



Vietnam: Remembering Our Own

Dozens of Potter County men, some of them drafted and others enlisted, shipped off to the Vietnam War, which ended with the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Behind each of these veterans lies a story. But for eight of them, their life's journey would end in Indochina. They lost their lives in an unpopular war that divides our nation even today.



None of the controversy should obscure the debt of gratitude that we owe to all who served. Those who made the ultimate sacrifice never had the chance to enjoy the freedom for which they had fought. They should never be forgotten.

				
Douglas	Kibbe	Maynard	Nuschke	
				
	Ritsick	Stiles	Stonemetz	Tubbs

It is with that philosophy that the Potter County Veterans Services Committee has set out on an ambitious project. It began as an effort to memorialize the county's eight Vietnam War casualties, and is now having a statewide and national ripple effect. Committee members Will Worthington, Paul Heimel and Dawn Wooster are coordinating a mission to assure that each of the



county's Vietnam War casualties is properly memorialized at the "Education Center at the Wall." A collaborative effort between the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the center is planned for a National Mall site.

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It will be built adjacent to the Vietnam War Memorial Wall. The two-story underground learning facility is designed to inform future generations of the honor and sacrifices made by all those who served their country in war. A prominent feature will be the larger-than-life pictures and biographies of service members whose names adorn the polished black panels of Vietnam War Memorial Wall. The pictures will be displayed on service members' birthdays and will add faces to the more than 58,000 names on the wall.

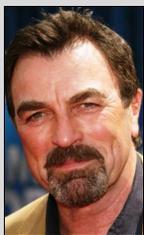
County officials across the country were asked to support the project, but the response was far from overwhelming. In an effort to inspire others, the Potter County Veterans Service Committee set a goal of collecting photographs and information about the county's Vietnam War casualties. They are **Capt. Edgar Nuschke, PFC Edward Ritsick, Sgt.**

Bruce Maynard, Sp/4 Donald L. Stiles, Staff Sgt. Garreth L. Kibbe, Sp/4 Gerald Stonemetz, Pvt. Edwin Franklin Tubbs and Spc/4 Clark Douglas. Anyone with information to share,



A message from Tom Selleck

(Actor and Vietnam-era veteran Tom Selleck is the national spokesman for the Education Center at the Wall.)



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a powerful symbol of courage and sacrifice. An exciting new project will make the stories behind the 58,261 names on The Wall come to life to ensure they are never forgotten. Nearly half of the visitors to The Wall were born after the Vietnam War. To them, the names cut in the smooth black granite have no context. There is no connection. The new Education Center at The Wall will enhance the visitor experience and honor the values of service demonstrated by all those who have served in our country's armed forces.

It will feature photos of those named on The Wall, a chronology of the conflict, and a selection of the more than 100,000 personal items that have been left at The Wall in memory of those who gave their lives for their country. The Education Center will give generations to come a deeper appreciation of the courage, sacrifice and devotion of those who fell, those who returned and those who waited. Please help to make the Education Center at The Wall a reality.

photographs or other material should contact Dawn Wooster at 814-274-8290, extension 207, or dwooster@pottercountypa.net.

With Potter County's project nearing completion, Commissioner Heimel will be approaching both a statewide and national military and veterans service committee on which he serves. He'll discuss how the local committee compiled the profiles and worked with state lawmakers to have all eight of the county's Vietnam War casualties recognized with a bridge named in their memory. One of his goals is to have Pennsylvania join the short list of states that have 100-percent county participation.

Like the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, the Education Center at the Wall will be completely funded through private donations. Congress has approved the project. Land has been appropriated and final design approvals are in hand. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund continues a campaign to secure the estimated \$120 million needed. More information is available at the website, buildthecenter.org.

Lasting memorial for Lt. William Daisley

About 80 people, ranging from family members and retired teachers to former neighbors and young children, gathered at American Legion Post 192 to pay tribute to a Coudersport airman. After the dedication ceremony for the Lt. William E. Daisley Memorial Bridge, many attendees progressed to the bridge itself, which carries Toles Hollow Road over the Allegheny River, to stand in the rain as commemorative markers were unveiled.

Among speakers were Brenda Whitman, sister of Lt. Daisley; Rep. Martin Causer; Potter County Commissioner Paul Heimel, on behalf of the National Veterans and Military Service Committee; and Chuck Dillon, representing Sen. Joe Scarnati.

The lieutenant's brother, Dana Daisley, played "Taps" while the Potter County Honor Guard accorded full military honors. Vocalist Anne Acker performed a tribute ballad, accompanied by guitarist Larry Herbstritt.

Bill Daisley was an outstanding scholar, role model and athlete at Coudersport High School, and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He was 27 when his F-14B Tomcat fighter plane went down during a training exercise off the coast of North Carolina in March 1993. Speakers said the best way to honor Lt. Daisley is to follow his example of recognizing obstacles and opportunities -- overcoming the former, maximizing the latter, and taking time to have fun.



Bill Daisley Sr. unveils one of the signs at the bridge that is now named in memory of his son.



Shown from left are Rep. Martin Causer, Dax Daisley (brother), Judy Daisley (mother), Dana Daisley (brother), Bill "Buck" Daisley (father) and wife Cindy, and Brenda Whitman (sister).



Dana Daisley plays "Taps" while Potter County Honor Guard member Rodney Cowburn stands at attention during the memorial service.



Commissioner Paul Heimel discusses Lt. Daisley's life and his lasting impact on those who knew him.

Successful veterans discount program



Potter County military veterans continue to sign up for discounts on products and services from more than two dozen local businesses participating in the first-ever Potter County Veterans Discount Program.

The number is steadily growing. To register, veterans should provide full name, mailing address, and contact information (telephone and email, if possible) to the county's Office of Veterans Affairs. There are three ways to apply: send required information by an email addressed to wworthington@pottercountypa.net; send regular mail to Veterans Affairs, Gunzburger Building, 1 N. Main St., Coudersport PA 16915; or call 814-274-8290, extension 210, to schedule an appointment or obtain additional information (office hours are 8:30 to 4:30 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

Each veteran who registers for the program will receive a membership card that must be shown at participating businesses to qualify for a discount. Veterans will also receive a brochure that identifies participating businesses by name and address, along with the particulars of their discount offer. Under the program, merchants and professional service providers extend discounts – typically 10 percent or more – to Potter County veterans. Certain restrictions may apply. Businesses wishing to sign up or learn more about the program should call 814-274-8290, extension 207, or send email to dwooster@pottercountypa.net.

Museum welcomes vets



As an expression of appreciation to those who have served in the military, Corning (N.Y.) Museum of Glass offers a 15-percent discount to all active and retired military personnel. On Veterans Day (Nov. 11), the museum gives free admission to all veterans and active military, with ID. All others in the party receive a 15-percent discount on museum admission. Anyone 17 and under receives free admission all year long.

Broader access to VA health care

Changes have been made in the VA's "Choice Card" and related programs unveiled in 2014 to cut the wait time for veterans seeking health care. Eligible veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA medical facility, or are unable to schedule an appointment within 30 days, may be eligible to use their Choice Card to see a provider in their community. To find out if you are eligible, call 1-866-606-8198. Meanwhile, recent legislation has amended the Veterans Choice Act to further expand eligibility for veterans to receive care in their communities, rather than waiting for a VA appointment. Now, if an eligible veteran is referred for care, he or she has 60 days to complete the referral. The 30-day rule can be waived in cases where a veteran has a clinical need for more immediate care. Also, the VA is expanding the number of providers who can see veterans under the Choice Card program. Lastly, veterans who receive hospital or medical services for a service-connected disability are now eligible to participate in a Health Savings Account. Veterans who are uninsured or not eligible to enroll for VA health care can learn more about those options by calling 1-800-318-2596.



Advice for Veterans

Variety of benefits, services available



Many veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces are unaware of the benefits and services available to them. Most programs are administered through the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA). There is no legal definition for "military veteran," so eligibility is based on how each benefit was written into law by Congress. For instance, home loan guarantees are offered to veterans with a certain

number of active-duty service days during specified periods of armed conflict. Here's a look at the categories of benefits:

► **Disability benefits:** Military veterans with a service-related disability rating of 10 percent or more, as determined by the VA, may qualify for monthly disability benefits ranging from \$127 to more than \$3,000. You may receive additional compensation if your disability is considered "very severe"; you have lost a limb; you have a spouse or dependent parents; or your spouse is seriously disabled. To apply, you will need: discharge papers (DD 214 or equivalent); service treatment records (if they are in your possession) or other evidence showing a connection between your disability and your military service; and medical evidence of your disability.

► **Pension:** VA's pension program is a needs-based benefit that is offered to qualifying veterans with a permanent disability or a limited income and the inability to work. To qualify for pension benefits, a veteran must have been discharged from service after at least 90 days of active-duty service with at least one day during an eligible wartime period (for other than dishonorable reasons); have a yearly family income that is less than the amount set by Congress; and be 65 or older, be totally and permanently disabled, be a patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care, be receiving Social Security Disability Insurance, or be receiving Supplemental Security Income.

► **Health Care:** VA must provide all eligible veterans with hospital and outpatient care that is defined as "needed," which is not limited to the treatment of military-related injuries and illnesses. In addition to regular health benefits, the VA offers HIV/AIDS treatment, blindness rehabilitation, drug dependency treatment, and other special programs to those who qualify.

► **Education and Career Services:** The GI Bill covers several different education programs available to veterans and their families (depending on eligibility and duty status). Additionally, eligible veterans have access to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program and the Education and Career Counseling Program.

► **Additional Benefits:** In addition to the four main categories of veteran benefits explained above, the VA and other federal and state government agencies also offer PTSD support, home loans, small business loans (through the Small Business Administration), life insurance and burial benefits

Details are available from county directors of veterans affairs, or online at va.gov.

Privatize vets' health care?



One veterans' advocacy organization is calling for veterans' health care to be privatized. Concerned Veterans for America believes the VA's Veterans Health Administration should be turned into an independent, government-chartered nonprofit corporation. Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system would still be eligible for free VA health care but would have the option of choosing private health care with co-pays and deductibles. Patients would be able to transfer federal funds spent on their care at the VA to help pay for private health care. Future veterans would have to use the new system and be subject to cost-sharing depending on their level of disability or financial need.

STEM jobs for vets

Air Force veteran Thomas A. Kennedy, CEO of Raytheon, believes there is a simple solution to employers' need for workers with training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). "Military service leaves many men and women well-prepared for careers in STEM fields," Kennedy wrote in an editorial circulated to newspapers across the country. "What's more, some of the fastest growing STEM fields -- particularly those related to cyber and information security -- are areas where former service members have much to contribute." Through partnerships with organizations such as Student Veterans of America and the Wounded Warrior Project, Raytheon is bringing veterans scholarships, training, and mentorship to translate military experience into a successful careers. Kennedy is calling for "an aggressive, national effort to help America's former service members put their abilities to work in the STEM fields."



Kennedy

If you need help

Veterans facing difficult financial challenges may be able to qualify for help through the Emergency Solutions Initiative. A \$200,000 federal grant was recently received to help veterans from Potter, Cameron and Elk counties who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Help is available for veterans, regardless of discharge status, for overdue rent, security deposits, temporary rental assistance and case management. More information is available from Lisa Harris at 814-389-5065.



So you need a job . . .

An Office of Military and Veteran Affairs in the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Department is offering help to those who served in the military. Details are available by calling 717-783-1944. Among the office's services is a Transition Guide for Education and Civilian Employment that can help veterans avoid the shady operators who are lurking out there, trying to take advantage of vets seeking to enter the civilian workforce or attend college. Separate guides offer tips for avoiding "pension poachers" who exploit veterans seeking their rightful benefits and services, as well as information on credit options, mortgages and other financial topics.

Potter County Veterans News is a publication of the Potter County Veterans Affairs Department. Copies are available for download from the county's website, pottercountypa.net. For more information, contact Paul Heimel at 814.274.8290, Ext. 203.