

HONOR OUR HEROES



THANK YOU
VETERANS

A Special Marketing Section Prepared by the Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial Committee and the Post Bulletin

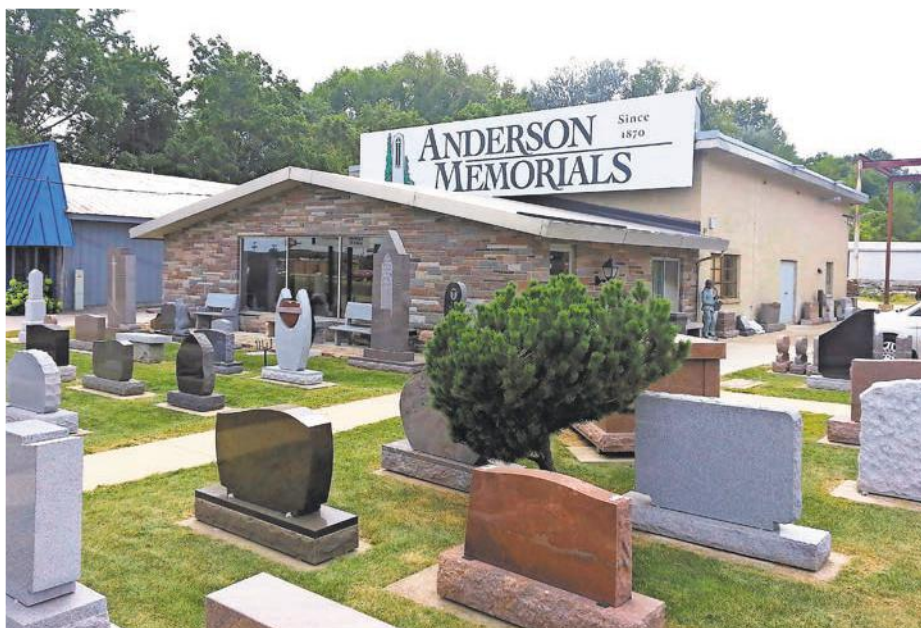
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Please join us ...

Monday Nov. 11 - 10:30 a.m.

Rochester International Event Center —

7333 Airport View Drive SW, Rochester, MN 55902

8:30 to 10:00 *Breakfast served courtesy of Powers Ventures*

10:30 *Welcome Kim Norton* Mayor of Rochester

10:32 *Special Recognition Wayne Stillman*

Past President Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial

Master Of Ceremony Lisa Peterson

10:34 *Posting Of Colors Intro Of Honor Guards Chad Stowers*

Retired Army Sergeant gambling chairman VFW post 1215
Marine Corps League Thor Det. 606, Korean War Veterans Club, Rochester Police,
Olmsted County Deputy's, VFW Post 1215, Rochester Firefighters
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter # 1110, American Legion Post

Posting of Colors, Mazeppa Veterans

Flute accompaniment by Gene Eiden

10:39 *"National Anthem" Performed By Tracey Pagel*

Olmsted County Deputy Sheriff

10:42 *"Pledge Of Allegiance" Tracey Pagel*

10:43 *Invocation Wendell Amstutz*

10:45 *Introduction Of Rich Daly Lisa Peterson*

10:46 *Recognition Of Gold Star Families Rich Daly*

Past Commander of Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

10:48 *Introduction Of Air Force Band Lisa Peterson*

10:48 *"God Bless America" Performed By Air Force Band*

10:51 *Introduction Of Josh Vandekamp Lisa Peterson*

10:52 *"POW/MIA Missing Man Ceremony Josh Vandekamp*

Army Combat Veteran and Member of the MN POW/MIA Riders

10:54 *More Than A Name On A Wall Performed By Tracey Pagel*

10:58 *Please Stand, If Able, For 11-11-11*

10:59 *Silence For Ringing Eleven Bells Bells For Eternity*

Founder and owner Terry Thronson

11:00 *"America The Beautiful" Performed By Air Force Band*

11:04 *Introduction Of Speaker Lisa Peterson*

11:05 *Main Speaker Robert Gross*

Cemetery Administrator Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA)

11:19 *Armed Forces Medley Performed By Air Force Band*

11:24 *Benediction Wendell Amstutz*

11:27 *Retire Colors Mazeppa Color Guard*

11:29 *Taps With Echo Les Fields And Gene Eiden*

11:30 *Closing Remarks Lisa Peterson*



*Breakfast provided courtesy of the Canadian Honker
and Powers Ventures*

We especially would like to recognize and thank the Color and Honor Guards
that graciously volunteer their time to carry the Colors at our many events over the years.

We recognize with gratitude, all the volunteers that made this program
possible, and the supporters listed below.

They support us, please support them.

Joe, Joey and Nick Powers and the staff of the Canadian Honker.

Peter Mathiason and the staff at the Event Center for hosting Veterans Day.

Terry Thronson and the Bells for Eternity for their ongoing support

POW/MIA Riders and the **DAV** for their constant support

Mike Pruett of MLT for his ongoing support of Veterans projects and programs

Lee Herold of Herold Flags for the Flags and his ongoing support.

Phil Schroeder of Renning's Flowers for the centerpieces and his ongoing support.

Jeff Hygrel of Oak Summit Golf Course for use of the golf carts.

Dave Evans and Bob Hopkins at Allegra for the printing of programs.

Greg Brandt at Audio Visual Logic for his continuous support

Andy's Liquor for their ongoing support of Veterans projects and programs

Gene Eiden and Les Fields who are always available to perform for us.

Richard Swanson and the **Byron Middle School Student Council** for their assistance and the "mail call" they present to our Veterans.



Activities to celebrate Veterans Day

**American Legion at 915 21st Ave SE is offering a
free SOS meal on Veterans Day**

**Free Breakfast for all Veterans
Monday, November 11 . 6 am – 11 am
Hy-Vee Stores, Rochester MN**

**Pasquale's Pizzeria 130 5th St SW will be closed on
Veteran's Day but in honor of Veterans Day will give
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To Place any orders Please call 507-424-7800.**



CLAY EWEERS

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Clay Ewers, owner of Universal Ford in Rochester from 1967 to 1980, was a Technical Sergeant Radio-Gunner on a B-24 Liberator Bomber during WWII. He was part of the Mighty 8th Army Air Force, 846th Squadron, 489th Bomb Group, 2nd Bombardment Division, Theater of Operations ETO and served from April 1943 until December 1944.

Airmen were asked to complete 25 missions at a time when life expectancy of a crew didn't surpass six months. Casualty rates for heavy bomber crews reached as high as 89 percent.

Only one in five made the quota to end their tour of duty. Crew members were given French and German money if they survived after being shot down. All of the crewmen, other than the officers, were Sergeant's because if captured, the Germans treated individuals of that rank and above better.

Clay Ewers was 32 and Sherm Abrahamson, age 24 met when they were assigned to the crew in Westover Field, Mass in early 1944. The other crew members were Ralph Cotton (pilot), Clarence Booth (co-pilot), Ralph Nix (bombardier), Pearson (engineer), Estes (top-turret), Cruikshank (waist gunner) and Davies (tail turret). After several months of training they were sent to Mitchell Field just outside NYC to pick up a new B-24. The plane was checked out thoroughly before they received orders to proceed overseas, with stops in Bangor Maine and Goose Bay Labrador, waiting for good weather. It was then on to Ireland where they stayed for 3-weeks practicing landings, takeoffs and flying in formation. They then proceeded to a small town called Southwold in England that had an air base that was the closest to the English channel of all the bases. My Dad never talked about the War, but did tell me one story about their trip across the Atlantic on the flight to Ireland. Sherm, the navigator said to me "Clay, we are running out of fuel..... and I can't figure out where we are?" My father said, "I don't know Sherm, but we better take a right." It turned out he was correct and they finally landed in a field in Ireland.

Sherm was able to fill in some details after Clay passed away. He said they

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were shot up very badly over Munster Germany on one of their bombing missions and had to fly back alone unescorted. He said they landed just as the plane was running out of fuel.

A 95-year old B24 Veteran and the only living member of his 10-man bomb group shared this recollection about warfare back then. "Most missions involved hundreds of B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator bombers targeting ball-bearing plants, rail yards, oil production facilities and aircraft manufacturing factories. The bombers wreaked havoc on the German war machine, but allied casualties began to mount due to German 88 mm anti-aircraft gun shells, commonly described as "Flak". Bomber losses increased rapidly to a rate the Eighth could not withstand. On Sept 6, 1943, 400 planes joined in a raid on the German ball bearing production plants, 60 were shot down and 600 Airmen were lost. Eventually, the deployment of the P-51 Mustang allowed bombers with fighter escorts to reach Berlin. The bombers and fighters together destroyed the Luftwaffe and air supremacy was gained over western Germany."

The veteran's grandson, who is a member of the US Air Force, commented "I can't imagine what the crews went through. You are basically a flying in an unpressurized beer can with four engines strapped onto it, a few guns and about 8,000 pounds of bombs. There is no GPS, no inertial navigation system, only a chart and a protractor to get you across the English Channel thru the clouds of German Flak. The planes were noisy, it was freezing at 20 degrees below zero at times and there was a low chance of survival over the course of 25 missions."

Sgt. Clay Ewers B24 was named the BTO which stood for "Big Time Operator". They made 40 takeoffs with bomb loads and completed 33 missions over enemy territory. Clay remained friends with the Navigator, Sherm Abrahamson, until he passed away in 1994 at the age of 82.

I kept in touch with Sherm, who filled in more details of the crew and their missions. He recounted one instance where four squadrons, consisting of 12 planes each, were lost on one of their missions, wiped out by the German



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HONORED FOR AIR BATTLES—T/Sgt. Clayton B. Ewers, husband of Mrs. Katherine Ewers, of 99 McLean avenue, is shown receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement in aerial combat over Germany and occupied countries. Radio-gunner on a B-24 Liberator bomber, Sgt. Ewers has made 33 bombing trips over enemy territory. He also wears the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf clusters. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Ewers, live in St. Paul, Neb.



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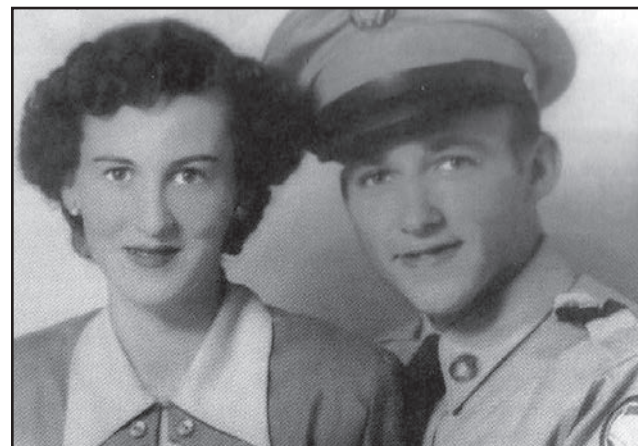
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Luftwaffe.

Clay was awarded the Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement in serial combat over Germany and occupied countries. He was also awarded the Air medal and three Oak Leaf clusters.

I had the opportunity to fly on a B-17 in 1992 when the war planes were at Flying Cloud airport in Eden Prairie, MN and my father strongly encouraged me to do it. It was an early dawn takeoff, much like what was done, when it was determined that the only way to win the war was to do day-light bombing. We flew around Minneapolis and St. Paul, culminating in several low level fly-bys at the airport before landing. It was an experience I will never forget and allowed me to first hand come to appreciate their bravery, flying these bombers. They truly earned the title of being a member of "The Greatest Generation."

-Don Ewers



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Mayo Southeast Chapter 28 of the Minnesota Disabled American Veterans is proud to support veterans in Southeast Minnesota. Over the past 3 years, Chapter 28 has:

1. Provided over \$76,000 to veterans in need. This is emergency help for rent, utilities, car repair, food and other necessities.
2. Sponsored the first Women's Veteran gala in the state of Minnesota.
3. Provided over \$120,000 to multiple veteran and community service organizations who have further assisted veterans in our region. These organizations include: Operation Hometown Gratitude, Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch (Operation Welcome Home and Gold Star family retreats), and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Southeast Minnesota.
4. Provided deer hunting opportunities to 55 disabled veterans who otherwise might not have been able to hunt.
5. Chapter programs have provided embroidered lap blankets with toiletry kits, commemorative sweat suits, and pillowcases to veterans residing in nursing homes and long term care facilities over the past several years.
6. Assisted several disabled veterans with acquisition and training of service dogs.



2019 Women Veterans Gala

Chapter 28 would like to thank the following businesses and organizations for hosting our DAV Clothing Donation Bins. Donations received in these bins help us fund the Veteran support listed.

Silver Lake Shopping Center
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Mazeppa Community Center
Zumbrota VFW
Pine Island American Legion
Kasson American Legion
Dodge Center American Legion
Sam's Club
HyVee South Barlow Plaza
HyVee West
Rochester Athletic Club
Rochester VFW

Chapter 28 will be sponsoring a GALA Fundraising event in the Spring of 2020. Anyone wishing to sponsor or donate to this event, please email:

DAVSEM@ gmail.com



Thanks for all your support

ELLSWORTH D. FIELDS, Commander
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COMMANDER DALE WELLIK

AMERICAN LEGION
MINNESOTA 1ST DISTRICT



Our oldest Brother, Dale, enlisted in the United States Air Force in December, 1967.

After completing basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, he was sent to Beloxi, Mississippi for Electronic Aircraft Guidance training.

Enroute to his next assignment in Minot, North Dakota, he and Joyce Alink were married, November, 1968. They lived in Minot until Dale was deployed to South Korea, February, 1970. Since Dale would be in "remote military installations" families were not allowed, so Joyce came to Rochester to live and worked at Mayo Clinic. Of course all the family was concerned about Dale's safety and health and we treasured his letters. A year seemed like such long time to his 10 brothers and sisters, mom (Mary) and dad (Elmer), and Joyce, we all missed "our soldier" brother everyday.

When he returned to Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma in March, 1971, to complete his enlistment obligation, Joyce joined him and after his honorable discharge, December, 1971, they came back to the Rochester, Minnesota area to work and raise their 2 daughters, Denise and Shari.

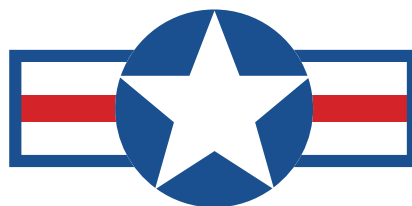
Always proud of his military service Dale is active in the American Legion.

He is in the honor guard and parades, has gone to schools to talk about patriotism, attended military funerals and visits many other vets and their families, always ready to assist.

He fund-raised relentlessly so that all WW2 vets could be included on the day long HONOR FLIGHTS to Washington, DC. He was an escort on several flights and when they returned to the crowded airport late in the evening it was really a wonderful sight to see; so many emotions unleashed by family and friends welcoming them home again.

We were very excited when the soldiers field memorial was being built and we would be able to salute our veterans with a "personal paver". Dale was one of the first to sign up and checked frequently thereafter when the installation began. The pavers of Dale, our dad, Elmer, WW 2, and mom's father, Robert Gildner, WW1, are next to each other on the first curve and since then, many friends and relatives have been added.

In May, 2019, Dale was installed as American Legion Commander, Minnesota 1st District. He is honored to have been chosen and is excited to move ahead with his duties and challenges. We wish him a successful year and know he will do his best be a strong voice for all veterans.



We Salute our Veterans

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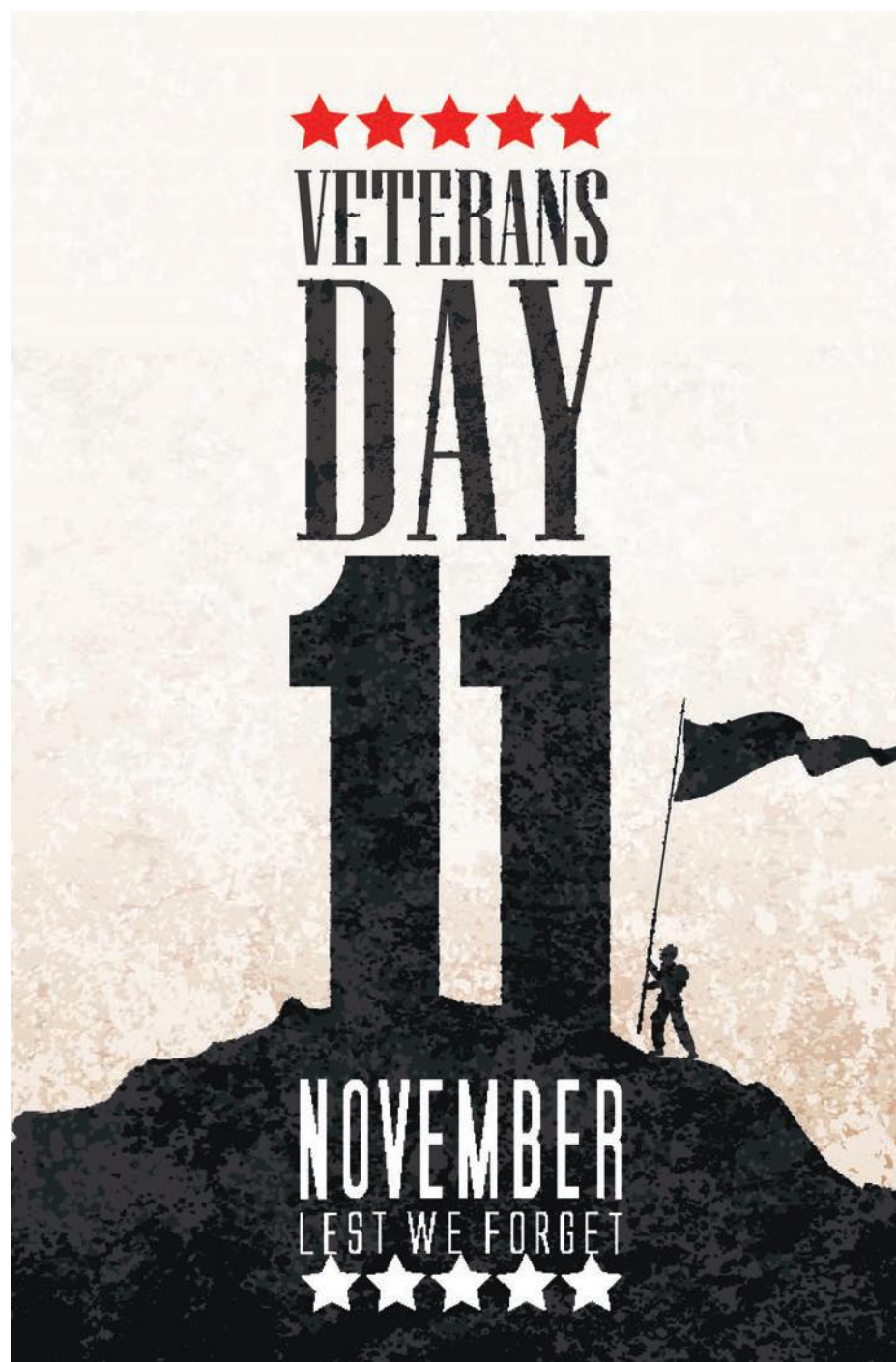


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Photo taken at base Hospital 26, a hospital unit in France during
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These are the memories of my Mothers', my Sister's and mine of our years spent in Germany during World War Two.

My parents, Amelia Wirth and Theodor and my three year old sister came to the U.S. in 1925 and settled in Chicago where they had family.

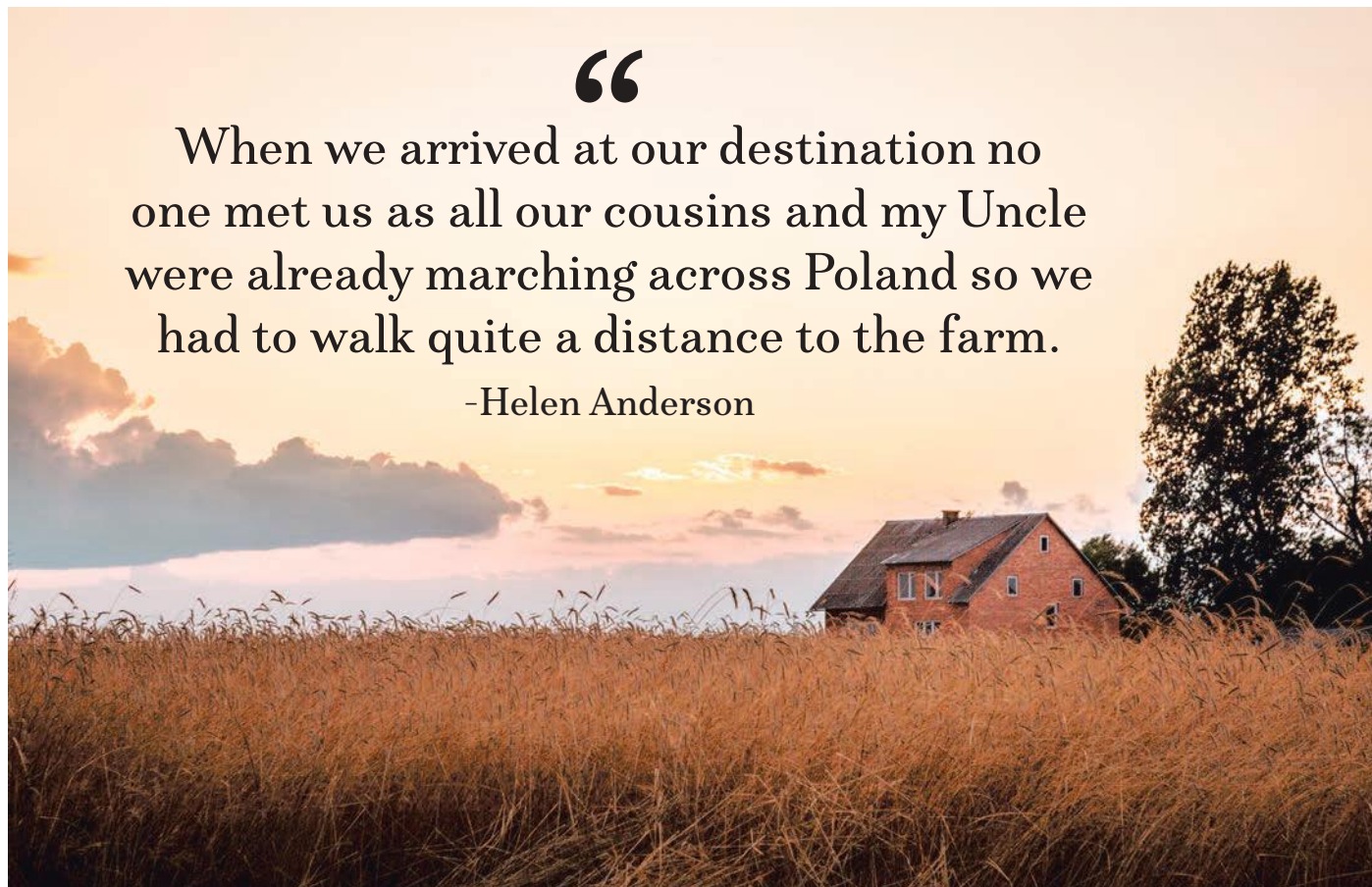
Most of my Mother's family remained in Germany and in 1938 my grandfather wanted our family to visit Germany and he would purchase the tickets. That is when disaster struck by me falling down two flights of stairs and sustaining serious head injuries. I was not expected to live but I survived and was able to travel so in the spring of 1939 we set sail for Germany. I was 1 ½ years old. We sailed on the "Europa", which was the last German ship to cross the Atlantic.

The ship held mostly young German men called back to serve in the Army. After we docked in Bremerhaven we found that the trains were so full with young men we could not take any luggage and had to send for it later. When we arrived at our destination no one met us as all our cousins and my

“

When we arrived at our destination no one met us as all our cousins and my Uncle were already marching across Poland so we had to walk quite a distance to the farm.

-Helen Anderson



We Salute Our Veterans



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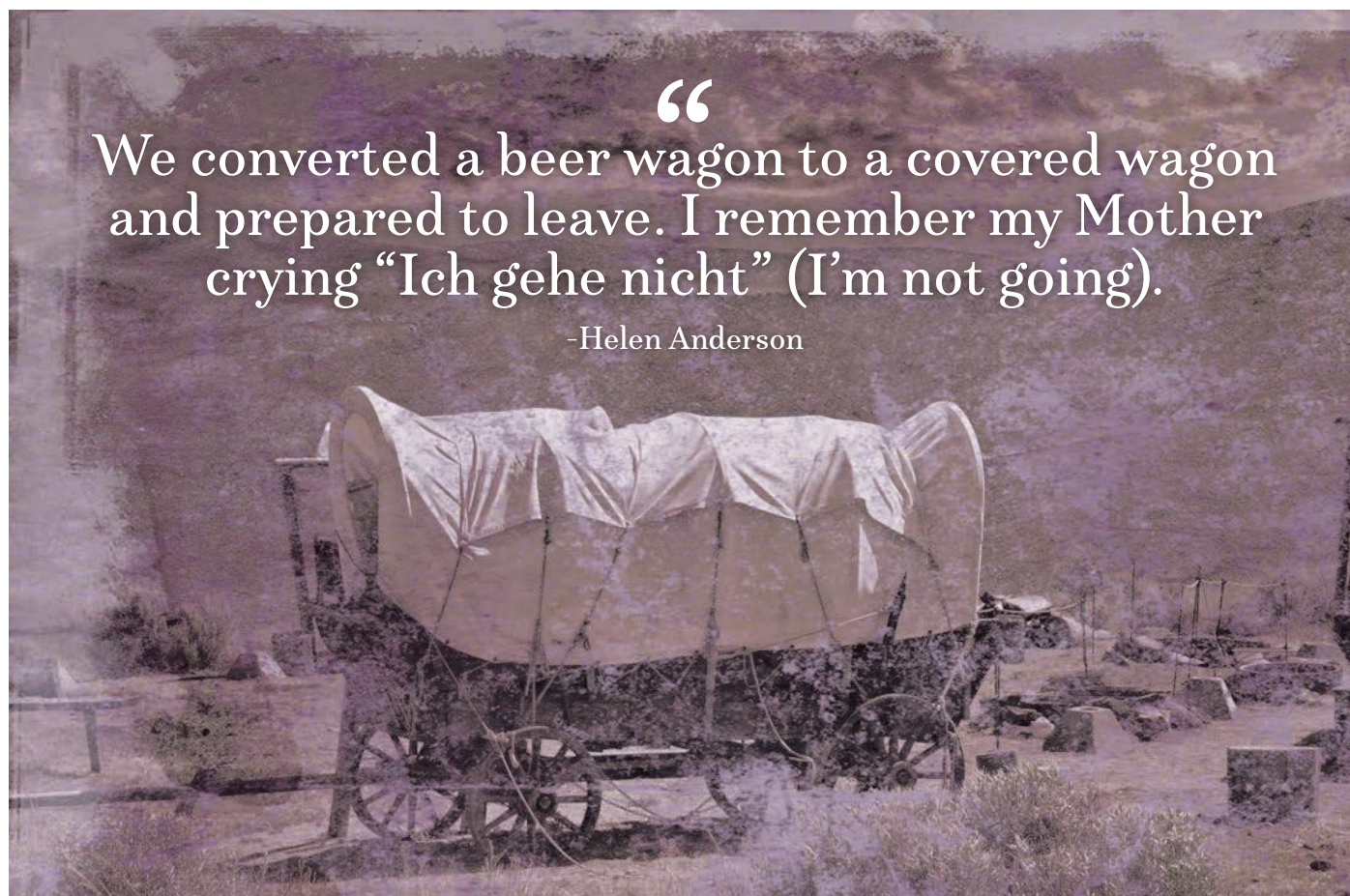
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Uncle were already marching across Poland so we had to walk quite a distance to the farm.

We stayed on the farms of different family members for the next three months.

My sister, Elizabeth, and I were American citizens but my Mother's Visitor Visa had just ran out so she was not able to return to the U.S so my Mother chose to keep us in Germany. Meanwhile she and my sister had to find work so we went to Berlin where we had relatives. My Mother found a job in in a uniform factory, my Sister a secretary and I went to day care. All went well until the bombing intensified and we were in bomb shelters almost every night. We had a radio, which was forbidden, that we listened to every night even though if caught we would be thrown in jail. It was the only way we could get news of the war. When the bombing intensified my Uncle, who had been wounded so was sent home, moved us back to his farm. From there we moved to a town called Malchine where my Mother and Sister found work again. Across the street was a

















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volunteers perform a public service when asked to do so, to include posting and retrieval of the National colors at certain ceremonies, raising of the colors at baseball games, display the colors in parades, perform flag education services for school and scout groups, honor local returning war veterans and to provide that service which may require a Military Honor Guard, the oldest in the State.

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church with no bathroom facilities or running water where refugees coming from the North stayed overnight.

My Uncle then sent a message to return to the farm with only what we could carry. We traveled by bicycle with a small suitcase and a small down comforter, left our home and possessions, and traveled cross country to the farm. Upon arriving we found our Mother's cousin and family. My Uncle said we should all leave as the Russian Army was only five miles away. We converted a beer wagon to a covered wagon and prepared to leave. I remember my Mother crying "Ich gehe nicht" (I'm not going). My sister stated she and I were going so finally my Mother joined us. We traveled for three weeks searching for the Americans and were constantly shot at by planes so we were forced to travel by night and stay in the barns of farmers during the daytime.

We were dropped off at a train station where we slept on benches waiting for a train but they were all full. I don't remember but somehow we ended up in a boxcar with five other people. The elderly man that was with us would talk to the conductor of every train that was going our way and persuade him to hook our boxcar up. We finally arrived in a location we felt was safe and made our way through the woods with our little suitcase and comforter. After many days some young soldiers spotted us and were surprised when they spoke to us in English and my sister answered in English. They were British troops and took us to their commander where my sister told her story. They fed us and gave us a place to sleep. It was the first time I had seen white bread and asked my Mother what it was, "Was ist alas Mama?" weis brot.

We were told they were leaving in the morning and there were no plans to take us so my Sister went to the Commander and informed him we were Americans and they must take us. They arranged for us to fly in the Army bucket seat plane to Belgium where we were later transported by Army trucks to an American holding camp in Germany. My Mother encountered a suspicious man looking around so when we stopped to rest in a barn my Mother put us in the farthest corner and covered us

with the comforter. We were scared and I guess he went away.

I remember the holding camp was a very sad place. There were dead refugees lying in ditches and people cutting meat out of dead horses. Those are pictures that are in my mind today.

From there we were transported to a Displaced Person' Camp, South of Frankfort, which consisted of large apartment houses they had taken from the Germans. We lived there for two years while my Mother and Sister worked with the Red Cross giving out clothing donated by the U.S.


In May of 1946 we returned to the U.S on a U.S. warship where the crew and officers donated their quarters to the women and the men slept below deck.

Helen married Marlo Anderson in 1956. Marlo was a Korean War Veteran and a recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He died in 1985.



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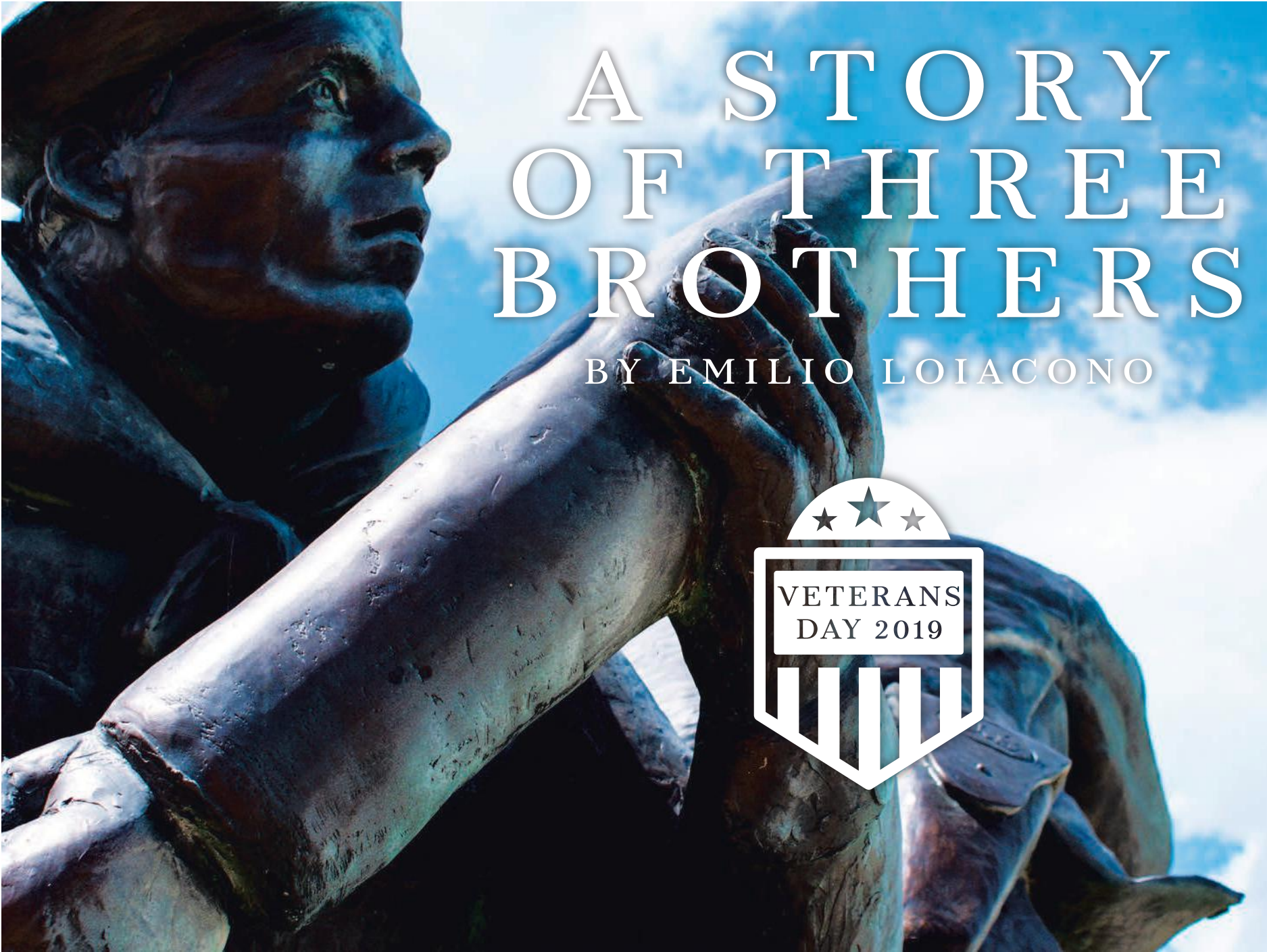


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In January of 1945 I felt there was a good chance I would be drafted into the Army. I wanted to serve but felt the Navy would be a better fit for me so I joined the Navy

I was sent to Sampson, New York for my Boot Camp training and in February, if you've ever been to New York in February you know it is very cold and dreary. I survived serving with Company 444 a great unit that won the "Regimental Rooster" for marching, which entitled us to one days "Liberty" in Geneva, New York. It wasn't all bad in Boot Camp..

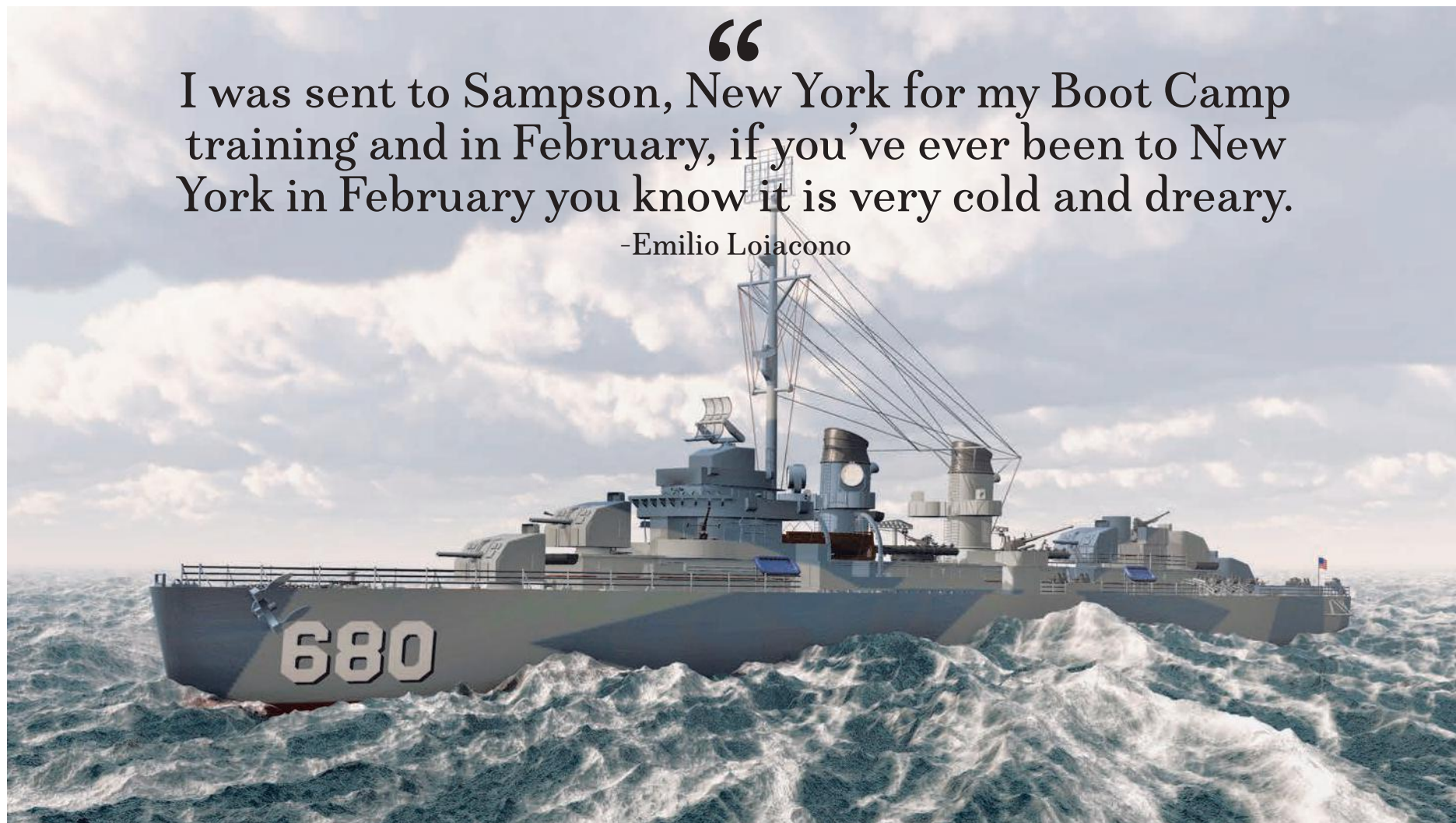
From Sampson we were sent to Norfolk, VA and boarded USS San Marcos, a

Kaiser ship, that broke down on it's shakedown cruise. From Norfolk we traveled south which took us through the Panama Canal on our way to Hawaii. The ship broke down again just outside of San Diego, CA and had to be brought in for repairs. The local graduating high school were a sight as it is the only place I ever saw where the girls wore evening dresses with white socks and saddle shoes.

One week after leaving San Diego on our way to Hawaii our ship broke down again so we were sent back to San Francisco for repairs. Again we did not complain because we were there for two weeks and had "Liberty" every other day. While there I met the owners of a bar and a restaurant and discovered they were fellow

“
I was sent to Sampson, New York for my Boot Camp training and in February, if you've ever been to New York in February you know it is very cold and dreary.

-Emilio Loiacono



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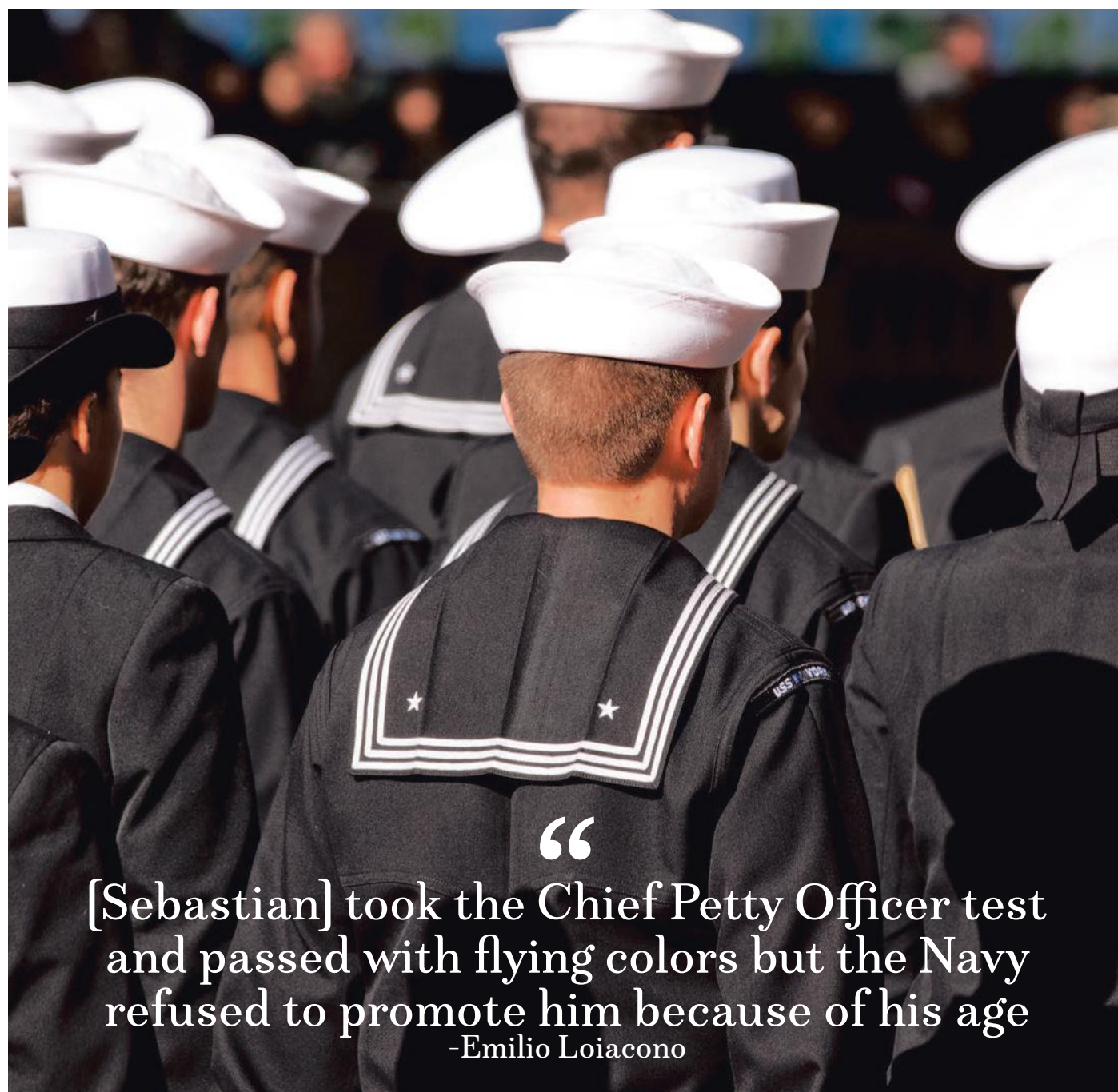
Brooklynites from New York and we formed a friendship and they treated me like a King during my stay. I was very disappointed when our ship final was able to continue on to Hawaii.

It may seem strange but I did not like Hawaii as it looked very much like Coney Island in Brooklyn, N.Y. A month later we joined a task force of one battle ship, two destroyers, a cruiser and an Aircraft Carrier bound for Saipan. On the way our task force had a mission to attack Wake Island where we bombarded the island for three hours. We later found out we had destroyed their food and water supply and the Japanese were living on Albatross which we called "Goonie Birds." During that bombardment we lost 24 planes, all because they ran out of gas, but all of the pilots were rescued. As we continued on to Saipan I made a huge mistake by hanging my hammock between two smokestacks which covered me with soot and a huge mess to clean up. Two weeks after we were dropped off at Saipan our ship, the USS Pennsylvania (BB38), was torpedoed at Okinawa.

In Saipan we were very lucky because between the time Saipan was declared secure and the end of World War Two 8000 Japanese were killed or captured and all that time we were unarmed.

Another brother, Sebastian LoIacono joined the Navy in 1947 where he served eight years, most of the time in Washington D.C. He served his time playing the trombone in the Navy Band.

After eight years he was put up in an apartment to assist him in making the decision to re-enlist or not. He took the Chief Petty Officer test and passed with



“
[Sebastian] took the Chief Petty Officer test and passed with flying colors but the Navy refused to promote him because of his age
-Emilio Loiacono

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flying colors but the Navy refused to promote him because of his age, which was 26, and he would have been the youngest Petty Officer in the Navy.

While in the Navy he served some time with the Mediterranean Fleet and met my Uncle and spent a lot of time with him and his family. At dinner one time he started to cut the fat off a pork chop and was told by his Uncle they ate every part of a pork chop so my Uncle took the fat and ate it himself.

After a while the Navy requested he make a decision about re-enlisting in the Navy. At that time my brother told them he had enlisted in the Air Force. He quickly packed up and moved to his Air Force quarters where he retained the rank equal to First Class Chief Petty Officer. The Air Force also assigned him to perform in the Air Force Band. He retired from the Air Force after 20 years.

My oldest brother, Al, spent time at the C.C.C Camps and from there joined the Army Air Corps, which was changed to the U.S. Air Force in 1947, before Pearl Harbor. He was stationed at Elgin Field, Florida for four years as a photographer for the Air Corps. From there he was sent to the Philippines where he served in Mindanao for a year. He sent home many pictures of the people, their customs and also sent pictures of many airplanes, which I have donated to the Veterans Military Museum to be built in Rochester. Al was the first one in our family to join the service and I have honored him by having a paver installed at the Rochester Veterans Memorial. I did not get one for my other brother because I was under the mistaken idea the veteran had to be from Minnesota, which I know now is not true.



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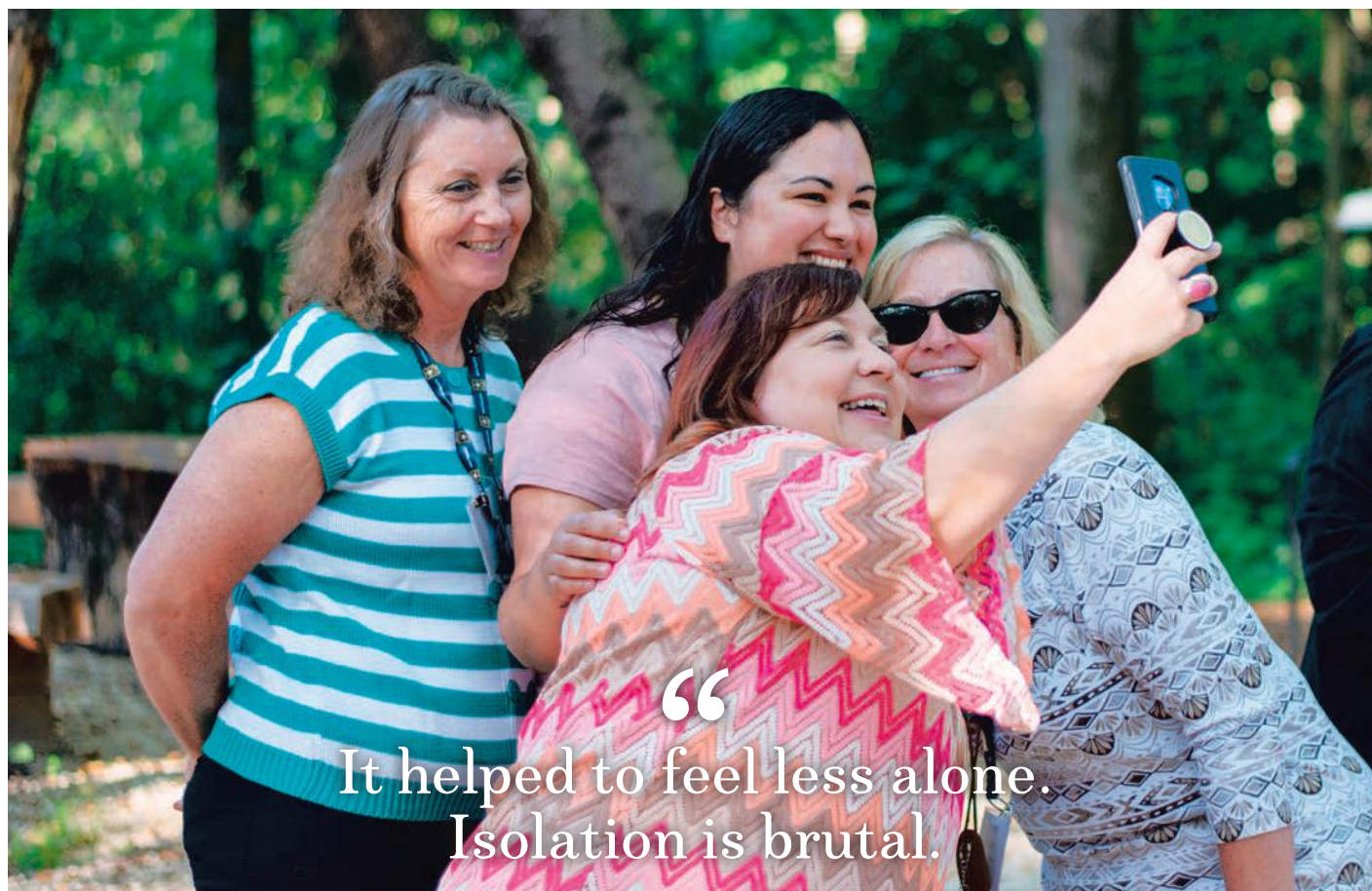
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According to the 2018 DAV report, **Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead**, nature-assisted therapies, including retreats, have been shown to have a clear and consistent positive impact on readjustment for women veterans. Retreats that place veterans together, often in nature or focusing on problem solving situations, offer a way for transitioning veterans to interact, solve problems and engage with a larger community that has shared similar experiences. A review of the available literature on nature-assisted therapies found uniformly positive outcomes for veterans who participated in some kind of retreat or course (from gardening to backcountry navigation), without any negative effects. Although many of the cited studies were relatively small and qualitative, veterans reported outcomes such as improved mental and physical well-being, a path back to work and improved ability to deal with PTSD symptoms in everyday life.

Women may especially benefit from the retreat model; they are less likely to be members of a veteran service




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organization and often have trouble locating communities of other women veterans. Women veterans also report feeling out of place among civilian women, and if they experienced military sexual trauma (MST), women veterans may feel uncomfortable around male veterans.

This information led to the dream of offering the first SE MN Women Veterans Retreat. 2-4 August, 2019, women veteran members of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Mayo Southeast Chapter 28 facilitated the event at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch in Stewartville, MN. The retreat consisted of group sessions around the bonfire, hiking, sunrise yoga, yoga nidra, horse-back riding, vision boards, and plenty of time to relax and share similar stories and experiences.

TESTIMONIALS

The women were asked what events helped with management of mental health symptoms/and or what new tools they learned to assist with managing mental health:

It helped to talk with other women who truly understand and relate to what I've been through.

Fireside talks, one to one, just being with fellow female veterans.

It helped to feel less alone. Isolation is brutal.

Being in the woods was extremely helpful. I felt the horseback riding was such a therapeutic tool. I enjoyed the group talks around the campfire. I enjoyed the yoga and yoga nidra. I also think talking with people who accept and understand was empowering, being able to leave if you became triggered and find comfort outside was a new skill. I also tried a crafting event I never thought I would enjoy and realized I loved it and helped organize my thoughts and anxiety.

CONTINUING ON

Due to the feedback and overwhelmingly positive response from the veterans who attended, the retreat will be offered again, this time in a winter setting from 31 January-2 February 2020

For more information on attending, or to support this event financially, please contact:

Ashley Laganieri, Veteran Service Officer
Olmsted County Veteran Services
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WOMEN VETERAN GALA

The third annual Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 28, and Olmsted County Veteran Service Office women veteran gala, hosted on Thursday, May 23rd, 2019 at the VFW Post 1215, Rochester, MN was a huge success!! This by far was the banner year, with over 180 women veterans in attendance. Thank you to the DAV Women Veteran members, and DAV Auxiliary for assisting with planning and facilitating this event. Thank you to all, for the support and donations that made this event spectacular! I am pleased that this event had such a great turnout. It is important for all veterans to have a support system, this event, gives women veterans that connection, and networking with other women veterans. This event provided resources, encouragement and valuable connections that will help these women veterans long after this event ends.

We hope to host the 4th annual Women Veteran Gala, May 21, 2020, at the Rochester Event Center. For more information about the event or the DAV Chapter 28. Please contact Olmsted County Veteran Service Office and ask for Jennifer or Ashley: 507-328-6355.



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Class of 64 Caledonia, son of Robert Lewis, PFC 1966-1967, Cannoneer, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery, Vietnam, Killed in Action, at Quang Tri, Vietnam, Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

On August 21, a three- vehicle convoy from Thon Son Lam in Quang Tri Province was ambushed by the NVA along Route 9, 4 kilometers north of Ca Lu. A platoon from Company L reacted to the attack but was surrounded before they reached the ambush site. Additional units were deployed into a battle lasted throughout the day that resulted in eight men being killed and many more wounded during the engagement with the enemy. One of the casualties was PFC Roger Lewis, one of the passengers in a vehicle killed by fragmentation wounds from a hostile explosive device.

He is buried in the Evergreen Cemetery, Caledonia, MN.

Note: Roger and I were inducted together.



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November 11 was originally Armistice Day, a celebration of peace on the first anniversary marking the end of World War I. It has evolved into Veterans Day, a day to honor those who have served in the military, who continue to serve in uniform, and who have died in service to our country. Less than 10% of the population can call themselves a veteran,¹ and when you consider the impact these individuals have had on the world, you realize what gratitude is owed by so many to so few.

I grew up in a military family. My grandfather served in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, and my father is a career Naval aviator and Vietnam veteran. I wish I could say that I joined the Navy out of a sense of tradition, duty, and patriotism, but that's not how it was. The truth is, I wanted to become a physician and did not have the money to put myself through medical school. When the Navy offered me a commission and full scholarship under the Navy Health Professions Scholarship Program, I jumped at the chance. After all, it was peacetime, and my job would



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be to practice medicine and to take care of patients, which didn't seem much different from what I would be doing in the civilian world as a physician.

On September 11, 2001, I was an Emergency Medicine resident at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California. I was standing in a patient's room when I heard what had happened in New York and at the Pentagon. As I watched the planes fly into the World Trade Center again and again on the television, I was devastated by the assault on my country. I also realized that what it meant to serve in the military was about to change.

When most people think about the Navy, they think about aircraft carriers covered in fighter jets or hospital ships like the Comfort and the Mercy that serve humanitarian aid missions all over the world. What many people do not realize is that Navy Medicine also provides health care for the Marines. In my decade of service as a naval officer, I never spent the night on a ship because I was assigned to the Marine Corps.

The Marines are sometimes affectionately referred to as the “pointy end of the spear.” Along with the Navy SEALs and the other Special Forces, they take on some of the most dangerous missions of the military. As Ronald Reagan is often quoted, “Some people go their whole lives wondering if they have made a difference in the world. The Marines don't have that problem.”

In Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), the United States has had the most severely injured casualties since Vietnam. But of the injured, more than 90% will survive—many of whom



“
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patriotism, honor, and
courage really mean.

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would never have survived another conflict. There are several reasons for this: better gear, faster evacuation, and some incredible advances in battlefield medicine, which have revolutionized both military and civilian trauma practice. The Marines attribute their high survival rates to putting their resources closer to the point of injury. I thought this sounded like a great plan until I realized that as an emergency physician, I was considered a resource.

I left for deployment on my twin girls' first birthday. At the time, I had 4 children under the age of 5 that I was leaving for 8 months. To be perfectly honest, nobody wanted me to go less than I did. But once I was there, everything changed. As the patients poured in with some of the most devastating injuries I had ever seen, I realized what patriotism, honor, and courage really mean. I learned it from my colleagues—the doctors, nurses, and corpsmen working alongside me. More importantly, I learned it from my patients, several of whom were still children on September 11, 2001. I may have missed my oldest son's first day of kindergarten and my twin girls' first words and first steps, but what I had given up paled in comparison to the sacrifices made by my patients. Many of them gave their lives, their limbs, their eyesight, and their emotional well-being. And they gave this voluntarily, in service to their country. I also realized that what I was doing really mattered. I realized I was very well trained and capable of providing the care these patients deserved and that most of them would survive to go home to their families because their "resources were close to


the point of injury." It was an incredible privilege to be their physician, and it was the most professionally rewarding thing I will ever do.

Had this been World War I, I would not have been able to serve in the military because I am a woman.² Had this been World War II, I would not have been permitted to serve because I am an osteopathic physician.³ I'm grateful to my country and my profession for the progress that has been made. I will always be grateful to the Navy for my education, my exceptional training, the camaraderie

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of my colleagues, and the opportunity to know that I made a difference in the world. As physicians, we are provided with multiple opportunities to rise to an occasion; the Navy taught me to never pass one up.

For those of you who have served in the military, in peacetime or in war, thank you for your service to our country. I'm proud to be one of you. And for those of you who have not served in the military, thank you for reading this. Even if you have never put on a uniform, your support of those who have is every bit as important. When I deployed, my sister quit her job and she and her husband moved in with my husband to help raise my children. It's not the kind of thing you could ever ask of someone or ever repay. In my book, my sister is a bigger hero than I will ever be. Happy Veterans' Day, with much gratitude.



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What happens when, out of the blue, your child tells you they've joined the military?

"When our oldest son decided to join the Marines, it was a total shock to us," said Tami Sawyer, current President of the Blue Star Mothers of Southeast Minnesota. "He came home from college and told us he was joining the Marines, and two weeks later he was at bootcamp."

She had no idea what any of it meant, what her life would look like now that her son was in training and soon-to-be active duty.

"I didn't know how to send a package, what you can and cannot do, that there would be no phone calls, there would be weeks where you wouldn't hear from them," she recalled. "I was glad to have this support group, because people don't really understand unless you are personally affected. It's nice to have moms who get it and who can help guide you as a new mom through that time."

At its core, Blue Star Mothers is a support group for mothers of all active members of all branches of the military. "You don't have to belong to the official organization, but you are a Blue Star Mom no matter what," explained Tami. "A lot of people don't know that."

Chapter 10, the Southeast Minnesota chapter, meets once a month, except July, and while they have official business (it is part of the national organization) the basis of the meeting is to offer a space for mothers to come together to share their hardships, their joys, their struggles, and to support each other through it all.

As President of Chapter 10, Tami oversees fundraising for the group. Much of the money raised supports Gold Star Mothers, mothers who have lost children while in the military. There is a ceremony when a mother transitions from Blue to Gold. Blue Star Mothers attend funerals, send flowers, and regularly have coffee with Gold Star Mothers, continuing the network of support through all aspects of military life. They also host an annual dinner for Gold Star Mothers and their families in December.

The local chapter encompasses all of southeastern Minnesota, and members live as far away as Northfield, Plainview, and Hastings. In fact, each year the group does a Christmas



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 -Tami Sawyer

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program at the Veteran's Home in Hastings, where they bring cards and a small cash gift for the vets.

The organization also participates in the Disabled Veteran's Deer Hunt at Chester Woods annually, along with Wreaths Across America, Tee it Up for the Troops, and more. Additionally, they support other organizations that support veterans, like Operation Hometown Gratitude, which sends care packages to active military members.

Being able to help out and to give back is a major factor why Tami continues to be part of Blue Star Mothers.

"It's such an unexplainable experience, being a parent of a military child," she said. "You're so proud of your kids, and you know what they're sacrificing. ... We know the importance of them getting support and having people remember them and not forgetting."

For more information about Blue Star Mothers Chapter 10 and for their meeting times and location, visit bluestarmomsmn.com.

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5/5/53



Michael T. Benjamin
Army
12/1/81



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Army
4/4/06



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Army
WWII



Ralph P. Buske
Army Air Force
WWII



Lyle T. Engesser
Navy
1958



Amy K. Espinoza
Air Force
2/23/83



David G. Espinoza
Air Force
8/1/72



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Army
WWII



Arnold L. Fredriksen Jr.
Army
1957-1959



Arnold L. Fredriksen Sr.
Army
WWI



Robert J. Fuller
Air Force
1978



Carl L. Gildner
Army
WWI



Cyril J. Gildner
Navy
WWII



Joe C. Gildner
Army
WWII



Vincent P. Gildner
Navy
WWII



Wilbur F. Gildner
Navy
WWII



Matthew L. Guenther
Marines
Afghanistan



Wayne H. Helgeson
Navy
1946



Randy D. Hofbauer
Air Force
Presian Gulf



Raymond Holst
Marines
WWII



Roy D. Hurlbut
Navy
WWII



Donald A. Jennings
Navy
WWII



Doris L. Jennings
Navy
WWII



James E. Jennings
Army
1948



Merle J. Jennings
Marines
WWII



Roger T. Jennings
Army
1953



Wilbur F. Jennings
Navy
WWII



Joyce N. Johnson
Army Air Force
WWII



J. Casey Jones
Army
Desert Storm

HONOR OUR HEROES



Duane D. Jones
Army Air Corp
WWII KIA



Franklin P. Kottschade
Army
Berlin Crisis



Donley D. Lamberg
Navy
10/31/55



Austin D. McGee
Army
Kuwait



Jordan J. McGee
Marines
11/18/13



Alex K. McNeill
MN Army National Guard
Kosovo/Kuwait



Marvin D. Miller
Army
Persian Gulf



Wayne L. Rauchenstein
Army
WWII



Eugene W. Russell
Army
WWI



Dwayne E. Schacht
Army Air Force
WWII



John A. Spreiter
Air Force
1962



Duane Caryl Spriestersbach
Army
WWII



Wayne Lee Spriestersbach
Army Air Force
WWII



Vern & Marge Strauss
Navy
WWII



Charles H. Strutzenberg
Army
WWII



Robert E. Sullivan
Army
WWII



Leon M. Swendsen
Army
WWII



Elmer L. Wellik
Army
WWII

Gale R. Hill

Gale Hill was drafted into the Army at Fort Snelling in 1942. I did not graduate from school as Uncle Sam said he needed me more.

I spent seventeen weeks at Camp Hood, Texas, four weeks at Van Dorn, Mississippi. I went into Camp Shanks, New York. Sailed around the Statue of Liberty went through the Strait of Gibraltar to Camp Lucky Strike. Got on 40 & 8 boxcar to Frontline Battle of the Bulge and Sigfreid Line, Germany. General D. Eisenhower our Commander Officer. I was in Wire Section. Helped hook wires to dial phones run by two dry cell batteries. Voice could carry about fifty feet. If the wires snapped we had to find the right wires to hook phones up again.

Received my G.E.D. from University of Minnesota - VFW Winona, Minnesota

Discharged from Fort Lewis, Washington.

70+ years membership of the Masonic Lodge.

Spent my 19th birthday in a fox hole at the Battle of the Bulge, Germany 1942-43



Gale R. Hill
Army
WWII

*The stories here
for all to see,
to show us
freedom isn't free.*

VIETNAM WAR



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Army
Vietnam War



Jerry G. Clausen
Navy
Vietnam War



Dallas S. Finseth
Army
Vietnam War



Dennis W. Hayden
Navy
Vietnam War



Kenneth R. Hurlbut
Army
Vietnam War



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Army
Vietnam War



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Marines
Vietnam War



Theodore Johnson
Army
Vietnam War



Roger C. Juhl
Army
Vietnam War



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Navy Seabees
Vietnam War



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Army
Vietnam War



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Vietnam War



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Marines
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Vietnam War



Robert J. Ronningen
Army
Vietnam War



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Army
Vietnam War



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Army
Vietnam War



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Army
Vietnam War



Terry J. Severson
Marines
Vietnam War



James F. Shaler
Marines
Vietnam War



Merton K. Unnasch
Army
Vietnam War



Richard F. Ward
Army
Vietnam War



Dale P. Wellik
Air Force
Vietnam War



William D. Widman
Navy
Vietnam War



Jerald Barnhart
Army
Korean



Bob DeWitz
Army
Korean



Craig Qualey-Fisher
Navy
Vietnam



Merle Peterson
Army
Korean



Floyd Riester
Army
Vietnam



Dave Senjem



Harry Kerr
Marines
Vietnam



Rod Lee
Army
Gulf War



Pete Mathias
Army



Glenn Miller
Marines
World War II



Harold O. Perry
US Naval Reserve
World War II



Wayne Arnold



Chris Stapleton



Scott Eggert



Robert L. Sheridan
Army Air Forces
World War II



Raymond L. Sibley
Army
World War II



Wayne Stillman
Army
1956



Terry Thronson
Navy
Vietnam



Ken Zubay



Al Maves



Mike Pruett

KOREAN WAR



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Army
Korean War



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Army
Korean War



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Army
Korean War



Ronald D. Ahern
Army
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Army
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Korean War



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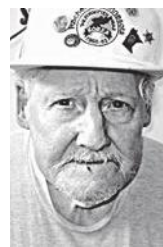
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Army
Korean War



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Keith Larson
Air Force
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Army
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Floyd R. Lewis
Army
Korean War



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Korean War



Lyle R. Lubahn
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Korean War



Basil C. Luck
Air Force
Korean War



Gordon Lukehart
Air Force
Korean War



Clarence C. Lunde
Air Force
Korean War



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Navy
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William E. Lyke
Army
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Lyle (Mike) Madsen
Air Force
Korean War



William C. Madsen
Army
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Korean War



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Korean War



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Korean War



Bob Marks
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Robert O. Mathieson
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Korean War

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Korean War



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Korean War



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Army
Korean War



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Army
Korean War



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Warren L. Olsen
Army
Korean War

KOREAN WAR



Archer A. Olson
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Jerry A. Olson
Air Force
Korean War



Ted E. Olson
Army
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Army
Korean War



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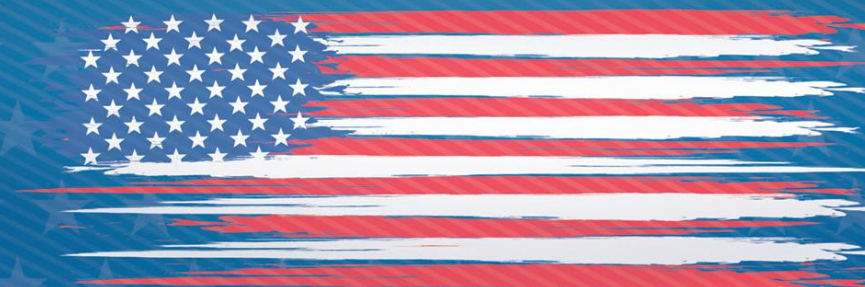


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