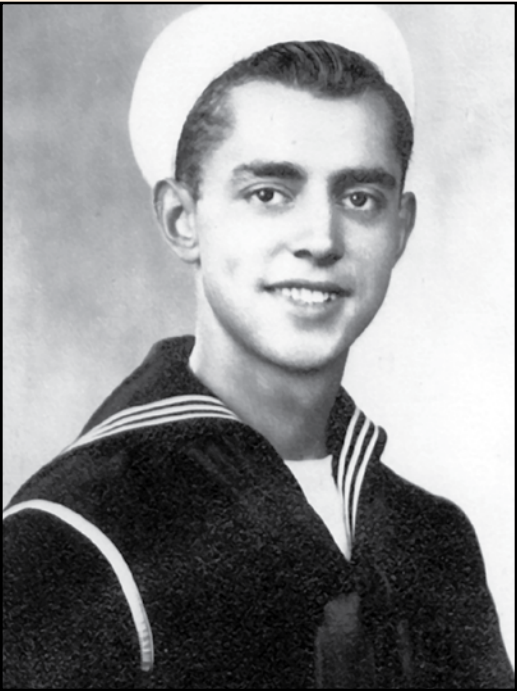
Rudy M. Mago

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 3/28/1927
Branch of Service: Army and Air Force
Date of Service: Army- October 23, 1950 to October 22, 1952
Unit: Infantry sch.det.
Rank: Army PFC, US Airforce s/sgt
Awards: GCM W/3

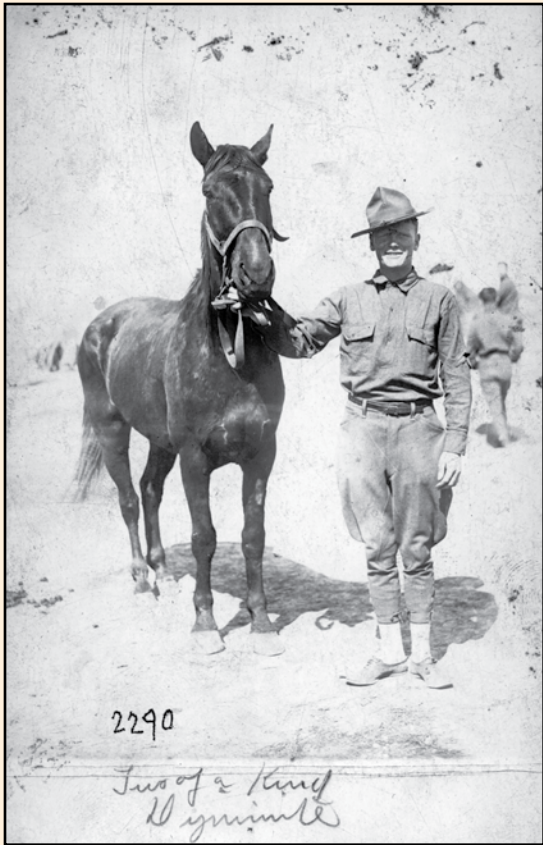
US Army October 230, 19 to October 22, 1952 PFC
US Air Force January 9, 1953 to December 13, 1956
US Air Force February 5, 1958 to June 5, 1962
10 years, 5 months, 21 days total

Joseph Paul Mago

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 6/24/1924
Deceased: 7/22/1996
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
War or Conflict: WWII
Status: Honorable Discharge
Date of Service: 5/20/1943-2/19/1946
Unit: U.S. NTS Sampson NY PC 1174
Battles/Campaigns: European Theater
Rank: Motor Machinist Mate 3rd Class
Awards: European Theater Ribbon 1 star; American Theater Ribbon, Victory Medal



Harry John Henry



Pete A. Lentina

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/8/1925
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 11/11/1943 - 2/19/1946
Unit: Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Italy, 3 Campaigns
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: 2 Purple Hearts, Bronze Star
Service-Related Injury: Amputated Left Leg



Leo Joseph LeKavich

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/15/1922
Branch of Service: Merchant Marines; Navy
War or Conflict: World War II and Korean War
Date of Service: 9/27/1942 (Maritime to 8/20/1945)
Unit: U.S.S. Libra AKA 12
Rank: Pipe fitter 3rd Class USN (1950-1954)



Leo LeKavich married Florence Trentin on June 27, 1953. They had four children and five grandchildren. Leo passed away in April of 2005.

Brian J. Maizer

Hometown: West Mifflin
Date of Birth: 8/12/1977
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 1/10/1996 - Present
Unit: 299th Engineer Company
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



Brian Maizer is in the Auto Body field and has two children and a fiancé. “I volunteered for this deployment, served my time and am proud to know that I played a part in giving the people of Iraq a taste of freedom.”

W. David Mancuso

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 4/12/1968
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 10/17/2000
Unit: 555 MEB
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom I and II, Operation Enduring Freedom
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: (2) Good Conduct Medals, Army Achievement Medal, (3) Army Commendation Medals, (2) Army Combat Badges, Drivers Badge, (2) Overseas Medals
Service Related Injuries: 10 IED blasts causing concussions, back and neck injuries

David Mancuso was sent to Iraq as a Combat Engineer to create FOBs (forward operating base), clear IEDs (improvised explosive device) and UXOs (unexploded ordnance). He trained Iraqis EOF and functioned as a gunner in Mosul clearing IEDs from major routes.

Bruno Marsili

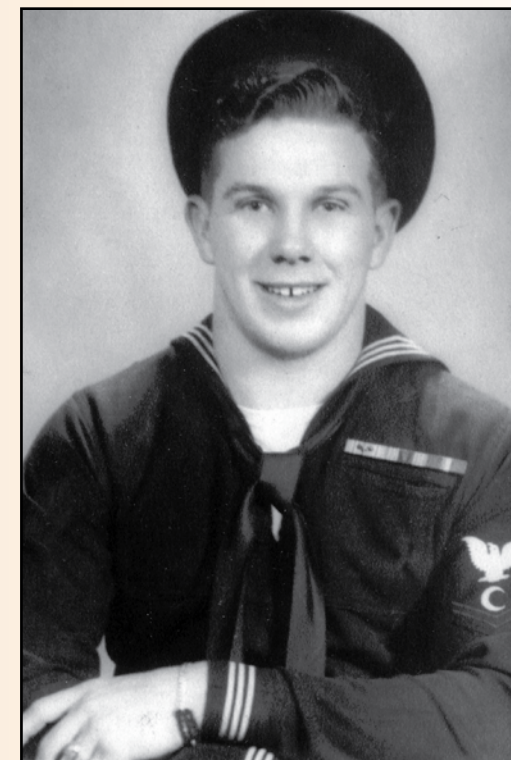
Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/30/1921
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1942 - 1945
Unit: Anti Aircraft Battery
Battles/Campaigns: Burma, India, China
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Unknown
Service Related Injuries: Malaria

Bruno Marsili was a 50-Caliber Machine Gunner credited with shooting down a Japanese fighter plane.



Samuel A. Mangus Sr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/1/1926
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1944 - 1946
Unit: U.S.S. Wrangell
Battles/Campaigns: Asiatic Pacific Campaign, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Japan
Rank: Baker 3rd Class



Victor Mannella

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/4/1919
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 5/26/1942 - 10/14/1945
Unit: Infantry-Rifleman
Battles/Campaigns: Rhineland-Bastogne
Rank: Corporal T-5
Awards: 2 Battle Stars, Purple Heart, Distinguished Unit Badge, Expert Rifleman, WWII Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal
Service-Related Injury: Loss of lower right leg

Victor Mannella was discharged at Walter Reed Hospital, October of 1945. He married Eve Laborde and became the father of one son and daughter. He also has three grandchildren. Mr. Mannella worked and retired from Stanford Building Center in Leechburg.



Ray John Marquette

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 6/30/1965
Branch of Service: Marines
Date of Service: August 1983 - 1987
Unit: HML 167 (Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron)
Rank: Lance Corporal

Ray Marquette enlisted in the Marines at the age of 17. He had training at Paris Island; studied aviation electronics at Naval Air Station, Memphis, Tennessee; and attended Cobra Helicopter Training, Camp Pendleton, California. He currently works at Love Air Field in Dallas, Texas.



John Manocchi

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/7/1977
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: November 1996 - December 2005
Unit: B Co 458 EN Bry
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: E4 Specialist
Awards: Iraqi Freedom Award, Combat Stripes, Army Commendation Medal



Leland M. Martin

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 5/17/1923
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1942 - 1945
Unit: Amphibious Force, U.S.S. Hamblen
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of Normandy (first wave), African Theater, Asian Theater, European Theater
Rank: Signalmen First Class
Awards: Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal



Bradley M. Martin

Hometown: Lower Burrell
Date of Birth: 9/14/1979
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: January 2004 - January 2005
Unit: 336th Military Police Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: E5 Sgt
Awards: Global War on Terrorism Medal, Iraqi Freedom Medal, Army Commendation Medal
Service Related Injuries: Hearing loss

Bradley Martin is the only son of Chris and Nick Martin. He enlisted in the Reserves in 2002 and went to Fort Leonard Wood for Basic Training. He was assigned to the 307th MP Company and was deployed January 2004 with the 336th MP Battalion to Iraq. He returned home one year later and is still active in the 307th MP Company here.

William R. Mason



Vincent J. Marsili

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/27/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: August 1943 - January 1946
Unit: 125th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
Battles/Campaigns: European
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, French Liberation Medal, Belgium Fourragere, German Army of Occupation, European Theater

Vincent Marsili landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day as a replacement. He joined the 125th Cavalry, fought during the Battle of the Bulge and went on to Berlin until the war's end.



Henry W. McCain

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/22/1922
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 9/16/1942 - 10/22/1945
Unit: Infantry, Company B Training Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Foggia-Naples, Roma-Arno, EAME
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: 2 Battle Stars



Sgt. C. R. Maxwell



Alfonso Mazzocco

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 10/2/1920
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 6/22/1942 - 10/31-1945
Battles/Campaigns: New Guinea, South Pacific Theater
Rank: Tech Sergeant
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon w/2 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation ribbon w/Bronze Star, Good Conduct Ribbon

Alfonso Mazzocco was the son of Carmen and Emilia Mazzocco of Leechburg. He married Julia Julius on September 10, 1947 and they raised two daughters. He was also the proud grandfather of four grandsons. He lived his entire life in Leechburg and retired from Allegheny Ludlum after 42 years of service. He was fondly known to all as “Fonzy”. He spoke often of the time he spent in the military and the war, and was always proud to have served his country in the United States Army.



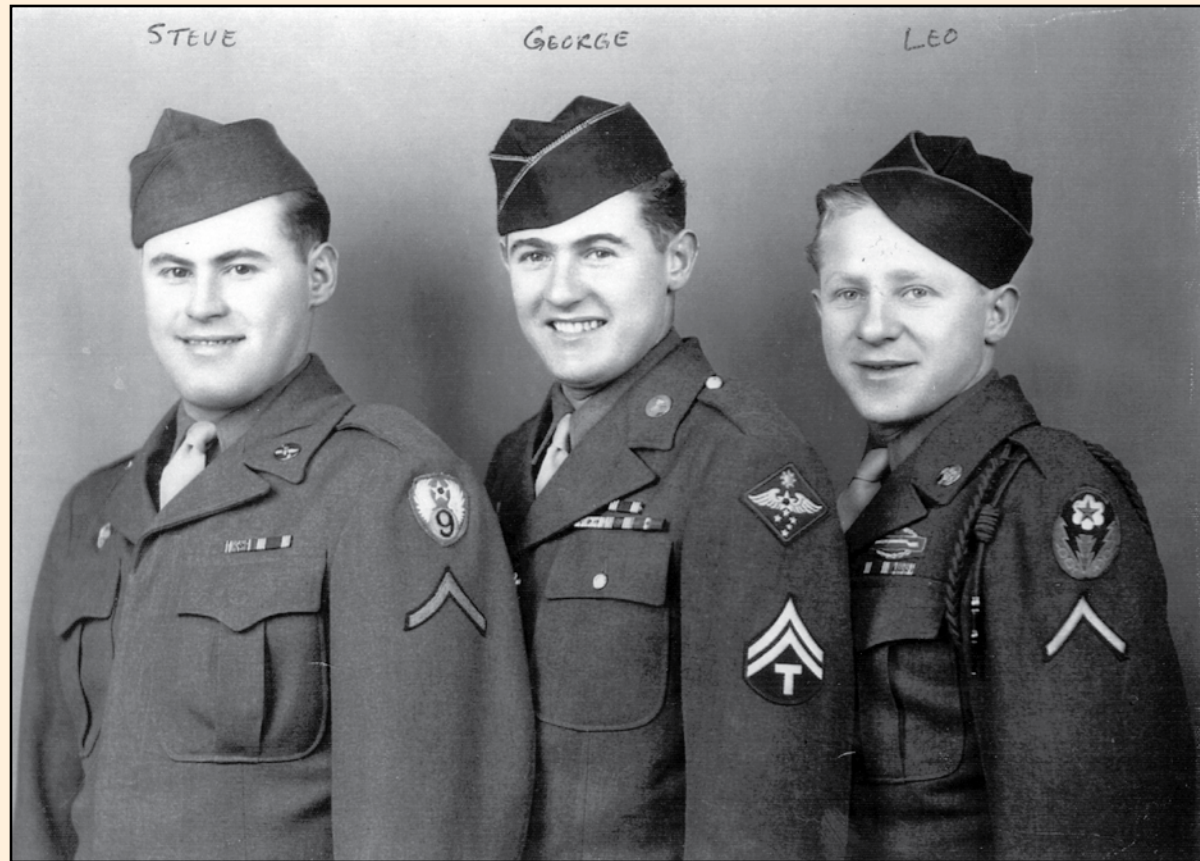
Ted Mikula



Sean McCutcheon



Mascarello Brothers



George Mascarello

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 4/3/1923
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: October 1943 - October 1946
Unit: Medic
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy Invasion
Rank: Corporal
Awards: WWII Medals

Leo Mascarello

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/23/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: October 1943 - January 1946
Unit: 45th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy Invasion
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: WWII Medals

Steve Mascarello Jr.

Hometown: Rural Ridge
Date of Birth: 12/23/1942
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 12/31/1964 - 12/31/1967
Unit: 1st Field Forces, Nah Trang
Rank: E4
Awards: Vietnam Service Medal
Service-Related Injury: Knee and neck injuries

Steve Mascarello is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).



Harold D. Miller

Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: WWII

Louis "Luigi" Mascarello

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1884
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War I
Unit: Cavalry
Rank: Private First Class

Steve Mascarello Sr.

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 12/13/1920
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/27/1942 - 10/15/1945
Unit: 88th Artillery
Battles/Campaigns: Invasion of Normandy, North France, Rhineland, Ardennes
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: WWII Medals

Paul S. Margo

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/11/1933
Branch of Service: U.S. Army
War or Conflict: Korean
Status: Retired
Date of Service: 9/6/1952-9/4/1956
Battles/Campaigns: Korean War
Rank: YN3
Awards: Good Conduct United Nations, Korea

Shane Michael McMasters

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/9/1986
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 6/12/2005
Unit: MWSS 374
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Certificate of Commendation (individual award), Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal

Shane Mc Masters graduated from Kiski Area High School June 11, 2005 and two days later went to USMC Training Camp in Parris Island, SC for 13 weeks of boot camp. He is stationed at Twentynine Palms, California, and will depart for his second tour of Iraq in February 2008. He is the son of proud parents John and Dolores Mc Masters.



Robert McDermott

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/3/1927
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: June 1945 - July 1946
Unit: U.S.S. Livingston, LCS 41, U.S.S. Neville
Rank: S 1/c
Awards: WWII Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Medal, Japanese Occupation Medal

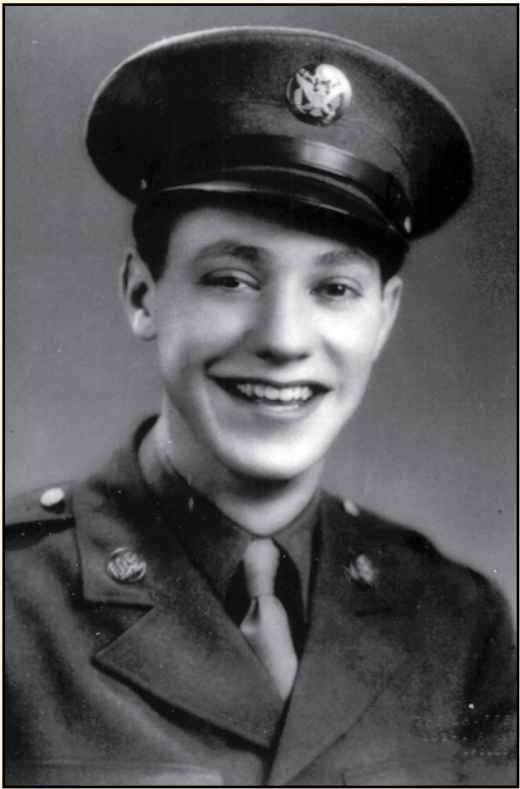


James H. Loy Jr.

Hometown: West Leechburg
Date of Birth: 5/24/1937
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 1/12/1961 - 12/28/1962
Unit: IX Corps Pacific
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Good Conduct Medal

Robert W. Milliron

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/29/1920
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: January 1942 - December 1945
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of Normandy



Melvin E. McLaughlin



Brian McDermott



Thomas McDermott



Noel Milian

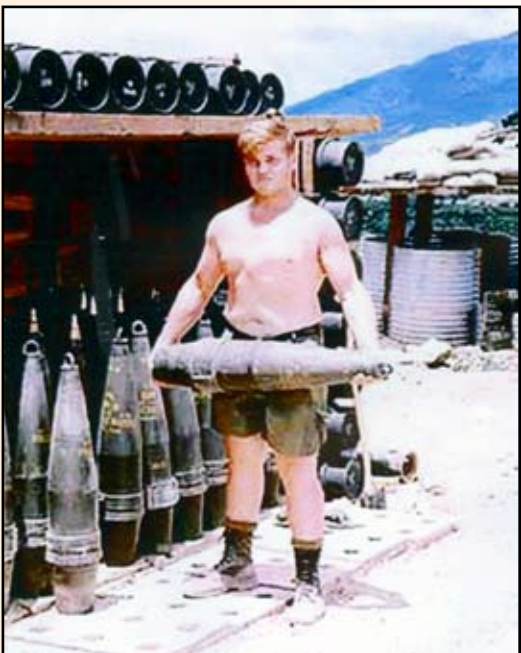
Hometown: Brooklyn
Date of Birth: 7/14/1973
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 3/20/1996 - Present
Unit: 340th Engineer Company; deployed with C Company 458th En Bn
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: CPT-03
Awards: Bronze Star, Iraqi campaign Medal

Noel Milian served with C Co 458th En Bn for seven years. He is a manufacturing manager for Covidien, Inc., in King of Prussia, PA and is married with two children. He has been deployed overseas three times and considers it an absolute honor to defend our freedom and having served with the brave men and women of C Co 458 Engineers.

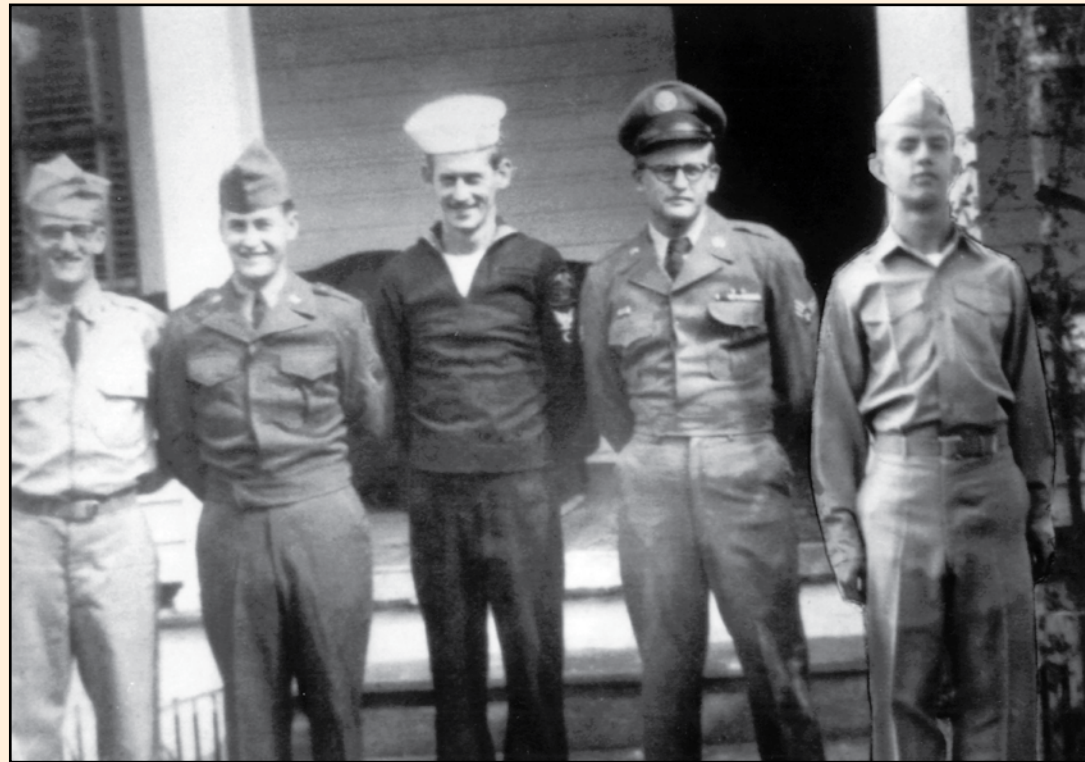
Gerald F. Mazur

Date of Birth: 1/21/1947
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 8/1/1966 - 4/20/1969
Unit: B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 79th Artillery; B Battery, 4th Battalion, 4th Artillery; F Battery, 26th Artillery; B Battery, 8th Battalion, 4th Artillery
Battles/Campaigns: Republic of Vietnam, 1968-1969
Rank: Specialist 4th Class
Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, 2 Overseas Bars
Service-Related Injury: Keloid scars and tinnitus

Gerald Mazur enlisted in the Army on August 1, 1966. He went to Fort Campbell, Kentucky for Basic Training, and to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for Advanced Individual Training. He has been stationed at Schwabisch Gmund, Germany; Dong Ha and Da Nang, both in South Vietnam. He was honorably discharged February, 1969.



Miller Family



Richard Miller

Hometown: Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 6/12/1946

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Vietnam

Date of Service: June 1964 - June 1967

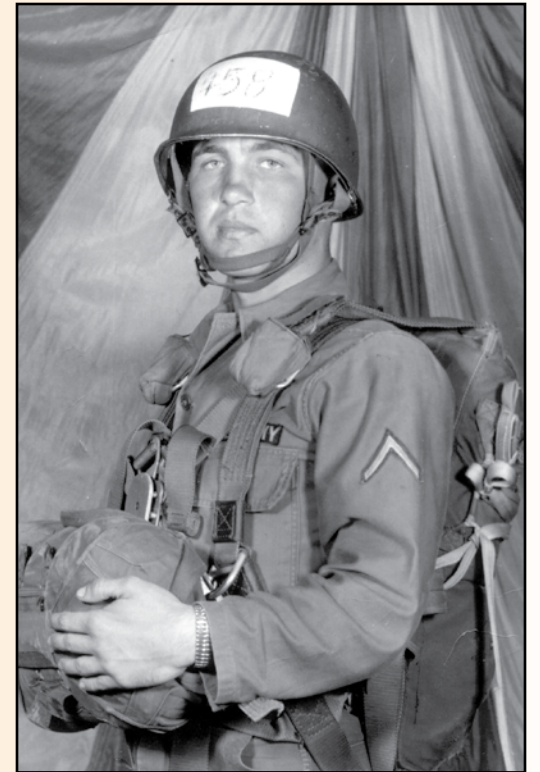
Unit: 173rd Airborne Brigade / 106th Trans. Company

Battles/Campaigns: Vietnam Campaign

Rank: E4

Awards: Parachute Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Sharpshooter Medal

After graduating from Kiski High School and completing three years of military service, Rich Miller attended Ohio State University and earned a B.S. in Education and an M.A. in Educational Administration. After 30 years in education at South Western City Schools, he recently retired. He is married to the former Antoinette Stano from West Leechburg. They have two children and two grandchildren. He and his wife currently reside in Galloway, Ohio.



Rich Miller

Hometown: Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 5/15/1945

Branch of Service: Marines

War or Conflict: Vietnam

Date of Service: July 1963 - July 1967

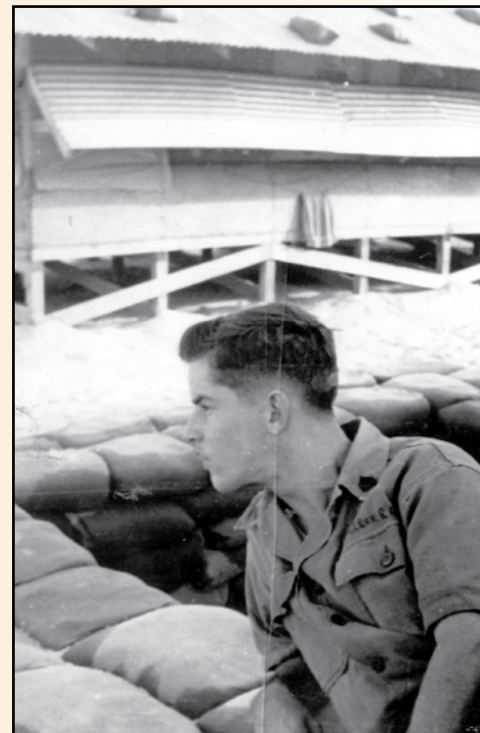
Unit: H + S Co Sup Bn, Camp Le June, NC; 1st FSR/FLC

Camp George, Vietnam

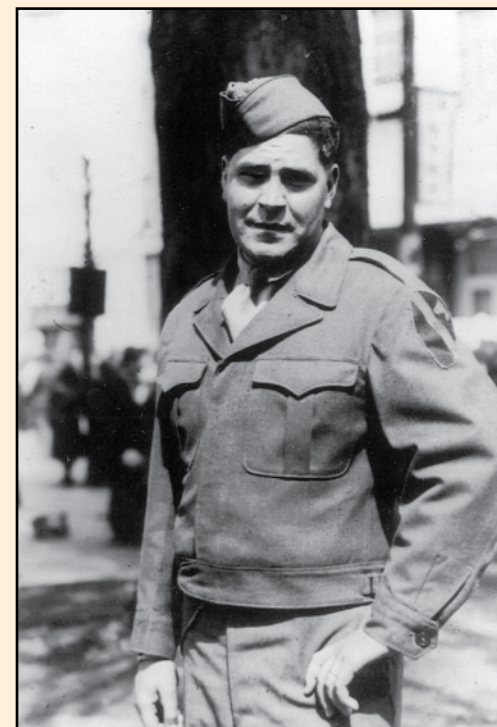
Rank: Sergeant

Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Award

Richard Miller enlisted in the Marines directly from high school in 1963. He went to Paris Island, SC for 16 weeks and then Camp Le June for another year. From there he spent 6 months in Vegas Island, Puerto Rico and then on to Marine Corp Supply Center in Albany, GA. He was in Vietnam from 1966 - 1967.



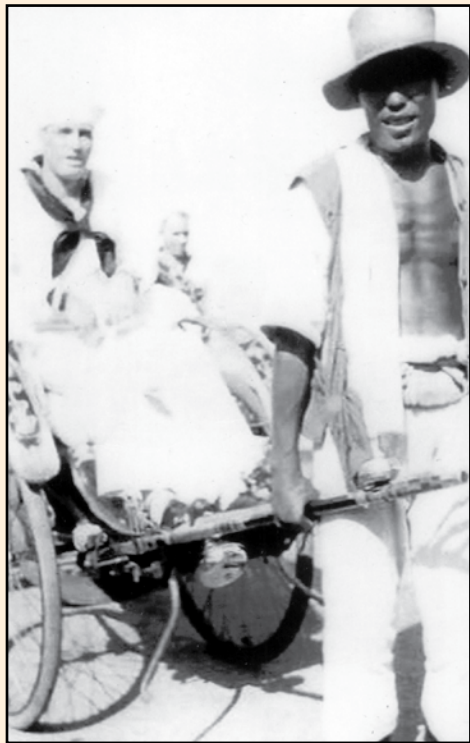
Ernest Morabito



Amergio Nick Mottilo



Benjamin Franklin Moore



Gary Cecil Moore



Samuel Earl Miller Sr.

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 11/27/1927
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 11/8/1950 - 11/8/1952
Unit: Munitions Handler, 335th 3rd Ammo BN
Rank: PFC (T)
Awards: Sharp Shooter, United Nations Service Medal,
Korean Conflict Service Medal

At the age of 18, Sam (Earl) attempted to enlist in the U.S. Army, but was refused due to flat feet. However, in 1950, he was drafted, serving in the Korean Conflict with the 335th 3rd Ammo BN, until his separation at Indiantown Gap, PA. After being discharged, he returned to his occupation of Roll Turner at the Hyde Park Foundry where he remained until retiring in 1977.



Glen Franklin Moore



John Nataruk



Samuel Earl Miller Jr.

Hometown: Hyde Park
Date of Birth: 1/18/1954
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: June 1972 - June 1975
Unit: Headquarters-MTMC (Military Traffic Management Command)
Rank: SP5
Awards: Good Conduct Award, Safe Driver Award, Marksmen Award, National Defense Medal

Samuel Miller enlisted in the Army in June 1972. He completed Basic and Advanced Individual Training (transportation), C43 MOS and also completed Leadership School. Scoring in the top 10% in AIT, he was offered to attend NCO Training at Fort Eustis, VA. He completed NCOES Training and was reassigned (PCS) to Headquarters MTMC as Command Staff Driver, Classified Courier, and Staff Assistant (attached to 3rd Infantry, Fort Myers, VA). Samuel attained the rank of SP5 in 18 months and left regular service duty in 1975. He enlisted in the Army Reserve 307th MP Company in New Kensington from 1980-1981.



Thomas L. Mills

Hometown: Georgetown
Date of Birth: 7/30/1939
Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 5/19/1958 - 5/11/1960;
8/10/1961 - 8/4/1962

Unit: HS BTRY3 Gun BN82 ARTY;
639th Trans Company
Battles/Campaigns: Giesson, Germany; Berlin Crisis
Rank: Spec 4 (E4)
Awards: Cold War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Sharp
Shooter Medal, Cold War Recognition Certificate,
Certificate of Training for Radio Operators MOS 050.0

Thomas Mills was recalled for active duty. While stationed in Maryland, he visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier—something he always wanted to do. He is one of seven children, a member of Christ the King Catholic Church in Leechburg, and also a member of the American Legion. He is a devoted and loving husband, and the father of four children. His experiences in the military changed his life and the lives of others. Mr. Mills is a very kind and considerate man who is always willing to help anyone in their time of need. He is a very hard worker and has relatives in the military that date back to the Civil War.



John P. Minarik

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/10/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 2/20/1943 - 12/31/1945
Unit: 82 and 101st Parachute Division
Battles/Campaigns: South France and Bastogne
Rank: PFC
Awards: (5) Bronze Stars, Bronze Arrowhead, Distinguished
Unit Badge, European African-Middle Eastern Campaign
Medal



Thomas L. Mills Jr

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 8/11/1967
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: January 1986 - January 2006
Unit: Service Navy
Battles/Campaigns: Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Chief Petty Officer (E7)
Awards: Navy Commendation Medal, Global War on Terrorism
Expeditionary Medal

Thomas Mills served over twenty years in the Navy and believes patriots are a dying breed.



Henry T. Musial

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/11/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 6/22/1943 - 3/16/1946
Unit: Infantry
Rank: Tec 5
Awards: American Theater Ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific
Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, WWII Victory
Ribbon, Rifle Sharp Shooter Badge



Thomas Niedwiecki
World War I



Vincent C. Nigliazzo



David Nabors Sr.

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/25/1934
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: January 1952 - November 1958
Unit: 4750th Drone Squadron
Rank: Airman First Class A/1c
Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Outstanding Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal, Sharp Shooter Award



Dr. Frank J. Mottola

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/4/1921
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/17/1943 - 12/27/1945
Unit: 743rd Tank Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe
Rank: Technician 5th grade
Awards: Presidential Distinguished Unit Badge, 5 Bronze Stars, WWII Victory Medal

The 743rd Tank Battalion provided fire power during the invasion at Omaha Beach in Normandy. They were surrounded by the German Army for several weeks during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. On April 13, 1945, they liberated a train of 2500 Holocaust victims; men, women and children, who had been incarcerated at Bergen-Belsen camp at Farsleben, Germany.

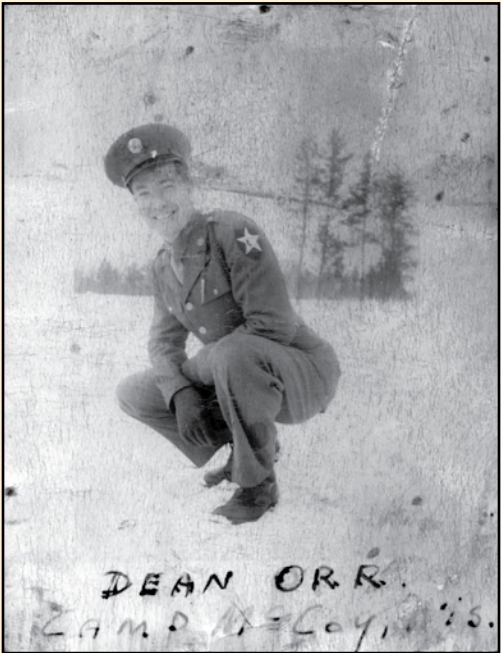


Chris Null

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 3/4/1977
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: 2/18/2004 - 2/25/2005
Unit: C Company 458th Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: SSG
Awards: Army Commendation Medal

Chris Null is single with no children. He is proud to have been deployed because he believed in the mission.

Dean Orr



Sean O'Rourke

Hometown: Tarentum
Date of Birth: 9/13/1979
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: February 2004 - February 2005
Unit: C Company 458th Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: SPC E4

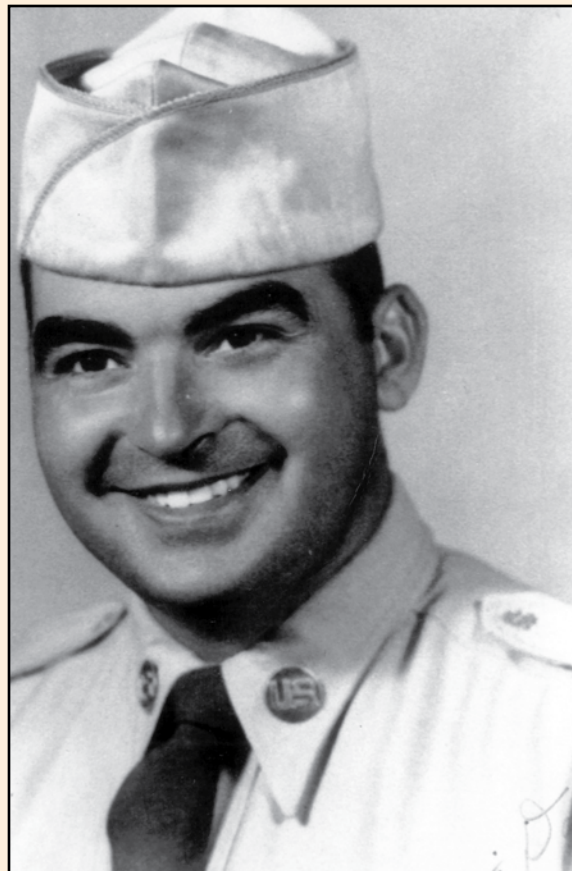
Sean O'Rourke was 24 years old, in the Reserves for just over a year, and working in a Drug and Alcohol Facility when he was deployed. He left a wife at home. He was proud to fight for his country and told his wife if his voyage overseas would help prevent their future children from witnessing another 9/11, then he would have done his job.

Clair L. Newingham

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 2/8/1907
Deceased: 1/3/1982
Branch of Service: U.S. Army
War of Conflict: WWII
Status: Honorably Discharged
Date of Service: June 23, 1942- After 1946
Unit: U.S.A.R.A.K 7th Infantry Division
Battles/Campaigns: Alaska
Rank: Warrant Officer
Awards: Asia Pacific Campaign Medal; American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal; Good Conduct Medal; Army Presidential Unit Citation



Rick Papurello



Al Perri



Clinton D. Newingham

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/21/1917
Branch of Service: Army
War of Conflict: World War II, Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War
Date of Service: September 1940 - June 1965
Battles/Campaigns: China-Burma-India Theater, Inchon Invasion, Korea, Turkey
Rank: Major
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Army of Occupation Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, EAME Campaign Medal

(Died on Active Duty)



Bill Powell



James A. Nutt



Jim and Joseph Pomatto

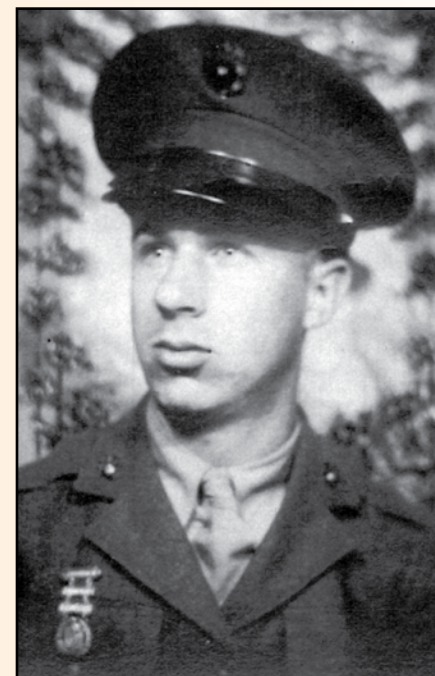


Christopher Pomatto



Mario R. Pezzana

Hometown: Hyde Park
Date of Birth: 8/16/1925
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 10/20/1943
Battles/Campaigns: Iwo Jima
Rank: ACK
Awards: Certificate of Satisfactory Service, Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Wounded in action 2/23/1945



James I. Parks

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/29/1920
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/22/1942 - 1/1946
Unit: Airplane Maintenance Technician 750
Rank: Tech Sergeant
Awards: Distinguished Unit Badge, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon w/Bronze Service Star, Good Conduct Medal

James Parks attended Airplane Mechanics School at Kessler Field, Mississippi for 19 weeks; B-24 Specialist School in San Diego for 5 weeks; B-29 Armament School at Lowry Field, Colorado for 4 weeks; and Engine Specialist School in both New Jersey and Texas. He served with 28 Bomb Sq., 19 Bomb Group for 11 months in the Pacific and supervised the work on planes with the help of 25 men.

Harry R. Ortman Jr.

Hometown: Arnold

Date of Birth: 12/23/1926

Branch of Service: Army; also Air Force Reserve Corp

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 4/27/1945 - 12/15/1946

11/20/1946 - 11/19/1949

Unit: 350th Infantry

Ammo Bearer 504

Battles/Campaigns: Italy, Austria

Rank: Private First Class

Awards: Sharp Shooter Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal,

Service-Related Injury: Shell-shock

Henry R. Ortman was one of eight children, born in Arnold, who loved life. Little is known about his military life because he wouldn't talk about it, nor would he watch military coverage on television. He lived in West Leechburg with his wife and children until his death at the age of 39, when he was struck and killed by a car.

He was a very kind-hearted man, and a loving and devoted husband, father, son and brother. For ten years he worked at American St. Gobain Glass Corp in Arnold. He was a member of Arnold Methodist Church. He is still loved and missed very much.



James V. Pirone

Hometown: West Leechburg

Date of Birth: 5/29/1920

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 11/27/1942 - 11/3/1945

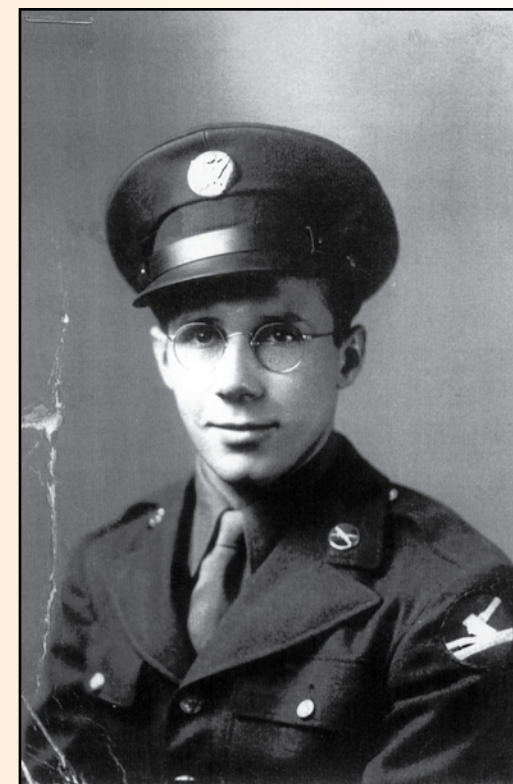
Battles/Campaigns: European Theater, Italy

Rank: Private

Awards: Purple Heart

Service-Related Injury: Shot in leg

James Pirone was married to Pauline Fondrk on June 15, 1946 and was a member of the former St Martha's Church in Leechburg. He was also a member of Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 36, and the American Legion. Jim enjoyed hunting, fishing, dancing, and spending time with his family. He worked for 30 years as a Core Maker in the United Engineering and Foundry plant in Vandergrift, where he died of a heart attack on April 8, 1971.



Steven M. Penn

Hometown: Lower Burrell

Date of Birth: 7/19/1982

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq

Date of Service: January 2003 - February 2004

Unit: C Company 459th Engineer Battalion

Battles/Campaigns: Battle of Alkut, Battle of Al Basiriyah, Battle of Baghdad

Rank: SGT

Awards: 2 Army Commendation Medals, Unit Citation, Marine Unit Citation, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Action Badge, Presidential Citation

"It was an honor to serve this great country."



Lee Rainey



Emilio S. Perez

Hometown: West Leechburg
Date of Birth: 10/6/1934
Branch of Service: Army and Navy
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: Army 1/19/1954 - 11/22/1955
Navy 4/17/1956 - 2/13/1961
Battles/Campaigns: Occupation Forces Korea
Rank: E5
Awards: United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Korean Service Medal



Larry J. Pecko

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/21/1938
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Berlin Crises
Date of Service: 1961-1962
Unit: 549th Artillery Battery
Rank: Specialist (E4)
Awards: DOA Commendation Medal

Larry was born in Vandergrift in 1938 to Steve and Helen (Costruni) Pecko. He graduated from Vandergrift High School in 1956 and Penn State University in 1960. He served active duty from 1961-1962 in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. When the 549th Artillery Battery was activated for the Berlin Crises, he was awarded the DOA Commendation Medal. Larry married Pati Maraffi and has three daughters. He worked in Portage, Indiana for National Steel, at various locations for US Steel, and thereafter in management positions in Production Planning until he retired. He continued to work part-time as a consultant and project manager for USX Corporation in Spain until fully retiring in 2001.



James Earl Post



Peter Preslipsky



Steve J. Pecko

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1911
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1944
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Theater
Rank: Electrician's Mate

Steve J. Pecko was born in Ford City and came to Vandergrift in 1934 to work as a tailor for the United Cleaning Co. He married Helen Costrini and had one son. Steve was one of the first fathers drafted for duty in WWII, and went to Great Lakes Navel Base in Illinois. He served for two years in the Pacific Theater as an Electrician's Mate aboard the destroyer escort U.S.S. Uhlmann in Ad. Hulsey's fleet. Upon discharge, Steve opened his own business (Steve J. Pecko, Tailor & Cleaner) on Lincoln Avenue in Vandergrift, where he worked until retiring in 1975. Steve passed away in 1984, preceded by his wife Helen in 1978.



Gregg Potter

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/12/1974
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: June 1994
Unit of Service: Operations Support
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom /
Enduring Freedom
Rank: Captain
Awards: (3) Accommodation Medals, (3) Achievement
Medals, Iraq Campaign Medal



Joseph James Rua

Hometown: West Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/3/1933
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korea
Date of Service: 1951 - 1953
Rank: Private

Nicholas John Schneider

Hometown: Cranberry Township
Date of Birth: 9/5/1982
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Unit: 307 MP Company
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Iraq Campaign Medal, Army
Commendation Medal

William Prunty Jr.



James Potter

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 5/1/1938
Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: October 1961 - October 1963
Unit: Presidential Honor Guard
Rank: SP4



Thomas Rago



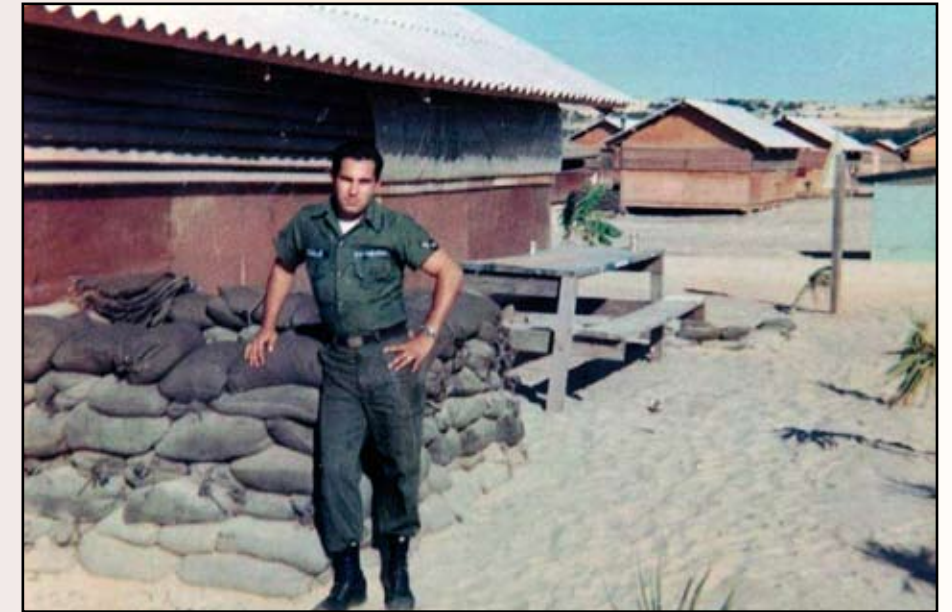
Jason Andrew Retter



Mark Retter



Jerry A. Sciallo
 Date of Birth: 7/29/1944
 Branch of Service: Air Force
 War or Conflict: Vietnam War
 Date of Service: 1963-1967
 Rank: A1C



Timothy Mark Retter

Hometown: Leechburg
 Date of Birth: 5/18/1983
 Branch of Service: Army National Guard
 War or Conflict: Iraq War
 Date of Service: 6/26/2000- Present
 Unit: Company C, 1/110th Infantry
 Battles/Campaigns: Kosovo, KFOR
 (March 2003 - March 2004)
 Rank: Sergeant
 Awards: Army Achievement Award, Kosovo Campaign, Army Commendation Medal,
 Reserve Achievement, National Defense Service Medal, NATO Medal, Republic of
 Yugoslavia, Global War on Terrorism Medal



Joseph Ressani



Matthew J. Rairigh

Branch of Service: Army
 War or Conflict: Iraq War

Robert L. Rairigh, Jr.

Branch of Service: Army
 War or Conflict: World War II

Stephen Porter

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/28/1985
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: 6/1/2005
Unit: 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines
Battles/Campaigns: War on terrorism
Rank: LCPL
Awards: Combat Action Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Shrapnel wounds



Stephen Porter started boot camp June 1, 2005 at Parris Island, SC. He went to School of Infantry at Camp Geiger, NC and became a mortar man. After 3 more months of training, he was deployed to Ramadi, Iraq in March of 2006. He was injured on September 2, 2006 from a hand grenade explosion while doing roof top patrol. After 6 months of light duty, Stephen returned to full training in order to re-deploy with his unit on the 22nd MEU. He is currently on the USS Ponce and will return home February of 2008.



Scott Revis

Hometown: North Huntington
Date of Birth: 5/20/1962
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2004 - March 2005
Unit: C Company 458 Engineers
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: First Sergeant
Awards: Combat Action Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal

Scott Revis has served with the Army Reserve for over twenty years, including one tour in Iraq.

James H. Riggle

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/27/1942
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Cuban Missile Blockade;
Early Vietnam
Date of Service: August 1960 - August 1964
Unit: 2D Marine Division, Reconnaissance Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Cuban Missile Crisis
Rank: Corporal E-4

Chris A. Rodemeyer

Hometown: Harrisville
Date of Birth: 3/10/1982
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq
Date of Service: May 2003 - July 2004
Unit: 1 AO 16 Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: E4

Although Chris Rodemeyer doesn’t agree with the war, he is proud to have served his country.

Scott A. Ryan

Hometown: Lower Burrell
Date of Birth: 9/14/1968
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2003 - January 2004
Unit: 307th MP
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: SSG E6

Scott Ryan is a professional driver and part-time soldier. He has been involved with the 307th MP for over 19 years and is proud to be part of the “Dirty Dogs” infrastructure. While in Iraq, he helped the Iraqis gain civil control of their policing departments in the Baghdad district. “We serve and sacrifice so that others can enjoy freedom.”

J.Y. Rosensteel

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 3/4/1932
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 5/8/1951 - 2/12/1954
Unit: Signal Const. Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: German Occupation
Rank: Staff Sergeant



Lacy J. Ross

Hometown: Spring Church
Date of Birth: 5/1/1917
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: August 1942 - June 1946
Unit: A3 Amph Truck Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Iwo Jima
Rank: Staff Sergeant



Arthur E. Rowe

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 1919
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Battles/Campaigns: Europe

Merle K. Rowe

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 1917
Branch of Service: Army Air Corp
War or Conflict: World War II
Battles/Campaigns: Europe
Rank: Sergeant

John J. Rusnak

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/20/1919
Branch of Service: Army Air Corp
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1942 - 1945
Unit: 3701st AAF Base Unit
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy; Horst, Holland
Rank: Corporal

While serving with the Army Air Force, Corporal Rusnak was instrumental in the construction of the first B-29 instructional mock-up panel for training flight engineers. The mock-up trainer was invaluable in teaching flight engineers start up procedures, simulation techniques for operating the engines of a Superfortress, tactical instrument interpretation and preventing the destruction of expensive B-29 engines during training exercises.



David S. Romanowsky

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/9/1974
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Date of Service: 9/14/1994 - Present
Unit: 566 IS
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Enduring Freedom, Kosovo Campaign, Desert Fox
Rank: Tech Sergeant
Awards: Bronze Star, 2 Air Force Commendation Medals, Army Commendation Medal, 6 Joint Service Achievement Medals, 4 Air Force Achievement Medals, Air Force Combat Action Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal

David Romanowsky is a graduate of Kiski Area High School. He is married with two children and currently living in Colorado, stationed at Buckley AFB. He is the son of Dr. Harvey and Ellen Fishel.

Timothy A. Rote

Hometown: Upper Burrell
Date of Birth: 12/21/1965
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2003 - February 2004
Unit: 307th MP Company
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom
Rank: E6 SSG

Timothy Rote is a 1984 graduate of Kiski High School. He has been in the Army for 13 years, which included nine months in Bosnia and one year in Iraq. He has been married to his wife, Marsha, for 19 years and is the father of two daughters. Tim has lived in the Kiski Valley his entire life.

Art Rupert



Michael Rywalk



Richard A. Ritenour Jr.

Hometown: Jeannette
Date of Birth: 10/5/1982
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2003 - December 2004
Unit: 307th MP Company
Rank: SPC

Richard Ritenour is 25 years old and has been in the Reserves for 8 years. He has one daughter and enjoys cars, hunting and the outdoors. "You can walk the valley, but you are not alone."

Richard V. Rulis

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 4/20/1929
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1951 - 1953
Unit: 1st Armored Div
Battles/Campaigns: Occupation Troops
Rank: Corporal

Richard Rulis was drafted into the Army and inducted at Fort Mead, MD. From there he was sent to the 1st Armored Division in Fort Hood , Texas for basic training. He went on to Wheel and Truck School, then Tank Mechanic School. He returned to Fort Hood to the 91st A.F.A. The 1st Armored Division was disbanded, so he was sent to the 60th Station Hospital in France (motor pool) until returning home in April of 1953.



Guy T. Scalzott



Donald L. Rupp

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/30/1942
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: April 1964 - April 1967
Unit: Signal Corps
Rank: E4
Awards: Good Conduct Medal,
Expeditionary Forces Medal, Vietnam
Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal



Edmund C. Salsgiver, SSgt.



Anthony G. Shea Jr.

Hometown: Leechburg
Branch of Service: Air Force
Date of Service: 11/20/1984
Rank: Major

Major Anthony Shea joined the Air Force through the Delayed Enlistment Program in November of 1984 and reported to Basic Training at Lackland AFB, Texas. He began his nine year military career as a Security Policeman. His assignments were at Myrtle Beach AFB; Patrick AFB, Florida; and Suwon Air Base, Korea. During this time, he completed his Bachelors degree and was accepted to Officers Training School. He is currently the Support Flight Commander of the 311th Recruiting Squadron at Canonsburg, PA. Major Shea is planning to retire from the Air Force March 1, 2008.



Blair N. Saul

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: April 15
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1942 - 1945
Unit: Army Air Corp
Battles/Campaigns: European Theater
Rank: Master Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal



Anthony G. Shea Sr.



Frank Salimbene



William E. Spang

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/10/1930
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 12/27/1951 - 12/14/1955
Unit: Strategic Air Command (SAC)
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal

William Spang made two trips to Morocco. The first time he was stationed 27 miles south of Casablanca for a total of 18 months. The second time, he was about 30 miles north of Rabat. One thing he learned was how great it was to live in the United States of America.

Arthur J. Scherf

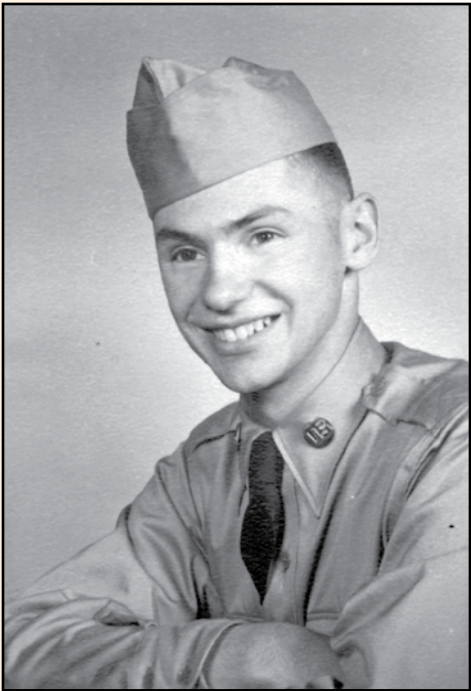
Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 1/28/1932
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1952 - 1954
Unit: Company D, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division
Rank: Sergeant First Class
Awards: Bronze Star



Clarence Richard Schumaker

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 6/25/1935
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korea
Date of Service: 1953 - 1956
Unit: 6th Armor Division
Rank: SP4

Clarence Richard “Dick” Schumaker went into the Army 6th Armored Division as a radio operator in Germany. He was separate from the Korean Conflict, but not separated from the haunting acts that a soldier is trained for. Clarence was in the Army from 1953-1956, earning the rank of SP4; he was later discharged from the Army Reserve in 1961.



Daniel J. Shellhammer

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/8/1906
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1/18/1943 - 11/11/1945
Unit: Army 1308 Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Normandy, Battle of the Bulge
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/3 Bronze Stars



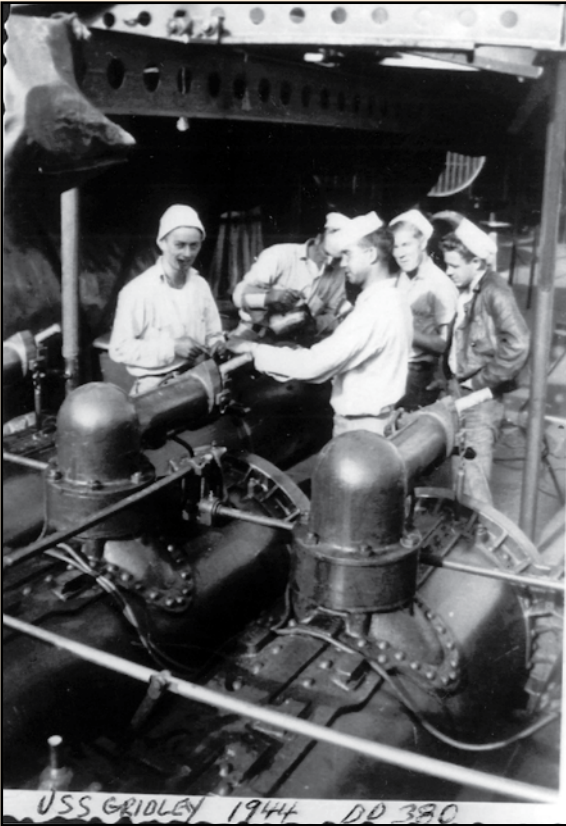
Richard L. “Dick” Scott

Hometown: Kiski Township
Date of Birth: 10/11/??
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Vietnam Era
Date of Service: 1957
Rank: Tech Sgt

Dick Scott joined the Air Force shortly after graduation and made it his career. He was an Electronics Technician and Cryto-Maintenance Specialist. He worked on missile guidance systems and top secret communication equipment. Later he became an Air Force recruiter. His service took him though out the United States, as well as England, Turkey, Italy, the Pacific and other unknown locations. He retired from the Kiski Valley where he operated a small engine repair shop. Shortly before his untimely death, he fulfilled his dream of becoming an ordained minister.



Bill Schweikert



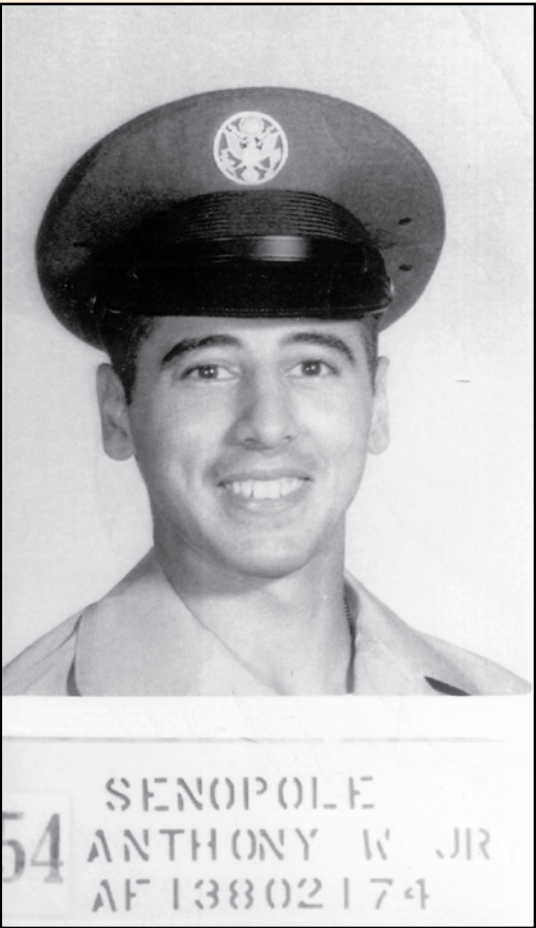
Victor C. Szczepkowski



A.W. “Bill” Senopole Jr.

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/18/1941
Branch of Service: Air Force
Date of Service: August 1963 - July 1967
Unit: CBPO
Rank: A1C
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, Sharp Shooter Medal, Overseas Medal

Bill Senopole graduated from Ford City High School in 1959, graduated from Slippery Rock College in 1963 and served in the United States Air Force from 1963 until 1967. While in the service, his work assignment was in the Consolidation Base Personnel Office, responsible for assigning personnel back to the States, or reassigning closed bases. He also played baseball in the service for the London Rockets as a leading hitter (.515 batting average) and at Ramstein AFB; an all-star first baseman at both. He was stationed in Lakeland, Texas; Greenville, Mississippi; South Ruislip, England; Ankara, Turkey and Ramstein, Germany. He retired from teaching in the Kiski Area School District in 1994.



Lawrence Gerald Shearer

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 7/18/1925
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1946
Battles/Campaigns: South Pacific Theater
Rank: Sergeant

Gerald Shearer was drafted into the U.S. Marines one month after graduating from high school. During the next three years, he witnessed the horrors of war in the South Pacific. He was a man who held strong allegiance to his family, country and God. With the wisdom gained from the war, it helped him to appreciate his fellow man and see the goodness in each person he met. He was patriotic toward his country and had much respect for the men he served with, which resulted in life-long friendships.

Edward Shearer

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/19/1953
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: December 1971 - December 1974
Unit: 8th Infantry, “Patty’s Gang”
Rank: SP4

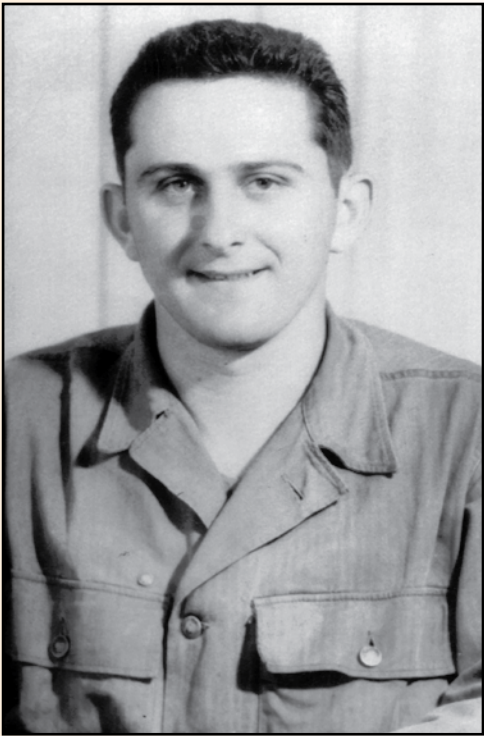
Edward Shearer enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve and defend his country. He finished his service with an honorable discharge.



Fred J. Segorek

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/6/1930
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korea
Date of Service: 8/30/1951 - 8/27/1953
Unit: HQ Co., 69th Tran Bn, Attached to 2nd Infantry Division
Awards: Korean Service Medal w/4 BCS, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Korean War Service Medal (50th anniversary of the Korean War)

Fred Segorek attended basic training at Camp Brackenridge, served in Korea 15 months and was discharged 8/27/53 to Fort Sheridan, Illinois.



Andres Sepulveda

Hometown: Windsor, CT
Date of Birth: 12/2/1966
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 1989; 1991; January 2002 - August 2002; January 2003 - March 2004
Unit: 1-39th FAR (Airborne) 16th MP (ABN) 307th MP Co (CS)
Battles/Campaigns: J/C, Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom
Rank: SFC (E7)
Awards: Army Expeditionary Ribbon, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Action Badge

“I would gladly give my life a thousand times so our sons and daughters can live one.”

Paul Lucas Shearer

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 6/7/1988
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: December 2006 - Present
Unit of Service: Security Forces
Rank: E-2 Airman

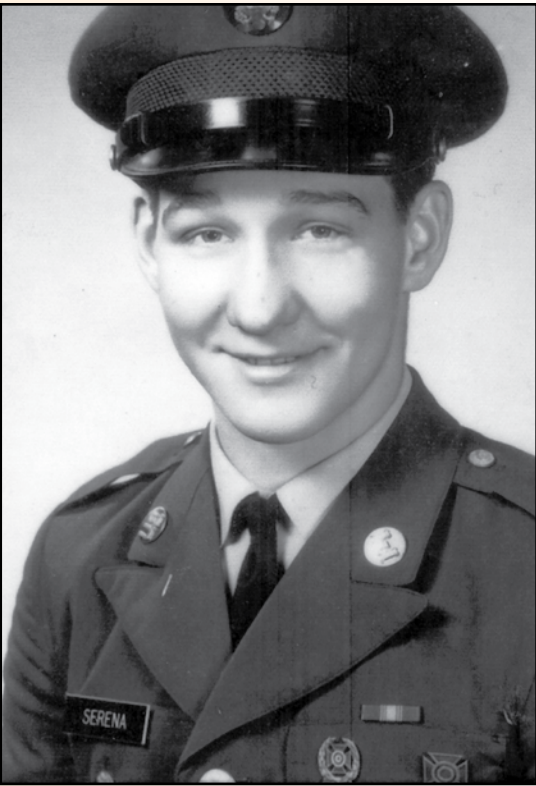
Airman Paul Shearer is presently serving in Security Forces in the United States Air Force. He joined the military in order to protect his country.



Robert J. Serena Sr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/3/1951
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1/3/1968 - 1/17/1977
Unit: Engineers
Battles/Campaigns: Vietnam Winter and Spring 1970; Sanctuary Counter-Offensive 1970; Vietnam Counter-Offensive Phase VII (1970-71); Consolidation I (1971); Consolidation II (1971-72)
Rank: SP/5
Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Palm, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Commendation
Service-Related Injury: PTSD

Robert Serena was born on Columbia Avenue in Vandergrift and has lived most of his life in the A.K. Valley. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam and two tours of duty in Germany. After the second tour in Vietnam, he returned to Vandergrift and married Sheryl Ross, to whom he is still married today. He also raised both of his children in Vandergrift. During his service, he received numerous awards and certificates of accomplishment, including graduating fifth in his class at the 8th Infantry N.C.O. Academy.



Harry J. Shipman

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 10/25/1945
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: April 1967 - April 1970
Unit: Signal Corps
Rank: Spec 5
Awards: Republic of Vietnam Medal w/Silver Bar, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal

Harry Shipman scored highest in his battalion in Fort Benning in the Advanced Individual Proficiency Test; highest in Advanced Individual Training at Fort Dix; and highest in Microwave Repair School at Fort Monmouth. He served on Monkey Mountain in Da Nang, Vietnam in 361st Signal Battalion. He was discharged from Fort Huachuca where he was a Microwave Radio Repairman.



Jack Lewis Shipman



Bernard Shipman



William Shipman



Louis Simon



Eric D. Wright

Hometown: Pittsburgh
Date of Birth: 12/18/1984
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 11/22/2003 - 1/15/2005
Unit: 336th MP Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal

Eric Wright joined the Army Reserve in 2002 and took active duty in 2007. He is a businessman in his civilian life and the proud father of one daughter. “I fight for those who can’t fight for themselves.”

Robert Shroyer

Hometown: Mt. Pleasant
Date of Birth: 1/3/1974
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2003 - February 2004
Unit: 307th MP Company
Rank: SFC E7
Awards: Iraq Campaign Medal, Bronze Star

Robert Shroyer spent four years active duty in the U.S. Marine Corp and a total of 16 years in military service. He has been deployed to both Bosnia and Iraq. He credits his success to the support of his family. He is married and the father of two children. As a civilian, Robert has worked as a Corrections Officer for 11 years. “Americans need to remember freedom is not without loss, and they have names, families and loved ones left behind.”
In memory of Nick Tomko and Eric Hull. You are always in our thoughts.

John R. Stearman

Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam

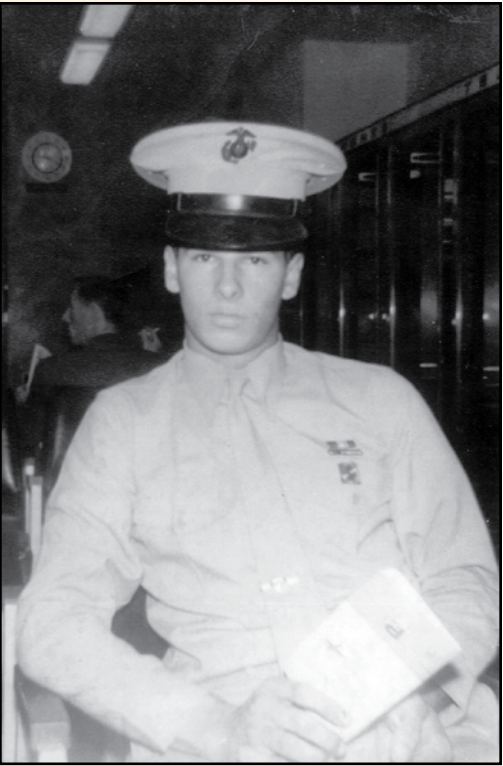
Gustine J. Zahumensky

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: September 1920
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: January 1942 - December 1945
Unit: 86th Bomb Sqdn, 47th Bomb Gp
Rank: Sergeant

Clyde B. Seckman

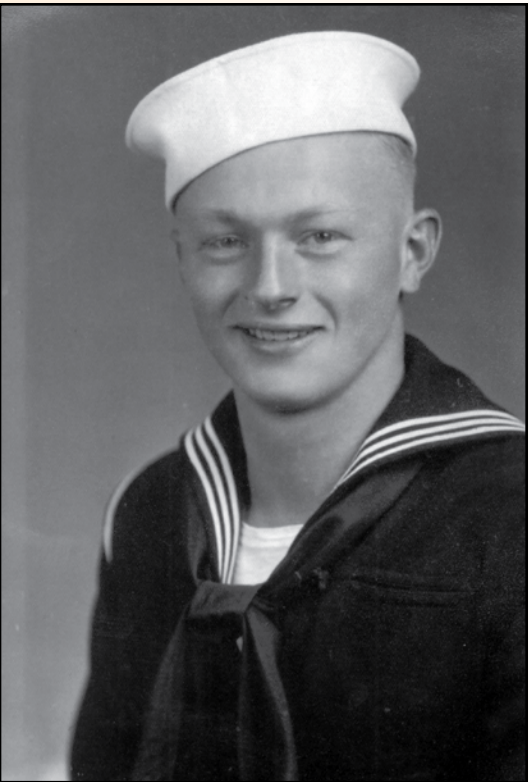
Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 2/9/1940
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 3/30/1967 - 5/31/1969
Unit: I Company, 3rd Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: TET Offensive, Kason, Hill 881
Rank: Corporal E-4
Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Purple Heart, Vietnam Campaign w/device
Service-Related Injury: Wounds resulting from booby-traps; PTSD

Clyde Seckman enlisted in the Marines in 1967 at the age of 17. He attended Basic Training at Parris Island, and Guerrilla Warfare Training in California. He was then deployed to Vietnam. After serving only 8 months, he was wounded and sent to Philadelphia Naval Hospital, where he spent one year. Having served faithfully and honorably, he retired from the Marine Corps on April 1, 1971.



James Raymond Shockey

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/25/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943-1946
Unit: Armed Guard
Awards: American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal



David E. Shirley

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 5/20/1937
Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 5/29/1954 - 5/22/1957
Rank: Specialist 3rd Class

David Shirley was born in Apollo and was the father of six children. He served for two years in Alaska during his Army enlistment. David was loved by his children and all who knew him.



Michael D. Shirley

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 2/12/1969
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Persian Gulf War; Afghanistan
Date of Service: 11/15/1990 - 6/7/2002
Unit: 710th MSB (Main Support Battalion)
Rank: E-5 Sergeant
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Award

Michael Shirley joined the Army in 1990 and did Basic Training in Fort Sill, OK., after which time he served in the Gulf War. He spent a total of twelve years in the Army, where his last assignment was in Afghanistan. Currently he lives in Leechburg with his wife and four sons.



Lester L. Shirley

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/4/1939
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War, Vietnam War
Date of Service: 1956-1976
Unit: Green Beret and Radio Repairman
Rank: E6
Awards: Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star
Service Related Injuries: Cancer due to Agent Orange in Vietnam



John A. Sikorski

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/6/1917
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1/30/1942 - 6/28/1945
Unit: Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Tunisia, Algeria, French Morocco
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: EAME Campaign Medal w/2 Bronze Service Stars
Prisoner of War: 18 months

John Sikorski was inducted at Fort Meade, Maryland, then sent to Camp Wheeler, GA for Basic Training. From there he was transferred to Camp Blanding, FL; Fort Benning, GA; then Indiantown Gap, PA. He was shipped to England, then Scotland and later Africa, where he was reported as Missing-In-Action. On December 23, 1942, he was captured by the Germans who sent him to Italy where he remained for 18 months as a POW. He returned to active duty June 23, 1944 and was discharged at the end of the war. He seldom spoke of his POW experience.



Robert Shoupe

Hometown: Salina
Date of Birth: 5/6/1930
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: June 1950 - June 1954
Unit: 12th Radio Squadron Mobile, Landsberg, Germany
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, German Occupation Medal, National Defense Medal

Robert Shoupe had a very interesting tour in the Air Force. He was an Intercept Radio Operator and his work was classified during the time of the Cold War. They intercepted Russian and Communist messages sent by Morse Code. It was then delivered to Intelligence who would decipher the messages. One interesting thing to note is that one of his fellow radio operators was a fellow from Dyess, Arkansas, whose name was John R. Cash. After his discharge, he became the famed country singer Johnny Cash.



Joseph D. Silicki

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 2/10/1950
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Vietnam Era
Date of Service: April 1969 - April 1974
Unit: Air Tactical Fighter Wing, Upper Heyford, England
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Service Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation

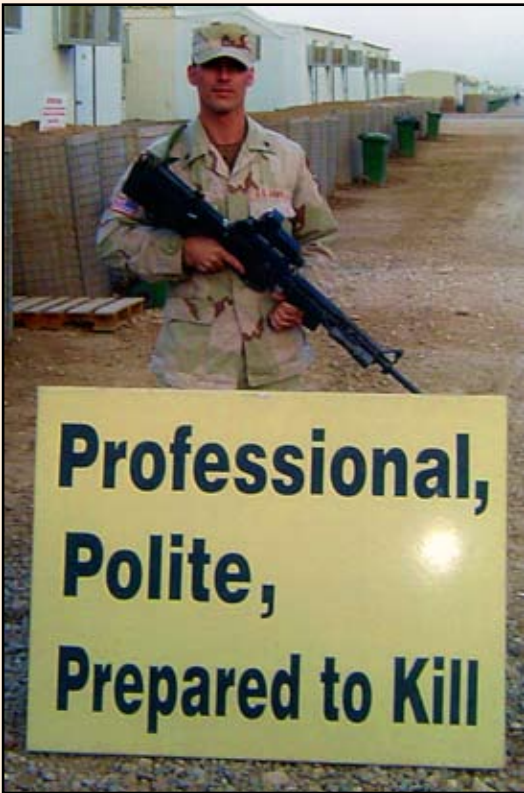
Joseph Silicki graduated from Kiski High School in 1968. He entered the Air Force in 1969 as an Aircraft Technician working on B-52's, F-III's and helicopters. After discharge, he worked at NASA in California on the Apollo missions. He was married to Elaine Pirone in 1974 and has three children. He currently works for the Federal Aviation Administration as a Airway Transportation Systems Specialist at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport and lives in Beaver, PA. He enjoys playing guitar, photography and classic cars.



Joshua A. Snyder

Hometown: Connellsville
Date of Birth: 6/21/1974
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2004 - February 2005
Unit: 458th Engineer Battalion
Rank: E6
Awards: Army Commendation Medal

Joshua Snyder was working as a welder when he was called to serve his country. He left a wife and two children behind but knew he “was fighting to give people the same freedoms we enjoy in our great country.”



Robert C. Silicki

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/23/1938
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Cuban Missile Crisis
Date of Service: December 1961 - 1965
Unit: Hospital Company
Rank: Spec 4

Robert Silicki graduated from Vandergrift High School in 1956. He attended college at Orchard Lake, Michigan and Saint Vincent's Seminary in Latrobe. He entered the Army in 1961 as an X-ray Technician in a hospital at Fort Knox, Kentucky. After discharge, he became a police officer in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he worked in law enforcement for 32 years. He also worked as a deputy sheriff and a hospital security guard. He completed his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and enjoys singing in the choir, gardening and photography.



H. Leo Sliviak

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 4/10/1929
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 4/25/1951 - 4/9/1953
Unit: 47th MASH Au APO 301 (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital)
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal

Leo Sliviak was one of five brothers who served in the U.S. military. After he fulfilled his Army enlistment, he transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve for five years. He was raised in Allegheny Township and lived there prior to relocating for his occupation to Carlisle, PA.



Vincent M. Sliviak

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 2/13/1913
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/23/1942 - 8/11/1945
Unit: 36th Division, 143rd Infantry, B Company
Battles/Campaigns: Tunisian and Naples-Foggia Campaigns
Rank: Private
Awards: Purple Heart, EAME Campaign Medal w/2 Bronze Stars, American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Honorable Service Lapel Button, Combat Infantry Badge, M-1 rifle SS
Service Related Injury: 10/3/1943, Caserta, Italy

Vincent Sliviak immigrated from Poland at age 3 and was one of five brothers who served in the U.S. military. He was a life-long resident of Allegheny Township.



Stanley L. Sliviak

Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 6/5/1917
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 4/24/1943 - 2/26/1946
Unit: 270th Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company
Rank: Major
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Honorable Discharge Lapel Button

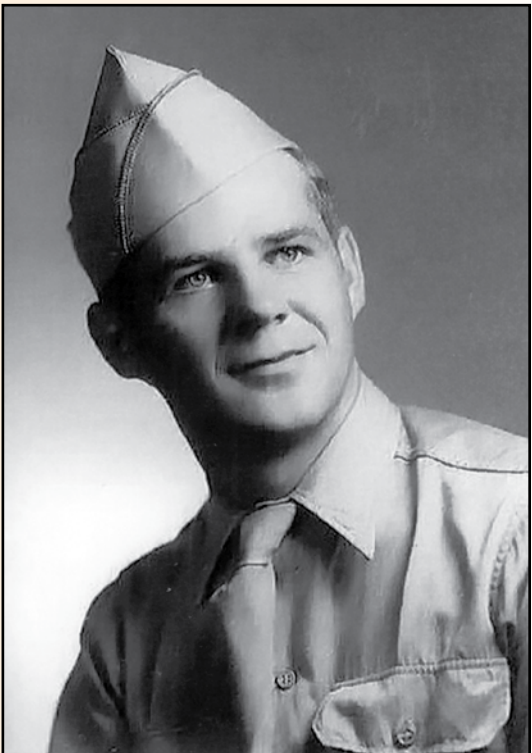
Stanley Sliviak was one of five brothers who served in the U.S. military. After he fulfilled his Army enlistment, he transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve. His military career lasted over 25 years. He was raised in Allegheny Township and lived there prior to relocating for his occupation to La Vale, MD.



Walter I. Sliviak

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 11/28/1925
Branch of Service: Army / Army Reserves
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 2/28/1946 - 8/1/1947
Unit: 3057th Ordnance Service Company
Rank: Technician 4th Grade
Awards: WWII Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal (Japan), Honorable Service Lapel Button

Walter Sliviak was one of five brothers who served in the U.S. military. He was raised and lived in Allegheny Township prior to relocating for his occupation in Baltimore, MD.



Andrew L. Sliwiak

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/18/1918
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 6/26/1940 - 11/12/1945
Unit: 3459th Ordnance
Battles/Campaigns: Po Valley Campaign, Rome-Arno Campaign, North Apennines Campaign
Rank: Staff Sergeant Technician 3rd Grade
Awards: EAME Theater Ribbon w/3 Bronze Stars, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon, American Theater ribbon, American Defense Service Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, WWII Victory Medal, Honorable Service Lapel Button

Andrew Sliwiak was one of five brothers who served in the U.S. military. He was a life-long resident of Allegheny Township.



Louis J. Smith

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 4/3/1926
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: April 1943 - April 1946
Unit: Amphibious Force
Battles/Campaigns: New Guinea, Philippines
Rank: Ship Cook Second Class
Awards: 5 Battle Engagements

Louis Smith was born April 3, 1926 in Johnstown. He grew up in Pittsburgh, where he married Ruth A. Waudby in November 1947. They had ten children; seven girls and 3 boys. They also opened their home to foster children.

The smaller ship commissioned by the U.S. Navy was the Landing Craft Infantry (LCI), a mere 150' by 24'. They sailed from Boston with a crew of 24, heading for the Panama Canal. They stopped in the Samoan Islands and then the Society Islands. The fun started when they arrived in New Guinea. Bougainville was the Japanese main base there. Many troops had landed in New Guinea on their way to the Philippines and there were large losses on both sides. The little ship (LCI360) earned five Battle Stars, one of which was for the Battle of Manila Bay, the largest naval battle ever fought.



Sterling E. Snider

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 1/1/1912
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: July 1942 - September, 1945
Unit: Anti-Aircraft
Battles/Campaigns: North Africa, Sicily, Anzio, France, Germany
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Expert Marksman
Service Related Injuries: Shrapnel wounds on legs

Sterling Snider was employed by U.S. Steel as a plant guard. He volunteered to go into the Army to protect our country; he was not drafted. He attended Basic Training at Eustis, VA, and was moved to Ft. Crockett, Texas to leave for overseas duty in December 1942.



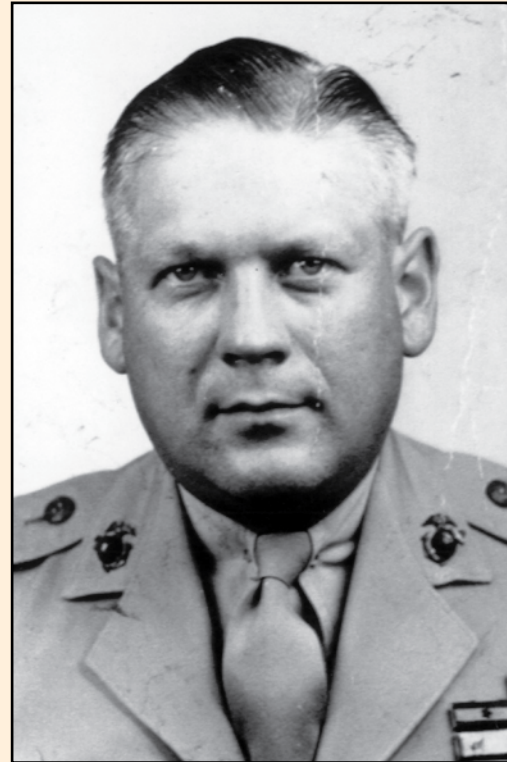
Clyde Spohn



Michael Snyder



Dean Stover



Edward Soska

Hometown: Allegheny Township

Date of Birth: 9/6/1924

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 4/28/1943 - 2/21/1946

Unit: Medical

Battles/Campaigns: Asiatic-Pacific (Okinawa)

Rank: Sergeant Technician Fourth Grade

Awards: Combat Medic Badge, Bronze Star



“With reference to the 96th Infantry Division-- ‘Deadeyes’: We brought back a lieutenant and staff sergeant wounded by Japanese mortar. On the way to the field hospital, the five of us in a jeep ran into four Japanese soldiers. They were going to mine the path we were taking. The lieutenant killed one and I got the other two. I shot at the fourth one, but he got away.”

John Stango

Hometown: Apollo

Date of Birth: 2/15/1961

Branch of Service: Army

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: 9/9/1982 - 2/16/2006

Unit: Company A, 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor, 28th Infantry Division

Battles/Campaigns: War on Terrorism, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom

Rank: Captain

Awards: Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Army Achievement Medal (6 awards), Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal

John Stango initially enrolled in IUP’s Reserve Officer’s Training Course in June 1979, contracting with ROTC in June of 1982, and enlisting in September 1982. He was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant May 1985, had training at Fort Knox and was then assigned as a Tank Platoon Leader from January 1984- 1987. He returned home after a year, but rejoined the 103rd Armor, serving in a variety of positions (Signal Officer, Intelligence Officer, Company Commander) for almost four years. After a short break in the service, he re-enlisted, serving as a Sergeant in A Company, 1st 103rd Armor until his discharge.

Michael L. Soska

Hometown: East Vandergrift

Date of Birth: 9/18/1921

Branch of Service: Air Force

War or Conflict: World War II

Date of Service: 8/5/1942 - 2/2/1946

Rank: Sergeant

Awards: Good Conduct Medal, American Theater Ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon w/5 Bronze Stars, Philippines Liberation Ribbon w/2 Bronze Stars, WWII Victory Medal

Michael Soska was a Radar Mechanic IFF. He tested, adjusted, maintained and performed minor repair of radar equipment. He also had thorough knowledge and understanding of circuits and construction of equipment. Michael served in the Southwest Pacific, Okinawa and the Philippines.



Shawn D. Troup

Hometown: Hyde Park
Date of Birth: 9/26/1970
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: May 1996 - Present
Unit: 1-7th Field Artillery
Rank: SFC

Shawn is the son of David and Nancy Troup and is a 1989 graduate of Kiski Area High School and a 1995 graduate of Clarion University. He enlisted in the service in 1996 and graduated with honors from Basic Training and AIT School. Shawn has two sons and makes his home in Lawton, OK. He plans to pursue an Army career and will be stationed in Germany.



James E. Stubbs

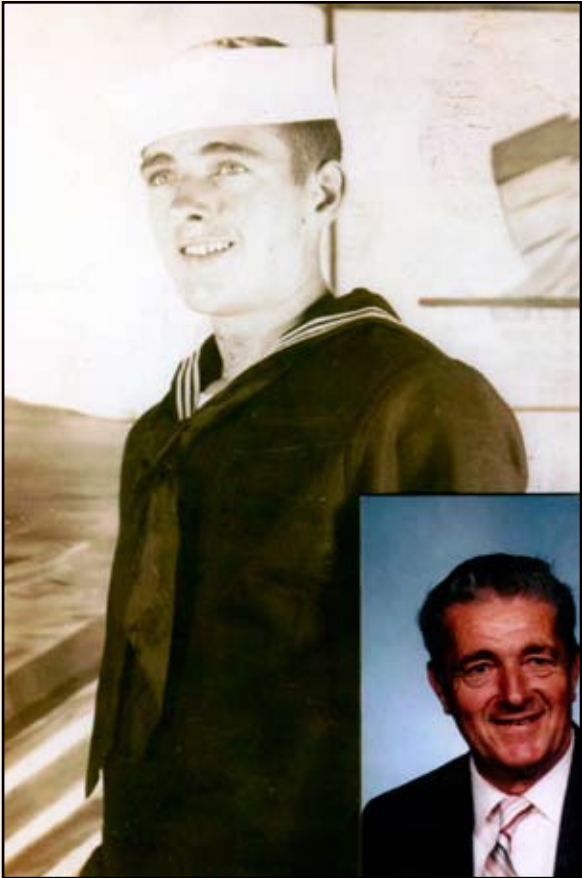
Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 3/4/1947
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1966 - 1968
Unit: 1st Infantry Division
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Junction City
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Bronze Star w/V Device, Purple Heart
Service-Related Injury: Wounds to both hands



Clair W. Stone

Hometown: New Kensington
Date of Birth: 10/8/1926
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II and Korean War
Date of Service: 5/17/1944 - 4/1951
Unit: Seabees
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific
Rank: D.C. 1st Class
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Theater Medal, WWII Victory Medal

Clair Stone joined the Navy in 1944 and was sent to a Special Construction Battalion. He was shipped to New Caledonia, constructing roads with heavy equipment. He was then sent to Saebo, Japan, cleaning and constructing units for troops. He went to Korea and was discharged in April of 1951.



Mark Suckfiel

Hometown: McKeesport
Date of Birth: 4/22/1979
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2004 - February 2005
Unit: 458 Engineer Battalion / 91 EN BN, 1st Cavalry Division, A Company
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Iraqi Liberation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Badge

Mark Suckfiel works as a teacher in his civilian life. He enlisted shortly after 9/11 to complete his patriotic duty. "I was honored to take up arms and defend my nation. Going to Iraq was an experience that solidified my love for my country. People take for granted the simple freedoms that we are afforded. I consider the sacrifices that I made a minor contribution compared to the opportunities my country has provided me."

Joseph Swast

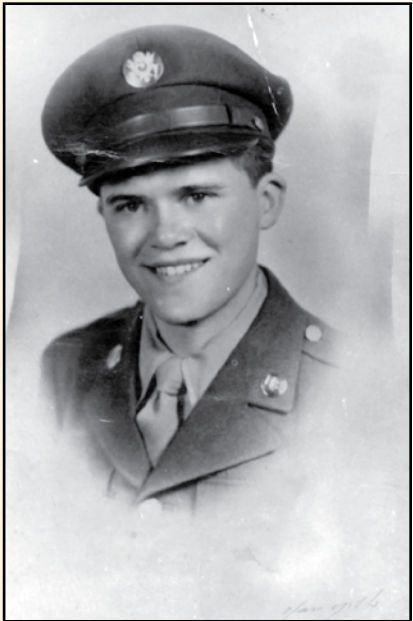
Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 11/11/1908
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: WWII
Date of Service: 1943 - 1946
Unit: 1/35th
Battles/Campaigns:
Battle of the Bulge
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Awards: Numerous



Emery A. Szalai

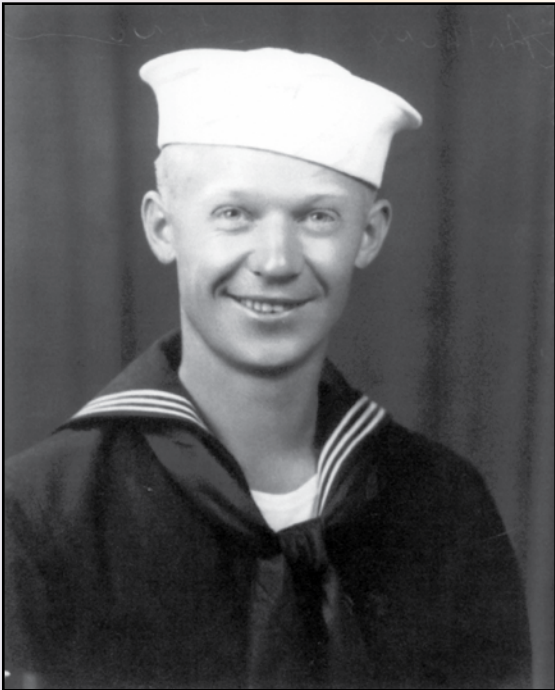
Hometown: Springdale
Date of Birth: 8/29/1926
Branch of Service: Army and USAF-ERC
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 8/8/1944 - 8/29/1946 (Army); 1946 - 1949 (USAF-ERC)
Unit: 60th Army Ground Force Band - 7th Army, Heidelberg, Germany
Rank: T5 Army - SGT UAAF-ERC
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal

“I am proud to have served my country.”



Anthony Andrew Stano

Hometown: West Leechburg
Date of Birth: 2/24/1917
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/26/1943 - 11/21/1945
Rank: MOMM 2



Leonard H. Stivason

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/1/1942
Branch of Service: Navy
Date of Service: 1962 - 1964
Unit: U.S.S. Lexington CVS 16



Keith Swanson

Hometown: Sheffield Lake, Ohio
Date of Birth: 12/12/1975
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: December 2003 - February 2005
Unit: 458th Engineer Battalion, C Company
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Rank: Staff Sergeant E6
Awards: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal

Keith Swanson left college in the middle of a career change to Paramedic/Firefighter. He never had any regrets to sacrifice that time to serve his country. “I was honored for the opportunity to serve my country.”

Jeffrey Stull



Andrew L. Stoughton Jr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/15/1948
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: July 1968 - July 1971
Unit: 82nd Airborne Division
Rank: Specialist 5th Class
Awards: Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Expert Rifle Medal.



Carol A. Stephenson (Stoughton)

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 1/9/1950
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: June 1970 - June 1972
Unit: 307th MP Unit, Brooke Army Medical Center
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: National Defense Service Medal



Burke Stoughton

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 1/19/1948
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 6/6/1975 - 3/1/1997
Unit: National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda MD. Laboratory Service; Combat Systems Technical Schools Command, Vallejo, CA.; USS Hawes FFG-53; Communications Station, Nuclear Submarine Base, Kings Bay, GA.; USS Aubrey Fitch FFG-34
Battles/Campaigns: 1987 Persian Gulf Oil Tanker Escorts; Desert Storm / Desert Shield 1990-1992; Anti-Drug Law Enforcement Operations, South America
Rank: Petty Officer First Class (Surface Warfare)
Awards: Navy Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, (5) Good Conduct Medals, (5) Sea Service Ribbons, Southwest Asia Service Ribbon, (2) Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals, Humanitarian Service Medal, Navy Unit Citation, Navy Meritorious Unit Citation, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Citation, (2) Operations Device, Coast Guard Special Operations Ribbon, Navy Battle "E" Ribbon, Rifle and Pistol Expert Medals.
Service Related Injury: Back injury while serving on the USS Hawes in the Gulf War

Christopher R. Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/17/1981
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: September 2006 - Present
Unit: 2nd Infantry Division, 5th Brigade, 1st Platoon, C Co.
Battles/Campaigns: War on Terrorism
Rank: PFC
Awards: Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Valorous Unit Ribbon, Rifle and Pistol Expert Medal



Daniel A. Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/26/1980
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 1999 - Present
Unit: U.S.S. Samuel B. Roberts FFG-58; U.S.S. Farragut DDG-99
Battles/Campaigns: Iraq War on Terrorism, Counter Drug Operations South America
Rank: Petty Officer 2nd Class (Surface Warfare)
Awards: Battle "E" Award, Good Conduct Medal, Sea Service Deployment, National Defense Medal, Rifle and Pistol Expert Medal



Floyd Burkett Stoughton Jr.

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 5/24/1918
Branch of Service: Army Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943-1946
Unit: 14th Air Force, 11th Combat Cargo Squadron; 10th Air Force, 332nd Troop Carrier Squadron
Battles/Campaigns: China Burma India Theater, European African Theater
Rank: Technical Sergeant (Aerial Flight Engineer)
Awards: Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Army of Occupation Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation and European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal



Edward A. Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/25/1974
Branch of Service: Army & Army National Guard
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 1992-Present
Unit: 1/112th, Company A, 28th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: Specialist
Awards: Combat Infantry Badge, Iraqi Freedom Medal, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Army Service Ribbon



Floyd B. Stoughton, III



James H. Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/15/1927
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 6/18/1945 - 10/12/1948
Unit: Air Traffic Control, Olathe Naval Air Station
Rank: Petty Officer
Awards: American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal

Leslie Andrew Stoughton Sr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/23/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 10/27/1943 - 6/13/1946
Unit: U.S.S. LST 720 and U.S.S. LST 807
Battles/Campaigns: Pacific Theater
Rank: Pharmacist Mate 3rd Class (Hospital Corpsman)
Awards: Asia Pacific Campaign Medal, American Medal Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal



Richard E. “Taxi” Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/12/1937
Branch or Service: Army
War or Conflict: Cold War, Vietnam War
Date of Service: 9/27/1955 - 9/27/1963
Unit: 5th Howitzer Battle, 43rd Arty., 4th U.S. Army
Rank: Specialist (E4)
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Rifle and Pistol Marksman Medal



Robert D. Stoughton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/12/1937
Branch or Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Cold War, Vietnam War
Date of Service: 1955-1974
Unit: Air Marshall Service, Military Police
Rank: Tech Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Rifle and Pistol Expert Medals, Air Force Expeditionary Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon, Outstanding Airman Ribbon.

(Died on Active Duty)



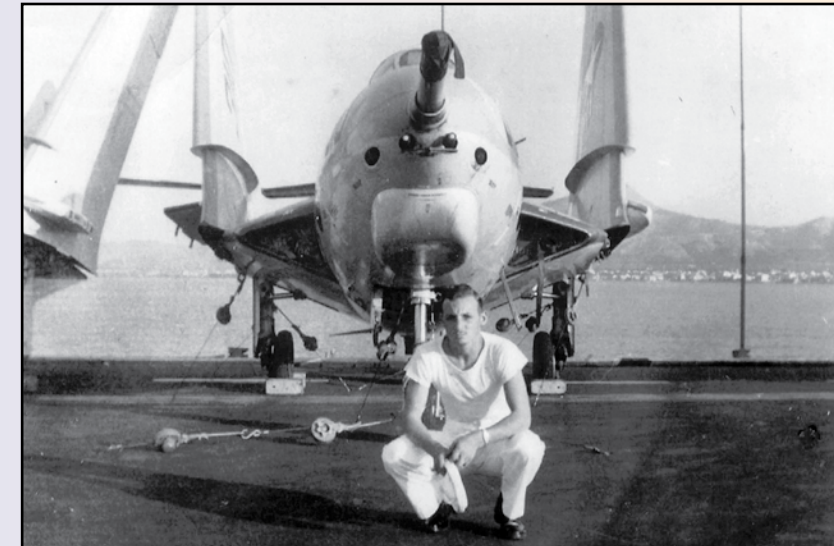


Claude Thomas
Sgt. USAF 1971 - 1975
Served Southeast Asia



William E. Sweitzer Jr.

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/3/1937
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: September 1955 - August 1966
Unit: FASROF 9 - VA-43, VA-46, VA-56
Rank: E5
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Expeditionary Medal



Robert Thomas



Ron Waner
SPF-3 US Navy
Vietnam 1965-1967



William M. Young

Hometown: Apollo
Date of Birth: 7/2/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: WWII
Status: Retired
Date of Service: June 3, 1943- February 23, 1946
Unit: Armed Guard Gunner
Rank: Seaman 1st Class
Awards: Bronze Star- Combat Ribbon- Medal from Russia

Campaigns- American, European, African, Middle Eastern, Asiatic and Pacific Last four months of service spent at Guam. Shipped out of United States seven times.



David Richard Taraborrelli Jr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/29/1953
Branch of Service: Air Force
Date of Service: 11/7/1977 - 3/28/1985
Unit: Strategic Air command
Rank: Captain
Awards: Marksmen, A-10 Tenure Medal

David Taraborrelli answered the call to duty on November 7, 1977. He completed Officer’s Training School and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. He was then assigned to the A-10 Program Office and was a Cost/Schedule Control Systems Analyst. During this time, he attended the Air Force Institute of Technology. He was transferred to the B-1 Program Office and was then promoted to Captain. Captain Taraborrelli dealt with major defense contractors such as Boeing, Rockwell and Fairchild in negotiating production schedules on the A-10 Weapons System, which is still fighting for democracy today in Iraq; the B-1 Long Range Bomber and the stealth-like B-2 Bomber. Today Dave lives in Vandergrift with is wife and daughter.



John A. Toncini

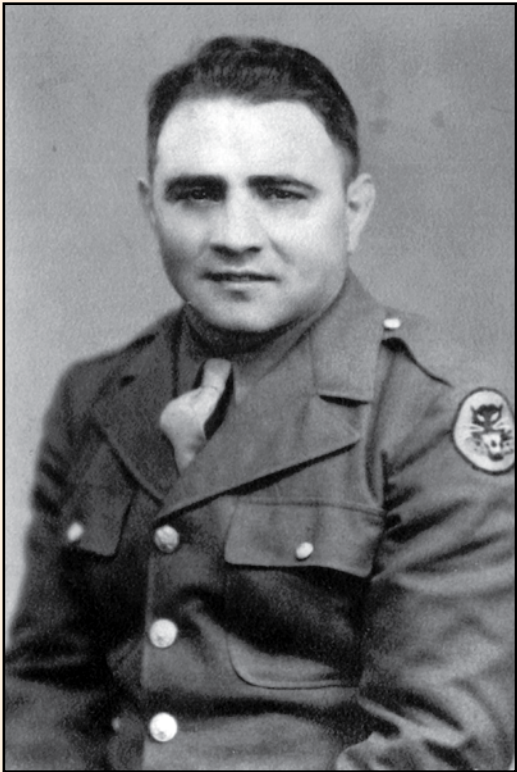
Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 11/14/1930
Branch of Service: Air Force
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 12/31/1950 - 7/10/1954
Unit: Air Rescue - Radar Tech
Rank: Sergeant

John Toncini lived in Vandergrift most of his life. He was formerly a Kiski Area School District Director and retired as an Administrator from the same school. He has been married 54 years to Jerri Toncini, and together they have three children, nine grandchildren and one great-grand-child. He’s been a Commander with the Vandergrift Honor Guard for two years and enjoys hunting, fishing and country music.

Guido D. Taylor Troiano

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/11/1910
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 7/26/1943 - 1/26/1946
Unit: Second Division, Company B, 9th Infantry (Anti Tank Gunner)
Battles/Campaigns: D-Day Invasion, Battle of St Lo
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, EAME Theater Ribbon w/Battle Star, WWII Victory Medal, American Theater Ribbon
Service Related Injuries: Shrapnel from German 88 in right calf

Guido Troiano was born in 1910 to immigrant parents Pietro and Teresina Romito Troiano. He graduated from Vandergrift High School in 1929 and Geneva College in 1934. He served as Captain of the 1933 Geneva football team and was named to the Small College All American Team as a half-back. In 1940, he married Ines Losasso and had two sons. From 1950 - 1970, he worked as a Delinquent Cost Clerk for the Westmoreland County District Attorney; 1960 - 1970, as Vandergrift Justice of the Peace; 1971 - 1977 as the area’s first District Magistrate; and from 1978 - 1991, he was Administrative Assistant to Representative Joseph Petrarca.



Arthur Edward Trawinski

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/26/1926
Branch of Service: Army and Air Force
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 10/26/1944 - 7/28/1946
Unit: 2002nd Army Air Force
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal

PFC Trawinski entered the Army after graduating from Vandergrift High School. After Basic Training, he was transferred to the Air Force where he trained as an Ambulance Driver and Emergency Medic. He served with the 2002nd Army Air Force at Steward Field, New York. Arthur was a caring, hard-working, family man. He became a theater projectionist in his spare time and his love of bowling led him to become a licensed instructor. He was a plasterer by trade and later became a Laboratory Technician.



Joseph A. Trentin

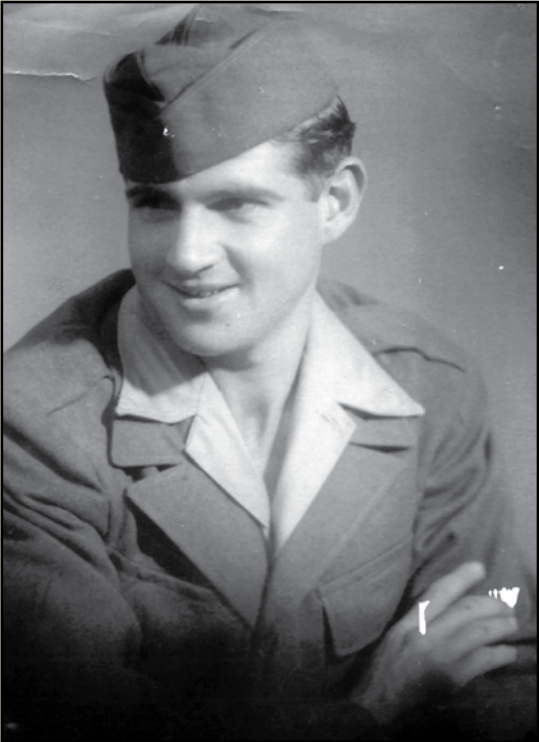
Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 10/27/1927
Branch of Service: Navy and Naval Reserve
War or Conflict: World War II and Korean War
Date of Service: 9/18/1945 - 4/23/1953
Unit: Seabees, U.S.S. Bauer and U.S.S. Moale
Rank: Ships Service Man, Second Class Petty Officer SSMB 2/c (5H2)
Awards: American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Certificate of Recognition, National Defense Service Medal, Cold War Honorable Service Pin

Joseph Trentin was called to service a second time during the Korean War. He courted his wife, Dorothy, against his skipper’s advice and later married her on May 5, 1951. He operated the Barberia barber shop in the historic Casino Building in Vandergrift. He has served as a Commander of VFW 566 and is involved in church, veteran groups and community service. Mr. Trentin is blessed with three children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



William Truffa

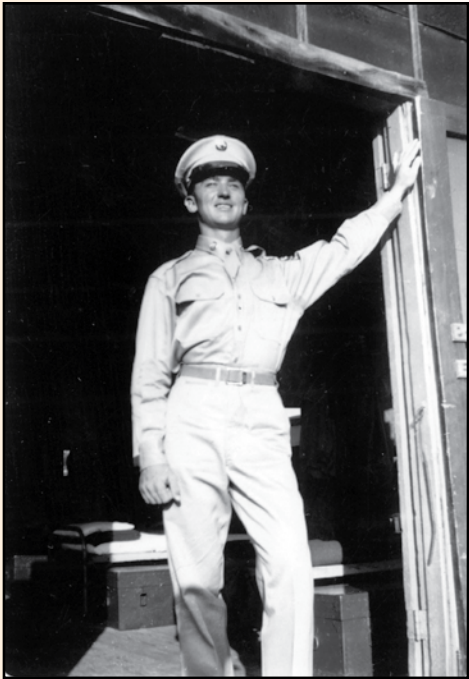
Hometown: Allegheny Township
Date of Birth: 5/22/1924
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 3/25/1943 - 12/19/1945
Unit: HQ BTRY 247 FA BN
Battles/Campaigns: Northern Solomons, Southern Philippines
Rank: T5
Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon w/2 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon w/Bronze Star, Good Conduct Ribbon, Bronze Arrowhead Victory Medal



Larry F. Trentin

Hometown: North Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 8/29/1931
Branch of Service: Air Force and Air Force Reserve
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 9/9/1949 - 1/9/1961
Unit: Weather Stations-Newfoundland and Azores
Battles/Campaigns: American Campaign
Rank: Lieutenant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Cold War Service Pin

Larry Trentin was a 1949 graduate of Vandergrift High School where he was president of his class. He enlisted in the Air Force and served during the Korean War. He attended the University of Pittsburgh and earned a degree in Business Management and Labor Relations. He also attended Harrisburg School of Higher Learning. Larry retired from the Department of Army Engineers as a Management Analyst. He and his wife Gloria have three children, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. They reside in Lower Burrell.



Frank Trunzo

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 7/31/1925
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Battles/Campaigns: Philippines, Leyte, Mindoro
Awards: Many

Frank Trunzo survived the Invasion of Mindoro on December 15, 1944, where the LST 738 was bombed and sunk by a Kamikaze plane. He also participated in the Invasion of Leyte.



William B. Troutner

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/24/1921
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Rank: Corporal
Awards: Marksmanship



Walter

Date of Birth: 8/8/1931
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 1952 - 1954
Unit of Service: 24th Ordnance Division
Awards: Korean Service Medals



Stephen Sweitzer

Hometown: Arnold
Date of Birth: 8/19/1989
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
Date of Service: December 2003 - February 2005
Unit: 340th Engineer Battalion

Stephen Sweitzer joined the Reserves in November 2006 and hasn't seen combat. Still, he considers the experience thrilling and helpful to his civilian life.



Stanley Tygielski

John William Ward

Hometown: Butler
Date of Birth: 3/27/1983
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: February 2004 - February 2005
Unit: C Company 458th Engineer Battalion
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: SPC

John Ward was fresh out of Basic Training when he left for Iraq. He was excited and nervous, but felt surrounded by a lot of good men.





Andrew Uncapher



Ralph Van Houtem

Hometown: Canonsburg

Date of Birth: 1/26/1973

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: 1/15/2005 - 3/1/2007

Unit of Service: 16th Engineer Battalion

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom

Rank: SGT (P)

Awards: 4 Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medal, 3 Overseas Service Ribbons, Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Iraq Campaign Medal

Sgt Van Houtem graduated as a 21B Combat Engineer on 2/17/2004 and got assigned to US Army Europe, 1st Armor Division, 16th Engineer Battalion. After his assignment, he qualified to become a Sapper, a high recognition in the Corps of Engineers. He also got selected Soldier of the Year Army Europe FY 05 and served as a Team Leader in Iraq. He is married to Shaunda and has two daughters. "This deployment made be physically and mentally able to challenge any obstacle in both military and civilian life."

James W. Walters

Hometown: Freeport

Date of Birth: 2/11/1945

Branch of Service: Marines

War or Conflict: Vietnam War

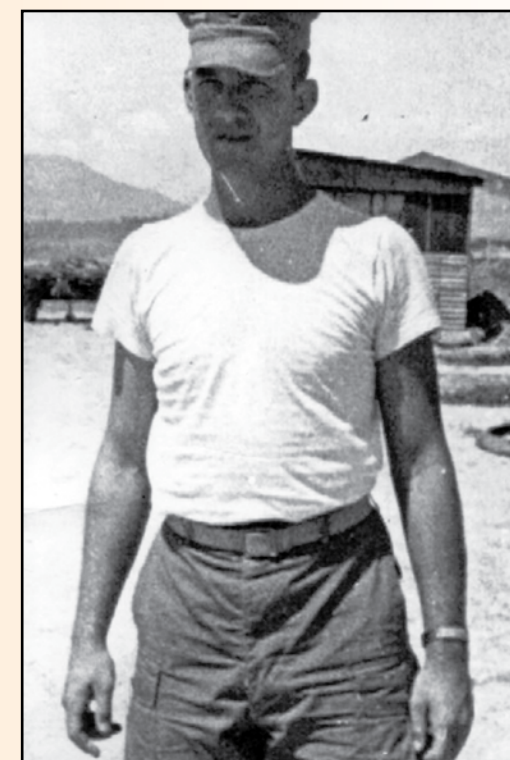
Date of Service: August 1963 - August 1969

Unit: 1st LLAM BN

Rank: Corporal (E-4)

Awards: Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon

James Walters graduated from Freeport Area High School in June 1963 and left for Boot Camp in August of 1963. He was stationed at Cherry Point, N.C. until 1965. He went to DaNang, South Vietnam until August 1965, at which point he was stationed with the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, N.C. until discharge in August 1967. He remained in the reserves until August 1969. While in Vietnam, James was the driver and body guard for Lt. Gen. Lewis Walt, who later became Commandant of the Marine Corps.



David Watterson

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 10/29/1945
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 1963 - 1968
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, Rifle/Pistol Expert



Lawrence F. Wells Jr.

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/22/1967
Branch of Service: Army
Date of Service: 8/27/1988 - 7/27/1991
Rank: E3
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medals, Army Service Ribbon

Robert Watterson

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 1943
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: 1964 - 1968
Unit of Service: Weapons Bat.
Rank: S Sgt



Christopher S. Walton

Hometown: Oklahoma Borough, PA
Date of Birth: 10/12/1967
Branch of Service: Army Reserve
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: May 1988 - Present
Unit: 716 MP Battalion; 709 MP Battalion; 503 MP Battalion (Airborne); 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Provide Comfort
Rank: Major
Awards: Airborne Badge, Air Assault Badge, Meritorious Unit Citation, Bronze Star, 4 Meritorious Service Medals, 3 Army Commendation Medals, 3 National Defense Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Liberation of Kuwait Medal, 3 Overseas Service Ribbons, Humanitarian Service Medal

Harold B. Walton

Hometown: North Apollo
Date of Birth: 8/7/1918
Deceased: 12/9/1896
Branch of Service: U.S. Navy
War or Conflict: WWII
Status: Honorably Discharge
Date of Service: 8/2/1943- 11/28/1945
Unit: Harbor Sonar- Wake Island- Pacific Theater
Rank: Sonarman 3rd Class (E4)

Howard D. Walton

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/7/1918
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1943 - 1945
Unit: 80th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Germany and France
Rank: Staff Sergeant E7
Awards: Purple Heart, Silver Star (April 8, 1945)
Service Related Injuries: Shrapnel wound, right shoulder

John H. Walton (Twins)

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/17/1943
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: September 1961 - September 1964
Unit: U.S.S. Boston CAG-1 Guided Missile Heavy Cruiser
Battles/Campaigns: 2 Mediterranean tours
Rank: Interior Communications Second Class (IC2) E5

James H. Walton (Twins)

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/17/1943
Branch of Service: Navy
War or Conflict: Vietnam War
Date of Service: September 1961 - September 1964
Unit: U.S.S. Boston CAG-1 Guided Missile Heavy Cruiser
Battles/Campaigns: 2 Mediterranean tours
Rank: Interior Communications Second Class (IC2) E5

Lawrence Yamber

Hometown: East Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 9/14/1934
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Korean War
Date of Service: 7/22/1953 - 7/21/1956
Unit: H S Company, 6th Marines, H S Co 12th Marines
Rank: Sergeant
Awards: Good Conduct Medal

Lawrence Yamber served in Japan and Okinawa during his military enlistment and serves as Commander of the Vandergrift Veterans Honor Guard.



Angela L. Wells Ackles

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 6/22/1967
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: Iraq War
Date of Service: 7/27/1997
Unit: HHC 13th CosCom Jag Unit
Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom
Rank: E5 SGT
Awards: Good Conduct Medal, 2 National Defense Service Medals, 3 Overseas Service Ribbons, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, 3 Army Commendation Medals, 3 Army Achievement Medals, Korean Defense Medal, NCO Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon
Service-Related Injury: Back injuries; medically discharged 4/13/2004



Jack E. Wilmot Jr.

Hometown: Kiski Township
Date of Birth: 2/28/1946
Branch of Service: Marines
War or Conflict: Vietnam
Date of Service: 1966 - 1969
Unit: 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division
Battles/Campaigns: Battle of Dai Do
Rank: Sergeant E5
Awards: Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/2 Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/Device, Good Conduct Medal
Service Related Injuries: Shrapnel wounds

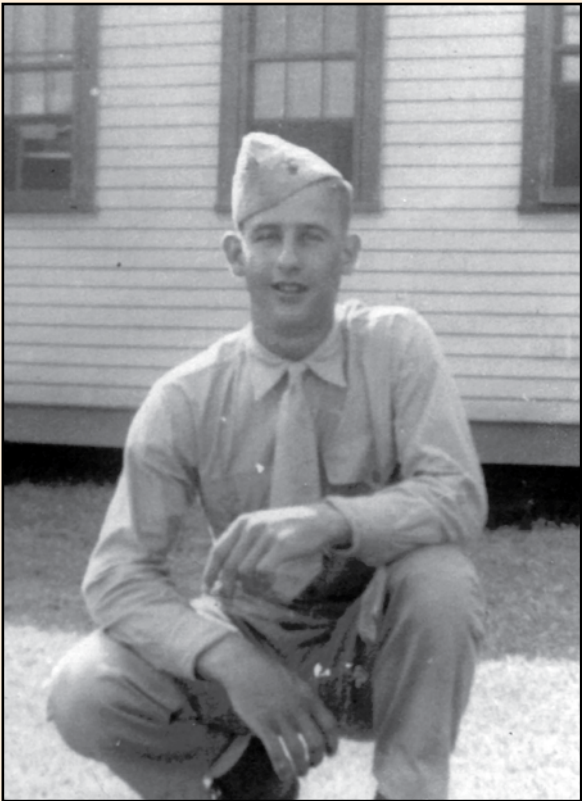
Jack Wilmot went to Boot Camp at Parris Island during June 1966, then to Camp Le June for more training in preparation for Vietnam. He was then sent to Subic Bay in the Philippines for Jungle Warfare Training. While he was in Vietnam, he was with a Battalion Landing Team and spent time on the U.S.S. Iwo Jima and U.S.S. Princeton. He worked with Graves Registration which required him to fly by helicopter out to pick up dead soldiers and bring them back to the ship. He was wounded March 13, 1967 while performing this same job.



Charles Wolfe



Leo Wawrzyniak



Eugene R. Young

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 3/29/1919
Branch of Service: Army
War or Conflict: WWII
Status: Discharged
Date of Service: 12/1944-10/1946
Unit: 34th Infantry
Battles/Campaigns: Philippines Liberation
Rank: PFC
Awards: Good Conduct/Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon,
Philippine Liberation Ribbon, WWII Victory Ribbon



Charles W. Wetovich

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 5/3/1914
Branch of Service: Army Air Forces
War or Conflict: World War II
Date of Service: 1942
Unit: Army Air Corps Training Command
Rank: Corporal

Charles Wetovich was a pilot and flight instructor who earned his license in 1938. He graduated from Randolph Field, Texas in 1942 and trained pilots in Georgia and Texas. He started a G.I. Flight Training Program in 1946 at Leechburg Airport, PA. From 1946 - 1958, he was a C.A.A. Flight Examiner for commercial and multi-engine planes. He was a charter member of OX5 Club at Latrobe Airport, PA. He received the honor of Flight Instructor of the Year from the F.A.A. in 1940, after 40 years of accident-free flying. Mr. Wetovich retired from flying in 1979. He married Rose Vinish and had two daughters and one son.



Richard A. Young

Hometown: Leechburg
Date of Birth: 9/28/1936
Branch of Service: Marines
Date of Service: June 1954 - June 1956
Unit: 4.2 Mortars
Rank: Private First Class
Awards: Rifleman Badge

Richard Young did not serve during war time; nonetheless, he felt it was an honor to serve his country.



Benjamin Eugene Wilson

Hometown: Vandergrift
Date of Birth: 12/28
Branch or Service: U.S. Army Air Forces
War or Conflict: WWII
Status: Retired
Date of Service: 4/28/1943-1/19/1946
Unit: 7th Air Force

Basic at Fort Benjamin Harrison Indiana
Matagorda Peninsula Foster Field Texas
Wheeler Field Hawaii 7th Air Force
Bellows Field Hawaii 7th Air Force
Hickam Field Hawaii Air Force Headquarters
Discharged January 19, 1941, Fort Knox Kentucky
Now resides in North Apollo, Pa with wife Corinne, and has 4 children, 6 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.



Jody Wessel

Hometown: Cheswick

Date of Birth: 3/18/1971

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: December 2003 - February 2005

Unit: 1004th Quarter Master Company

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom

Rank: Sergeant

Jody Wessel has been in the Army Reserve for twelve years. He recently graduated from St. Margaret's Nursing School and started a new job as a Registered Nurse in December 2007.
"Proud to have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Robert L. Zinn

Hometown: Leechburg

Date of Birth: 5/2/1950

Branch of Service: Air Force

War or Conflict: Vietnam War

Date of Service: July 1971 - October 1975

Unit: 57th Combat Supt. Group, 356 Combat Supt., 8th Combat Supt.

Rank: Staff Sergeant



Edwin Albert and George Washington Zimmerman



Edwin Albert and George Washington Zimmerman

Bill Zabinski - Corregidor



John Walsh

Hometown: Apollo

Date of Birth: 11/29/1965

Branch of Service: Army Reserve

War or Conflict: Iraq War

Date of Service: December 2003 - February 2005

Unit of Service: C Company 458th Engineer Battalion

Battles/Campaigns: Operation Iraqi Freedom II

Rank: SGT E5

John Walsh is married and has three children. He felt it was a great honor to serve his country.

Vandergrift Honor Guard



First Row

Left to Right: Harry Hepler, John Stefaniak, Fred Segorek, Sam Julian, Jim Tipton, Bob King, Tom Loftus, Dutch Berberich

Second Row

Left to Right: Matt Kotsell, Paul Black, Frank Billek, Steve Filo, Bob Jasper, Joe Trentin, Bob McDermott, Steve Filipek



Raising the flag at the Veterans Memorial
Paul L. Black

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