



Korean War Casualties Memorialized

A memorial display honoring the eight Potter County men who lost their lives in the Korean War has been donated to the Potter County Historical Society for display at its museum in Coudersport.

Among the artifacts are photographs depicting the eight local war casualties. Also donated were several artifacts collected by the Potter County Veterans Service Committee for the highly



Potter County Historical Society president David Castano (right) accepts portraits of Potter County's Korean War casualties for display and permanent safekeeping at the organization's museum. Potter County Veterans Service Committee members Bill Simpson and Dawn Wooster made the presentation. Among the artifacts are photographs depicting the eight local war casualties (from left): John Goery, Edward W. Duston, Lewis A. Guilds, Paul M. Brown, Robert I. Roberts, Gerald Lattin, Fred J. VanWhy, and Donald Johnson (not shown).

successful 2013 Korean War Veterans Recognition Dinner and Memorial Service, held at American Legion Post 192 in Coudersport.

Officials from the U.S. Dept. of Defense attended that memorable gathering to recall the sacrifices of the fallen soldiers and to thank those who served in the Korean War. Potter County's dinner and memorial service was used as a model for similar observances across the nation.

All Korean War veterans and their families were invited to the dinner. The local committee compiled biographies of the eight casualties and other material for a booklet that chronicled the Korean War and Potter County's involvement. Among its sections is a listing of all Potter County residents known to have served in Korea.

Here's a summary of the eight Potter County men who lost their lives in the war:



Paul M. Brown

Potter County native Paul M. Brown lost his life during combat operations in South Korea on March 2, 1951. Brown was born in 1916 at Marion Center to Lester and Rebecca (Bash) Brown. He lived with foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. James D. Glover, in Wharton

Township. Paul was working for Williamson Pulp and Paper Company in Austin when he was called for service in World War II. After deployment, he went to work for the Department of Forests and Waters and, later, Kress Flagstone Company in Wharton Township. He had also signed up for the inactive reserves and, five years later, he was recalled to active service. Brown sailed for Korea as a sergeant with Company B, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was killed by enemy fire during heavy fighting which ensued as part of an effort to push the North Korean and Chinese forces back above the 38th

Edward W. Duston

Edward W. Duston just missed an opportunity to serve in World War II, but as a 17-year-old he enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1946. Duston, the son of James and Jennie Duston, lived with Mr. and Mrs. Morris Stephenson of Canada Hollow, near Millport, at the time of his enlistment. He was sent to occupied Japan with the Army's 1st Cavalry Division as part of the massive demilitarization effort. After that assignment was completed, PFC Duston re-enlisted for a three-year period and was once again deployed to Japan in February 1950. Soon, orders arrived for the Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment/1st Cavalry Division which he served to join the allied forces in defense of South Korea. PFC Duston was a member of an Ordnance Corps at Taegu, South Korea. On Sept. 5, 1950, after heavy pressure from reinforced North Korean troops, commanders had directed the 7th Cavalry to withdraw. Mud that formed after torrential rains slowed the wheeled and tracked vehicles, exposing the forces to enemy fire. PFC Duston and other soldiers in the Ordnance Corps were killed in action on Sept. 6, 1950. He was 21. PFC Duston is buried in Woodland Cemetery.



John Goery



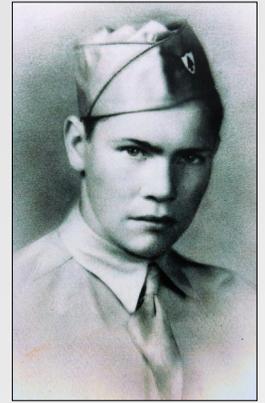
John Goery grew up in Galeton, the son of a railroad blacksmith, Baptist Goery, and his wife, Clara. After graduation from Galeton High School in 1947, he enlisted in the Marines. In June 1951, he began training to become a fighter pilot. In July 1952, he joined VMA 312 "Checkerboard" Squadron at Pyongtaek, Korea. Three weeks later, "Scotty" flew his first combat mission. In October, VMA 312 transferred to the USS Badoeng Strait, based in Japan. Its primary area of operation was in the Yellow Sea off the west coast of Korea around the 38th Parallel. By December, Goery had flown dozens of missions and earned his promotion to first lieutenant. His flight of Dec. 27, 1952, was his 65th and last.

Goery was at the controls of one of the six Strike Flight Kneehigh 4 planes launched to photograph points of strategic value and to bomb a railroad bridge and a supply dump. His jet was hit by enemy fire and he parachuted out, landing in the water, apparently unharmed. A rescue helicopter dropped a rope ladder to Goery, only to have the hoist malfunction. The crew then dropped a rubber raft.

However, the down draft from the blades kept pushing the raft away. A second helicopter arrived and attempted to lower a sling. Goery managed to get himself in the sling, but halfway up that hoist also failed. A second raft was dropped; again the chopper prop wash blew it out of Goery's reach. Eventually, a crash boat arrived, but it was raked with enemy fire, eventually turning back to sea. A helicopter returned after its hoist was repaired, but the crew was unable to locate Goery. In April 1953, Marine Corps Headquarters declared him killed in action, reasoning that Goery could not have survived freezing water temperatures for more than three hours. As a result of the failed attempts, hoists on rescue helicopters were modified. Medics were directed to descend to the water line and secure a pilot to the ladder if he was unable to climb it or if the equipment malfunctioned.

Lewis A. Guilds

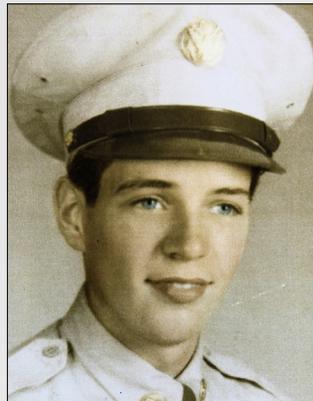
Lewis Adelbert Guilds, the son of Loren D. and Nora Chapman Guilds, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941 and served during World War II with Company I, 26th Infantry. When the U.S. entered the Korean War in 1950, he re-enlisted. Guilds, 28, was promoted to sergeant first class and deployed with the 8th Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division to a region of South Korea that was experiencing some of the fiercest fighting of the war. Guilds' unit arrived to defend the Pusan Peninsula against a massive North Korean invasion force. Against the odds, the allied forces held the line and crushed the offensive, and then moved north. In the Unsan engagement of Nov. 1-2, 1950, east of the North Pyongan province in North Korea, the 8th Regiment was confronted by a massive fighting force made up of the first wave of Chinese troops to fortify the Communist ranks. SFC Guilds was a member of the D Company, which provided weapons support. As fighting intensified, plainly the site could no longer be held. Many men were lost in place, while others withdrew across the Kuryong River. The Chinese established further roadblocks and the battle proved to be the most painful and costly in the proud history of the 1st Cavalry Division. Almost 300 of the men lost at Unsan came from the division. Extensive investigation that included contact with surviving prisoners from the Unsan engagement led the Army to conclude that SFC Guilds did not fall into enemy hands. The Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953. His remains were never recovered. A memorial marker was placed at Ackley Cemetery in Clymer, Tioga County.



Donald T. Johnson

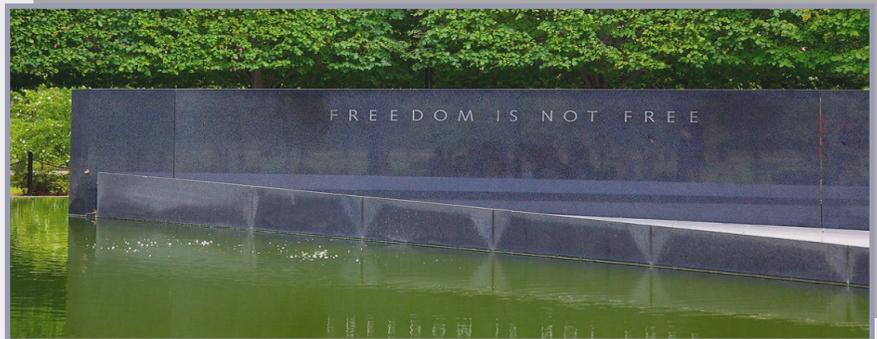
Among the thousands of modest white monuments marking the graves of soldiers interred at Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira, N.Y., is a memorial to Coudersport resident Donald T. Johnson. A native of Pine City, near Elmira, he was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Earle Johnson. The young man affectionately known as "Dutch" had graduated as an honor student at Elmira Free Academy in 1946. His wife, Elsie, was also a Johnson by birth – the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Johnson of Galeton. "Dutch" was employed by Pennzoil Corporation when he was drafted into the Army in May 1951. He was assigned to the 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, known far and wide as the "Wolfhounds" and respected for its courage and perseverance. The 27th Infantry Regiment had been deployed in 1950 to help hold the Pusan perimeter in South Korea as the conflict escalated. The unit saw heavy action throughout the war, serving often as the "fire brigade" – in essence, making first combat contact with enemy forces. Sgt. Donald T. Johnson, known simply as "Don" to his brothers-in-arms, lost his life to enemy fire on July 11, 1952, at the age of 24. Survivors included his parents, four-year-old son Donald and nine-month-old daughter Deborah.

Gerald Lattin



Enlisting in the U.S. Army as a teenager, Gerald Lattin would never see his 20th birthday. He was killed in action while fighting in the Battle of Triangle Hill in North Korea on Oct. 16, 1952. His body was never recovered. PFC Lattin was a member of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. His unit and others were pitted against two large corps of fighters from the People's Republic of China who were defending the critical Iron Triangle in North Korea. PFC Lattin was among the battle's earliest casualties. The Battle of Triangle Hill would prove to be the biggest and bloodiest contest of 1952. The Chinese suffered

11,500 casualties in holding their ground. The high number of U.S., South Korean and UN forces lost in that battle signaled an end to the multi-battalion offensive efforts and provided impetus for peace talks. Despite its impact and scale, the Battle of Triangle Hill is one of the least-known episodes of the Korean War. The Chinese used the battle as a propaganda tool while ignoring the terrible toll on their own forces.





Fred J. VanWhy

After Fred VanWhy and several of his Austin classmates answered their nation's call to service in World War II, they returned to their hometown with the expectation that they would live a typical small-town, family-oriented life. But the VanWhy family has a proud tradition of military service, so when the call to arms came again for Korea, he responded without complaint. Born Oct. 1, 1923, in Austin, he was the son of Fraley and Edith Allison Davenport VanWhy. He attended school in Austin and then

learned electrical welding at the New York Trade School. As a Private First Class with the U.S. Army, he was assigned to the 17th Airborne Division, based in Germany. PFC VanWhy was injured in Belgium and was assigned to the 193rd Glider Infantry in the Ruhr industrial section of Germany. He was awarded the Purple Heart as a result of further injuries sustained during bitter fighting in which the 17th Division helped stem the German counter-offensive.

VanWhy went to work for the Tri-County Rural Electric Association when the call to Korea came. He was deployed before Christmas 1950 as a member of the First Platoon, Company A, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. Weeks earlier, the Chinese entered the war in defense of North Korea. The 24th Division launched a counter-offensive, running into heavy resistance as troops participated in Operation Killer, pushing Chinese forces north of the Han River. It was in those battles that Private Fred J. VanWhy lost his life on Feb. 8, 1951. He was buried in Austin's Forest Hill Cemetery.



Robert Ives Roberts

Two months short of his 20th birthday, Potter County native Robert Ives Roberts lost his life while fighting Communist aggressors in North Korea. Among survivors was his mother, Mrs. Nellie S. Roberts of Austin. Roberts had been educated at the American Legion Scotland School for orphaned children of military veterans before enlisting in the U.S. Army. He was promoted to Private First Class and assigned to the 72nd Medium Tank Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. That unit was instrumental in smashing the Communists' 1951 spring offensive in North Korea. Among the lives that were lost was that of PFC Robert Ives Roberts, on May 28, 1951. He was among crew members of an M4A3E8 Sherman tank, equipped with a 76-mm gun. Circumstances of his death were not released by the Army. His body was recovered and shipped to Austin, where he was buried at Forest Hill Cemetery.

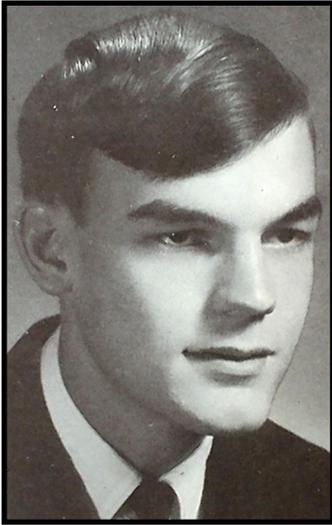


Volunteer corps to clean veterans' graves?



Hundreds of veterans grave markers scattered across Pennsylvania have become difficult, if not impossible, to read. The Potter County Veterans Service Committee is investigating an ambitious plan to rectify the situation. Members are discussing the recruitment of volunteers to "adopt" these headstones and be responsible for their maintenance so that these veterans are never forgotten. Committee members have contacted Andrew Lumish (left), a Florida man who has received national acclaim for launching a local gravestone-cleaning mission, for pointers and will be drafting a proposal to present to cemetery caretakers, veterans' service organizations and potential volunteers. For more information, contact Veterans Affairs Director Bill Simpson at 814-274-8290, extension 210.

Philip Palmatier Jr. Memorial Bridge proposed



Members of the Potter County Veterans Service Committee are working on a plan to have a bridge in Coudersport Borough designated as a memorial for the late U.S. Navy Commander Philip F. Palmatier Jr.

Committee members Bill Simpson, Paul Heimel and Dawn Wooster were approached by members of the commander's family and asked to seek a state designation of the bridge that carries traffic over the Allegheny River on Avenue A in North Coudersport/Rubbertown as the Commander Philip F. Palmatier Jr. Bridge. Representative Martin Causer has been asked to introduce the enabling legislation in the Pa. House of Representatives. Support is also being requested from Coudersport Borough and American Legion Post 192.

Family members chose the North Coudersport bridge because it's close to Commander Palmatier's childhood home. Born Nov. 4, 1950, in Coudersport, he graduated with honors from the local high school in 1968 and was appointed to the United States Naval Academy. He became a career Naval officer and was flying a training mission on Dec. 10, 1990, when his TA-4 Skyhawk collided with another TA-4.

A memorial marker and flagpole can be found near the entrance of the Woodland Cemetery in Hebron Township. A replica of his fighter jet is positioned atop the flagpole.

County renews VA Medical Clinic contract

Potter County Commissioners have renewed their contract with the Bath (N.Y.) VA Medical Center for operation of a VA medical clinic located at Mapleview, just off Rt. 872 in east Coudersport. The center was established to bring services close to the veterans, many of whom had previously been forced to travel to Bath, Erie or other distant locations for basic medical care. The Potter County clinic is staffed by personnel trained to process new enrollments, update patient information, conduct screenings and deliver primary care and/or referrals, depending on each veteran's needs.



Dr. Lori Trostle is the medical director and physician. Also on staff are a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and administrator. The health care team stresses health maintenance and preventative medicine. Blood-draws and prescription services are available at the center. Operating hours are 8 am to 4 pm on Mondays and Thursdays. Veterans interested in being seen at the Coudersport office should call 814-260-9342. Specialty services beyond primary care are available through the Bath center. The clinic is connected to the Bath computer and phone systems, which will increase capabilities for tele-health and computer connections.

News & Notes

Donate vehicles to support veterans

An organization is seeking donated vehicles as part of its mission to provide food, shelter, clothing and other services to military veterans. Cars Helping Veterans resells the vehicles and uses the proceeds to help those in need. The organization offers free pickup and towing. Donors receive a receipt that can be used for a tax deduction. For details, visit the website carshelpingvets.org or call toll-free 1-888-480-8387.



State launches new service



Pennsylvania has joined with the national Network of Care, establishing a website for veterans, military members and their families in an effort to centralize services and benefits. It can be found online at philadelphia.pa.networkofcare.org/veterans. The website carries information on services in all 67 Pennsylvania counties. County veterans service officers, community-based organizations and local and state governments will find the site to be a ready source of information relating to local, state and national social services. The website carries news, personal health records, community calendars, peer support/advocacy, language translations, social networking, services available in each county, employment information, crisis intervention and emergency services, and a health care library that includes conditions, injuries, medications, treatments, assessment tools and online recovery programs. More information is available from Bruce Bronzan at 415-458-5900.

Legion documenting war memorials

American Legion National Headquarters is compiling a directory of war memorials across the nation and seeking help from veterans service organizations in Pennsylvania. Richelle Savant (717-730-9100) is coordinating the project in the Keystone State. Goal is to create an inventory of every Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and War on Terror monuments, memorials and markers. Information that's being sought includes location (with directions), purpose of memorial, date of installation, people responsible for maintenance, and assessment of condition. Photographs are also being requested.



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.