



VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6

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## Never too Old to Learn

# Meet Bob Zonneville. If You Can Catch Up to Him.

By Edward J. Senko

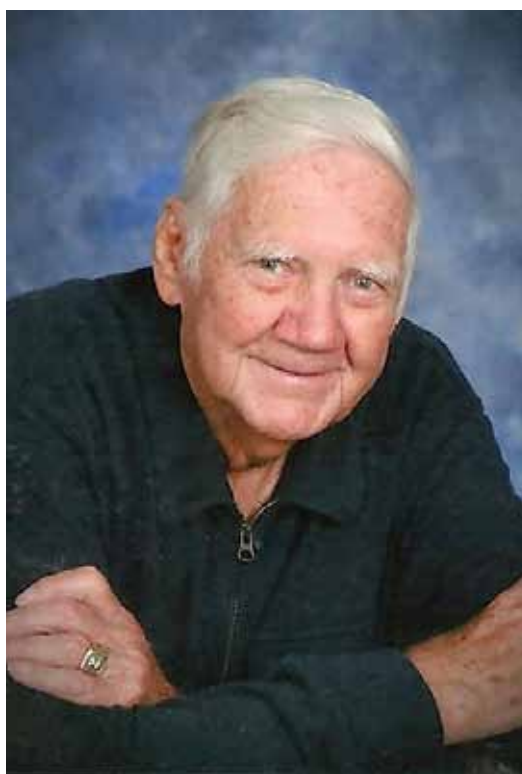
**H**e's a walkin', talkin', history book and you wish he were your uncle. At least your classmate. For many students, veterans and otherwise, the second option is available. However, not for long.

Bob Zonneville is finishing up at Lakeland Community College, where he has been a teachers' pet for a while. He should be. Zonneville loves education the way the rest of us love ice cream.

It's not just education Zonneville loves. This wrinkled, energetic, generous, balding, intelligent, successful, kind, and curious student loves life. He's the best example of education being life long and rewarding. After talking with Zonneville, Abraham Lincoln's concise and cogent observation has current application: "Most of us are just about as happy as we make up our minds to be."

Zonneville's history is worthy of study: A child of the Depression, a combat trooper in The Good War, a self-made business success, a philanthropist with heart and vision, a devoted husband and loving father, and now a student.

If his fellow students are impressed with him, and they are,



From D-Day to Graduation Day

they should hear what he has to say about them:

"I'm a great believer in the younger generation. I wish I were as smart as they are. I have a ball with them. They're very bright and I'm glad I'm not in competition with them. Too often, we criticize them, failing to realize how bright and good they are. Seriously, I think we overlook them; these kids are

fantastic." He's the only student wearing a WWII baseball cap.

He wanted to get into the fight while still in high school, but had to wait until he was 18 to take his oath. He scored well on tests and was placed in special classes. He intentionally flunked out so he could be part of the infantry. Of course, like every kid who wants to join the infantry, he had no idea what he was getting involved with.

After training, he shipped to England to prepare for D-Day. While he was there, Gen. Eisenhower ordered some units to send a couple GIs to English units and vice versa. Zonneville was sent and his observations were keen: "I was a private first class at the time and spent two weeks with the British Army. The food wasn't all that good, but I was making \$50 a month, a source of envy for British soldiers."

British troops were not quite as fired up as American troops, he noted, but added that the Brits had been in the war a

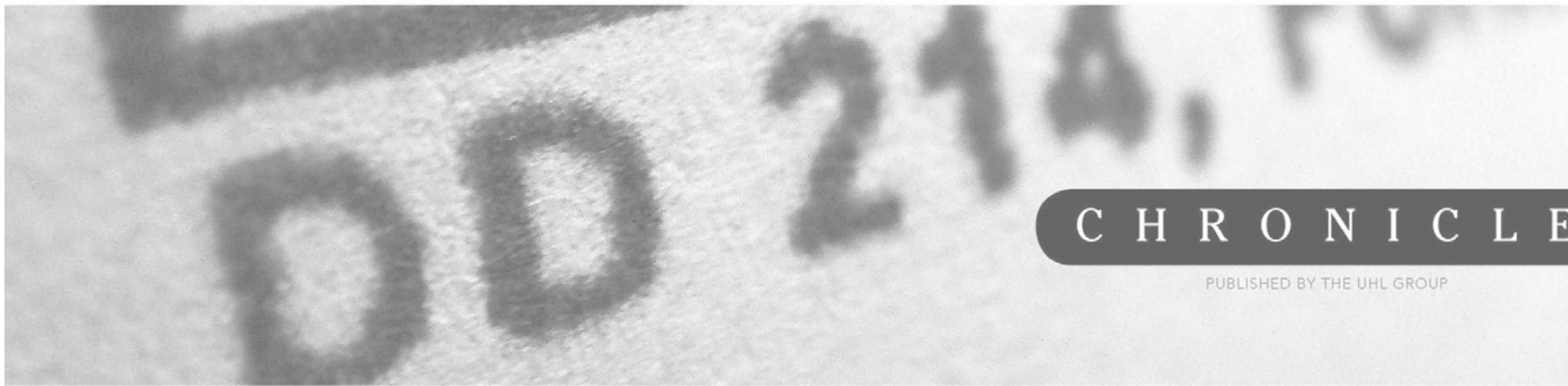
long, long time. "In the American army, you're taught not to be afraid, but Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery wasn't as eager."

By war's end, Zonneville was a staff sergeant and earned numerous decorations, including a pair of Purple Hearts. He came home to doff his uniform, put on work pants, and get to work driving a truck.

Then, as now, he said, "I'm the luckiest guy in the world." His attitude may be one of the unheralded reasons we won the war.

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**PUBLISHER**  
Terence J. Uhl

**EDITOR**  
John H. Tidyman  
(216) 789-3502  
forgedirons@yahoo.com

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Ann Marie Stasko  
(216) 704-5227

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Harry Besharet

**CHAPLAIN**  
Rev. Ralph Fofia

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Terry Bell

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Laura Chadwick

**For advertising information, call:**



Terence J.Uhl  
(216) 780-5104  
terryuhl@uhlgroup.com

**DD 214 Chronicle is published by**  
Terence J. Uhl  
Principal  
The Uhl Group  
700 West St. Clair Avenue  
Suite 414  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
terryuhl@uhlgroup.com

**Phone:**  
(216) 912-2863  
**Fax:**  
(216) 771-5206

# On Veterans Day, a Moment of Gratitude and a Heartfelt Toast to Our Veterans

By Terry Uhl, Publisher

**W**ith this edition of *DD 214 Chronicle*, we begin our third year of publishing. It is a rare publication whose editorial goal is so clear: To honor and celebrate the lives of northeast Ohio veterans. Few states have so unselfishly given their sons and daughters to military service.

It seemed to us, when we first discussed the idea that became *DD 214 Chronicle*, the northeast Ohio community needed and could use and enjoy a newspaper for our veterans. Other media seemed uninterested in the men and women who wore the uniform and bore the brunt of battle.

We saw it from another perspective. Young men and women set off on the trail blazed by previous generations. And when they returned, they added a great deal to our society and culture.

Confident in our mission, our next job was to ascertain the support for veterans by area advertisers. Our promise to advertisers was simple: We'll write, produce and deliver a newspaper that will deliver your message to an audience eager to learn about you.

Without our advertisers, *DD 214 Chronicle* would be just a good idea. Instead, it's a vibrant, current, readable



journal devoted to the continuing lives and contributions of veterans.

One of the important questions we had to answer before launching *DD 214 Chronicle* concerned distribution; essentially, where are our veterans? They are at VFW and American Legion halls, college campuses, coffee shops, health care centers, senior communities, and libraries. Espe-

cially libraries, because we write and publish for veterans and all who love and care for them.

Since our first issue two years ago, our list of library outlets has grown to almost 100. We go to libraries in the five counties we cover: Cuyahoga, Summit, Lake, Lorain, and Medina. Our mail subscriptions, for those who prefer to have *DD 214 Chronicle* delivered continues to grow.

As our veterans have been in service to all of us, we hope *DD 214 Chronicle* serves our veterans. We share your pride in the men and women who selflessly and at great personal risk, wore the military uniforms of the greatest country in history.

On Veterans Day, and every day, we lift our glasses and say, "Thank you."

**We share your pride in the men and women who selflessly and at great personal risk, wore the military uniforms of the greatest country in history.**

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# Long Ago and Far Away: Play Captures Ghosts of Vietnam War

By Christopher Johnston



Christopher Johnston

**O**n March 16, 1967, PFC Danny Nicklow, a 20-year-old Marine from Friendsville, Maryland, died with most of his company on Hill 861 at Khe Sanh, in South Vietnam. He was a member of the First Battalion, Ninth Marines (1/9), that became known as “The Walking Dead,” because the unit lost more than 90 percent of the battalion at Khe Sanh, the highest casualty percentage in Marine Corps history.

This January, almost 46 years later, the story of Danny and Bravo Company’s heroic rescue mission will be told in my play, *Ghosts of War*, at Dobama Theatre in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

In September 2008, I was fortunate to encounter the man who told me the story, James Kyle (Capt., USMC, Ret.), who was living in Annapolis, Maryland. Jim and I met when he came to Cleveland for a wedding.

After several hours together, I knew two things: this story was more rich and complex than I first thought, and Jim was an ideal storyteller: intelligent, articulate, intense yet funny, and willing to delve into the emotional depths.

As a freelance journalist and a playwright, the opportunity to write a documentary play about the Vietnam War was extremely tempting, and now I had a credible, willing source.

Jim grew up in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, a coke-oven and coal mining center. He thought he wanted a life of teaching high school history and coaching football.

That all changed in 1964, when he landed a summer job working for a marina at Deep Creek Lake in northern Maryland. There, Danny Nicklow roared into his life, fresh from attending a special reception for outstanding youths of Maryland at the White House with President Lyndon B. Johnson. A great athlete



PFC Danny Nicklow, First Battalion, Ninth Marines, building a bunker at Khe Sanh base (circa 1966-67).  
Second Lieutenant James Kyle serving as a member of the Second Battalion, First Marines in Vietnam (circa 1969-70)



on his high school’s football, basketball and baseball teams, Danny was a charismatic firebrand who pushed Jim to engage in his country and reflect on Medgar Evers’ assassination in 1963, Civil Rights and the war in Vietnam.

Their friendship flourished into the summer of 1966, when Jim learned Danny had forsaken a full-ride football scholarship at Youngstown State University, a beautiful girlfriend, and an academic deferment to instead join the Marines and serve in Vietnam.

When he visited Danny while he was on leave for Labor Day, Jim enjoyed a good time, but questioned his friend’s decision to enlist. Six months later, Jim came home from college one weekend, and his mother handed him the front-page article about Danny’s death at Khe Sanh.

He soon decided it was time to forgo football, beer and coeds and give back to his country. He convinced a Pittsburgh recruiting sergeant to ignore the small spot on his lung discovered by X-rays and let him join the Marines. He served

two tours, 19 months in Vietnam during 1969-70 as a second lieutenant for the Second Battalion, First Marines, before coming home to a young family and life as a commodities trader.

Jim then became the embodiment of the Marine’s motto “*Semper Paratus*,” spending the next 40 years searching for anyone who was with Danny the day he died. The Department of Defense death notice was brief and vague. Moreover, Nicklow’s mother, Bernice, didn’t believe her beloved son was dead.

After years of attending 1/9 bi-annual reunions all over the country and contacting numerous veterans by mail or telephone, Jim used the Internet to track down the one 1/9 Bravo Company survivor, Corpsman Keith Price, who lived in Pageland, South Carolina.

Price was able to tell Jim how, after walking patrol for more than a week, the 13 men of Bravo Company sipped water from a creek, removed

their flak jackets, double-timed it up Hill 861 to support another company under attack, and ran into a mortar barrage and oblivion.

I had the great fortune to meet Keith and many members of the 1/9 at a reunion in San Antonio, Texas, in August of 2010. But the deeper I got into Jim’s story, the more I realized it was one Marine’s journey to reconcile all the ghosts of war that haunt him to this day.

Along the way, he survived a few self-destructive moments, and then found redemption by completing his search for Danny’s fate. Fortunately, Jim is in great health and looks like he could still run the obstacle course at Parris Island.

He has a lovely, supportive wife and two wonderful adult children from his first marriage. Retirement includes business consulting for friends launching new businesses.

I feel particularly blessed to share his story of friendship, heroism, loss and redemption, and dealing with the fact that the repercussions of war don’t end because a President declares it’s over.

If you would like to experience this compelling journey, please join us at Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Road, January 16-29, Wed-Sun at 8 pm. For more information, call the box office at 216-932-3396 or visit [www.dobama.org](http://www.dobama.org).

# 'Cookie' Cooks for Us at the 'Fabulous Food Show' at the I-X Center!

By Bess Panageotes

**W**hen veterans gather to tell war stories, no one talks about food. No veteran says, "Khe Sanh was tough and what got us through was the great meals prepared by Marine chefs."

Scrambled eggs never referred to the yolk and the whites whipped together and poured into a hot skillet. Instead, it was military slang for the decorations on the brim of a field grade officer's dress cap. And SOS was not a distress signal. It was breakfast.

The I-X Center, in a gracious and generous salute to veterans, is inviting all of us to its annual Fabulous Food Show, and on Veterans Day, military cooks will be whipping up dishes that, had



they served back then, would have been enough to get us to re-up.

On Sunday, Veterans Day, tickets to the I-X Center's Fabulous Food Show, will be half price for veterans.

It gets better.

On Veterans Day will be "Taste for the Troops,"

friendly competition between cooks from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. The host will be Chef Sam Morgante, who cooked for the Commander-in-Chief.

The competition begins Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m. at the Main Kitchen Theatre. Not only a delight for the senses, but no KP!



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# Trenchermen, Unite! Colonial Eatery Sets a Place for You at the Table

By Christopher Kunzi

**A**ny place that peels, boils, and mashes its own potatoes starts on the right foot. So it is with the Colonial Restaurant on Ridge Road, just south of Brookpark Road, in Parma.

It is my kind of place: unpretentious, comfortable, and focused on its mission: Provide good meals at a good price with good service. That's it. No waiters announcing, "Hello, my name is Jeffrey and I'll be your waiter today. Can I tell you about our specials?"

The place does have specials, but they're paper-clipped in the big menu. If you can read, you can figure it out yourself.

There are two dining rooms here. The back room is booths and for the overflow crowd. In the front are marble-topped tables for two, four, six and squeeze-in-another. There is also

a counter with a half dozen or eight seats. A couple of televisions are mounted, but the one getting views is at the counter. Most customers seem to be too engrossed in conversation than to watch the telly.

The Colonial is a friendly place. While the front room buzzes with conversation, it is never loud. Well, except when one table or another erupts into laughter. I'm always tempted to join the table and ask what was so funny. I have a feeling the funny sto-



"Can I tell you our specials of the day, sir?"

ries are about family members or work, but rarely jokes.

The front room is worked by two waitresses and how they manage to provide service is a good question for a time-and-space engineer. Staff is friendly, quick to refill a coffee cup or clear the empty plates. So, if the front of the house can provide hot meals in a timely, friendly manner, you know the back of the house is well organized and more efficient than a hive of worker bees.

The dessert menu is a conundrum: Desserts look gorgeous, but meals are so generous, who has room for dessert? Maybe the next time we go, we'll just order two desserts each, and report back. If they taste half as good as they look, we'll need to add a couple inches when we next buy trousers.

The menu offers all sorts of dishes: appetizers, salads, and a truckload of big sandwiches. There are specials every day (though the menu is being redone right now, so don't quote me on it.) On a recent Thursday, corned beef and smothered chicken shared the specials menu with ribeye steak, broiled salmon, and stuffed peppers.

It is as close to home cooking that you're going to get unless you apologize to your mother-in-law. Me, I opt for the Colonial.

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## It May Not Sound Like a Lot, But Food and Ammo are Included

The Commander-in-Chief has proposed raises for enlisted military troops. The increase is 1.6 percent and likely to pass Congress. Some of the figures might be unnecessary. If you're a buck private after two years, maybe another career is calling. Same with privates first class.

### 2012 Base Pay for Enlisted Members

Pay-Grade	Less-than-2	Over-2	Over-3	Over-4	Over-6
E-9	-	-	-	-	-
E-8	-	-	-	-	-
E-7	2680	2925	3037	3185	3301
E-6	2318	2550	2663	2772	2885
E-5	2124	2266	2375	2487	2662
E-4	1946	2046	2157	2267	2364
E-3	1758	1868	1981	1981	1981
E-2	1671	1671	1671	1671	1671
E-1	1491	1491	1491	1491	1491
Pay-Grade	Over-8	Over-10	Over-12	Over-14	Over-16
E-9	4709	4816	4905	5109	-
E-8	3855	4026	4131	4258	4394
E-7	3499	3611	3811	3977	4090
E-6	3143	3244	3437	3496	3540
E-5	2845	2994	3013	3013	3013
E-4	2364	2364	2364	2364	2364
E-3	1981	1981	1981	1981	1981
E-2	1671	1671	1671	1671	1671
E-1	1491	1491	1491	1491	1491
Pay-Grade	Over-18	Over-20	Over-22	Over-24	Over-26
E-9	5268	5523	5740	5968	6315
E-8	4641	4767	4980	5098	5390
E-7	4209	4256	4412	4496	4816
E-6	3590	3590	3590	3590	3590
E-5	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013
E-4	2364	2364	2364	2364	2364
E-3	1981	1981	1981	1981	1981
E-2	1671	1671	1671	1671	1671
E-1	1491	1491	1491	1491	1491

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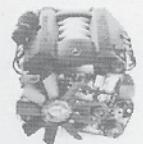
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## Mark Your Calendar; Meet Employers Who Want to Meet You

Monday, November 5th, 2012 at Quicken Loans Arena. The event is designed to introduce Northeast Ohio businesses to our nation's military veterans who are seeking good jobs. Last year's event was a huge success with over 80 employers, 400-plus veterans and sponsors are looking to increase both numbers this year.

Quicken Loans Arena and MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network) are partnering with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Veterans Services Program to bring together employers, colleges, social services and other partners to assist the men and women who have protected our nation.

# PTSD: Attends All Wars, but Relief Grows Closer

By Bill Grulich

**R**eturning veterans often have trouble sleeping, nightmares, flashbacks, problems with alcohol and substance abuse, anger problems, spousal difficulties, workplace concerns, divorce, sexual issues, family issues --- the list goes on.

During World War I, soldiers with battle trauma were called "shell shocked," the condition created by thousands of artillery shells falling on or near their trenches.

During World War II, mental ravages of war were called "combat stress reaction." During the Viet Nam War, combat stress was identified and formalized as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Around one hundred leaders gathered at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Medical Center for training on identifying PTSD and the basics of how to work with those returning veterans who have it.

With the identification of PTSD came effective treatment. According to Dr. Edgardo Padin, Chief of Psy-



Joan Englund, Executive Director of the Mental Health Advocacy Coalition and Rick DeChant Executive Director of Cuyahoga Community College's Veterans Services & Programs display the latest copy of DD 214 at the Community Clergy Training Event at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



Chaplain George Hankins

chology Service at the Cleveland VA hospital, "Ninety-five percent of those who go through a large-scale traumatic event --- combat, earthquake, 9/11 --- will suffer PTSD to some degree. After ninety

days, most of those symptoms will subside and no further treatment is needed." But, Dr. Padin said, "Thirty-six to 38 percent of those people will have PTSD after the ninety-day period and need treatment."

Dr. Padin, a Viet Nam War veteran, relayed the following story about a Korean War veteran he was treating. "For forty years, he kept seeing the head of a 12-year-old boy floating in front of him. It would just appear out of nowhere. He told the wartime story of his company commander ordering him to kill everyone in a village. They didn't know who was the enemy. He killed a little boy. All he remembers is that little boy looking at him right before he shot him.

He had to follow orders. He was doing what he had to do at that moment."

Chaplain George Hankins, a Gulf War Desert Storm veteran, talked about "Dear John" letters and how they are changing with modern communication. Hankins said, "We had a soldier receive a 'Dear John' video of his wife in 'the act' with another man and her saying 'We're through.'"

When the veteran returns, the home situation changes: rolls may be reversed. When the veteran returns, he/she has changed and so has the home front. The uncharted path is transitioning into home, work, and the community.

Most returning veterans do not want to talk about the problems of war. It's a tough sell to ask the returning veteran with PTSD to visit the veterans' hospital and enroll in a psychotherapy program.

Part of the therapy is about caring. Returning troops need caring and sincerity. Clergy and spiritual leaders can be the best in identifying veterans with PTSD and should be able to help those veterans.

Dr. Padin also related, "For many returning veterans, it's a loss of faith; well over eight percent of returning veterans have lost their faith." That is why our spiritual leaders are needed for our returning veterans. Those leaders need to be there for the veterans and be a trusting and a good listener.



## GHOSTS OF WAR

A play by Christopher Johnston

Directed by Charles Kartali

Wednesdays—Sundays, January 16-27, 2013

A retired Marine Corp officer conducts a 40-year search to learn what happened to his friend who was killed at Khe Sanh in 1967. Based on personal interviews with a Vietnam War veteran.

Tickets are gratefully discounted for veterans and active duty military.

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### Many resources are available for veterans and their families including the following:

**Real Warriors Campaign** is a multimedia public awareness campaign designed to encourage help-seeking behavior among service members, veterans and military families coping with invisible wounds. <http://www.realwarriors.net/>

**National Center for PTSD** is the center of excellence for research and education on the prevention, understanding, and treatment of PTSD - <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

**Veteran Crisis Line** 1-800-273-8255 (Available 24 Hours)  
For families, there is "Coaching into Care" 1-888-823-7458 (Weekdays: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.)

There is also PTSD Applications for Android and iPhone. Download the mobile app here: [www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsdcoach.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsdcoach.asp)



# Kimberly Hazelgrove: Opportunity Knocked and She Opened the Door to Baldwin-Wallace University

By Annabelle Lee Dowd

**Y**ou can't keep a good woman down. Kimberly Hazelgrove is a good woman.

Farm-raised in Geauga County, she is a Baldwin-Wallace University student, former staff sergeant in the Army, passionate mother to her children, tough as nails and tender as a rose petal.

The former staff sergeant is a war widow: her husband, Brian, was killed in Iraq in 2004. She soldiers on.

She is effervescent, energetic, and quick to smile.

Whew! That's a lot of woman.

The oldest of three children, she pretty much grew up on her own; her parents divorced when she was very young. After graduating from high school, she took on more than she could handle. She couldn't make rent and car payments while going to a community college. She wondered

what opportunities were there for her in the military.

"The military had always appealed to me," she said. A cousin served in the Navy and an aunt was a career Marine.

If she joined the armed forces, the GI Bill would help pay college tuition.

She stepped forward and raised her right hand.

Basic training was at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Of her first contact with the military, she said, "I was 21 and thought these people were crazy. I got off the bus and they were yelling and screaming at me. I couldn't care



Kimberly Hazelgrove: A Busy Yellow Jacket

less; it went in one ear and out the other. I didn't rebel, but it didn't motivate me, either. I was old enough to know what I needed to do and what I wanted to do."

It was in the Army she met her husband, Brian. Both were divorced and Brian had children. The marriage was blessed with a couple more kids.

A widowed staff sergeant with children doesn't fit in the Army, and she took her honorable discharge and adjusted her plans.

"My primary focus is my children and my education," she said.

Living and working in Washington, D.C., she studied colleges the way a forward observer studies terrain. She selected Baldwin Wallace University without a campus visit. *U.S. News and World Report* named BWU a top university, where the university motto is, "Quality Education with a Personal Touch." The school was founded in 1845 and is a Yellow Ribbon school. Plus, for Hargrove, it was close to family.

She has a double major, sociology and business administration. She does a great deal of work on behalf of veterans and their families. "I need both degrees because sociology teaches understanding people and the ways they operate in their environments. The business major allows me to learn how decisions are made, legislative initiatives, which are in Congress."



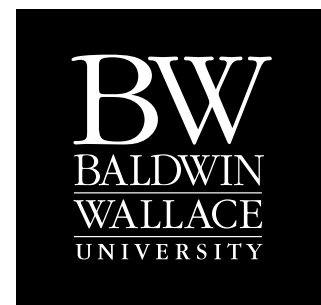
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# Ohio State Responds to Needs of Student Veterans

By Wayne Carlson, Guest Columnist

I have been on the faculty at Ohio State for quite a number of years, teaching both at the graduate and undergraduate level. I started in administration in 1991, first as a director of a research center on campus, and then as a department chair. In that capacity, I encountered several military and veterans issues, including student deployments and activations as well as military personnel returning to campus. A little over 3 years ago, I was tagged to be the Dean of Undergraduate students, with responsibilities that spanned both the academic and the student life of all undergrads on campus (nearly 50,000). Included in my direct reports were the ROTC programs and student advising, both with a strong military student commitment.

As soon as I took office, I was made keenly aware that the support for our military and veteran students was good in some areas, and not so much in others. We had launched a “veterans-only general education course program” that allowed the cohort of students to attend, study and interact with like-experienced students in writing and narrative courses. We had an excellent counseling and consultation program, our student health program was good, we had a veterans learning program, and we were just launching a veterans house living environment, a transitional residence for several dozen returning vets.

However, all of these services and programs were uncoordinated and spread over several different areas

of our campus.

Additionally, our previous veterans service office was established in 1991, when we served only a couple of hundred students. We had 1.75 people in the office processing the GI Bill benefits applications, but also overseeing the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action functions for all veteran employees of the University. The small staff fielded calls, connected with the VA and other

**As soon as I took office, I was made keenly aware that the support for our military and veteran students was good in some areas, and not so much in others.**

services, responded to student complaints, etc. As the number of veterans returning to campus increased, (we had 1,776 vet students last year and nearly 2,000 this year) and as we see more dependents coming because of Post-9/11 financial benefits, the small staff was overwhelmed.

As luck would have it, the commander of our Air Force ROTC detachment, which reported to me, retired, and I was able to set aside some funds to hire him on a part time basis to do a thorough analysis of our situation and to bring forward a plan to establish a Veteran Resource Center that would coordinate all of our efforts for vets, and to provide a single “gateway” for students and

families of vets as they returned to student life.

He assessed the programs of all of our peer institutions, looked at all the services we offered, connected with our Vets4Vets student organization, participated in a Veterans Services Task Force that we established, comprised of reps from all of our vet services groups, met with VA and representatives from both the military and the government. He looked at

numbers;

- Act on the need for former military members/veterans to be part of this office;

- Veterans office leaders ideally have backgrounds in military/veterans issues, higher education, and strategic planning with the most important skill being able to coordinate across departments/colleges at a high level.

In addition, we identified six fundamental responsibilities of the office and are instituting and reviewing them at present.

We are locating the office in our Student Services Building, a centrally located facility where all of our student financial aid, admissions, registrar, bursar, and first year experience offices are located. It will be on the first floor, with excellent handicap accessibility. It will be fully staffed, and integrate over a dozen student work-study veteran students, funded by the VA. It will not house all of the disparate services, but will be a central access point for referrals to our counseling, health services, student learning centers, etc. We have built in space for reps from the VA and for a dedicated academic advisor in addition to the expanded benefits processing staff. The office will maintain the same access as all of our other student services offices. In addition, we are planning for a veteran's lounge at a different space on campus, which will include a space for vets to congregate, study, and socialize, with expanded access hours.

the impact of programs such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Yellow Ribbon program, and the State's GI Promise, and made predictions of the increasing need for focused services.

Because of his report, I recommended to our Provost and President that we establish a Military and Veterans Services Office. This recommendation included several essentials:

- The office should be located on campus proper;

- The office would not need to own all resources, but should definitely be representative of and coordinate resources across OSU;

- Integrate the existing veteran services personnel, but expand the

## November is Busy Month for Catholic War Veterans of Lake County

St. Gabriel Church, 9925 Johnnycake Ridge Road, in Concord, will have members of Catholic War Veterans, Post 1959 of Lake County, offering memberships and poppies at the 5 p.m. Mass on Saturday, November 10, as well Sunday, November 11, at morning masses scheduled for 7:30, 9:30, and 11:30.

On the first two weekends in November, the post is having a CARE package collection for the USO at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 7575 Bellflower Road, Mentor.

## Afghan War Begins Year 12; Dozen Down, Two to Go

When international forces leave Afghanistan in two years, the only good bet is the country will be riddled with bombs, bullets, dead women and children, and faint hope for civility.

U.S. forces have sacrificed more than 2,000 killed in action, and uncounted numbers of wounded, both physically and mentally.

The beautiful, mountainous country has been counting its war dead for a long time, including the bloody civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1996.

Prior to the civil war, the Soviet Union, which made the mistake of joining a war where it wasn't needed or wanted, lost 13,310 soldiers and suffered more than 34,000 wounded. The Russians were there for a decade.



# Military Families Transition After Service, Too

In recent years, we have witnessed the growth of support mechanisms for our military families, most notably First Lady Michelle Obama's and Dr. Jill Biden's *Joining Forces* initiative. There are still families, however, who remain invisible – the families of veterans in transition after service.

Military families in transition are likely accustomed to their service member as the breadwinner, even if the non-military spouse is employed. What happens if that recently discharged service member has trouble finding immediate employment capable of sustaining his/her family? How does the spouse step up to help, while being sensitive to what the new veteran is experiencing? How easy is it for that spouse to find employment, with a scattered (or possibly nonexistent) work history?

While on active duty, the military provides housing (or an allowance) for service members with families. On deactivation, that military family, now in transition, needs to find housing on its own, and deal with the new reality of a landlord or a mortgage. The loss of the service member's stable income, coupled with the loss of free (or nearly free) housing,



Bridget Ludwa with a Veteran Student

may reveal the lack of budgeting experience to be a real weakness for many military families in transition.

Along with housing, the military provides community. How does a military family in transition find community? Are both the service member and spouse from the same city, and are they returning to a supportive family in that same area?

If this is not the case, the decision of where to move after active service can be stressful. In addition, the military family in transition may encounter people in their new community who have diverse, and sometimes opposing, perspectives regarding our nation's military.

Military children are often additionally challenged, having at-

tended school with peers who have also moved around in the military, being routinely uprooted and transplanted. When the service member parent leaves active duty, that child will transfer to a civilian school; his/her new peers are children who have likely never moved, perhaps never attended a different school, and who have known their classmates their whole lives. This dynamic is foreign to a military child in transition, and this experience can be very isolating.

Spouses of veterans in transition find themselves in unfamiliar territory with regard to possible employment issues or just being unaware of how to support their veteran's transition. Children of veterans in transition also cope with the reality of becoming civilian; all they have known since birth was the military. My family experienced all of these issues in 1994, when my mother left active duty (transitioning to the US Army Reserves), and our family moved to the city where my parents grew up - Cleveland. It is with this awareness that I ask the veteran community: what can *we* do to support the families that continue to be the strength of our new veterans?

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Distance Learning Opportunities  
Access to Community Resources

Veterans Club  
Career Planning  
Scholarship Opportunities



**To learn more contact:  
Veteran Services & Programs, Cuyahoga Community College  
216-987-3193      [www.tri-c.edu/veterans/](http://www.tri-c.edu/veterans/)**



# April 15 May Seem a Long Way Off. It Isn't.

By Carol Grady

**I**ncome Taxes - I am sure none of you wants to think about taxes but here are some hints to help you make



Carol Grady

your tax preparation a little easier in 2013.

**Military** - Those in the military can deduct things like living, moving and travel allowances from your gross income. You can also deduct combat zone pay. This pay must be a month in which you either served in a combat zone or were hospitalized as a result of wounds, disease or injury obtained while serving in the combat zone. You need to have

only served for one or more days in a month to qualify for the exclusion for the entire month.

The following deductions apply to both military and non-military.

**Medical** - you can deduct medical and dental insurance premiums that you personally pay, co-pays, prescriptions, mileage to and from your doctor or dentist and parking. This includes any physical therapy or medical equipment prescribed by your doctor. This applies to expenses for both you and any of your dependents.

**Charitable** - all your contributions to charities. If you or any of your dependents volunteer, your mileage to and from the facility is deductible. Clothing, household goods, ap-

pliances, etc. given to a charity are deductible. Save the receipts that the charities give you.

**Dependents** - you can have dependents other than your children. Sometimes a parent or other family member lives with you or you help support them. Talk to your tax preparer about this. There are many things to consider which are too numerous to discuss in this article. Again, just keep good records about expenses paid.

**Unemployment** - unemployment compensation is taxable. If your spouse is working and you are collecting unemployment you might want to think about having federal income tax withheld from your payment. It all depends on how much income you

are both receiving and the number of exemptions you take. Give your tax preparer a call and discuss with him/her.

**Alimony** - it is deductible as an expense when you pay it and it is income when you receive it.

The most important thing to remember in all this is to find a reputable tax preparer. You will save money in the long run using someone who will look carefully for all your possible legal deductions and who has the experience and credentials to do a good job for you.

Carol Grady is DD 214 Chronicle's tax writer as well as a professional tax preparer. Her telephone number is (440) 799-7514.

## The Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission: There When We Need It

By Warren Harley

**O**ne of our unheralded benefits goes by the most mundane of names, The Veterans Service Commission.

More accurately, the agency might be called, "Give Us a Call: We Can Help Solve That Problem."

In every issue, we profile one of the five commissioners and we'll continue that in the January/February edition. However, we might better serve DD 214 Chronicle readers by explaining what this remarkable office does for us. Its service goes back to the Civil War.

In Cleveland, which serves veterans in Cuyahoga County, the office is at 1848 Prospect Avenue, just across the street from the Wolstein Center. It is not part of the Veterans Administration, though it works closely with the VA, including VA claims.

Its mission is simple: "Provide direct and indirect financial assistance



and other benefits to veterans and their dependents who have met with unexpected hardship resulting from illness, injury, or loss of employment, and meet eligibility requirements."

That mission covers a lot of territory. The Commission is up to it. Being named to the commission means a series of interviews. The pay isn't much; every commissioner serves because he has something to offer.

At the Commission offices, you're a face, not a name. Your situation, regardless how many variations have been seen by commissioners, is yours alone. The resolution of the difficulty is equally unique.

Never worry that your situation or problem is too big or too small for Commission help. These guys are like old pastors; they've heard it all. By the way, that experience also means you're not going to swindle them.

These guys can spot grifters faster than Clark Kent changed clothes.

Some commissioners know a great deal. Others continue to learn. When the five of them sit down and put their heads together, it's rare they fail to find a workable, practical, positive solution.

A few observations of the commissioners:

Each is a veteran. They understand our situations as well as our language. At present, the commission is all-male. Look for that to change in coming years.

Each relies on fellow commissioners, for counsel, or advice, or experience in a particular field. It is teamwork at its best and the beneficiaries are veterans.

In addition to their own work, they understand the workings of the Veterans Administration and serve as experienced guides.



## VETERAN'S DAY TRIBUTE!

TICKETS ARE \$15 for Veterans and Active Military Personnel – SUNDAY ONLY (SAVE \$15 PER TICKET!)  
 Sunday, November 11, 2012 - 10:00 am - 6:00 pm



*Learn the latest cooking techniques, collect new recipes and taste, as well as purchase, great food, wines and products!*

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  - Taste of the Neighborhood Stage – Daily presentations by top chefs in the region.
  - Grand Tasting Pavilion – The American Wine School will assemble over 300 wines, beers and spirits.
  - Beverage Theatre – Daily seminars conducted by the American Wine School featuring topics of discussion for a wide range of tastes.
  - Celebrity Chef Autograph Pavilion – Meet your favorite celebrity talent. Stop by the **Food Show Bookstore** to purchase a copy of your favorite chef's newest cookbook, then drop by the Autograph Pavilion to have it signed. (Purchasing event tickets or cookbooks does not guarantee an autograph.)
  - Sweet Stage – Features various demonstrations on stage from regional confection experts as well as sweet and decadent chocolates to sample and buy. The **Cake Walk** displays artistically designed cakes from local pastry chefs and bakers.
  - Shop-N-Drop – Shop all day and have a secure holding area (free of charge) to keep all your purchases. Free gift wrapping is also available.
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- 12:15PM Jacques Pepin *with special guest Claudine Pepin*
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- 4:15PM Michael Symon

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# Talking with Dennis Kresak, Chief Executive Officer, Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio

**DD 214 Chronicle:** A half dozen years after the Arcade opened for business in downtown Cleveland, the Volunteers of America was created. Volunteers of America has a history of pitching in and helping, whenever and wherever its services can help the community. Its business plan was simple, yet far-reaching: To go where it was needed and do whatever was called for. That brief but broad mission, over the course of a century, has provided a panoply of services, including summer camps, hot meals for the hungry, shoes for the shoeless ... the list goes on and on. Do you think Balington and Maud Booth knew what they were setting out to do? The term visionary comes to mind.

**Dennis Kresak:** One of the unique things about Volunteers of America nationally, is that different services are provided in each community based on the needs of those in the area and needs not being met by other government, community or service organizations. This has allowed Volunteers of America to truly assess real needs and step up to solutions. That original flexibility and broad mission has led to the impact we still have in communities today. I think "visionary" is a pretty good

way to describe it.

I really do believe the Booths knew what needed to be done. They recognized that the social environment of the late 1800's called for a broad vision, and that vision has been time tested to the present where today we have a diversity of services that reaches 16,000 people annually.

**DD 214 Chronicle:** The name, Volunteers of America, is so simple, yet perfect. I know you can't jump in a time machine, but somehow the Booths were able to rally volunteers to relieve some horrible social conditions. America was then a different country, yet today the VOA has the same mission. How is it that Volunteers of America has been able to adjust to changing needs?

**Dennis Kresak:** From the roots of the word "volunteer," which in the 1800s described anyone committed to a mission or cause, Volunteers of America is what it is today because of the many dedicated staff who understand their work as a ministry of service. This perspective has guided the organization down a path to relieve negative social conditions is driven

by a passion to minister to those that are forgotten. We have the energy and resilience to adapt to changing needs by finding solutions that work. Serving those most in need is more than a goal, it is our mission.

**DD 214 Chronicle:** How is it Volunteers of America is able to recruit such talented, committed, hard-working people to its staff? It's not as if you join Volunteers of America to make money or to find yourself the guest on a talk show. What sort of men and women are drawn to work at Volunteers of America? Can you say what the three top personal characteristics are in them?

**Dennis Kresak:** People are drawn to us because of a passionate need to help those who can't help themselves. They believe that they can make a better life for those in need and work tirelessly everyday to reach those goals. I would say three of the top personal characteristics I see in our staff are caring; faith in others; and selflessness.

**DD 214 Chronicle:** How did you first become acquainted with Volunteers of America? How did you come to join? What positions have you held?

**Dennis Kresak:** I was recruited to work at the Indiana affiliate in 1990 as a Program Director overseeing homeless and corrections programs. I also held the position of Director of Development. In 1992, I was given the responsibility of managing the Ohio affiliate and have been in the role of President/CEO since that time.

**DD 214 Chronicle:** Along those same lines, I wonder: What brought you to Volunteers of America and what keeps you here? Are there satisfactions in your work not shared by, say, mutual fund managers, or union bricklayers, or teachers? What are they?

**Dennis Kresak:** I believe those who work in this field are here because of a sense of satisfaction in making a better world through helping others. There is a tremendous sense of accomplishment at the end of each day knowing that through your efforts, others have benefitted.

**DD 214 Chronicle:** What are you working on at present?

**Dennis Kresak:** We are working on developing permanent supportive affordable housing and are continuing in our never ending fight to assist struggling veterans in any way that will show our sincere thanks for their sacrifice.



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