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MOVING WALL – The Vietnam Moving Wall was on display at Camden, Tenn. in 2011. (Vietnam Combat Veterans photo)

## Fundraising going well to bring Vietnam Moving Wall to Dexter

by Mike Lange

DEXTER – When the Shirley B. Carter Veterans of Foreign War Post announced that it was going to bring the Vietnam Moving Wall to Dexter next spring, they figured that it was going to be

a lengthy process to raise the necessary funds.

But so far, the veterans’ organization is way ahead of schedule.

“We want to raise \$10,000 and we’re already three-quarters

of the way there,” said Post Commander Dave Iverson. “I thought we might get to the midpoint by December, so this is phenomenal.”

The post has been hosting Friday night meals by donation

since early summer. Although it started off slowly, they’re now serving 30-35 people every week, said Iverson. “And they’re very generous,” he added.

The VFW Auxiliary will host a craft fair on Saturday, Dec. 3

from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and are now taking reservations from crafters. The cost \$20 a table and all profits will also go to the Moving Wall fund

The Moving Wall is the half-

*Continued on next page*

VETERANS DAY  
CEREMONY

Please join us Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

In recognition and thanks to all veterans and members of the military for their service and sacrifices. Mayo Regional Hospital extends an open invitation to a Veterans Day Ceremony at the hospital entrance on Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. Light refreshments will be served.

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Fundraising from previous page

size replica of the Washington, D.C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial and two versions have been touring the country – one on the East Coast and one out West – for more than 30 years.

In recent years, it's made one stop in Maine and last year, the display was viewed in Thomaston.

One of the reasons the post wanted to bring the wall back to Maine was the advancing age of Vietnam veterans, said Ray Wallace, the post adjutant who served in Pleiku and Saigon in 1966-67. "I was fortunate enough to see the memorial in Washington," said Wallace. "But we have Vietnam vets who will never have that chance. We have some that have never left the state of Maine since they returned (from the war.)"

John Devitt, a former helicopter door gunner who served for 18 months in Vietnam and other Vietnam vets built the Moving Wall and it went on display for the first time in Tyler, Texas in October 1984.

The wall, made of aluminum panels, is 253-feet long or about half the length of the original memorial. All the names on the original wall are silk-screened on the replica.

Originally, the local VFW post wanted the display at Mount Pleasant Cemetery but discovered that it was a lot more cost-effective to set it up at Ellms Field. "The backdrop at the cemetery would have been beautiful," said Iverson. "But it makes a lot more sense to have it at Ellms Field."

A lot of preparation needs to go into the field prior to the wall's display from May 11-16, 2017, but much of the work is being donated, Iverson said "The town has been outstanding, Chuck Ellms has been terrific and so has (electrician) Steve Herring," he said.

At a recent Dexter Council meeting, VFW members learned that Steven Thomas from Exeter was looking for a community service project to help him advance to Eagle Scout.

As it turned out, some residents had asked the council previously why there wasn't an American flag on display at Ellms Field since it was one of the town's most visible recreation areas.

VFW Post Adjutant Rick Batchelder said that having a flagpole with the American and POW/MIA flags on display would be ideal, especially in view of the Moving Wall's arrival in May.

When Batchelder asked Frank Spizuoco, the owner of Millworks, if he could order a flag and flagpole through his business, Spizuoco said he would donate the items – and the local contractors said they'd pick up the cost of installation.

"That's the kind of support we've been getting," Iverson said.

For craft fair table reservations, contact Dorothy Iverson at 379-4000.



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Paul Davis

Maine Senate

Senate District 4

**Maine became first state to recognize “Veterans in the Arts” day**

AUGUSTA – Maine became the first state to recognize Nov. 1 as Veterans in the Arts and the Humanities Day when a new law designating the holiday went into effect in late July.

“The United States is experiencing an epidemic of suicides among service men and women. It’s two to three times the rate of the general population,” said Rep. Bob Duchesne, D-Hudson, who sponsored and championed the measure. “Veterans’ groups are particularly recognizing art for its therapeutic value.”

Duchesne’s bill came amidst a national movement to recognize veterans in the arts annually on Nov. 1. Several major cities have recognized Veterans in the Arts and Humanities Day, including Los Angeles.

Jay Emerson of Hudson, who founded the American Veterans Arts and Crafts Gallery, asked Duchesne to sponsor the measure.

“This does not involve days off or fireworks. What it does do in a quiet way is salute the men and women who have given a blank check to the United States, up to and including their lives, to defend and preserve this nation,” said Emerson, a Vietnam veteran. “I believe it is a very important step in the right direction to help veterans return to their rightful place in a free society.”

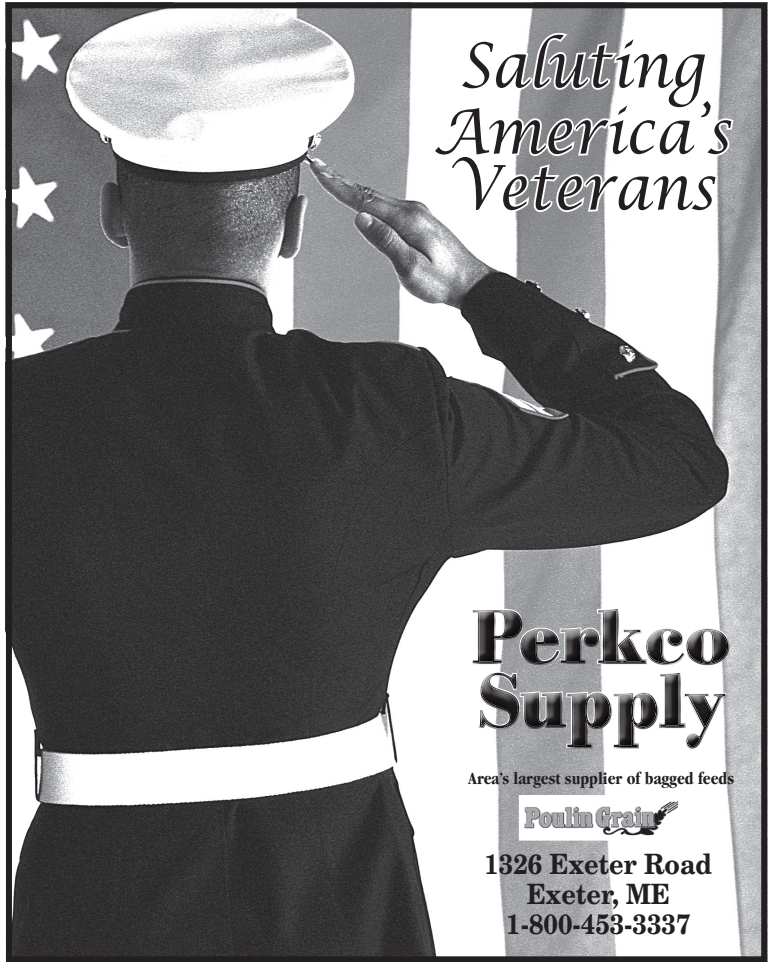
In addition to running a website that allows veterans to sell their art and crafts online, the American Veterans Arts and Crafts Gallery organizes art shows to display veterans’ art, including one at the Maine State House this past fall.

“They’re doing all the work themselves. All they’re asking for is some helpful recognition so they can grow their ability to help other vets,” Duchesne said of Emerson’s Maine-based organization.

At nearly 10 percent, Maine’s percentage of military veterans within the state’s population is one of the highest in the country.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA medical facilities across the country incorporate creative arts into their recreation therapy programs, recognizing the role the humanities can play in recovery from service-related challenges. The department also partners with the American Legion Auxiliary to organize the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, a celebration and art show for veterans treated in the VA national health care system.


Both the House and the Senate voted unanimously to enact Duchesne’s measure.




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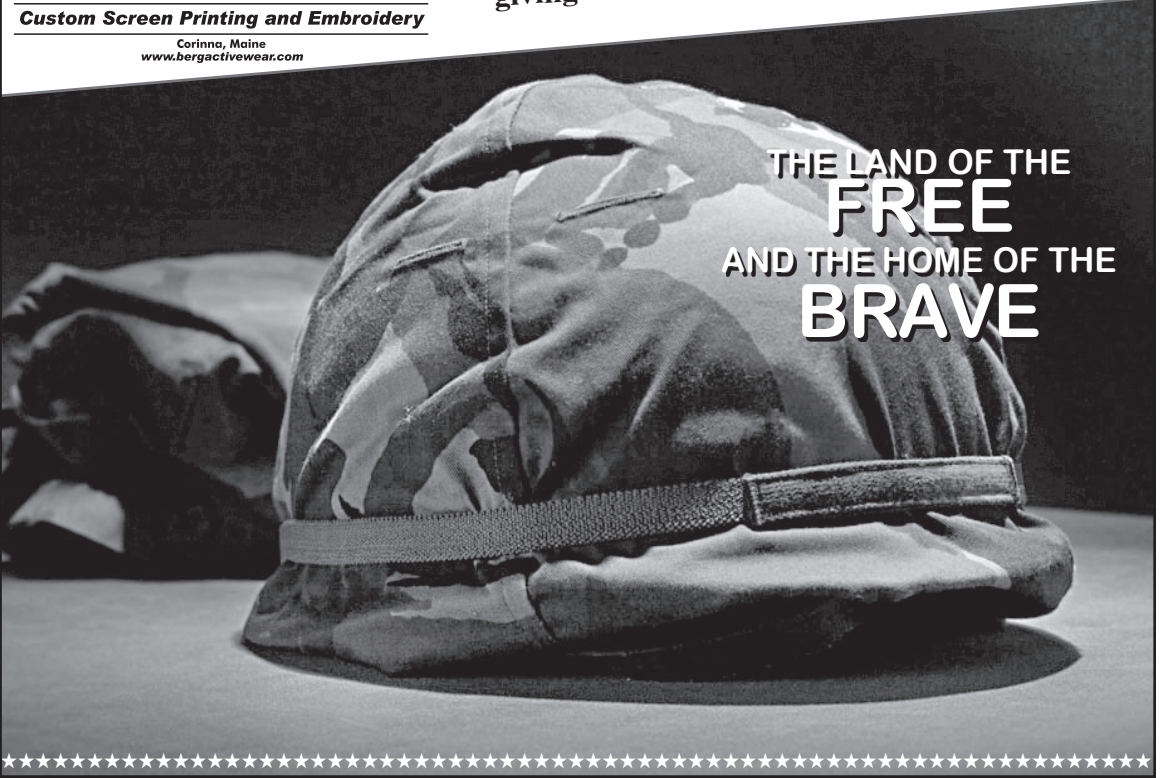
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## History of ‘In Flanders Fields’


“In Flanders Fields” was written during World War I by Canadian physician Lt. Col. John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of a friend and fellow soldier Lt. Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres in western Belgium. According to legend, fellow soldiers retrieved the poem after McCrae, initially dissatisfied with his work, discarded it. “In Flanders Fields” was first published on Dec. 8, 1915 in the London-based magazine Punch. As a result of its immediate popularity, parts of the poem were used to recruit soldiers and raise money selling war bonds. Its references to the red poppies that grew over the graves of fallen soldiers resulted in the remembrance poppy becoming one of the world's most recognized memorial symbols for soldiers who have died serving their country. The poem and poppy are prominent symbols for Remembrance Day in Canada and Memorial Day and Veterans' Day in the United States.

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

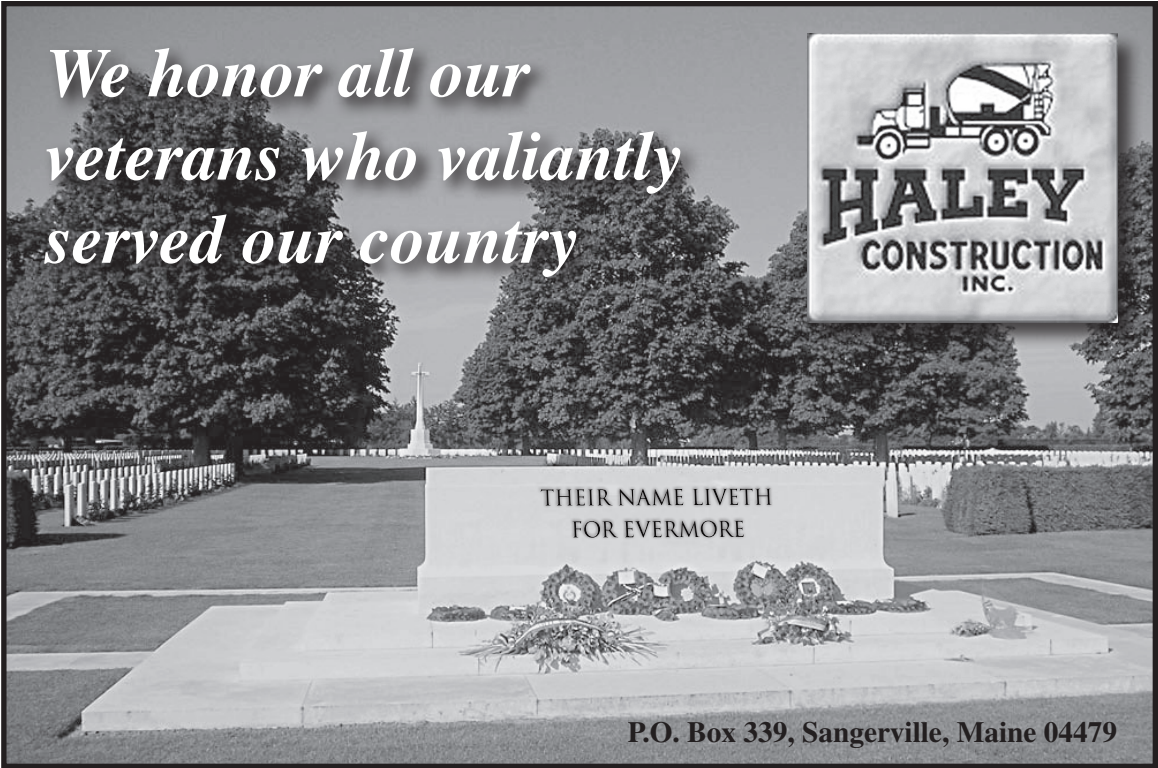
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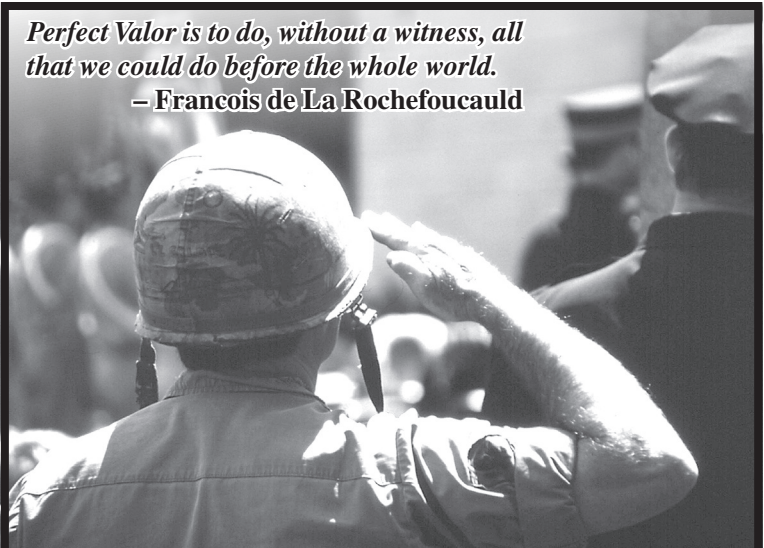
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## A Bit Of Veteran’s History

by Richard L. Graves Sr.  
Past Commander, Department of Maine  
The American Legion

### Richard F. Preston, Milo

Richard F. Preston of Milo and a member of Joseph P. Chaisson American Legion Post 41 shared some memories of his 20 years of military service in the United States Navy.

His basic training started in Orlando, Fla., specializing in the submarine service as a helmsman. Being selected for submarine service is an accomplishment in itself.

After basic and specialized training he was assigned to the USS Salmon SS 573 in the Philippines, part of the West PAC; and when it was decommissioned, he was assigned to the USS Gudgeon AG SS-567 where he worked as a sonar technician, continually learning and qualifying for a promotion.

Eventually, he was assigned shore duty and attended schooling in sonar electronics and qualified as an instructor/supervisor and then assigned to the USS Baltimore SSN 704 out of Norfolk, Va. This was a nuclear submarine in which he served for five years, traveling all over the north Atlantic. Its history of travel and assignment still remains classified today.

The next two assignments before retirement were as an instructor in advance electronics and the last sea duty was on the USSS McKee AS 37 a maintenance ship.

In October 1996 he retired and went to Chandler, Ariz. and worked for Intel Computer.

Around four years ago, he moved to Milo and purchased a home. Rick Preston now volunteers for numerous non-profit organizations in the community.

### Richard D. Melanson of Brownville

Richard D. Melanson of Brownville, a member of Bernard Jones American Legion Post 92, shared some of his military experience after enlisting in the United States Army in 1966 during the Vietnam War Era.

Basic training was at Ft. Dix New Jersey, then on to Ft. Gordon (Ga.) Signal School for training in helicopter radio and communications and advanced Huey instrument repair at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Richard then volunteered for duty in Vietnam and was assigned to the 279th Signal Corp with a detachment to the 48th Assault Helicopter Co. After a 30-day leave, he was flown into Vietnam and joined the detachment at Ninh Hoa District in South Central Coast of Vietnam in October 1967.

On Oct. 29, the military complex was struck by six mortars from the enemy and they landed where the Korean detachment was located, causing nine casualties and one fatality. Richard was not aware of the mortar results other than knowing that they landed somewhere in the complex.

On No. 6, 1967, Typhoon Freda came ashore, the aircraft had been moved inland but the personnel remained in what they called tent city. The typhoon took a toll on the tent city, equipment and personal gear. Ninh Hoa is right on the coast at the intersections of Rte. 1 and Rte. 21.

On Jan. 1, the TET Offensive took place throughout the country. The 48th Helicopter Co. was on alert and Richard was part of a reactionary force. However, they did not come under attack.

There were few calls for Richard’s instrument skills, so he volunteered for flight duty, filling in as a Huey door gunner in the 48th Snoopy Platoon. They flew equipment, supplies and personnel to and from remote sites and outposts.

Flight duty increased his pay while increasing the risk; however, he came out of Vietnam in October 1968 without injury and was discharged from active duty with three years total service.





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# Portland Korean War vet married his pen pal from Guilford

by Mike Lange

In 1940 when Frank Parker was in fifth grade, he saw a picture in his geography book of a man and lady wearing dressing gowns sipping tea under a cherry tree outside their home.

There were views of islands and fishing boats in the background, Parker recalled, and the title was “Chosin (Korea): The Land of the Morning Calm.”

“I told myself right then that I have got to see that place someday,” Parker wrote in his memoirs. “I did not know back then that Uncle Sam was going to make sure I didn’t miss it.”

Parker, a Portland native, wound up in Korea as an automatic weapons crewman on an M16 half-track, manning a Browning 50-caliber machine gun. “Our job was to make like a fire truck on a four-alarm call and put the big hurt on where it was needed the most,” he wrote.

In a roundabout way, his service in the Korean War led to his courtship and 58-year marriage to a Guilford woman, Elizabeth “Betty” Bigger.

A copy of Parker’s memoirs was recently given to Peter Dougeneck, the owner of the Subway restaurants in Guilford and Skowhegan, by his uncle Robert. “He met Frank at the American Legion Post in Bristol, Conn.,” Dougeneck said. “As it turns out, Frank knew my grandfather who served in World War I and earned the Croix de Guerre (for heroism under enemy fire.)”

Dougeneck said that his uncle casually mentioned that his nephew owned a restaurant in Guilford one day “and Frank said, ‘Boy, do I have a story for you.’ So when I got the papers, I showed them to (Guilford Town Manager) Tom Goulette because I knew he was really into historical stuff.”

Parker and his Army buddies looked forward to mail call as a respite from the rigors of combat. One day, Parker got three letters from his mother, one from a schoolmate stationed in Germany and one from a girl from Guilford. “Gee, I don’t know anyone up there in moose country,” he wrote. One of his buddies urged him to open it, joking that “It might be a Valentine. It is February, you know.”

Betty Bigger got Parker’s name from a school paper that listed addresses of men serving in Korea and decided to make him her pen pal.

In 1951, Parker and his new pen pal “continued to write each other nearly every other day.” In November that year, his platoon leader told him to pack up his gear because “I had the magic number of points and was being shipped back to the land of the big PX and indoor plumbing.”

Parker arrived at Fort Devens, Mass. via train on Dec. 15, 1951, and in Portland a few days later. “After we had gotten all of the kissing and crying out of the way, and things had returned to what passed for normal in the Parker household, I went about catching up,” he wrote. This included visits to his grandparents, former schoolteachers and neighbors along with some Christmas shopping.”

Finally, on Jan. 2, Parker told his family that he was going to visit his pen pal in Guilford by taking the train to Newport Junction and hitchhiking to her home. But his father thought he was crazy. “Did that damn war addle your brain?” he asked. “You’ll freeze to death up there. You had better wait until spring before you go traipsing off in that neck of the woods.”

But Parker reminded him that after spending a Korean winter in “make-do shelters, I can damn well handle one in Maine.”

He wound up in Newport Junction at 2 a.m., got a ride to Dexter in a Montgomery Ward delivery truck – which was also a mail carrier – and to Guilford in a logging truck.

As it turned out, the log truck driver – Junior Race – lived in Sangerville and went to school with Betty Bigger.



Parker stayed with her family for a few days, took a tour of her hometown where her younger brother, Earl, ran the movie theater and other members of her family worked at the wood products mill.




Parker decided to take the train out of Guilford which only arrived once a day at 8 a.m. But after the train had gone about a mile-and-a-half, he looked for his ticket and couldn’t find it. “I hailed the conductor and asked, ‘How can I get off the train?’ He said, ‘You can’t. It’s an express all the way to Derby.’”

The conductor told him that the only way he could get off was to “jump for it” when the train slowed down for a curve. “I tossed my bag and followed it out. I hoofed it back up the tracks and came into the kitchen (at Betty’s house) red-faced. As I removed my hat, I felt a piece of paper tucked behind the cuff – and there, stuck in my hat, was my ticket.”

Parker and Betty went to the movies that night and he took the train the next morning. After he reported to his new unit at Fort Dix (N.J.), Parker said, “I went to the PX and bought Betty the largest box of Valentine chocolates they had on display.”

The Parkers observed their 58th wedding anniversary in 2010 and she passed away later that year.





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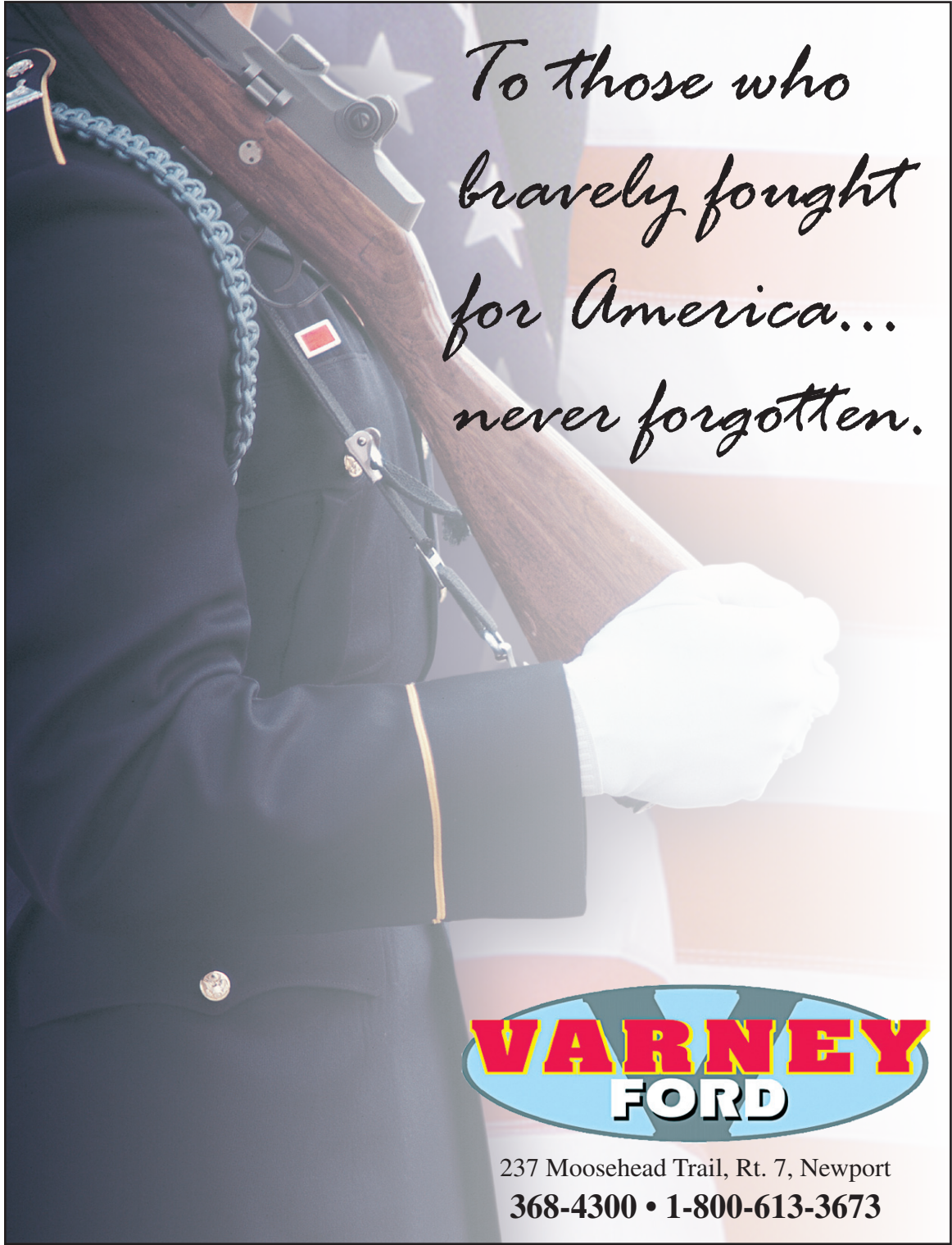


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# Troop Greeters Museum at BIA will be a place of remembrance and healing

BANGOR – Earlier this year, a volunteer organization that has welcomed over 1.5 million troops – and nearly 400 military canines – on 7,000-plus flights arriving or departing at Bangor International Airport announced plans to build the Maine Troop Greeters Museum.

These greetings, which started in 1991, have resulted in a collection of more than 5,000 challenge coins, at least 1,000 unit patches, 500-plus metal ID or “dog tags” along with flags, banners and many letters of gratitude. A permanent museum at the airport will ensure that these items are displayed and preserved for all to appreciate, according to museum committee co-chairs Cathy Czarnecki and Gil Cory.

“This collection of memorabilia represents the sacrifice that our troops have made on behalf of our country. It is our duty to preserve them and to tell their story – and the story of what has taken place here – to all who visit the museum,” said Czarnecki.

The museum will be located in the hallway between BIA’s international and domestic terminals; and if all goes as planned, will open in November 2017.

The committee has set a fundraising goal of \$500,000.

“We’ve raised more than \$185,000 so far,” Czarnecki said. “Verizon and Bangor Savings Bank have been huge contributors and Gov. Paul and Ann LePage donated \$20,000 out of their contingency fund to the museum.”

Interest accelerated in the troop greeter network starting in 2003 due to the increase in the almost-daily troop flights. Unicel began donating cell phones and free minutes for use by the troops and U.S. Cellular and Verizon followed suit in 2004.

Sam’s Club donated thousands of cookies; and Walmart, Hannaford, Shaw’s and the American Legion provided food and items such as “Build-A-Bears” for new moms and dads.

The Maine Troop Greeters organization was officially incorporated as a registered non-profit in 2008. The group agreed on this guiding principle: “The mission of the Maine Troop Greeters is to express the Nation’s (and our) gratitude and appreciation to the Troops, for those going overseas for a safe return and for those returning for a joyful homecoming and to make their (hopefully brief) stay in Bangor as comfortable and pleasant as possible. Additionally, we will honor the trust placed in us by these troops by preserving and perpetuating the donations entrusted to our care, through display, education and sharing of these collections.”

The Maine Troop Greeters Museum Committee Honorary Chair is former U.S. Senator and Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen.

Cohen, in his donor’s letter, noted that “often in the dark of night and no matter the weather, ordinary citizens have turned out to offer a warm ‘Welcome Home’ to America’s sons and daughters returning from their deployments to troubled foreign lands.

“On their journey home, these returning soldiers first set foot on American soil in Bangor, Maine. Those waiting to embrace them and honor them came to be known as the Troop Greeters. In the midst of this heartfelt expression of respect and gratitude for those who choose to serve, those who were once strangers were strangers no more.

“Now it is time to commemorate this special experience by creating a museum where all can visit, learn from, and remember this extraordinary display of human kindness. The Maine Troop Greeters Museum will preserve the thousands of items of memorabilia resulting from the greeting experiences shared by the troops and the greeters and create a place of healing and remembrance for all who visit.”

Czarnecki said that troops are still returning from combat zones overseas “although the flights aren’t as frequent. Still, every service member who comes through BIA will be able to see how much we appreciate their sacrifice once the museum is complete.”

For more information, visit [www.mainetroopgreetersmuseum.org](http://www.mainetroopgreetersmuseum.org).



GREETERS KIOSK – This kiosk at Bangor International Airport displays details about the Troop Greeters Museum which is scheduled to open in November 2017. (BIA photo)



# History of Veterans Day

*Veterans Administration Public Affairs Office*

World War I – known at the time as “The Great War” – officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919 in the Palace of Versailles in France.

However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

For that reason, Nov. 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.”

In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11 a.m.

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926.

Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation’s history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word “Armistice” and inserting in its place the word “Veterans.”

With the approval of this legislation on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

But for a few years, the observance was held on different days.

The Uniform Holiday Bill was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Columbus Day.

It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production.

Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on Oct. 25, 1971.

It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens. So on Sept. 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed another law which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978.

This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans’ service organizations and the American people.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls.

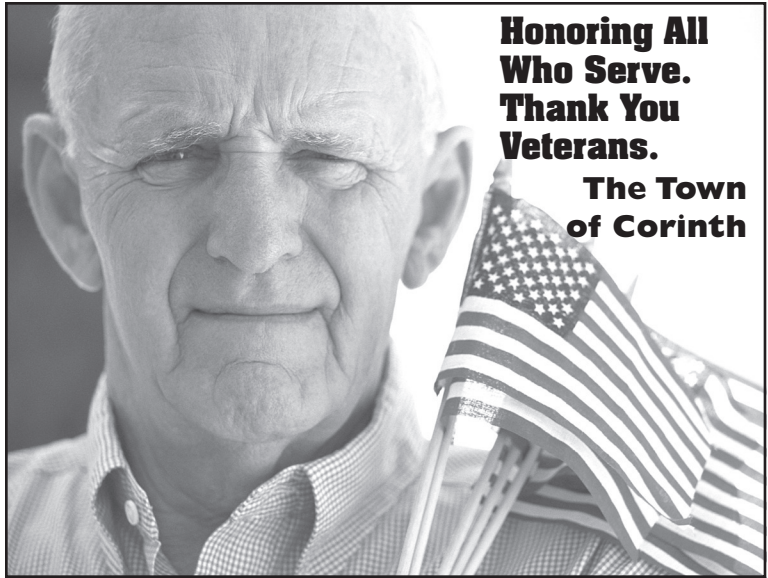
The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.



## Honoring Those Who Served

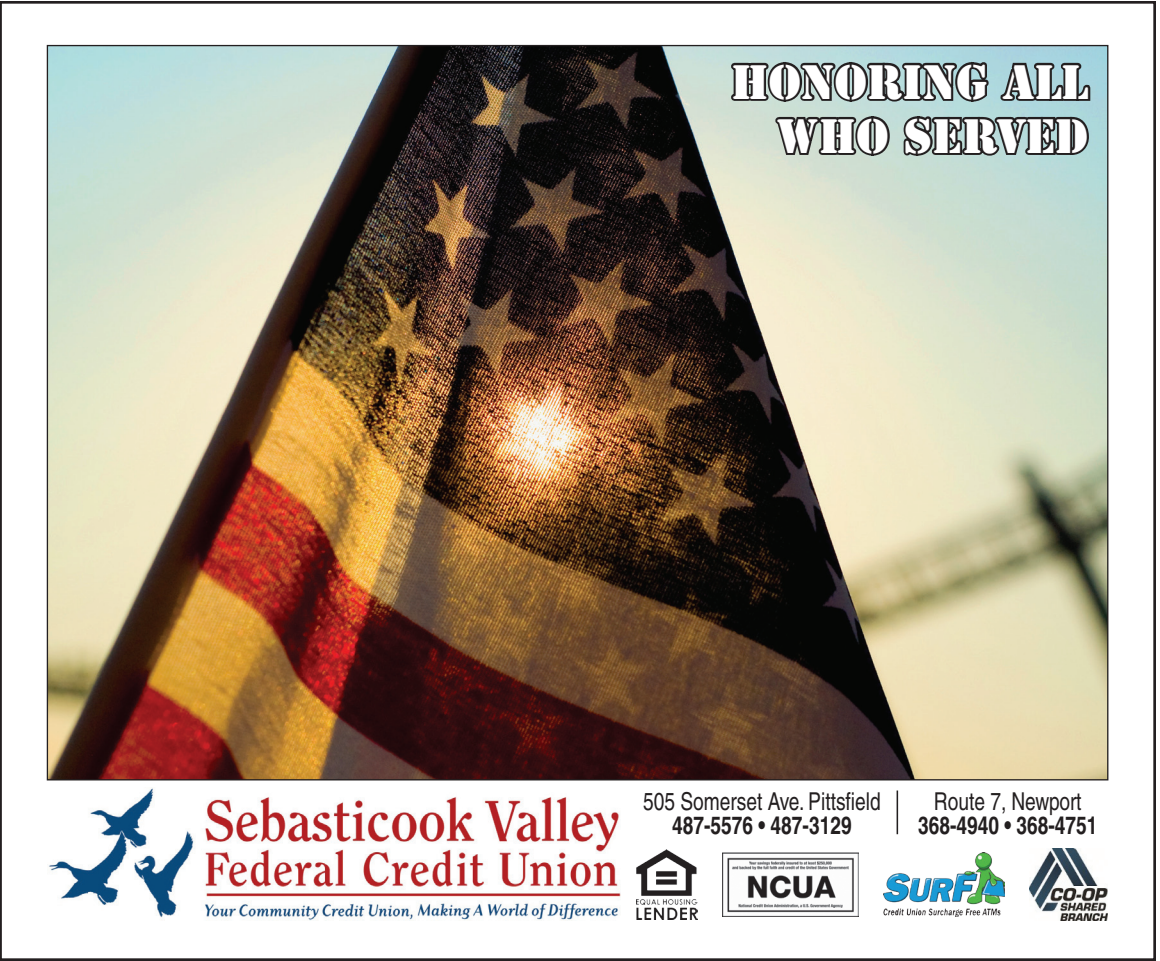
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# Malcolm C. Dulac Square dedicated by Dexter VFW

by Mike Lange

DEXTER – Although 1st Sergeant Malcolm Dulac was close to end of his enlistment after serving 20 years in the Army, he choose to go out in the field with the troops he had trained in Vietnam one more time.

As a result, Dulac became the first Dexter resident to lose his life in the Vietnam War on May 5, 1968.

On Sunday, Oct. 29, Dulac’s heroism was recognized by the Shirley B. Carter Veterans of Foreign War Post as the intersection of Water and Liberty streets in his hometown was designated as Malcolm C. Dulac Square.

Dulac’s brother, Stan, chaired the dedication ceremony where a sign was unveiled next to a display of Malcolm Dulac’s medals. They included a Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, designating a second award; two Purple Hearts, a Combat Infantryman’s Badge and a Combat Medical Badge.

Dulac earned his first Bronze Star while serving in Korea in

1950 when his rifle company came under attack. “Advancing through intense small arms and automatic weapons fire, he manned a machine gun on the perimeter defense line and remained at his post to cover the tactical displacements of the forward elements,” read the citation.

Dulac was deployed to Vietnam in September 1967 as a 1st Sergeant assigned to Company Q, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry. “At noon on May 5, 1968, near the village of An Bao in Binh Dinh Province, A Company forces were attacked and outnumbered 10 to one by a regiment of the North Vietnamese army,” Stan Dulac said.

Dulac went out in the field in an armored personnel carrier (APC) with two other soldiers and he was thrown from the APC when it was struck by enemy rocket fire. “Despite his wounds, he returned to the burning APC to remove more wounded as the vehicle burst into flames,” Dulac said. He died from his injuries at age 36.

After 45 years, Dulac’s greatest recognition came on May 2, 2013 when the 1st Battalion, 50th Regiment Veterans’ Association at Fort Benning, Ga. named the A Company enlisted quarters as Dulac Barracks.

Malcolm Dulac was born on Dec. 25, 1931 in Dexter, one of Maurice and Minnie Dulac’s 10 children. “He lived mostly with his grandparents because there was not much room at home,” according to Stan Dulac. “As an adolescent, Malcolm spent more time hunting than going to school, which resulted in him only completing the eighth grade.”

Eventually, Dulac enlisted in the Army with friends Clarence Gilbert and Robert Clukey.

Stan Dulac noted that 217 service members from Dexter served in the Vietnam War, but only Malcolm Dulac “paid the supreme price.”



VFW DEDICATION – The corner of Water and Liberty streets in Dexter was designated as Malcolm C. Dulac Square on Oct. 30 by the Shirley B. Carter VFW Post. 1st Sergeant Dulac was the only Dexter native to lose his life in the Vietnam War. Pictured, from left, are Chaplain Gary Burke, Vice-Commander Bill French, Quartermaster Richard Batchelder, Adjutant Ray Wallace and Stan Dulac, Malcolm’s brother. (Eastern Gazette photo – Mike Lange)



HERO’S AWARDS – A display case with Malcolm C. Dulac’s numerous awards and medals was brought to the VFW dedication ceremony. (Shirley B. Carter VFW photo)

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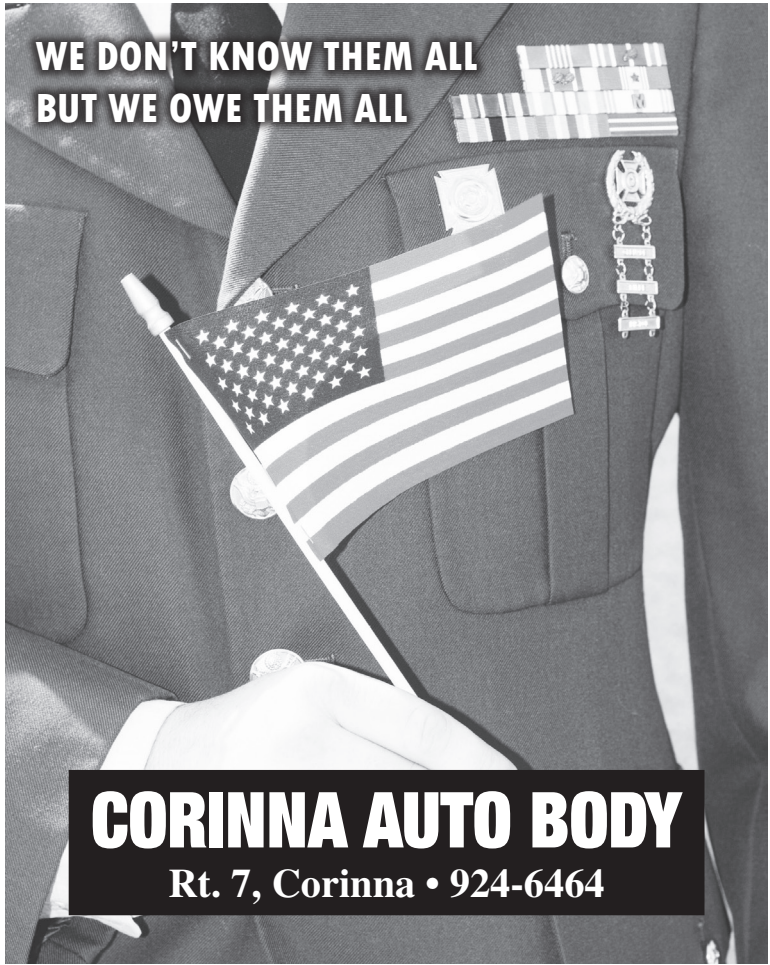


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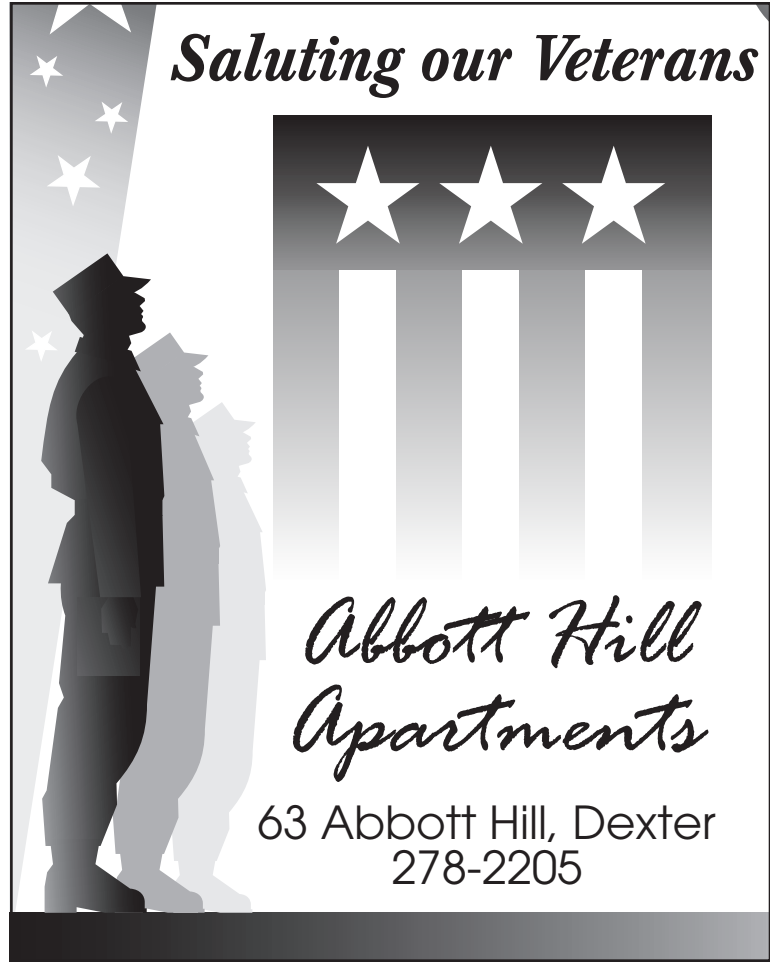


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Freedom is not free:

Remembering our soldiers' sacrifices this Veterans Day

(BPT) - When U.S. Navy Lt. John McGrath took off on his 178th mission over North Vietnam at the age of 27, he had no idea it would end his life as a free man for more than six years. His plane was struck by anti-aircraft fire, tearing the wing and forcing him to eject from the aircraft. With a fractured back and dislocated knee, Lt. McGrath was captured and taken to "New Guy Village," a war camp in Hanoi, Vietnam, where he became a Prisoner of War (POW).

Lt. McGrath was handcuffed behind bars, isolated, tortured and interrogated for more than a half decade. Back in the United States during the Vietnam War, when a soldier went missing, an American could buy a bracelet with their name on it to show solidarity and support. Nearly 5 million Americans wore POW/MIA bracelets to support Lt. McGrath, and the 600 other imprisoned soldiers as they anxiously waited for the war to end.

The veteran's journey is one that few civilians understand, despite the nearly 22 million Americans who share it.

Veterans Day, Nov. 11, is a time to remember and recognize veterans who have served throughout our nation's history. It's also a time to do our part to understand their sacrifice.

Historically, Veterans Day began as Armistice Day to commemorate the end of the First World War. Now, since November 1919, we celebrate each year to honor all veterans who have protected our freedom. We can begin to repay their sacrifice by advocating for military personnel who gave some, or all, to defend our country and our rights as citizens.

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is one of the nation's most prominent supporters of veterans. The nonpartisan organization, founded in 1919, is committed to advocating for veterans' issues, mentoring America's youth and promoting patriotism. It was founded to advance the mission of The American Legion, incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans service organization.

The ALA believes it is each citizen's civic responsibility to support the veteran community. In 2015, ALA members donated

5 million hours of community service to the nation's veterans. Members support those who served in the Armed Forces in many ways including education scholarships, aiding shelters for homeless veterans and working with local VA hospitals to support service members.


On Veterans Day, the ALA encourages Americans to take the time to thank individuals in the Armed Forces, engage with the military and veteran community in a meaningful way to recognize their sacrifices throughout history, and take a moment to understand the experiences of soldiers like Lt. McGrath.

Recalling his homecoming in March 1973, Lt. McGrath said, "I returned to San Diego where I was greeted by my wife and two sons. The years of waiting for this moment were suddenly forgotten, and I realized how great it was to be alive, to be wanted and loved and, most of all, to be American."

For more than six years prior to his coming home, Doreen Long, then a teenager, had worn a POW/MIA bracelet bearing Lt. McGrath's name. When she rediscovered the bracelet in a jewelry box decades later, she set out to determine the fate of the honorable soldier. Long got in touch with the ALA and expressed her desire to meet Lt. McGrath and thank him for his service.

Long's dream became a reality at the ALA National Convention in 2014 when Lt. McGrath surprised her on stage. For Long, it was the opportunity to meet a true American Hero. For Lt. McGrath, it was an affirmation of the nation's gratitude for his service.

For more information about how you can support the veteran community, visit [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org).

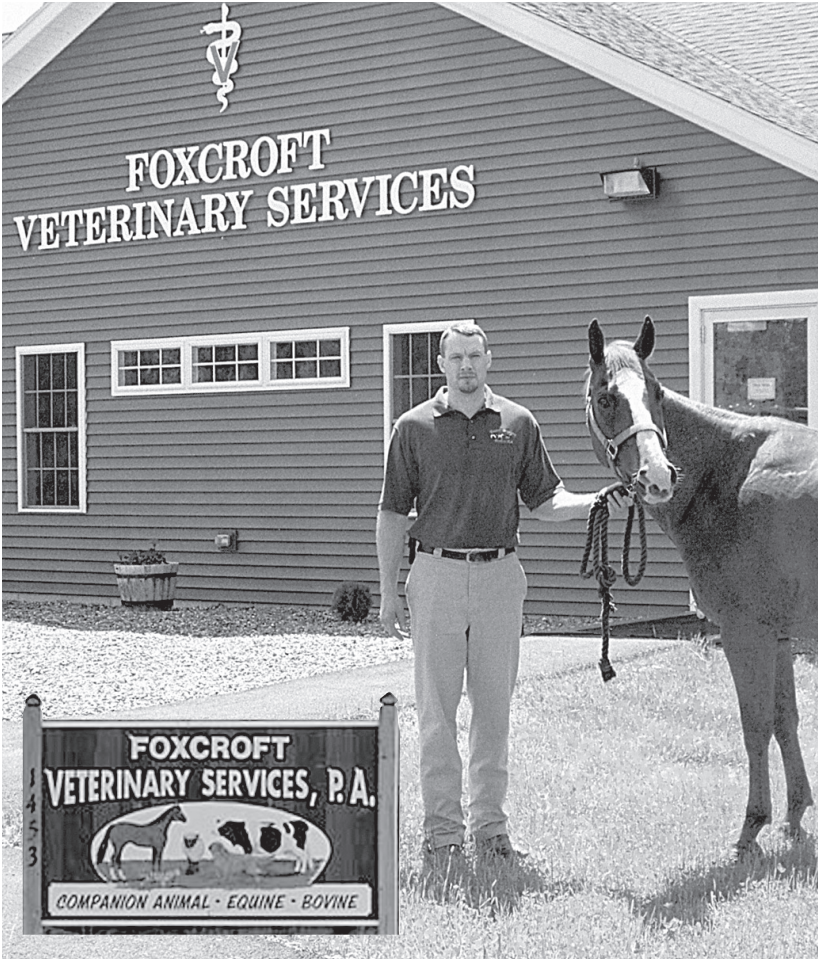


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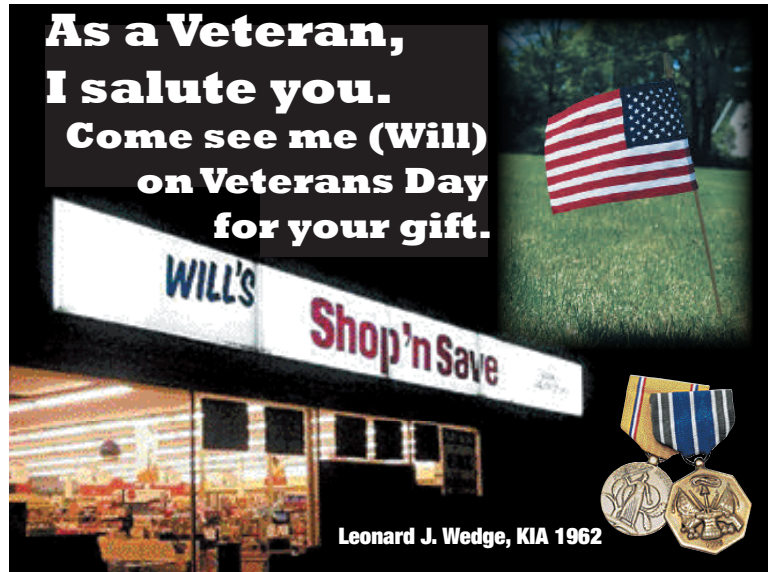
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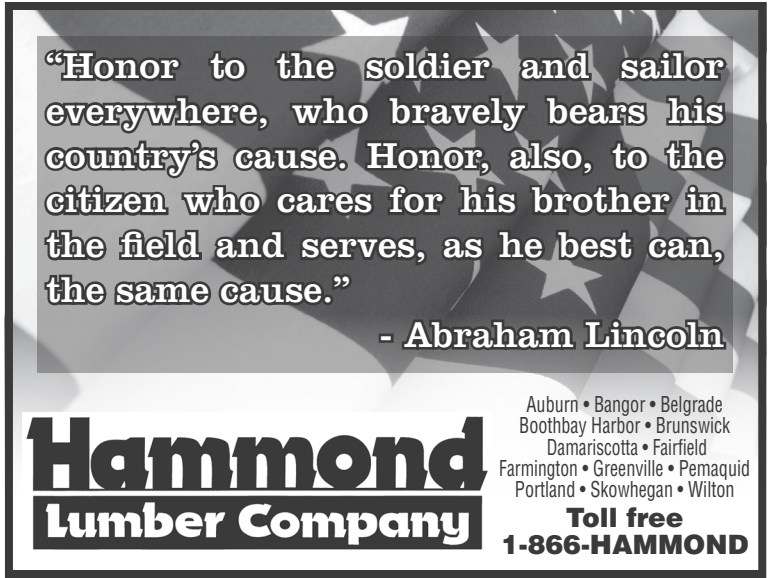


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## Letters and journals show World War I conflict from soldier’s view

by Mike Lange

MONSON – Elmer Lindie and Frank Flint were two of an estimated 60 young men from Monson who answered the call of duty and joined the Army during World War I.

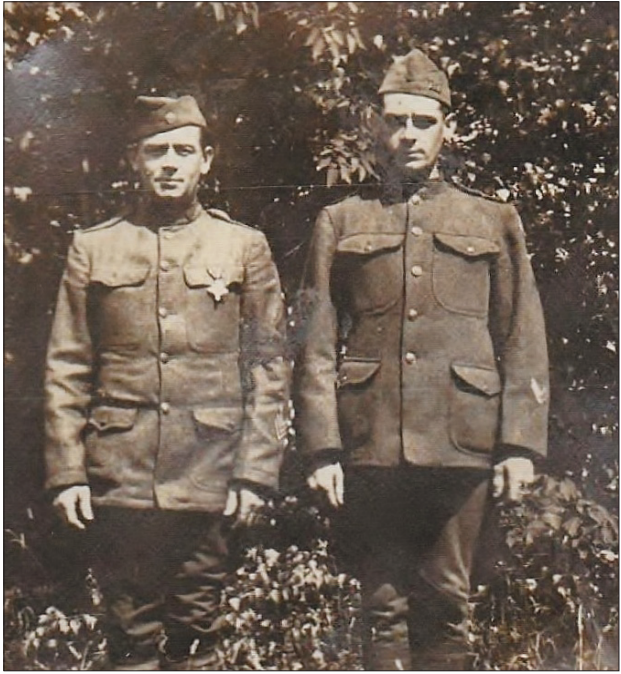
Thanks to some meticulous work by volunteers, the Monson Historical Society Museum now has a collection of letters from the battlefield by Lindie and a daily journal of activities from Flint.

In addition, the museum has firearms, uniforms and other combat gear from the conflict that raged across Europe from 1914-18 and claimed an estimated nine million personnel and seven million civilians.

“Elmer was a small town boy who turned into a national hero,” said Estella Bennett, secretary of the Monson Historical Society. “Frank Flint was his best friend and constant companion during the war.” Lindie’s older sister, Amy, was Bennett’s grandmother.

Lindie was presented with the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism on Feb. 19, 1918 by Gen. John “Black Jack” Pershing.

“That is the next-to-highest honor the American government can give a soldier because you can only win it under fire,” Lindie wrote. “I got caught in a (German) machine gun next while scouting ahead of the company and I had the good luck to clean them out instead of getting me.”



LINDIE BROTHERS – Elmer, left, and Frank Lindie of Monson, who served in World War I, were two of the founders of the Towne-Holmbom American Legion Post. (Monson Historical Society photo)

Bennett said that while Lindie wrote home as much as he could under the circumstances, Flint kept a journal during the entire time he served and “wrote at least a few sentences each day. You really get a sense of what they were going through.”

Flint arrived in LeHavre, France in October 1917 where rations were scarce but some soldiers were choosy – to Flint’s advantage. “We got an issue of coffee and rum (and) three of the boys in my squad

*Continued on next page*



COMBAT READY – World War I veteran Frank Flint’s gas mask and helmet are on display at the Monson Historical Society Museum. (Eastern Gazette photo – Mike Lange)



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Continued from previous page

wouldn't touch the coffee with the nasty rum in it," he wrote. "So they gave to me. Well, two issues under my belt and two in my canteen make this war pretty good."

Flint wrote about food and the weather conditions quite often, but sometimes with biting satire. "They didn't feed us very heavily tonight," he wrote on May 5, 1918. "(They) probably think it will be wasting grub, seeing that we're going to be shot before midnight."

The Monson infantryman avoided gunshots that night but had a few scary moments while patching up barbed wire fencing that was split by artillery shells. He had to crawl to the site, reattach the strands and get back to his trench "just as carefully as I crawled out."

Lindie's letters were also quite descriptive, although all correspondence sent from the front lines had to go through a military censor. Still, he managed to write some vivid descriptions of life on the battlefield sprinkled with some humorous moments.

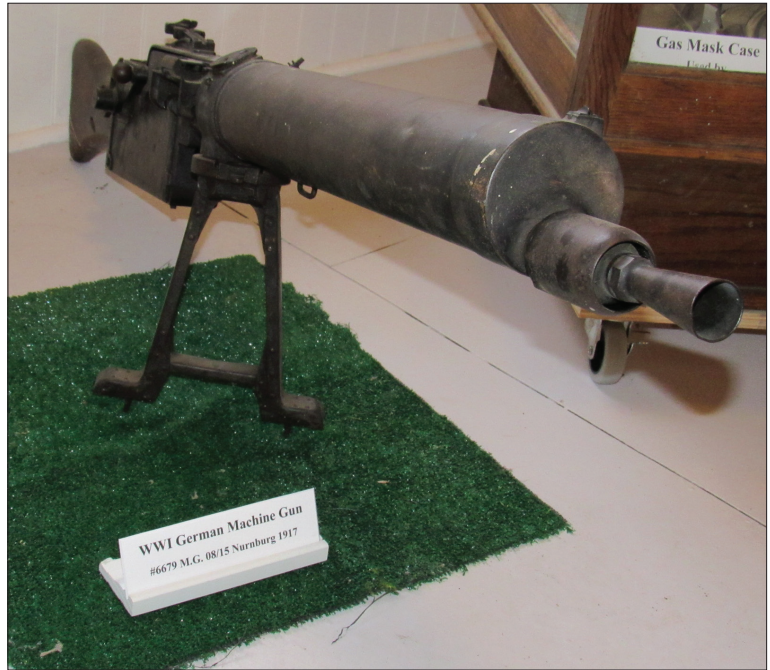
One time, he was caught in an artillery barrage and jumped into a trench with his buddy, asking "What do you think of this?" He responded, "I wish the old lady would have raised a girl."

Lindie's biggest fear was the poison gas used by the German Army. "I would rather see the devil coming than to hear the gas signal, especially at night because you know there is only one thing to fight gas with and that's your mask," he wrote. "If that happens to leak, you are done."

Ironically, Lindie spent 34 days in the hospital, not from gunshot wounds or poison gas, but from barbed wire. "I don't expect to be here only a few days," he wrote. "I got a bad cut on my ear with rusty wire in the last drive." As it turned out, he had blood poisoning.

After the war was over Lindie, his brother, William, and Flint helped start the Towne-Holmbom American Legion Post in Monson, an organization that's still active and helping to promote veterans' causes.

"We owe them a great deal of gratitude," said Bennett. "These letters and journals really give us a glimpse of the hardships they went through 100 years ago."



GERMAN MACHINE GUN – One of the artifacts on display of the Monson Historical Society Museum is this German MG 08 machine gun. It used 250-round fabric belts of 7.92 mm ammunition but was often prone to overheating and jamming. (Eastern Gazette photo – Mike Lange)

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