

CHRONICLE

The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018



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Navajo Code Talker, Marine Veteran George B. Willie Sr. remembered for heroic service to the nation

WASHINGTON – Today Navajo Code Talker, Marine Veteran George B. Willie Sr. passed away after a storied life of service to our nation. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps as a 17-year old in 1943.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) honors the heroism, commitment and dedication of Willie and his comrades that made up the elite Navajo Code Talkers.

Willie's wartime service began as a private in the 10th Battalion

of the Second Marine Division as part of a specially chosen Navajo-speaking contingent of Marines. The "Code Talkers" spoke in their Native American tribal language that was effectively a code that the enemy was unable to crack throughout the war despite many efforts to do so.

According to Marine Corps University history of the Navajo Code Talker Program, it was established in September 1942.

"Once the code talkers completed

training in the States, they were sent to the Pacific for assignment to the Marine combat divisions," the MCU history says. "In May 1943...[in a] request for a report on the subject, the various division commanders reported to the Commandant that excellent results had been achieved [by] Navajo code talkers in training and combat situations, and that they had performed in a highly commendable fashion. This high degree of praise concerning the Navajos'

performances prevailed throughout the war and came from commanders at all levels."

"Our nation will continue to honor and pay tribute to the Navajo Code Talkers, such as George Willie Sr., for countless generations to come," said VA Secretary David Shulkin. "Their unique contribution to the Marine Corps and the Army during World War II provides an enduring symbol of pride for the families of these great Veterans and of the nation."

Some Headlines, Some Comments



1 Opossum gets drunk after breaking into liquor store

Big deal – it was all bottom shelf.

2 Viagra factory is turning men in this town into walking stiffs

Real estate prices skyrocket in town.

3 Penn State football recruit charged with robbing a Wawa of \$13,600

Expected to be red-shirted.

4 Famed conductor James Levine accused of sexual abuse; complaints date back to his time in Cleveland

It's clear he didn't use his good looks to charm anyone.

5 Mom wants to stop daughter from opening credit accounts to pay for heroin

Dealers take credit cards?

6 Ohio Wesleyan biologist blasting plants into space

Good idea, but harvesting is going to be a bitch.

7 Trump is considering calling Jerusalem Israel's capital, officials say

Benjamin Netanyahu retaliates: We're considering calling America's capitol Podunk.

8 Steve Bannon battles Republican leaders for the soul of their party

Now this battle ain't gonna last long.

9 Cleveland Clinic raises \$50 million to honor outgoing CEO Toby Cosgrove

Somehow, I can't see Toby on his knees, praying:

A PHYSICIAN'S PRAYER

Lord, Thou Great Physician, I kneel before Thee. Since every good and perfect gift must come from Thee:

I Pray

Give skill to my hand, clear vision to my mind, kindness and sympathy to my heart. Give me singleness of purpose, strength to lift at least a part of the burden of my suffering fellow men, and a true realization of the rare privilege that is mine. Take from my heart all guile and worldliness, that with the simple faith of a child I may rely on Thee.

Amen

MAIL CALL

Happened to be in the library last night where I picked up a copy of the latest Chronicle. I admired the cover photograph of the Veterans Section at Lake View Cemetery, and then I spotted Dad's headstone in the background! Mom is right next to him with her own marker because she also served in the WACs as a nurse. It's a wonderful historic cemetery..

Christine Kriha Kastner



The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.

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Editorial Statement

DD214 Chronicle is committed to its readers: Veterans of every generation and all who love them. The printed newspaper is delivered across northern Ohio without charge: More than 60 libraries, colleges and universities that welcome veteran students, VFW and American Legion posts, city halls, Veteran Administration offices and health care facilities, organizations in support of veterans, advertisers, political offices, and Veteran Service Commissions. DD214 Chronicle also maintains dd214chronicle.com and DD214 Chronicle/Facebook.

The Chronicle would not exist without its advertisers. Make the effort to patronize them.

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Dominion Energy Wants to Talk with You: Job Recruitment Events

Dominion Energy Ohio is hosting four job recruitment information events on January 9 and January 10, 2018. The company is recruiting individuals for Field Metering Services Helper positions. These positions are full-time opportunities and start at \$21.10 an hour. These positions require the following:

- Strong customer service skills
- Desire to learn and perform advanced tasks
- Strong mechanical skills
- Willingness to work overtime, shifts and call-outs
- Valid driver's license
- High School Diploma or GED
- Ability to work outdoors in extreme weather conditions
- Ability to pass a physical assessment and mechanical aptitude test

Interested applicants should consider attending one of the recruitment sessions to meet with supervisors and hiring managers to discuss qualifications. Sessions will be held on the following dates at two separate locations:



Date: January 9, 2018

Session One: 2:00PM-4:00PM

Session Two: 6:00PM-8:00PM

Location: Holiday Inn Akron-West Fairlawn
4073 Medina Road, Akron, Ohio 44333
Akron Recruitment Session Eventbrite

Registration

www.eventbrite.com/e/dominion-energy-recruitment-session-tickets-41346510526

Date: January 10, 2018

Session One: 2:00PM-4:00PM

Session Two: 6:00PM-8:00PM

Location: Holiday Inn Independence
6001 Rockside Road
Independence, Ohio 44131

Cleveland Recruitment Session Eventbrite
Registration

www.eventbrite.com/e/dominion-energy-recruitment-session-tickets-41345785357

*For additional questions please contact
Ruth Rachel Przybojewski at rr.przybojewski@dominionenergy.com
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Women in the Vietnam War: Lynda Van Devanter

By Kristine Meldrum Denholm

Though overlooked in history lessons, 11,000 women were stationed in Vietnam, 90% serving as nurses. One was Lynda Van Devanter, who chronicled her memoirs in *Home Before Morning: The Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1983, 2001.) It was the first published book by a female Vietnam veteran.

Personal narrative drives any story, gives history a face. And no one knows war's face like a nurse repairing the wounded, comforting the dying. What's powerful is in this autobiography, Van Devanter didn't paint herself a hero; instead, she shows her humanness. She was—quite simply—*real* in her book.

Growing up in Arlington, Virginia, and hearing Kennedy's 1961 "no dream unattainable" speech, she understood her generation was "chosen to change the world." In nursing school, Van Devanter and a friend eagerly signed contracts with an Army recruiting sergeant, then were commissioned as 2nd lieutenants in the Army Nurse Corps. She learned how to fire an M-16, set up a field hospital, work emergency tracheotomies-- and mass casualties. Though a returning sergeant told her Vietnam "sucked, don't do it," others assured her as a female she'd never be sent into danger. She still chose Vietnam for service. It was 1969.

As her plane descended into Saigon hours after First Lieutenant Sharon Lane, a 26-year-old Army nurse from Canton, Ohio, was killed by shrapnel, she learned of 6 more Army nurses who died in helicopter crashes; she soon realized medical personnel "were being sent home in body bags."

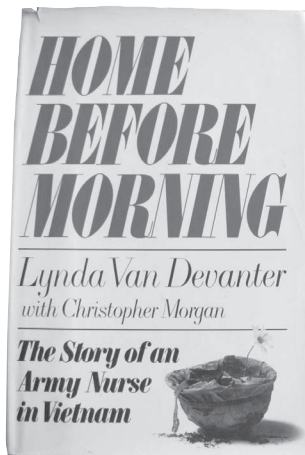
Assigned as a surgical nurse for the 71st Evacuation Hospital in Pleiku, she soon felt the heavy combat and casualties were unending. She detailed the constant barrage of rocket attacks, then the helicopters and call: "Incoming wounded." They readied gurneys, plasma, morphine, prepped for surgery. Then the horror began. Daily.

"No warning could have prepared me for the sheer numbers of mutilated young bodies that copters kept bringing to the 71st," she wrote.

The book is not for the faint of heart. Van Devanter wrote of gruesome injuries: burn cases, Napalm, fragments, infected bullet wounds, bellies destroyed after falling on Viet Cong mines, VC's barbarism, separated body parts. One soldier's prom picture slipped out of his pocket as he died. *Gene and Katie*, it read. 1968.

She wrote the book to tell these families they tried to save their kids, how they held their hands. Gene wasn't forgotten.

The author paced tragedy by stepping out of the OR: cheering for man landing on the moon, and enjoying alcohol, parties and love affairs.



Her no-holds-barred memoirs, "Home Before Morning, the Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam," revealed her life at the 71st Evacuation Hospital in Pleiku and was the basis for the TV show "China Beach."

"When you don't have any sanity around you, you try to find normalcy, comfort, communication with another person on a level removed from the environment of destruction. You want to share moments of happiness," she wrote. Van Devanter was also buoyed by tapes from her parents.

When the year was over—she recalled the elation when they cleared air space—she shared the same harsh homecoming as many male veterans. Dropped off at Oakland Army Terminal to find their own way to San Francisco Airport, "as if you've outlived your usefulness," she hitchhiked.

Instead of rides, she got the finger from a carload, obscenities from another. One threw a carton of trash, hitting her with a soda can. Another passerby taunted: "We don't take Army pigs," then spit on her, calling her a Nazi [expletive.] "What had I done to them?" she wrote. "Didn't they realize those of us who'd seen the war firsthand were probably more antiwar than they were? That we had seen friends suffer and die?"

She stopped revealing her Vietnam service. Instead of questions about medicine in the war, men would ask her who she slept

with in 'Nam. She wore a sweater over her nurse's uniform, hiding her silver bar.

As she tried to readjust, it's here that Van Devanter does not hold back, recounting alcohol abuse, recurring nightmares, PTSD, difficulty in jobs, a marriage and divorce, and engulfing depression.

But what is triumphant in the story arc is the resilience of the human spirit; a VA counselor offered therapy, offering a "structured process for understanding the most difficult experience of my life." Under this umbrella of validation, she began to see how they saved lives.

Writing this book was another way to heal, "to exorcise the Vietnam War from my mind and heart." She learned "war doesn't have to own me; I can own it." She became the founding executive director of the Women's Project of Vietnam Veterans of America, 1979-1984, testifying before Congress for 7,465 women.

She got sober in 1983, married the love of her life in 1984, native Ohioan Tom Buckley (disclaimer: he's my late dad's good friend) and they had a daughter, Molly. She credited Tom, Molly, and stepdaughter Bridgid, with giving her life strength, meaning and love.

Van Devanter Buckley died in 2002, at age 55, from systemic collagen vascular disease, which she attributed to Agent Orange. Though the book was released long ago, it's a compelling read, because history is about the faces...of men and women.

A native Clevelander, Kristine Meldrum Denholm is a writer based in Washington.

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LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED THE HARD WAY

Telling the waiter, on a first date, "Separate checks, please."
Robbing a thrift store.
Buying anything made in Communist Red China.
Believing anything said by a politician.
Buying tomatoes in a supermarket.
Wearing shorts to a wake.

Training your parrot to squawk, "Eat shit and die!"
Leaving a saloon at closing and saying, "I'm fine to drive."
Drawing to an inside straight.
Believing any doctor who says, "You'll feel just a little pinch."
Starting any sentence with, "Well, when I was a kid ..."

Marine Veteran Faced Enemy at Home

By Jerri Donohue

Laura Oluich tapped her reserves of courage years after she left the Marines.

Oluich, who was named Cuyahoga Community College's 2017 Student Veteran of the Year, fled an abusive husband in South Carolina in 2015. She waited until he fell asleep, and then, at one o'clock in the morning, she slipped out with their 9-week old son and her dog. Somehow she also managed to lug a blanket, a diaper bag and a tote stuffed with baby clothes.

Although her husband refused to find a job, he controlled her earnings. She had worked until a week and a half before their son's birth but left with less than \$20. That night, Oluich's sister paid for a hotel room while their father drove from Ohio to retrieve the little family.

In her speech class at Tri-C, Oluich gave a presentation on domestic violence. She explained why women stay with their tormentors.

"Every time he lashes out is a separate memory your brain boxes off in separate instances," she said. "It's

a coping mechanism."

She speculates that the episodes eventually coalesce into the woman's sudden realization that she is mired in an abusive relationship.

While in the Air Force, Oluich's sister had dealt with domestic violence cases. During a visit one month before Oluich's baby was born, she listed the alarming signs she noticed,

and urged her sister to get out of the marriage. Because leaving and its immediate aftermath are the most dangerous time for the victim, she warned the new Mom not to tell her husband if she decided to leave.



"Every time he lashes out is a separate memory your brain boxes off in separate instances."

— Laura Oluich

Although Oluich's husband had never struck her, she realized his abuse was escalating. In addition to verbal attacks, he threw things, punched doors and walls, and wouldn't let her leave the house except to work. Because he spent every dime she earned, she hid small amounts of cash for emergencies. He usually found them.

Today Oluich is glad she followed her sister's advice to leave. She rebuilt her life in Ohio under her maiden name.

In the Marines, she had studied Russian at the Defense Language

Institute in Monterey, California, and then worked as a Russian linguist and analyst. At Tri-C, she is studying sign language and majoring in Deaf Interpretive Services. She will finish an associate degree this spring but hasn't decided where to complete her bachelor degree. Oluich's dream is to land a position in rehabilitation services at a Veterans Administration facility.

Despite working part-time and raising a toddler, Oluich maintains a 4.00 GPA while carrying a full course load. (She's taking seven classes this semester and eight next semester.) Her honors from Tri-C included a proclamation from Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson at City Hall, a plaque from the college and a written tribute from the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

Chronically strapped for time, the single parent allows herself one indulgence each month, the meeting of the Marine Corps League.

"I like being around other Marines," Oluich said. "I really miss that camaraderie."

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or visit www.lorainccc.edu/veterans

or email our office at veterans@lorainccc.edu.



"LCCC was my best choice because I knew there was a military and veterans presence here."

Anna Lupson, Navy veteran and LCCC psychology student who is using her veterans benefits to attend school. She plans to continue her education through LCCC's University Partnership program.



**Lorain County
Community College**

Last to Die in World War II

A book review by JC Sullivan

Stephen Harding is a New York Times bestselling author of eight books. He began kicking around the idea for this one over thirty years ago when he first got

wind of the story of Sergeant Tony Marchione, the last to die in combat in World War II.

Born into a first-generation Italian-American family from

the heavily-Italian, south end of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, his parents, Raffaele Marchione and Emelia Ciancaglini had emigrated from the Abruzzo region of Italy; he from San Buono and she from Scerni. Although born nine miles apart in the same week of June, 1877, they married June 25, 1922 in St. Aloysius Church in Pottstown.

Tony grew up there, graduating from Pottstown High School in 1943. He was a talented guy, already an accomplished design draftsman and trumpeter, playing in the high school band as well as a small group that earned extra cash for them by playing local gigs.

Tony wanted to be a flier from an early age. When World War Two broke out he enlisted in the then-US

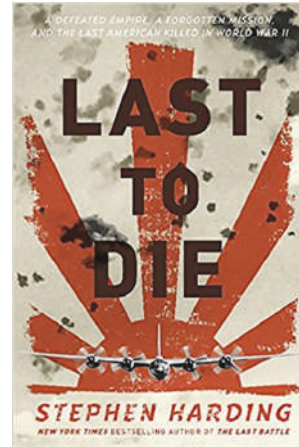
Army Air Force, later to become our U.S. Air Force. Like so many who, then and maybe now, he was pressed into a different Military Occupational Specialty.

On August 18, 1945, three days after the war supposedly ended, he was a gunner/photographer's assistant on a photo reconnaissance flight over Tokyo in a B-32 Dominator from the 386th Bombardment Squadron. A Japanese fighter pilot who feared the plane was on a mission to drop another atom bomb attacked the plane. Marchione was hit

and died on the floor of the aircraft. In Pottstown, his family has never forgotten him.

Sullivan is a U.S. Army veteran who served with the 2nd Armored Division (Hell on Wheels).

He resides in Northfield Village, Ohio.



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VA CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

Our Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) serve as a liaison to the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA). VSO's advise and assist Vets and their family members of their rights and/or obtaining possible benefits through the VA, the State of Ohio and Lorain County.

Services include processing claims for:

- Non-service Connected Pension for Wartime Vets (Aid & Attendance/ Housebound Pension, and Survivors Pension).
- Service Connected Compensation.
- Ohio War Orphans Scholarship.
- Notice of Disagreements & Appeals.

VSO's also submit application for:

- Military Awards and Medals.
- H.S. Diploma for Wartime Vets.
- Upgrading Discharges.
- Requests for Discharge (DD 214).

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 Departs Elyria 8:00 a.m.*1
 Arrives W/P..... 9:15 a.m.*2
 Departs W/P 3: 00 p.m.*3
 Arrives LCVSO..... 4:30 p.m.*3

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Elyria: Admin. Bldg., 226 Middle Ave.

*1 May depart earlier if all riders are present.

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Belgian War Bride Recalls Wartime Romance, Marriage

By Jerri Donohue

From a window in her grandparents' home in Theux, Belgium, Simone Decoun watched an American soldier stagger through knee-deep snow, his weapon slung over a shoulder.

"Oh, no!" she told her sister. "Here comes that good-looking G.I." That morning, the 18-year old

had spotted Corporal Charles Malachosky in the schoolhouse where Americans distributed food to ration-weary villagers.

Charlie Malachosky noticed the stunning teenager, too. He learned her address from another civilian and came calling.

Simone's grandparents, who had

raised Simone and her sister after their mother's death, did not want them to associate with soldiers. But it was January 1945, the later stages of the Battle of the Bulge. Americans were fighting in bitter cold. Simone's grandfather took pity on Charlie and let him come inside.

Thereafter, the Yank visited the family everyday. (He later claimed that Simone helped him cheat when they played cards.) They communicated with help from an Army-issued phrase book and improvised sign language.

Charlie saw that the pretty Belgian was also feisty and cheerful, and Simone realized that her handsome suitor was kind and respectful. By the time the Fifth Armored Division moved on to Holland, the two were in love. Charlie promised to return and marry Simone.

True to his word, he turned up on furloughs and by briefly going AWOL. He had his sister send his baptism papers, necessary for a church wedding, and an engagement ring. He bought satin for Simone's wedding gown, and he studied French.

Meanwhile, Simone worried about her fiancé. As a machine gunner on a half-track, he made an easy target. She often went to a nearby chapel to light a candle for him. One of the nuns eventually greeted her with, "Mademoiselle, you have come to pray for your American."

When the war in Europe ended, Charlie had the points needed to go home, but he volunteered to stay on with the Occupation Army. His disapproving major had delayed the wedding by refusing to sign required papers. In the man's absence, a sympathetic officer finally completed them.



Simone Malachosky

Charlie sailed for the States in the spring of 1946. Simone and their infant daughter followed on the SS *Brazil*, a troop ship carrying war brides.

Her husband's large family gathered in Akron to welcome Simone. The couple initially lived with his mother but soon bought their own home when she accused Simone of breaking things.

Charlie sponsored Simone's grandparents to come to America, and they stayed for several years. Simone got a job and her grandmother babysat the Malachoskys' three daughters. A coworker once triggered Simone's wrath by claiming that all war brides had been prostitutes.

Over the years, the Malachoskys attended many reunions of the Fifth Armored Division and Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, and they returned to Belgium, too. They had been married 69 years when Charlie died in 2014.

Now 90 years old, Simone attests to the health benefits of Belgium's Leffe beer (dark only, please) and enjoys flipping through photographs of her life with Charlie. She happily recalls the first time she saw the curly-haired mustachioed G.I.

"I thought he looked like Clark Gable," she said.

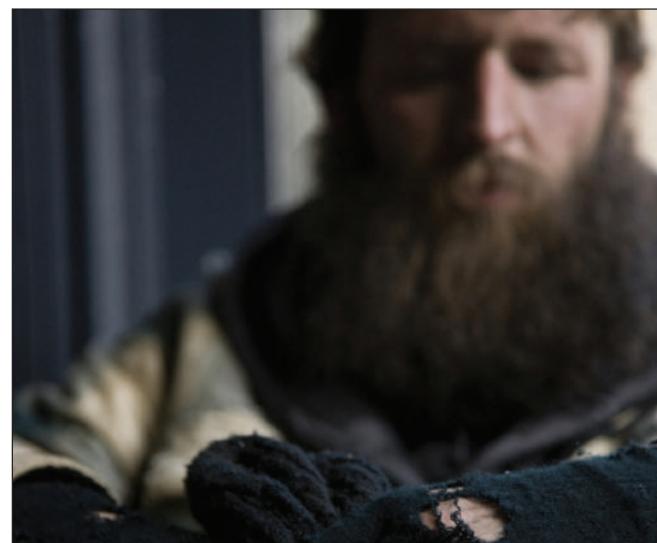


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We encourage you to find out more about the Fisher House program by visiting us online at www.greaterclevelandfisherhouse.org or by calling (440) 377-0067.



THANK YOU
Cleveland

Freshman at Kent or Trooper in Mideast? Trooper!

By Nancy Peacock

By the time Ariane Hawkins graduated from high school in Zanesville, she was already enrolled to enter Kent State University in the fall of 2003. And that might have been the next phase of her life, had she not tagged along with her brothers to the recruiting office.

"Behind my parents back, I expressed interest to the recruiter that I was interested in doing it myself," she said. "I asked if I could call my parents before I signed and they said sure. My parents were not home. My mom keeps bringing up that day: 'If we had been at home, we would have talked you out of it.' So I joined."

Hawkins admits she was looking for something more exciting than freshman year at Kent.

"The appeal of the adventure and the appeal of getting college paid for were calling to me," she said. "I thought why not go experience something crazy and get money for it and then go to college?"

Hawkins signed up for an eight-year contract in the Army Reserves, but spent her first three years active duty.

She was still in boot camp at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri when they announced her unit was going straight to mobilization in Indiana. From there, it was on to Iraq as the second wave of American forces with the Big Red One, 1st Infantry Division.

"The first wave went in and took out the regime," Hawkins said. "In my wave, the Iraqis were still recovering from the shock of what had just happened in their country. By the time we left, they had started getting more creative with their improvised explosives."

Her unit's primary mission was driving fuel trucks that supplied other bases. To keep from getting complacent, her unit rotated jobs every month. On base, they did perimeter guard and gate guard. Off base, they did convoy protection and main line fuel supply.

"It was pretty crazy work," she said. "I felt relatively safe on our base, but I was hyper vigilant when I was out of my base."

She was driving the convoy commander when an IED exploded under



her Humvee. The gunner who normally would have been standing was sitting down to eat and missed the shrapnel that flew up in the explosion. The other two times her unit was attacked, she was on R&R and on leave.

"We were a pretty lucky unit," she said. "We never had any losses due to enemy forces."

Wearing 50 pounds of equipment

in the desert heat was daunting and the lengthy fuel convoys took no restroom breaks. But the stress of being in a war zone was the hardest adjustment.

"A year after my deployment I was still experiencing the shock of it, just trying to calm my body down. Now I feel totally normal but it took a while after for me to settle back into civilian life."

She graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in sociology. But it was her truck driving experience in the Army that helped her land her first research job.

Other service benefits? The VA loan for her first house, the veteran discounts at Home Depot and Lowes, and the free admissions to zoos and museums she uses as a stay-at-home mom with her two small children.

Would she encourage her own children to do a hitch in the service?

"I would be OK with it," she said, smiling. "What I found with myself is that it really isn't the parents' choice."

"A year after my deployment I was still experiencing the shock of it, just trying to calm my body down. Now I feel totally normal but it took a while after for me to settle back into civilian life."

Enlisting was WW II WAC's True Battle

By Jerri Donohue

Louella McIntosh's real battle occurred before she enlisted.

When she graduated from high school in 1941, the Pennsylvania teenager wanted to join the WAVES, but until she turned 21, she needed her parents' permission. They refused, and so she forged her father's signature on the papers.

Unfortunately, the Navy detected her ruse and informed McIntosh's Dad. An Army veteran of World War I, he held a low opinion of women in military service. More importantly, he wanted McIntosh at home to help care for her numerous siblings. The family ultimately numbered 13 children.

"It seemed like everything was put on my shoulders to take care of the kids," McIntosh said. Her two older sisters fled into West Virginia and married at age 15 and 16.



Louella McIntosh

McIntosh's father had tried to keep her out of high school but a truant officer intervened.

"I got to finish high school, but it was a fight all the way through," McIntosh said.

She then received nurse's training through the Red Cross.

On her 21st birthday, McIntosh enlisted in the Women's Army Corps. She went to boot camp in Georgia and then reported to the hospital on the Army airbase in Kearney, Nebraska.

As part of her duties, she greeted

wounded soldiers arriving by plane from both theaters of war, cheerfully calling out, "Where are you's from?"

Hearing her Pennsylvania accent, a double amputee replied, "Oh, thank God! I'm home!" Unbeknownst to McIntosh, the traumatized soldier had refused to speak until then.

"The doctors and nurses congratulated me," McIntosh said. "They couldn't keep him quiet for a while."

The man returned to Pennsylvania. McIntosh eventually encountered him again in the Aspinwall VA facility where her father was hospitalized with black lung disease.

At Kearney, McIntosh worked on a medical ward with patients suffering from pneumonia, sore throats and flu. She took vital signs and administered shots, and for the non-ambulatory ones, she wielded bedpans and gave bed baths.

One day, she injected a patient with penicillin but when she removed the syringe, the needle remained in his

backside. A laughing doctor directed her pull it out with pliers.

One of McIntosh's brothers served in the Pacific theater and another in Europe; she was reunited with them in Pennsylvania after the war.

She met her future husband at the local American Legion post and the couple later moved to Ohio. One of their three sons went to Vietnam with the Marines, and another served in the Army.

McIntosh's husband died shortly before their 46th anniversary.

Children and grandkids gathered from around the country when McIntosh was chosen Grand Marshall of Medina's Memorial Day parade two years ago.

Now 94 years old, the former WAC reflects on the benefits of her military service: work she enjoyed, life-long friendships, and most of all, escape from a life of drudgery.

"I got away from home," she said.

VA Prioritizes Improving Veterans' Access to Pro Bono Legal Services

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), together with the American Bar Association, The Veterans Consortium and National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium, signed a Memorandum of Agreement aimed at improving Veterans' access to free legal services.

Veterans often face stressful legal problems — such as eviction,

foreclosure, child support, or drivers' license revocations — that can affect their ability to gain or maintain employment and housing or focus on medical treatment. In VA's annual Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups survey, legal assistance repeatedly tops the list of homeless Veterans' unmet needs.

"We are encouraging VA Medical

Centers and other VA facilities to engage with their local communities to establish legal clinics and Medical Legal Partnerships to address Veterans' legal needs that threaten their health and well-being," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "By signing this agreement, we are documenting a shared commitment to better facilitate Veterans' access to legal services."

Currently, VA hosts at least 165 free

legal clinics in its VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers across the country by partnering with external, legal-service providers, such as local bar associations, legal-aid organizations and law school clinics.

More information on VA's coordination of legal services for Veterans at VA facilities may be found at www.va.gov/OGC/LegalServices.asp.

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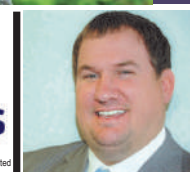
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VA Needed Only Three Years to Create VA ID Cards

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available for Veterans — yet another action honoring their service.

This has been mandated through legislation since 2015 to honor Veterans, and today's rollout of the ID card fulfills that overdue promise.

Only those Veterans with honorable service will be able to apply for the ID card, which will provide proof of military service, and may be accepted by retailers in lieu of the standard DD-214 form to obtain promotional discounts and other services where offered to Veterans.

"The new Veterans Identification Card provides a safer and more convenient and efficient way for most Veterans to show proof of service," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "With the card, Veterans with honorable service to our nation will no longer need to carry around their paper DD-214s to obtain Veteran discounts and other services."

The VIC provides a more portable and secure alternative for those who served the minimum obligated time in service, but did not meet the retirement or medical discharge threshold. Veterans who served in the armed forces, including the reserve components, and who have a discharge of honorable or general (under honorable conditions) can request a VIC.

To request a VIC, Veterans must visit vets.gov, click on "Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card" on the bottom left of the page and sign in or create an account.

Veterans who apply for a card should receive it within 60 days and can check delivery status of their cards at vets.gov. A digital version of the VIC began online last month.

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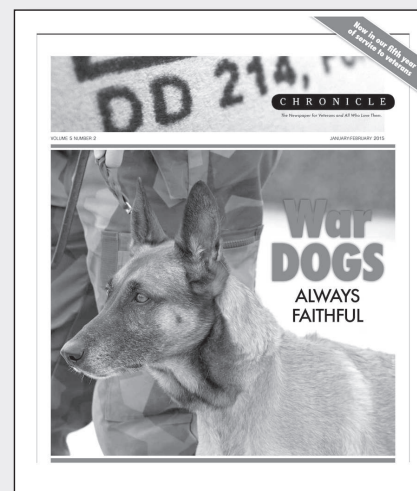
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Robert P. Madison

CLEVELAND'S ROBERT P. MADISON FOUGHT FOR COUNTRY, EQUALITY; AN HONORABLE MAN

By Barry Goodrich

Madison would go on to become Western Reserve's first African American graduate and the first licensed black architect in the state of Ohio. Today, Robert P. Madison International Inc. is one of the country's top architectural firms, collaborating locally on

such projects as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, FirstEnergy Stadium and the Great Lakes Science Center.

Madison himself designed the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, a project near and dear to his heart. While in Senegal, he was deeply moved after

seeing the gangplanks that led to slavery ships.

"During the war, we had to be quicker and more alert, better than anyone else," said Madison of his unit. "As my mother used to say, we had to be twice as good to be equal."

As a member of the U.S. Army's African American 92nd Infantry Division during World War II, Robert P. Madison fought two wars – one for his country and another for his dignity.

Madison's unit, often referred to as the Buffalo Soldiers (a group of black soldiers first known for their bravery during the American-Indian wars), was segregated from the Army's other units. During training at Fort Huachuca, Arizona and Fort Benning in Georgia, Madison and his fellow soldiers were not allowed in the same barracks as the white soldiers and had to ride in separate trucks.

"We were traveling on a troop train in Virginia and stopped in a town but we were not allowed off the train," remembers the 93-year-old Madison. "We had to wait until the train went into the woods before we could get off and relieve ourselves."

Madison, a graduate of East Tech High School, joined up with the ROTC program at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he was studying to become an architect.

In September, 1944, his 92nd Infantry unit was sent to Italy, where they would soon liberate the town of Lucca. "The white soldiers had told the villagers the black monkeys were coming," he said. "But they came out and greeted us as heroes. That was the turning point in our morale."

Following a Christmas celebration in December, 1944, Madison's driver was too hung over to drive so the officer took his Jeep out on his own. He ended up being blown out of the Jeep when it was struck by a German artillery shell, receiving shrapnel in his stomach and ankle. Soldiers from an outpost just 100 yards away would save his life.

"That shell hit the side of the Jeep where I should have been sitting," Madison said. "And if it had missed, the Germans would have been waiting for me right down the road."

Following the war, Madison was told he could not enroll at Western Reserve University (Case Western Reserve today) in Cleveland. He did not accept that verdict lightly. Madison returned to campus and appeared before the school's dean of admissions, this time wearing his Army uniform and Purple Heart medal.

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CHANGED LIVES

The Metanoia Project has been helping shelter-resistant homeless men and women since it was established in 2008 using the principles of Dorothy Day's radical hospitality. Each year from November through April, the first floor of St. Malachi School is transformed into a hospitality center where men and women have the opportunity to eat, sleep safely in a warm space, and take advantage of the many services that The Metanoia Project offers its guests to help them put their lives back together.

One of the most important services offered is the opportunity to participate in The Courage to Change Program, facilitated by Metanoia



Co-Founder and Program Director, Carl Cook, who said, "We meet people exactly where they are at, and when they are ready, we walk with them to help them improve the quality of their lives as they focus on core issues and often, the development of new values." Carl Cook has a real passion for Metanoia and his heart lies in serving and giving back. He sees the changes in people take root every day as they regain their self-reliance. Carl has worked with hundreds of men and women who have participated in this program, many of whom

It was a joyful celebration for Courage to Change graduates Michael Schneider, Ebony Croom, Carl Cook (Program Director) and Mary Travers.

now have been reunited with their families, have their own homes, and for many, steady employment.

Recent program graduates shared their thoughts on how Metanoia has helped them. Mary and Ebony described themselves as loners, and both suffered from illness. Life improved for these single moms who were inspired by their children to help them through the hard work the program calls for. "There definitely is a spiritual foundation that runs throughout the program – and it helps you find yourself again." Ebony added, "The people in the program are like a family, and together we help each other with the pain we have in our lives, and help each other as we find a new faith, and hope." Graduate Michael Schneider added,

"Having that strong base helps us to learn to deal with practical issues like finding permanent housing and a job. It saved my life."

"Metanoia" literally means a reversal in thinking, and The Metanoia Project does look differently at their guests as they attempt to develop personal relationships with them, and also helps their guests to look differently at themselves, too.

Megan Crow, Executive Director, states, "We are very proud of the work that we do here by helping people in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance. We all wish to thank Community West Foundation for their continued support and belief in the work that we do. Thanks to this wonderful partnership we are changing lives for a brighter future."

Dominion Energy Awards \$50,000 to Cuyahoga Community College to Support Veterans' Educational and Employment Efforts

Dominion Energy has presented a \$50,000 grant to the Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Foundation of Cleveland, part of an overall \$550,000 awarded to eleven nonprofit organizations providing essential support services to active duty, veterans and military families, in seven states served by the company. The Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, the company's philanthropic arm, administered the veterans' grants.

"Many of our brave servicemen and servicewom-

en return to civilian life only to struggle with employment, financial hardships, housing or health issues," said Hunter A. Applewhite, president of the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation. "These grants will help to strengthen programs that provide an important safety net for veterans and their families seeking employment, shelter, medical care and more."

The selected programs offer a variety of community-based services – from specialized workforce and financial training,



Tracy Oliver, Director, Media & Local Affairs, Dominion Energy Ohio, Matthew Miller, Manager, Veterans Program Services at Tri-C, Dr. Donna Imhoff, President, Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus, Jennifer Kudla, Director of Development, Tri-C

to adaptive sports, family retreats, housing and transportation. Dominion Energy recognized Tri-C for its veterans' initiatives and military community

outreach programs, including job fairs and workshops on accessing benefits.

"We appreciate the long-term partnership that Dominion Energy Ohio has shared with Cuyahoga Community College," said Dr. Alex Johnson, president of Tri-C. "This gift in particular will serve thousands of veterans and their families as they turn to Tri-C for high-quality education and workforce training during the transition back to civilian life."

Since 1973, Tri-C's Veterans Education Access Program has provided support services to eligible veterans interested in pursuing

their first college degree. Tri-C helps veterans transition into student life with assistance in preparatory coursework completion, college access and academic skills development, all leading to graduation and/or transfer to a four-year school.

The Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation received proposals from 60 nonprofit organizations for this competitive grant program. Dominion Energy employees who also are veterans participated in the final selection.

Dominion Energy is active in the recruitment and support of veterans in its workforce, as well as in the community. The company is a founding partner in the national Troops to Energy Jobs program, which helps military members find rewarding careers in the energy industry. Currently, one in five, or 20 percent, of new hires at Dominion Energy is a veteran, and about 11 percent of the compa-

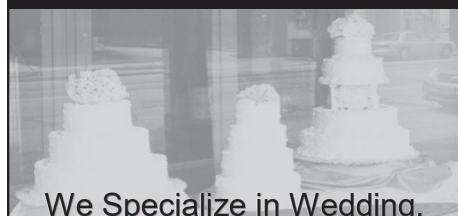
ny's more than 16,000 employees are veterans.

"We have found that veterans possess many of the skill sets we seek in our workforce, including safety consciousness, civic mindedness and a strong work ethic," notes Jeff Murphy, vice president and general manager—Ohio & West Virginia Distribution Operations, Gas Infrastructure Group.

Dominion Energy (NYSE: D), headquartered in Richmond, is one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy. The Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation is dedicated to improving the physical, social and economic well-being of the communities served by Dominion Energy. The Foundation supports nonprofit causes that meet basic human needs, protect the environment, promote education and encourage community vitality.

For more information, visit the company's website at www.dominionenergy.com.

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Female Truck Driver Traveled Rough Road - With Good Companions

By Jerri Donohue

When the 762nd Transportation Company deployed in 2003, Army reservist Aneta Mullins took her turn at the wheel during 10- and 12-hour shifts. Like her driving partner, she slept on a cot beneath the trailer of their semi during long hauls, and she kept her M-16 with her all the time.

Gradually Mullins earned the respect of other soldiers in a male-dominated MOS.

"The first six months I proved myself," she said. "I didn't ask for help or shy away from any jobs." She was promoted to sergeant during her deployment.

Mullins was aware of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military.

"But I was with really good people, a really good platoon," she said.

While stationed at Camp Navistar on the border of Kuwait and Iraq, the company's 20 women could have occupied a females-only tent. Instead, they opted to remain with their respective co-ed squads.

Mullins said she was realistic in her



expectations. She didn't object to Playboy pin-ups and conversation other women would find offensive.

"As long as it wasn't about me or to me, I didn't care what they talked about," Mullins said. "I didn't disrupt how they do things and so I think they accepted me."

The company hauled supplies, vehicles and ammunition in convoys that could include 60 vehicles.

When on mission, the drivers sometimes left Camp Navistar for 2-week stretches or longer, travel-

ing from morning to dusk before stopping inside the gates of an American camp. Some of their destinations had good chow halls and hot showers; others did not.

"It's just like camping," Mullins said. "Hence, I never camp now."

At Easter 2004, Mullins was at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) when insurgents attacked.

"We were under siege," she said. "Mortars were coming in and they [the enemy] were trying to come over the walls."

Mullins had trained as a combat lifesaver.

"Convoys were getting hit outside the gate," she said. "When they could actually get into the base, I was helping treat the wounded."

Because insurgents had blown up bridges, Mullins's group was stuck at the airport for 17 days. The trucks finally left on tempo-

rary bridges constructed by Army engineers.

Her deployment delayed the reservist's wedding by a year. She married her patient fiancé, another veteran, when she returned to the States. Mullins stayed in the Reserves until 2008. She credits the Army for her ability to calmly multitask under pressure in her job as a police dispatcher.

"Whatever I do on the civilian side is nothing compared to the situations we were in in Iraq," she said.

Currently the president of Medina County Women of the Military, she enjoys comparing her experiences with those of older female veterans.

"It's interesting to see how much things have changed," she said. "It's also interesting to see what has not changed."

Mullins encourages female veterans from all branches to attend the group's social hour at Dragon Buffet in Medina on Saturday, January 27 at 11:30 and to visit www.facebook.com/MedinaCountyWomenoftheMilitary.

A BUDDING CAREER

Nikki Barrett earns certificate in landscape contracting to build professional credentials

Nikki Barrett spent the past eight years tending to a community garden in her Cuyahoga Falls neighborhood, adding beauty and a dash of color to the corner of Curtis Avenue and Anderson Road.

Look for her work to be more widespread in the future following her studies at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C).

The 49-year-old U.S. Air Force veteran graduated in December with a certificate in landscape contracting through the College's Plant Science and Landscape Technology program. Consider it a stepping-stone on a new career path.

"I always loved gardening," Barrett said, "but Tri-C showed me how to turn that into a career."

She enrolled at the College in 2016 after spending years at home raising her two sons, Jack (15) and Joseph (13). Barrett said she immediately found a family atmosphere within the program at Eastern Campus.

Within a year, she became part of the team representing Tri-C at the National

Collegiate Landscape Competition. The annual competition attracts the top horticulture and landscape schools in the country.

Barrett helped Tri-C place first among community colleges and fifth overall at the 2017 competition, held in March at Brigham Young University in Utah.

"We have a nationally recognized program," she said. "I don't think people realize what's here."

Barrett will compete again in 2018 as she continues her studies at the College this spring with classes such as soil technology and arboriculture.

She is working toward an Associate of Applied Science degree and another graduation day.

Her long-term goal is to work within Northeast Ohio's booming greenhouse industry.

"Tri-C has provided me an opportunity to pursue a career I really like," Barrett said. "There are many, many



opportunities in this field. I know there are good jobs out there that I'm going to be prepared to take."

EDUCATION AS AN ART FORM

Pedro Torres moved from Mexico to Cleveland's west side with his family in 2001. The youngest of six kids, he always had an artistic bent. "I loved drawing and painting," he said.



Torres attended Max S. Hayes High School, where his art teacher helped secure a scholarship for him to attend the Cleveland Institute of Art. That act

inspired Torres to become a teacher himself.

The 25-year-old graduated from Tri-C in December with an Associate of Arts degree and plans to enroll in John Carroll University's education program in the spring. He hopes to become an art and Spanish teacher in Cleveland's

inner city.

"I'd like to be the type of teacher that inspires students and helps them through life's inevitable uphill battles," he said.

Torres applied to Tri-C in 2011 after graduating high school but ultimately chose to join the U.S. Army. His experiences as part of the 173rd Airborne in Italy equipped him with valuable skills and a drive to achieve that led him back to the College four years later.

He credits Tri-C's abundance of resources and supportive instructors for helping ensure his success over the past two years. He took all of his classes at the Western Campus in Parma.

"Small classes and a real community culture at Tri-C made me the student I am," Torres said. "Having access to programs like TRIO and Hispanic Council kept me focused, and I was never without a mentor."

Though Torres has little time to devote to art these days, a sponsorship awarded through Tri-C's Hispanic Council allowed him to create a piece for the *Doors to My Barrio* traveling art exhibit this past summer. The project gave local artists the opportunity to show pride in their Hispanic heritage.

The Long Run: Rocky Bleier's Inspirational Journey

By Barry Goodrich

In 1968, Rocky Bleier was drafted twice -- in the 16th round by the Pittsburgh Steelers and in the first round by Uncle Sam.

"I was walking out of a meeting in training camp and the head coach Bill Austin was standing there with an envelope," remembers Bleier. "It was my 1A classification letter."

By May of 1969, Bleier found himself in Vietnam as a member of the 4th Division, 31st Regiment of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

In August of that year, Bleier was wounded twice in Heip Duc when he was shot in the thigh and sustained a serious injury to his lower leg and foot from an enemy grenade.

"The grenade hit my CO in the back and rolled towards where I was," said Bleier. "I jumped out of the way but it blew up through my right foot."



Bleier's improbable success story defies description. From the apartment above his father's family bar in Appleton, Wisconsin

to the University of Notre Dame to Vietnam to Pittsburgh, his saga has been filled with enough achievement, despair and triumph for several lifetimes and was immortalized in the 1980 ABC movie *Fighting Back: The Rocky Bleier Story*.

Today, the 71-year-old Bleier operates Rocky Bleier Inc. in Pittsburgh.

He is a sought after motivational speaker whose clients have included AT&T, Time Warner and Alltel and also has a construction firm specializing in VA work.

Recuperating from his wounds in Tokyo, Bleier was told not to expect to play football again as his foot had lost most of its strength and flexibility. "That sucked some hope out of me at that moment," he said. "A couple of days later I got a postcard. It read Team's not doing well. We need you...Art Rooney.' That note gave me hope."

During his first training camp back with the Steelers in 1970, Bleier suffered through practices. "Nobody ever expected me to come back and play, not even the players," he said. First-year head coach Chuck Noll was forced to cut Bleier from the team. "I was emotionally devastated," said Bleier.

For the next two years, Bleier

underwent a rigorous training regimen and, by 1974, he was in the Steelers' starting backfield. "When I got back from Vietnam I weighed 163 pounds. By 1973, I weighed 218 pounds and was benching 465 pounds and squatting 600 pounds." At the time of his retirement in 1980, Bleier had played on four Steelers' Super Bowl teams, rushing for 3,865 yards and 25 touchdowns.

Bleier says his athletic background helped him during his adjustment to Army life as well as his recovery from the injuries that earned him a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. "Athletes can compartmentalize. You don't feel sorry for yourself and you don't think about getting hurt. I was very coachable...when a sergeant told me to do something I did it."

When asked about his remarkable life, the personable Bleier laughed, saying "I've been in the right place at the right time."

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