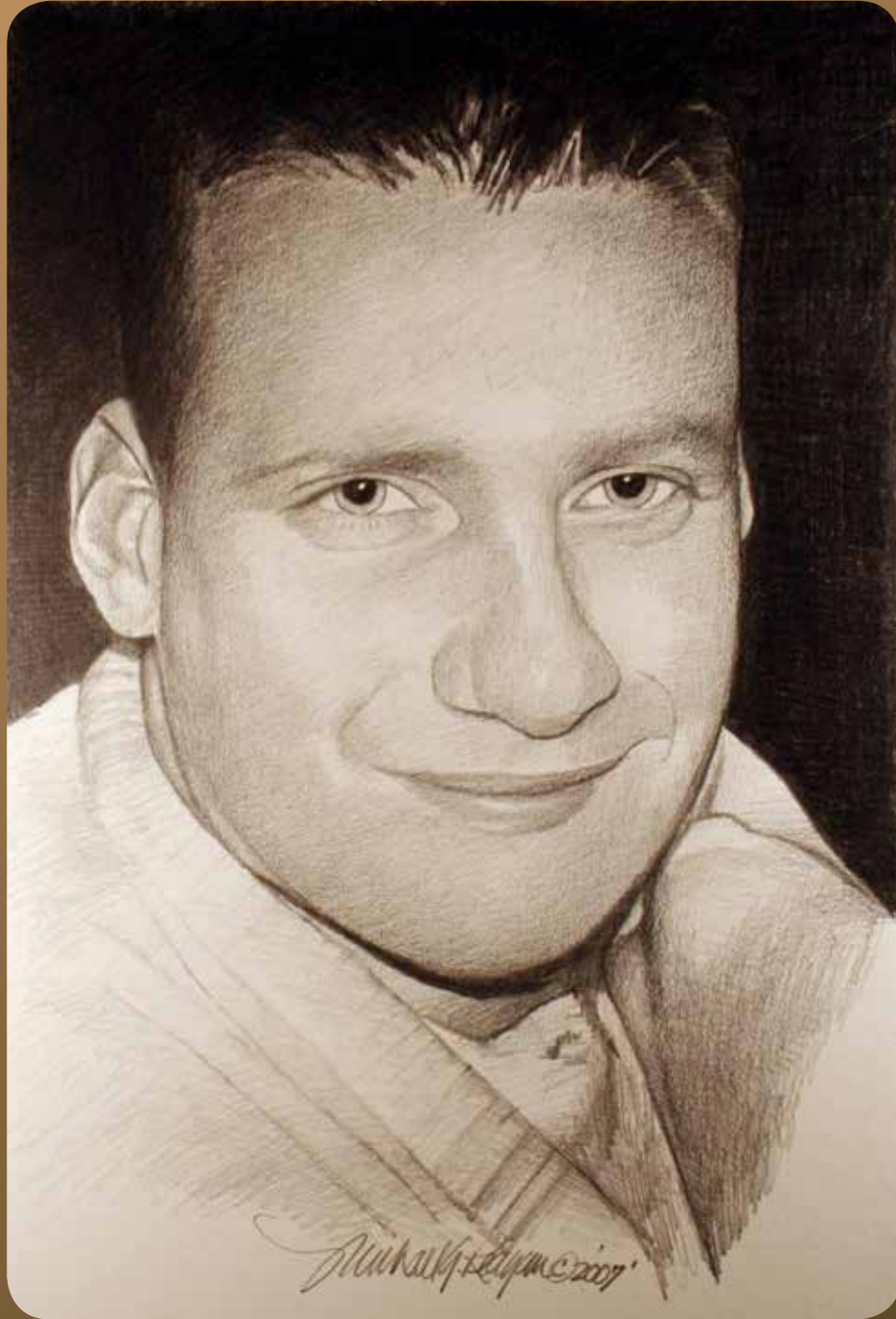


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see pages 17 and 18 for honoring Andy Nowacki

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The Only Thing Constant Is Change

Change is supposedly healthy, or so I understand! The mantra above says to “Stand At Ease!”

That’s not so easy sometimes! In the last few months, we at *DD214 Chronicle*, have gone thru some change that has been crucial to the strength and energies of our publication. We were in the position to either idle, or forge full speed ahead. We have chosen the latter.

Our longtime publisher/editor, Mr. John Tidyman has gone through a skirmish with his personal health and wellbeing, and is, I am very pleased to report, rehabilitating nicely, with much better days ahead.

This column has always been his, as Publisher, and he has asked me to take the reins of our paper



as of this edition. Hence, my thoughts. John will continue writing and be so very valuable in keeping us on the right track!

Having been with John, his wife Anna, and our formidable crew for the last year, with pride in what we do, I accepted the assignment of Publisher. Although the task seems monstrous to me, in addition to Sales Management, we are sending this very special May/June edition to our printer.

Mr. John H. Tidyman will join, Mr. Terence J. Uhl as Publisher Emeritus, and the *DD214 Chronicle* will remain and flourish as “The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them”

Taking a deep breath, and standing at ease, we thank you for your readership and support!

Memorial Day

*By Rev. Andrew Rerko
Elmwood Church of the Risen Christ*

Since the last Memorial Day, we have become grayer, maybe heavier, probably grouchier. But we’re inhaling and exhaling, enjoying the occasional glass of whiskey, and hoping to see the Indians win it all before we’re planted.

We enjoy Memorial Day for lots of reasons. Early in the day we watch parades and listen to men and women talk about the country and those who fulfilled their duty on our behalf. Those who never came home. Those whose last breaths were taken on foreign soil.

A few years ago, I watched The Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. The ceremony was moving and impressive. The Guards were spit-shined, precise, and sharply creased.

As I was fascinated by The Guards, I looked at the Tomb of the Unknowns and wondered about their families, friends, classmates, sweethearts, and fellow troops.

Every war is pockmarked with tragedy. If losing a family member to war scars the heart, that horrible and never-ending pain is made worse by not knowing.

One of those Unknowns left home. Smiling as he said goodbye, turned and began the great adventure of his life. Wrote a few letters home, each one optimistic and hopeful. The letters stopped. Frantic prayers followed. An eerie quiet permeated the house. The tragic news wasn’t far behind.

I think of the bones in The Tomb. The bones

belong to men whose skins were black, white, or a combination. Christians, Jews, Muslims, and all others, and atheists.

On Memorial Day, we think of the many, many thousands of troops who took their last breath in service to our country. But the huge number of those killed in action overwhelms me. I cannot think of hundreds of thousands of deaths.

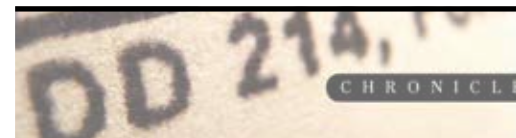
I can think of only one at a time. So off it is Ravenna to stand at foot of a veteran’s grave. I read a headstone and try to imagine his life. I know he was young and a Marine. He always will be. Was he engaged? Married? A father? Did every nephew and niece jump for joy when he was coming to visit?

He was young; his headstone says he was only 24 when his heart stopped beating. Twenty-four? Battlefields are for the young and courageous. They are our killing grounds.

Killing grounds have always been with us. The price we pay is always high. Lives lost to all sorts of weapons: booby traps, small arms, artillery shells, disease, hand grenades, bayonets, carpet bombings.

When a young trooper breathes his last, the pain and suffering end. For those who knew and loved, the heartbreak begins and, in many ways, never ends.

On this Memorial Day, I’ll go and visit the grave of another soldier who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Maybe the visit will end as it did last year: a prayer for him and those who loved him.



VOLUME 11 NUMBER 3

*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 to more than 500 locations: 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.
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REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN



Would you HELP our Korean War Veterans Association
 (KWVA) memorialize 1,822 Ohio veterans Killed In Action during the Korean War by engraving their names on the 16 blank black granite panels at the Ohio Veterans Memorial Park in Clinton Ohio?
 For just \$30 per name we can achieve this with your help so those Korean War Veterans who are 87 to 95 can see this accomplished.
 Please mail your donation to KWVA Chapter 138, PO Box 4788, Akron, Ohio 44310.

The KWVA Tax Exempt number is 14-1671031.



Cpl Joshua Harmon Pets to Vets Program

Lake Humane Society has recently launched the Cpl Joshua Harmon Pets to Vets program. The Cpl Joshua Harmon Pets to Vets program is part of a compassionate mission to protect animals and build connections between pets and people. This program will focus on meeting the needs of pet owners who are veterans, training volunteer veterans to work with shelter animals and offering visits to veterans in their home.

Cpl Joshua Harmon was a U.S. Army Soldier from Mentor, OH and served as a Combat Medic attached to the Scouts Sniper Platoon and received the Army Medal of Commendation of Valor for performing extraordinary life-saving measures. Additionally, Cpl Harmon was awarded the Combat Medical Badge and is a Bronze Star recipient. When returning from a mission in Iraq on August 22, 2007, Joshua, along with thirteen fellow soldiers, lost their lives when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Multaka, outside of Kirkuk. The Pets to Vets program was named after Joshua because of his lifelong love of animals.

Pets are a great comfort and stress reliever to many people and this program is a way to connect veterans with shelter pets through volunteer visits, fostering and adoption.

Pet services being offered to veterans include Auggie's Pet Food Pantry, a pet wellness clinic and TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) services. Auggie's Pet Food Pantry is open the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 1:00 PM-3:00 PM and the 1st Saturday of each month from 9:00 AM-11:00 AM at Lake Humane Society, located at 7564 Tyler Blvd. A driver's license or other form of ID is required to receive assistance. Appointments are not necessary.

The Pet Wellness Clinic provides low cost veterinary services such as annual tests and vaccinations. The TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) program provides spay/neuter services for people with feral cat colonies on their property. The cost of TNR is

\$25 and includes spay/neuter service, ear tipping, rabies vaccine and FVRCP vaccine. Additional services upon request include FELV/FIV Snap test, topical flea treatment and tapeworm injection. To schedule an appointment for the wellness clinic or TNR services, please email scheduling@lakehumane.org or call 440-951-6122 X116.

Lake Humane Society also offers special adoption rates with no administrative fees to veteran adopters. Additionally, all adopters of Senior animals are eligible to purchase discounted medications for age related illnesses for the duration of the pet's life from Lake Humane Society. Lab work for age related illnesses will also be available at a reduced cost.

While Covid has affected the ability to launch the pet visiting portion of the Cpl Joshua Harmon Pets to Vets program, Lake Humane Society is actively seeking veteran volunteers who may be interested in being trained to bring a shelter pet to another veteran's home for regular visits. Pets are a great comfort and stress reliever to many people and this program is a way to connect veterans with shelter pets through volunteer visits, fostering and adoption.

The Cpl Joshua Harmon Pets to Vets program is an important community resource for veterans in Lake County. In addition to offering reduced fee services, it is important to support veterans who may be feeling isolated and lonely. The Companion Program will directly connect veterans who have had similar life experiences and open the door for conversation.

For more information on the Pets to Vets program, please visit our website at www.lakehumane.org or contact Ann Loveless, USA Retired, at pets2vets@lakehumane.org or by calling 440-951-6122.

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Delivering Restorative Energy to our Warriors

Bill Royer's story of service, crafted in song, shared in tribute

When Bill Royer, BG's Project Sales Manager, accepted an invitation to a fund-raising event at Avon High School, he didn't quite know what he'd be walking into. It was there, in that echoey school building, where Bill first heard of "Project D.R.E.W."

Earlier that year, several veterans were paired with musicians to translate their stories into song. The two-day program, Project D.R.E.W., gave them the opportunity to lay out everything—the good, the bad, the ugly—to an unassuming songwriter and hear it played back in front of a small audience. The Project D.R.E.W. alumni were now recounting that experience to the crowd gathered at Avon High School—sharing how it felt to pull something cohesive out of a bank of memories swirling with hardship, camaraderie, difficult goodbyes, and glimmering moments of joy. Standing at that fundraiser, hearing about other veterans who'd relinquished their stories and let their words sing out across an audience, it wasn't as if the thought of participating in Project D.R.E.W. hadn't crossed Bill's mind. But thinking back to the last time he raised a hand to volunteer, he decided against it. "That's how I ended up in 'Nam," he jokes, "I volunteered."

When Bill was drafted into the Army, he was twenty years old. It was 1967. He had just bought a Lyman boat for no particular reason, was making a good living off construction work, had a girlfriend, a Harley, a fire engine red Chevy—the whole kit and caboodle.

By the time Bill completed basic training and made it through another eight weeks in the airless heat of Fort Polk, Louisiana, the life he left in Cleveland looked a lot different: His dad sold the car, the boat, the motorcycle; his girlfriend dumped him; he didn't even get to make the first payment on his Chevy. He was, as he puts it, "0 for 4." Needless to say, when Bill was deployed to Panama, a place he'd never heard of, he was eager for



Project D.R.E.W. was founded to honor the legacy of Special Forces Captain Drew Ferguson. D.R.E.W. is an acronym that uses his first name to capture our mission: Delivering Restorative Energy to our Warriors. Drew was deeply passionate about music and on several occasions, made anonymous donations to Music on a Mission, a unique non-profit in his hometown. After Drew passed away, the Executive Director of Music on a Mission, Marilyn Zeidner, came up with the vision for Project D.R.E.W. to honor his legacy of service and love of music.

change, something to distract from the rubble he left behind.

A few months after the fund-raising event, Bill walked up to a white barn with an electric guitar mounted to its door front. Inside of Carnegie Hall, Bill stood among the wives, mothers, husbands, and children of other service members, listening to the heroes' choir for the first time. He heard the haunting melodies of the brave and the broken, the slow strums of the forgotten. He watched the singers croon to the pain of estranged lovers and Purple Hearts and felt the guitars vibrate in celebration of the ones who got a second start, in remembrance of the ones who never made it home.

Once the thrumming stopped and the applause died down, Project D.R.E.W. Co-Founder, Marilyn Zeidner, approached Bill with an inquisitive look: "Are you

ready to do this?"

"What," he motioned to a group of veterans, "take their picture?"

"No. Are you ready to do this?"

In the heat of the moment, with the woman who'd orchestrated the event standing before him, waiting for a response, Bill relented. Once the evening had settled and he was alone with his thoughts, he returned to their conversation: "Oh man," he said out loud, "What did I commit to?"

A couple months later, he opened his email to a message waiting in his inbox. It was from Marilyn. The dates were set for the Leap Year weekend. Bill accepted his fate with the same grace he displayed nearly 50 years before, when he packed his life into a rucksack, headed out to basic training, and didn't look back.

Bill's last stop in military training was unofficially known as "Tigerland." The lush, jungle-like vegetation, on top of Louisiana's

notorious heat, made Fort Polk the perfect grounds for assimilating a Southeast Asian climate. As soon as Bill stepped foot onto Tigerland, he saw the signs reading, "Home of the Combat Infantry for Vietnam" all over the place. When he received orders to report to Panama instead, he should have felt a sense of relief. At least, initially.

The old canal was stinking hot and uneventful. Whenever Bill thought about the next 18 months at his station, he became restless: "I felt like I was playing Army." But there was also his brother to think about. Only a couple years older than him, married and with a kid. It struck him that if he volunteered, maybe his brother wouldn't have to.

"You don't want to do that," his Commander warned.

Bill stood with staunch determination.

"No," the Commander retorted, "You don't want to go there."

Bill's head was filled with apprehensive thoughts as he approached the door to Carnegie Hall. After all, he was about to squeeze a lifetime of personal experiences into a few hours of conversation with a perfect stranger and trust that the story he hoped for would be delivered.

"Ever hear of Alex Bevin?" asked Marilyn. "Sure, I've heard of him," Bill assured her, "'Skinny Little Boy from Cleveland Ohio' was one of his big songs."

Bill and Alex hit it off immediately. Two Cleveland boys, brought up in the same era. They'd visited the same spots and basked in the same gilded image of the city.

The last time Bill was matched with another Clevelander, he was trapped in a canopy of green. The commanders made it a point of asking each arriving soldier where they were from. That's how Bill met Jimmy. The two connected immediately, each representing for the other a piece of home. But the game

Continued on next page

To Be a Soldier

Bill Royer

Continued from previous page
they were playing was deadly and didn't wow with a reset.

As the unit's Point Man, Bill slinked ahead of the Infantry line, gauging where to shoot next, One night, the unit was ambushed. Before the ringing in his head subsided, Bill turned to see his best friend lying face down on the ground. From that point forward, it was all about survival: "We all survive, we all go home."

Bill told Alex all of this, of course. The local legend was a good listener. Even so, a piece of him wondered how Alex could turn fervent scribbling into a song. And all within the space of 24 hours.

After Bill's tour of duty, he put on civilian clothes for the first time in months and started the long journey back home. He struggled for some time to find peace, often numbing his senses instead. He was lost in a place that should have been familiar. Uninterested in role playing normalcy.

There was one thing, though, that shines through those hard times—or person rather. Behind the counter of a local convenient store Bill frequented, a woman with long black hair stole glances at a Vietnam veteran as he perused the shelves or fished out his wallet. She was ten years younger. Bill didn't even consider whether he'd have a chance.

50 years later, as that Vietnam veteran waits for Alex Bevin to take the stage, the woman with raven hair sits next to him, steadying his nervous legs. The beginning chords of "To be a Soldier" sound out from Bevin's acoustic and Bill braces for the verses shaped by his life.

At its heart, Project D.R.E.W is a platform for warriors to voice their stories with all the support of an embracing crowd and none of the pressures of the spotlight. It's a chance to project what's never been said or what can't be said through words alone into a room of intimate strangers, and listen to its reverberations.

Bill feels his son and wife watching him as the words of his song wash over the crowd. He looks around, sees the other "combat guys" who once served in Afghanistan or Iraq, now with small children at their feet and thinks, "I hope they make it, I hope their life just gets better."

Born in Ohio...In a West Side Hood
He gave Saint Ed's 'bout the best he could
Just a young man running kind of wild and loose
All muscle and gut and full of juice
He didn't start out to be a soldier..
But when duty called and the country asked
He put a rifle on his shoulder
Squared on up and went into the Draft

So the the Army put him in the infantry
Set a twist of fate in his destiny
That blue collar boy became a man
Wearing green fatigues for Uncle Sam
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
When his first deployment came around
He put that rifle on his shoulder
And found that he was Panama bound....

It was all pretty quiet on the Old Canal
So he asked for a transfer to a new local
He told his Captain ..."I don't give a damn...
So .. put me on a plane to Viet Nam....
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
But he got his wish in the Three Corps lines
He took the rifle off his shoulder
Out in the jungle playing seek and find....

The squad had guys from all around
But there was one guy ... Jimmy from Cleveland town
With a wife in the States and a kid on the way
Who always made the cautious play
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
But he took point on the scouting treks
And used that rifle on his shoulder
Cause a firefight is more or less like sex

And then one night after dark patrol
The tracer lines began to rock and roll...
And before the noise cleared in his head
Not far away his friend lay dead.....
Who can say if the Lieutenant froze
Or if fate just picked.....that's the way it goes
Jimmy was gone ... others too...
So rotate in a replacement crew....

There was a field promotion to a higher grade
And sargent stripes were soon displayed
Now the goal he carried was'nt his alone...
Say, "We all survive ... and we all go home"
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
Or the point man... ready for the crazy shit
And still that rifle's on his shoulder
He started to wonder about the whole of it....

There was a Purple Heart and a Star of Bronze
And memories just went on and on...
He mustered out just to come back home
To the land he defended feeling all alone.....
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
A little dinky-dow ... yes... I suppose
He let the rifle fall from his shoulder
And put back on civilian clothes

Back in town... in the Lakewood bars
There were times the drinking got way to hard
A few picker uppers just to get to speed
And fuel the dreams the demon need
A few more fights.... some nights in jail
Born to be wild..... and born to fail
Some learn to bend through thin and thick
Some learn to break like glass and brick....

There's the the short of the story... and the long of
the truth
And the things we own in our age and youth

So one Christmas Eve he took one more drink
They put the bracelets on and he was back in the
clink
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
But he found a brand new battle ground
With a wife and his friends at his shoulder
And began a sober turnaround...

So if strength is won by the heart's own truce
And weakness fails by it's own excuse
Then the journey continues of it's own goodwill
And the proof is here ... in this man called Bill
He didn't start out to be a soldier...
But he found his way to be a better man
Like that rifle on his shoulder
There were tools that fell into his hand....

Sometimes it's hard to understand
What part we play in any plan
In all things simple... in some things grand
In the way we grow from boy to man
When the fabric of our dreams...
spun from debts of love and honor...
is cut and sewn and seen
though our lifetimes as we wander...

...it's in the eyes of the beholder....

He didn't start out to be a soldier...

© 2020 Bill Royer and Alex Bevan - all rights reserved.

"When I met Bill Royer, I was immediately taken with his humble sincerity. As we talked over the course of a few hours while participating in the DREW Project I discovered that there were more than a few parallels in our lives. It even turned out that 'back in the day' we hung around some of the same places.... it's funny it took us so long to finally run into each other with a welcome hand and nod to the larger forces that brought our stories together. I hope you see the good man behind these lyrics.... some of the words might be mine... but the life told in the verses is all Bill... and that is a good and precious thing! Thanks. **Alex Bevan**



Here are benefits you may not be aware of

Military Voting

Military Ready to Vote/ Vote in Honor of a Veteran

The Military Ready to Vote program of the Ohio Secretary of State is intended to make it easier for active duty Ohio-resident military service members stationed outside the state to register and cast their votes. Online services of the program include:

A Military Ready-to-Vote (MRV) packet designed to allow active duty service members to register to vote and request an absentee ballot. The packet also has a Track your Ballot feature to ensure that the ballot reaches a local board of elections.

- An electronic download of the MRV packet or a .PDF of the Federal Post Card Application for an absentee ballot.
- An e-mail sign up for elections updates and reminders.
- Ballot information on state and local candidates and issues.
- Online Ohio elections results.

The Secretary of State also offers the Vote in Honor of a Veteran program, which enables any voter to pay tribute to an individual service member by dedicating their vote to them. It also allows a voter to post a testimonial about their military loved one and to receive a special pin to wear on Election Day.

Contact:

877-767-6446 or 614-466-2655

website: www.ohiomilitaryvotes.com

Ohio Veterans Bonus

For Service in Afghanistan & Elsewhere

This program provides a monetary bonus for those who served during the time of the conflict in Afghanistan. It pays \$100 per month for service in Afghanistan and \$50 per month for service elsewhere, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

Eligibility:

Veterans (including those currently serving) can determine if they are eligible by visiting the website and using the eligibility tools. Generally, anyone who served honorably anywhere in the world for more than 90 days (not for training) on or after October 7, 2001 is eligible. Applicants must have been Ohio residents at the time of entry onto active duty and must be current Ohio residents.

Contact:

Applications and Q&A are located at: www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov or at any of Ohio's 88 County Veterans Service Offices. Call 877-OHIOVET (877-644-6838), select option 2.

Please Note: Bonuses offered for service during previous wars have expired.

Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was created to recognize the contributions of Veterans to their communities after they leave the service.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Committee (consisting of all Veterans) selects no more

than 20 inductees annually from nominations submitted throughout the year.

This is NOT a Military Hall of Fame. Those inducted have served honorably in the military and have continued to serve and contribute in their communities, state and nation in an exemplary manner.

Nominations are accepted all year, but to be considered for the November Induction Ceremony, packets must be received by June 1 of each year.

Purpose: The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame recognizes the postmilitary achievements of outstanding Veterans and spotlights all Veterans' contributions to the civilian workplace and community.

Eligibility:

- Served honorably in the military.
- Contributed to their community in a commendable way.
- Born in Ohio or lived in Ohio for at least five years.
- Must have received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces and must provide a copy of discharge papers with the nomination.
- Be of good moral character, no felony convictions.

Posthumous nominations are accepted.

NOTE: Restrictions apply to current ODVS employees, state elected officials, Veterans Service Commissioners and members of the executive committee and foundation for the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

Location in Ohio Law: Ohio Revised Code 5904

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page

Contact:

Nomination packets can be printed off of the website at: www.ohiovets.gov/main/veterans-hall-of-fame-nominations.html

Or reach the Hall of Fame Coordinator at halloffame@dvs.ohio.gov or 877-OHIO-VET (877-644-6838), option 4.

Mail packets to: Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame 77 S. High St., 7th Fl., Columbus, OH 43215

Ohio Veterans Homes

The Ohio Veterans Homes are comprised of three facilities at two locations:

- Located near Lake Erie in Sandusky, Ohio (approximately 60 miles west of Cleveland), the Sandusky Home offers standard and memory care in its licensed nursing home.
- The Sandusky home also offers Veterans Hall, a domiciliary (DOM) for those who are able to function in an independent living situation and DOM+ for those requiring very limited assistance (supervised care) but who do not require the level of care provided to nursing home residents.

- Located in scenic, rural Georgetown, Ohio (approximately 45 miles east of Cincinnati), the Georgetown Home offers skilled nursing services providing two levels of nursing care – standard care and memory care.

Eligibility:

- Must have been an Ohio resident for one year, at any time during lifetime.
- Served on active duty during a time of war or armed conflict or be the recipient of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal or Vietnam Service Medal.
- Most recent discharge must be under honorable conditions.
- Be disabled by disease, wounds or otherwise and, by reason of such disability, incapable of earning a living.
- Individuals who have medical conditions that cannot be adequately supported by OVH personnel are not eligible for immediate admission.

Contact:

800-572-7934

Pre-admission form and application can be found at: www.ohiovets.gov/main/ovh-admission.html

Pensions

Disability Pensions

Veterans with low incomes who are permanently and totally disabled or are age 65 or older may be eligible for support. Payments are made to bring the total income, including other retirement or Social Security, to a level set by Congress. Unreimbursed medical expenses may reduce VA countable income.

Eligibility:

- A Veteran must have 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a wartime period.
- The Veteran's discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable and their disability must be for reasons other than their own willful misconduct.
- Veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, or officers who entered active duty on or after October 16, 1981, may have to meet a longer minimum period.

Contact:

Your County Veterans Service Officer can explain the requirements for disability pensions

Medina County Veterans Service Office

We provide two basic services:

1. Temporary emergency financial assistance to eligible veterans and family members.
2. Help with applying to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for benefits.

Our services are FREE of charge!

Examples of assistance we provide:

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- Free public transit on MCPT in Medina County
- County Veterans ID card
- Submission for awards records, decorations and medals

When you come into the Medina County Veterans Service Office you will be assisted by one of our knowledgeable associates. Everyone here has a compassionate understanding of the problems which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and their families.



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and provide assistance to properly complete all applications for this benefit.

Find their local office by calling: 877-OHIO-VET (877-644-6838)

Or visiting: www.ohiovets.gov

Recreation Benefits

Free Registration of Watercraft

Eligibility:

Registration is available to 100-percent service-related disabled Veterans (as rated permanently and totally disabled by the VA) or former POWs, Medal of Honor recipients, or Veterans Car Assistance Program participants.

Contact:

Veteran's Boat Registration, Ohio DNR Division of Watercraft

877-4BOATER (877-426-2837)

Discounts at Ohio State Parks

Eligibility:

- Free camping is available to 100-percent disabled Veterans (as rated permanently and totally disabled by the VA) or former POWs.
- A 10-percent discount on camping, get-away rentals, cottages and lodge rooms is available to active duty military and Veterans.

Contact:

website: parks.ohiodnr.gov/discounts

Small Business

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development is responsible for liaison with the Veterans business community, for policy analysis and reporting, for acting as an Ombudsman for Veterans in Small Business Administration programs, for providing business training, counseling and assistance, and for overseeing the Federal procurement programs for Veteran and service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses.

Contact:

800-827-5722

website: www.sba.gov/content/veteran-service-disabled-veteran-owned

Bunker Labs

Bunker Labs, a 501(c)(3) non-profit program, provides a nationwide network of Veteran entrepreneurs dedicated to helping new veteran entrepreneurs start their own business.

Contact:

website: bunkerlabs.org

1st Stop Business Connection

This state program provides free information for business people to get started or to continue to develop and grow a business.

Contact:

614-752-7455

website: business.ohio.gov/starting

GrowNOW

Veterans receive approval preference through the Ohio Treasurer's Office on reduced rate loans for small businesses.

Contact:

800-228-1102

website: www.tos.ohio.gov/grownow

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)

The PTACs help Ohio's businesses sell goods and services to local, state and federal governments. In addition to services like marketing, one-on-one training and help with resources, the Ohio PTACs offer (at no cost to Ohio businesses) bid-matching services, product and procurement histories, military specifications and trade events where Ohio firms can meet government buyers. The program is part of a nationwide network of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers.

Contact:

Office of the Ohio Procurement Technical Assistance Program, 800-848-1300 or 614-644-1637.

website: www.development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_ptac.htm

Small Business Development Centers

The Ohio Development Services Agency in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration has a network of Small Business Development Centers in Ohio. These centers contribute funds and resources to support small business development.

Contact:

800-848-1300

website: clients.ohiosbdc.ohio.gov

Taxes

Ohio offers a number of tax exemptions for military personnel and retirees.

Mobilized Military Member Tax Exemption

Effective January 1, 2007, the deduction of military pay from federal adjusted gross income received for active duty while stationed outside of the State of Ohio for greater than 30 days is allowed.

Location in Ohio Law: Ohio Revised Code 5747.01 A(24) 26)

Military Retirement Pay – State Tax Exemptions

Effective January 1, 2008, military retirement pay and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) benefits are exempt from Ohio income tax Homestead Exemption and local school district income taxes.

Effective August 21, 2008, surviving spouse benefit plans are also exempt from Ohio income tax and local school district income taxes.

Location in Ohio Law: Ohio Revised Code 5747.01 A(26)

Homestead Exemption

Veterans who are rated by the VA as 100-percent disabled due to a service-connected disability are eligible for expanded Homestead Exemption property tax relief on their primary residential home. Instead of the \$25,000 allowed for other eligible 65-and-older or permanently disabled applicants, eligible Veterans can exempt \$50,000 of the assessed value of their primary residential home from property taxes, meaning that a home valued at \$150,000 will only be taxed at a value of \$100,000. These Veterans are also exempt from the \$30,000 limit on annual income applied to other applicants; eligible Veterans have no limit on their annual income.

Eligibility:

A Veteran must have been separated or released from active duty under honorable conditions and receive a total disability rating, or total disability rating for compensation based on individual unemployability, for a service-connected disability or combination of service-connected disabilities.

Location in Ohio Law: Ohio Revised Code 323.152

Contact:

Application must be made through the county auditor in the county where the home is located. A directory of county auditors is at: caao.org/auditors-directory/



Northeast Ohio Foundation for Patriotism Honors Late 1st Lieutenant Ashley White

by Jerri Donohue

First Lieutenant Ashley White has a tree on the Memorial Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, Georgia, the first woman to be so recognized. Ashley's House, a transitional housing facility for female veterans under construction in Mount Dora, Florida is named in her honor by Villagers for Veterans. And this year, the Northeast Ohio Foundation for Patriotism (NEOPAT) chose 1st Lt. Ashley White as its 2021 Charles Kirby Wilcox Honoree.

Deborah White, Ashley White's mother, said the family views NEOPAT's recognition as a special honor in a long series of tributes.

"She's an Ohio girl," White said of her daughter. "It means a lot to us. But she'd be shaking her head about it and asking, 'why are people doing this?' She was very humble."

NEOPAT provided \$80,000 in emergency financial assistance last year to veterans and current service personnel and their families living

in Northeast Ohio. In keeping with its mission to foster patriotism, the nonprofit also annually recognizes a serviceman or woman killed during military service. The honor is named for Charles Kirby Wilcox, a West Point graduate who died in Vietnam in 1968. NEOPAT posts its video tribute to Lt. White and previous honorees at www.neopat.org/charles-kirby-wilcox-honorees.

Ashley White grew up in Stark County and joined the ROTC while studying at Kent State University. Upon graduation with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Medicine, she was commissioned a U.S. Army Medical Service Corps Officer. She underwent medic

training at Fort Sam Houston and moved to North Carolina to be near her future husband, then stationed at Fort Bragg. A physical fitness

enthusiast, Lt.

White worked as an athletic trainer at St. Andrew's College, while serving with the North Carolina National Guard.

In the winter of 2011, she learned about the Cultural Support Team (CST), an all female initiative designed to improve American military in-

teractions with Afghan women. Some CSTs would build positive relationships with villagers, focusing on humanitarian work. Others would accompany male soldiers on missions to root out dangerous insurgents, locate hidden explosives

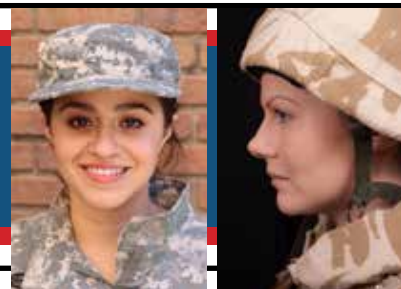
or gather useful information. To avoid offending local culture, these female soldiers—not American men—would search Afghan women, and question them through an interpreter.

Lt. White immediately volunteered for CST, passed its grueling selection process and then trained for the group working with the Army Rangers. The pretty blonde's physical strength amazed her male colleagues. Assigned to the 230th Brigade Support Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina National Guard, Lt. White arrived at Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan in August 2011 to support the 75th Ranger Regiment. She celebrated her 24th birthday that September.

"She would call us every Sunday," Deborah White said. "But she wouldn't talk about anything [happening] over there. She said, 'I'm just helping the women and children over here.'"

Continued on next page





Continued from previous page

While true, this was not the full story. In fact, Lt. White routinely ventured on hazardous nighttime missions with the Rangers. While her comrades searched compounds, she calmly questioned civilian women through an Afghan-American interpreter, gave candy to their children, and recorded information. Gunfire erupted on one such mission. Lt. White shielded several little kids with her own body, then rushed the group behind a building and out of harm's way. She later received the Combat Action Badge for the episode.

On October 22, 2011, during a raid to capture a Taliban weapons maker, an improvised explosive device killed Lt. Ashley White and Army Rangers Sgt. First Class Kris Domeij and Private First Class Christopher Horns.

Lt. White's funeral took place in St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Mogadore, where she had married U.S. Army Capt. Jason Stumpf just five months before. (White didn't change her last name.) She is buried in the cemetery behind the church.

Her family promptly established the Ashley White Memorial

Scholarship. Each year, a one-time award of \$1,000 is given to one or two worthy graduates of Marlington High School, her alma mater. Ashley White ran cross-country, and for several years a 5K race raised funds for the scholarship. Her family is considering a 10-year memorial race for October.

Gayle Tzemach Lemmon's 2015 bestseller, *Ashley's War*, described the Cultural Support Team and Lt. White's sacrifice.

Deborah White said the reactions of fathers who read the book surprise her.

"They tell me, 'This has changed my whole outlook on how to raise my daughters. My daughters can be anything they want because of your daughter,'" White said.

Almost 10 years after Lt. White's death, her parents continue to find trinkets and notes anonymously left at her grave.

"Someone left a medal from a 10K at Disney World," White said. "On the back, it said, 'You are my hero.'"

Women who served with Lt. White keep in touch with her parents.

"They're like family," White said. "Three of them have named children after Ashley."



Lt. White shielded several little kids with her own body, then rushed the group behind a building and out of harm's way. She later received the Combat Action Badge...

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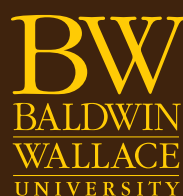
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Photo courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

One of this year's community heroes to be honored at the Sept. 11 Andy Nowacki Foundation gala will be Cleveland Police Officer Erwin Eberhardt, who with two Cleveland police detectives offered a "Progress with Chess" program for students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for 20 years. Eberhardt died in February and will be posthumously saluted.



Illustration courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

Marine Lance Cpl. Andy "Ace" Nowacki was a Grand River police officer serving in the Marine Reserves when he was killed during his second deployment to Iraq in 2005.



Photo courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

Denis and Sheila Nowacki started the Andy Nowacki Foundation shortly after he was killed in Iraq as a way to award scholarships to those seeking to follow his example in public service, and salute unsung local community heroes.

Andy Nowacki Foundation fosters legacy of fallen Marine

By Brian Albrecht

Marine Lance Cpl. Andy "Ace" Nowacki was trying to make a difference when he was killed by a roadside bomb in 2005 during his second tour in Iraq.

In a sense, he's still making a difference.

It comes through the Andy Nowacki Foundation Inc., (<https://nowackischolarship.org>), which honors unsung community heroes, and provides full scholarships to future police officers, firefighters, EMTs, nurses and others seeking careers in public service.

For the past 16 years the nonprofit charitable foundation, founded by his parents Denis and Sheila Nowacki, of Painesville Township, has committed itself to keeping the memory of the 1988 Brush High School graduate alive, and helping those seeking to follow his example.

A "Heroes for Andy" gala, held this year on Sept. 11, helps raise

funds to continue that work, award scholarships and recognize "folks in the community who have an impact with no expectation of recognition," said Sheila Nowacki.

"They're selfless people who think about other persons, and how they can make life better for them," she added.

Same for the scholarship recipients. "We're looking for individuals with a passion for serving the community . . . like Andy (who was also a Grand River police officer). We're kind-of looking for the Andy in people's hearts, to carry the torch forward and keep his spirit out there," Nowacki said.

Some 43 Northeast Ohioans, and one PTSD service dog, have been recognized as community heroes by the foundation. Their exploits

range from harrowing, life-saving efforts, to comparatively modest, but crucial volunteer work in local public service groups.

One of this year's four heroes who will be honored posthumously is Cleveland Police Officer Erwin Eberhardt,

who offered a "Progress with Chess" program in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

For 20 years Eberhardt (who died in February) was joined by police

detectives Carl Powers and Michael Belle in teaching more than 500 students each year the rules of the game and competitive skills, ideally creating a positive interaction with law enforcement.

The foundation's gala also serves another purpose.

"It's all meant to introduce people to Andy, and make people go away with a big smile," Nowacki said. "I feel my job is to educate people as to how he approached life. He was just such a joyful spirit."

Her son joined the Marines after graduating from high school, then stayed in the Reserves when he became a Grand River police officer in 2001.

"Ace" is a nickname he got in high school when introducing himself to a girl by saying, "I'm Ace, and I'm from the school of hard knocks."

In 2005, Nowacki, 24, of South Euclid, was a Humvee gunner on

Continued on next page

The Andy Nowacki Foundation, Inc



For the past 16 years the nonprofit Andy Nowacki Foundation Inc. has honored local community heroes and awarded scholarships to those seeking to follow the public service example set by Marine Lance Cpl. Andy Nowacki who was killed in Iraq in 2005.

Continued from previous page
his second tour of Iraq, a place where he empathized with and befriended Iraqi civilians, according to his mother. "He was going to sign up for his third tour when he was killed," she said.

At the time of his death she said, "He was really OK with being over there because he saw the oppression and the cruelty that had happened to the people there.

"He thought a lot of the Iraqi people and he was willing to go back because he thought we were doing so much good."

She recently noted, "He impacted so many people, it astounds me."

That impact continues through the foundation's scholarship program which has awarded more than 60 full scholarships, worth in excess of \$450,000, during the past 15 years.

Applicants have to demonstrate more than a financial need, according to Rich Harmon, foundation president. "They need to demonstrate that they're good citizens and good neighbors, that they have a sense of community about them," he said.

Because most recipients stay in the area after completing their

education, scholarship donors are "funding the services that go directly into helping what could be in their local community," Harmon said.

He also noted that an unexpected side effect is that many of the scholarship recipients become part of an extended Nowacki family, who stay involved with the foundation and often join the more than 400 people who attend the its galas.

Among the gala guests this year will be 2010 scholarship recipient, Damir Kuduzovic, 32, who used the foundation award to attend Lakeland Community College's Basic Police Academy and is now an officer with the North Ridgeville police department.

Kuduzovic immigrated with his family from Bosnia in 1996 and got the urge to become a policeman from one of his coaches in a middle school DARE program.

While attending Lakeland he found out about the Andy Nowacki scholarships from his soccer coach, and recently recalled that it was a blessing.

"I was a poor college student, living on my own, working part-time jobs. I wouldn't have been able to afford it [police academy] by

myself," he said.

Kuduzovic said he has kept in touch with Denis and Sheila Nowacki over the years. "I consider them as family, like my second parents," he said.

"It's amazing to see the impact that Andy's legacy has had on people," he added. "It's incredible."

The "Heroes for Andy Gala" will be held Sept. 11 at Landerhaven, 6111 Landerhaven Dr., in Mayfield Heights.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for an evening featuring cocktails, dinner catered by Executive Caterers, silent auctions, honoring "Andy's Heroes" and scholarship awards.

Keynote speaker will be Alex Johnson, president of Cuyahoga Community College.

Entertainment will be by the Belle Tones, and dancing to music by Sumrada to top off the night. Tickets are \$125. For details and reservations call (440) 413-5991.



Photo courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

Members of the armed services were among guests of a recent "Heroes for Andy" gala to raise funds for scholarships for those seeking to become police officers, firefighters, EMTs, nurses or other public services.



Photo courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

◀ TV newscaster Dawn Hendrick, second from right, recipient of a 2019 Andy Nowacki Foundation heroes award, is joined at the group's gala by (from left) Rich Harmon, foundation president, and Sheila and Denis Nowacki who started the nonprofit charity in honor of their son who was killed in Iraq in 2005.

▶ Deacon Joe Bourgeois, second from left, founder of the Knight Riders homeless aid group and recipient of a 2019 Andy Nowacki Foundation heroes award, is joined at the group's gala by (from left) Rich Harmon, foundation president, and Sheila and Denis Nowacki who started the nonprofit charity in honor of their son who was killed in Iraq in 2005.



Photo courtesy of Andy Nowacki Foundation

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Sleeping Marine, Union Station, 1948



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American troops on board a landing craft heading for the beaches at Oran in Algeria during Operation 'Torch,' November 1942

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Kent campus earns 12th consecutive Military Friendly honor

Emma Andrus / kentwired.com

For the 12th year in a row, Kent State's main campus has been named a Military Friendly school for its commitment and service to its military community.

The honor is given by VIQTORY Media, self described as a "data-driven military marketing company" who works to use media to improve the lives of those connected to the military. Awards are given to schools and employers based on an extensive survey conducted by VIQTORY Media which is then evaluated by a third party to test for legitimacy of answers, said Joshua Rider, the executive director of the Center for Adult and Veteran Services at Kent State.

The organization evaluates factors such as retention of military-connected students (veterans, service members and their dependents), recruitment, performance of students (graduation rates and GPAs), services and programs offered and marketing and web presence, Rider said.

"It means to Kent State as a university that it's consistent service to this population, upholding a standard for 12 years," Rider said. "It's a really consistent, high standard of service to our military-connected students."

Two regional campuses, Trumbull and Tuscarawas, were also named Military Friendly schools. The main campus, however, received a bronze-level ranking,

meaning it was among the top 30 percent of similarly-sized schools in its category.

Veteran services provides a place for students to process benefits, have questions answered and connect to additional resources, including Student Accessibility Services, housing and childcare, dining, advising and career services, Rider said.

One newer service started in spring of 2020 at the start of the pandemic were phone calls made by employees within the veteran services office to military-connected

students. Meant to act as a check-in and a time to inquire about student needs, this service continued in the fall of 2020 and is anticipated to continue in upcoming semesters, Rider said.

He said being given the award is a testament to the "comprehensive support" Kent State as a whole offers its military community.

"It wouldn't be possible without other areas in the institution: the university itself agreeing to the principles of excellence, agreeing to a number of different things and abiding by certain standards,"

Rider said. "It's not possible to even be Military Friendly if the university hasn't committed to that."

In regards to the future, Rider said continuing KSU's military excellence is a priority.

"We never stop improving," Rider said. "It's continuing to work with our partners in fundraising and advancement to get more opportunities for our military-connected students, whether that be scholarships or physical space...to leverage those internal and external partnerships."



Courtesy of Kent State University

Joshua Rider is the executive director of the Center for Adult and Veteran Services at Kent State University.



2021-2022 Military Friendly® School's

Institutions earning the Military Friendly® School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Over 1,200 schools participated in the 2021-2022 survey with around 750 schools earning the designation of which 162 selected for the "Gold" award status for their leading practices, outcomes, and effective programs.



A screenshot of the award given to Kent State University from VIQTORY Media.

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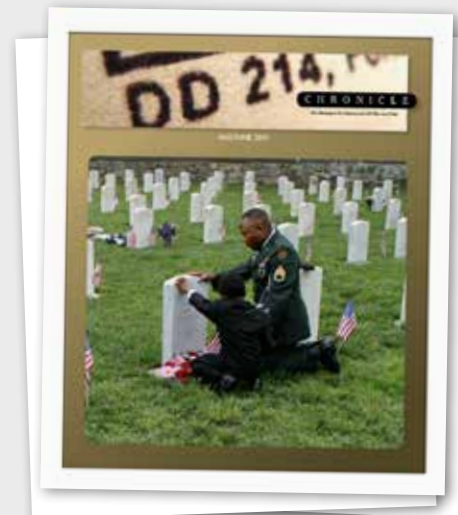
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because I said I would.
20525 Center Ridge Rd. Suite 365
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Tri-C[®] is here for veterans

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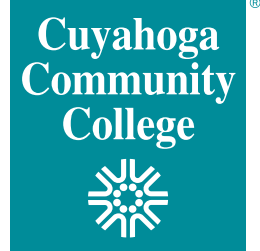
Our Veteran Services Initiative will assist you with:

- Registration
- Activating your educational benefits, including GI Bill[®] and Guard or Reserve benefits
- Reviewing your military training records for possible award of college credit

Visit tri-c.edu/veteranservices for more information or to get started.

Check out our new Online Associate of Arts degree, a flexible two-year option for students who want to begin their studies at Tri-C.
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Visit tri-c.edu/veterans on Monday, May 31, to view our virtual Memorial Day remembrance.





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