

HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES ON VETERANS DAY

DI Daily Independent

‘I want to continue being Mark’s mom’



JESSICA WESTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT

Lydia Gomez braves the wind to honor son Mark Vargas’ memory at the Petroglyph Festival Nov. 4, 2017. Gomez is posing with Vargas’ military banner and her daughter, Marina Gomez’s, 2006 Mustang, which was part of the Muscle Mustangs of Ridgecrest Car Club show.

By **JESSICA WESTON**
City Editor

It has been more than a year since Mark Vargas passed away on Aug. 5, 2016, at the age of almost 31, but his mother, Lydia Gomez, has found ways to keep her son’s memory alive.

Mark has been included as part of the Remembering Our Fallen exhibit at both the state and national level. Lydia and her daughter, Marina Gomez, also found a way to honor Mark closer to home. They posted his military banner next to Marina’s blue 2006 Ford Mustang at the Muscle Mustangs of Ridgecrest Car Club show during the Petroglyph Festival in November, where Marina chose to “adopt” Mark as a vet.

Mark’s heroic instincts started early. At 16, he was working for the Daily Independent when he and Josiah Long helped save the life of a young boy. The two were selling subscriptions door to door on Segundo Street, when a 3-year-old child was injured in a car accident. The two drove the toddler to Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

Later, when he told his mother of his decision to become a Navy Corpsman to receive medical training and save lives, Lydia said she supported the decision.

“I never thought that it would actually take him into combat,” Lydia said in 2016. “I thought, he’s going to work in a hospital. So I thought he would be safe.”

That’s not exactly the way it worked out. Mark was deployed to Afghanistan, where he spent most of his career attached to a Marine Squadron.

As a Second Class Hospital Corpsman, he was assigned to Marine Support Squadron 371’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team. His team aided in several Marines and allies disposing of IEDs throughout the Helmand Province.

Lydia said he saved a life when a bomb went off as it was being defused. Running across un-cleared ground, “he got to his marine and he saved his life.”

Lydia Gomez keeps memory of heroic son Mark Vargas alive

Such automatic heroism was typical of his nature, she said; Mark was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his heroic lifesaving actions during his deployment in Afghanistan.

Lydia said that anyone wanting to honor Mark could follow his example by taking positive actions without fear of judgment. “Don’t be scared of people judging you when you are taking action. If it’s for the good of someone, just do it,” she said.

Mark also received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his actions on Oct. 15, 2006, in Maryland. Mark assisted three victims of a two-car collision that was feared to have the potential of explosion. He removed an unconscious victim and reassured the other two until emergency responders arrived.

According to Lydia, Mark battled post-traumatic stress disorder for six years, which led to depression and alcohol abuse as the cumulative result of service in combat areas. He was ultimately hospitalized with pancreatitis and died of cirrhosis of the liver.

Lydia reported that Mark’s death has been recognized as military-related and that he received a letter from then- President Barack Obama thanking him for his service and his sacrifice.

His picture was included as part of the Remembering Our Fallen exhibit that was displayed in the Kerr McGee Center for the anniversary of Sept. 11 this year. Ironically, Mark’s popularity may have accounted for the mysterious disappearance of the photo from the exhibit.

“There is a possibility that maybe somebody took it,” Lydia said. It has since been replaced. She added that the same picture will be used for the national exhibit, but will be displayed on a tower.

Then there was the Muscle Mustangs of Ridgecrest Car Club.

Mark’s sister, Marina, joined last spring, according to Lydia. “She knew this event was coming up. We had Mark’s banner. I had it rolled up in bedroom in plastic.”

An initial plan to cover the car with the banner was scrapped and they decided to simply stand it up.

“This was the perfect opportunity to display it again in his honor,” Lydia said. She said the club OK’d the idea. She attended the car show Nov. 4, answering questions and trying successfully to keep the banner in the ground despite the wind.

Lydia also touched base with one of Mark’s friends at the event. She said in the last year she has become closer to his circle of friends.

Mark, she said, was the kind of person who brought people together and made sure everyone was included – a function he is still performing.

“I have gotten to know this whole new group of young people who have kept in contact with me and actually made friends with me and its made me feel so good.

“I feel like he doesn’t want me to feel alone, and it’s like this energy that I get when I speak to them and they speak of Mark.”

Vargas said that keeping Mark’s memory alive has helped her deal with her grief.

“I love being Mark’s mom,” he said. “I want to continue being Mark’s mom. I want to continue doing things for Mark. It might not make sense, but to me it makes sense.”

Honor Flight gets vets to memorials

By **Jack Barnwell**
Editor

Washington, D.C., is home to a wealth of history and politics. For veterans from those who served in World War I to those still in active service, the nation’s capital is home to the memorials built in their honor and to thank them for the service provided to the nation.

Not every veteran gets a

chance to see those memorials, but one service is trying to alleviate that, especially for those World War II and Korean War veterans still alive.

Honor Flight of Kern County is actively trying to do it, according to Gary Zuber, Honor Flight’s outreach representative for Kern River Valley and Ridgecrest.

“We honor veterans and they go and take all of their memorials, Arlington, and the Tomb of the Unknown,” Zuber said of Kern Honor Flight. Veterans are flown back free of charge, and accompanied by a guardian — usually a family member or friend. The flights depart



COURTESY PHOTO

A group of veterans from Kern County gathers at the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., in October.

SEE HONOR, C2

HONOR

Continued from C1

and return to Bakersfield.

Kern Honor Flight is part of a national organization that goes back to May 2005, when 12 World War II veterans were flown back to Washington, D.C. free of charge in six small planes. By the end of the year, 137 veterans were transported to see their memorial.

Zuber said that the Kern chapter of the Honor Flight sent its first cadre of in May 2012. "Lili Marsh started it," he said. "She got wind of it, she had the heart, and decided to do that in Kern County."

For its inaugural flight, Kern County sent 21 veterans back to Washington, D.C. Now, five and a half years later, more than 1,000 veterans from Kern County have flown. Kern County itself is home to approximately 46,000 veterans.

"Our mission is to honor and send America's veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the memorials built in their honor for their service to our country – at no cost to the veteran. Top priority is given to our most senior veterans – World War II veter-

ans – and those from any conflict who are terminally ill – followed by Korean and Vietnam veterans," according to Kern Honor Flight's webpage. "Every veteran accepted by HFKC for this honor travels at no cost to him/her due to the generosity of tax deductible donations from our community. The trips include all air and ground transportation, meals, overnight accommodations, and guided tours."

The program has earned a lot of support and praise from major companies and leaders in Kern County, including Congressman Kevin McCarthy.

Zuber said he's heard nothing but good experiences from the veterans who went on the flight.

"I've never heard anyone who is disappointed. It's a 'we thing.' There we each do our own little thing to make it work," Zuber said. "It's a long overdue 'thank you' for what the veterans did."

Zuber is a familiar face in Ridgecrest, attending the monthly Veterans breakfast held by the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert at the Historic USO Building. He provides informational material and assists with sign-ups as needed for the flights.

Several Ridgecrest residents have gone

on the Honor Flight since it started in 2012. All of them called it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Ridgecrest resident Keith Sinton, who served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War as a dispersing clerk, said the Honor Flight experience was wonderful when he went in 2014.

"We saw all the various military memorials, from WWII to Vietnam, memorial dedicated to the women service members, the WWII memorial and everything," Sinton said.

Sinton said he had heard about the Honor Flight numerous times, and finally considered it while in Fresno with his wife when a friend of a friend asked about it.

"It appealed to me because all the vets that told me that I should go on it," Sinton said. "They didn't tell me much other than I would have the time of my life."

When Sinton decided to go on the Honor Flight with his son Terry as his sponsor, he noted there was so much to see, and that the World War II memorial is impressive. The memorial consists of 56 granite pillars, 17 feet tall and arranged in a semi-circle around a plaza with two 43-foot plazas. Each pillar represents the arrangement of the U.S. at the time: 48 states, the

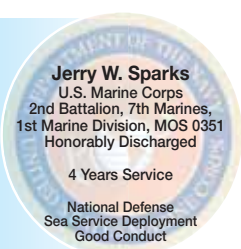
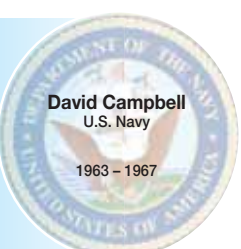
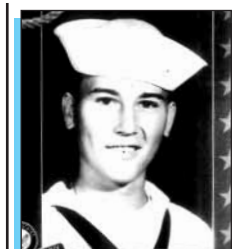
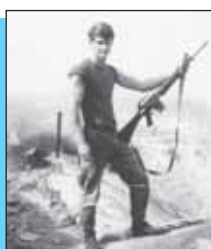
territories of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"It was just beautiful with the pillars there for every state and the territories," Sinton said. "The Korean War memorial was also moving in that the man who made it ... he made he made life-sized statues of men in their uniform coming out of a wooded area when it was probably raining because they had gear their expressions showed all type of expressions, fear, worry. I can well imagine how those men looked like when they were on patrol, just portrayed the emotion and feelings of them men. You have to really see it to understand."

The Vietnam War Memorial also strikes a chord, he said, as the memorial wall holds the 58,318 names of those who died, were listed as missing in action, prisoners of war, and others.

"It was just moving to see the names of the men who served and died in that war, and [a reminder of those who] were not given the respect deserved when they came home," Sinton said.

SEE FLIGHT, C3



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FLIGHT

Continued from C2

Sinton said perhaps the most amazing experience was that his group was greeted by people upon their arrival.

"The one thing that really got me was that as we were just getting off the bus, my son pushed me down the walkway in the wheelchair to the memorial, where people lined down cheering down, just praising us with cheers," Sinton said. "I said, 'Terry, stop, I'm going to walk through this.' The respect you get shown is just tremendous and moving. They just stood and clapped. Shook our hand and thanked us for our service. I would think it would be tremendous for those who came back from Vietnam."

Harley Baker, another Korean War-era veteran who served as a staff sergeant in the Air Force from 1953 to 1957, also flew back in 2014. Like Sinton, Baker had nothing but good things to say of the program.

"Words really won't express how I feel about it," Baker said. "Seeing all of the memorials, there really aren't any words to describe the emotions I felt."

Baker said that he remembered World War II when he was young, but he was not old enough to serve in the military. He went to South Korea toward the tail end of the conflict.

Seeing the memorials reminded him of the service others have given before and since.

"See the memorials honoring the veterans that served in those wars, I even as a vet owe each of them a lot for the freedom I have," Baker said.

Going on the Honor Flight was the only time that Baker said he has been to D.C.

"I owe Honor Flight a deep debt to be able to go each of the memorials. I had the idea that the memorials would be an 8-by-10 hole in the wall. The memorials are huge," Baker said.

He noted that all the memorials capture each war in its own fashion.

"The Korean War memorial, after the war, seeing what they did to honor the weather problems of Korea, it was amazing," Baker said. "I had it easy in Korea, but I know others that didn't. The Vietnam war, the entire length of the wall, just seeing those years put into one perspective is mind boggling."

Currently, Kern County Honor Flight is

transitioning its priority of veterans from those who served in World War II to Korean War and Vietnam War veterans, as well as those of any conflict who are terminally ill.

Honor Flight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a large portion of its funding comes from sponsors, supporters and donations. According to Kern Honor Flight, it costs about \$1,500 to fly a veteran back for the three-day experience. Many businesses sponsor a veteran to fly back.

Each veteran is accompanied by a guardian or family member, but must typically assist the veteran at the airport, hotel, memorials and during the flight if necessary. The application also states that spouses, companions and siblings will not be considered as guardians.

"All applicants may be subject to a Live Scan review as well as an interview. Being a guardian is physically strenuous as there is much walking (up to 7 miles a day), lifting, and pushing the transport chair up mild inclines," according to the application.

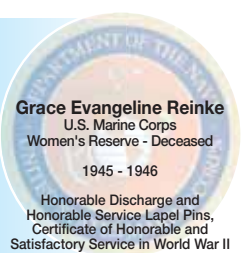
As a nonprofit, the organization also looks for volunteers to help in a variety of



COURTESY PHOTO
Congressman Kevin McCarthy takes a moment with veterans on the Kern County Honor Flight in October.

ways, from media and public relations to data entry and outreach.

For more information on Honor Flight, visit www.honorflightkerncounty.org or call 661-527-3838. Gary Zuber, the Kern River Valley and Ridgecrest outreach person for Kern County Honor Flight, can be reached at 760-379-2109 or at Gary@HonorFlightKernCounty.org.





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 <p>Neil Jerome Elmquist U.S. Army - Retired 1945 - 1946 WWII Victory Medal Expert Sharp Shooter Medal Good Conduct Medal</p>	 <p>Niles T. Elmquist U.S. Army Distinguished Flying Cross Sharpshooter Medal Good Conduct Overseas Medal</p>	 <p>SPO Jered S. Roark U.S. Army 2001 - 2004 Army Commendation Medal Army Achievement Medal Good Conduct Medal National Defense Medal</p>	 <p>Richard Lasell, SP4 U.S. Army - Discharged 1969 - 1972</p>
 <p>Susan (Hoppus) Lasell, Captain U.S. Army - Discharged 1971 - 1976</p>	 <p>Andrew Saunders, CW02 U.S. Army - Deceased 2009 - 2015</p>	 <p>George W. Hoppus, Lt. Col. Army Air Corps, Air Force Retired - Deceased 1942 - 1964</p>	 <p>Marti (Golobic) Hoppus, SP5 U.S. Army - Discharged 1975 - 1976</p>
 <p>Justin Smith U.S. Army - Active Duty 2014 - Present</p>	 <p>Harold L. Smith U.S. Navy Honorable Discharged 1941 - 1944</p>	 <p>Cody Smith U.S. Army Honorable Discharged 2012 - 2015</p>	 <p>Bob Smith U.S. Army Honorable Discharged 1979 - 1984 Army Commendation Medal Good Conduct Medal NCO Professional Development Ribbon Army Service Ribbon Overseas Service Ribbon</p>

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Veterans Day 2017 official statements

Capt. Paul M. Dale, NAWS Commanding Officer

For 98 years, Americans have remembered those who served our country in uniform on 11 November – first termed Armistice Day, and then, since 1954 as Veterans Day. In this 99th year of commemoration we remember that Veterans Day is a day of reflection for the sacrifices of those who served in the U.S. military and their families.

Veterans Day is largely intended to thank living veterans for dedicated and loyal service to their country but also honors all American veterans, both living and deceased.

Today many Americans observe the Veterans Day holiday by attending ceremonies, events, or parades dedicated

to honoring veterans for their service. The ceremonies, events, or parades provide a formal opportunity for veterans to share their experiences and speak about their time in service. Moreover, the activities surrounding such events enable Americans of all ages a chance to personally interact with and thank those that have served this great nation and protected our freedoms.

Many years ago President John Fitzgerald Kennedy said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

The spirit of President Kennedy's words remind us that while we celebrate on one day a year with various com-

memorative Veterans Day activities and celebrations the veterans who serve or served our country; it is a reminder to express our appreciation year-round and be respectful, to those who have honorably served and remain amongst us, as well as to the families of those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I celebrate and honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. It is with this spirit in mind that we say thank you to those that answered this great nation's call-to-arms thank you for your service and thank you for your sacrifices. You are appreciated today and every day!

Joan Johnson, NAWCWD executive director

On Veterans Day, the nation comes together to honor the service of our nation's military members, past and present. The men and women we call veterans answered the nation's need across the globe, in wartime and in peace, representing the United States with honor, courage and commitment.

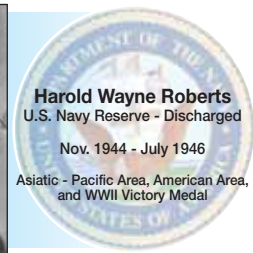
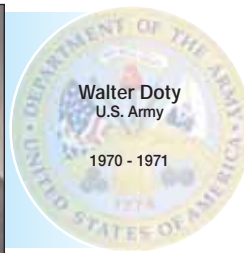
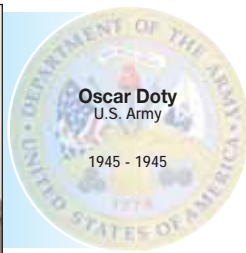
Veterans defended our nation and our partners in far-away lands, on ships and in aircraft, under the sea and on the land. They also brought humanitarian aid to those in need, both in far-flung locales and closer to home. We still have men and women fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other regions around the globe, but we also have service members aiding hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and building schools and clinics in Southeast Asia.

All these forms of service deserve honor and recognition; Veterans Day is an opportunity to show it.

As a military organization, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division understands the value of service. At NAWCWD, we say that people are our asymmetric advantage, and that is especially true with our military veteran employees. They know what they faced in service, and they work to ensure our efforts continue to support those still in the field.

This Veterans Day, I honor those men and women who serve and who have served; I especially want to thank the hundreds of veterans who I work with every day at NAWCWD.

Thank you for your bravery and continued commitment to your nation. Happy Veterans Day.



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 <p>Cornell E. Hall, SKC (E7) U.S. Navy - Retired 20 Years Service Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, Good Conduct (3), National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal</p>		 <p>Bammer Blackshaw U.S. Navy - Discharged Honorable Under Medical Due To Back Injury 1984 - 1986 E4 Combat Medic</p>	
 <p>Larry A. Jackson DVM U.S. Navy - Discharged Reserves 10 Years</p>		 <p>Lt. Col. Darcy Saint Amant Covington US Army - Active 1998 - Present West Point - Class of 1998</p>	
 <p>Robert M. Kinstle Jr. U.S. Navy - Retired 4 Years</p>		 <p>Robert E. Bloudek U.S. Navy - Discharged Journalist 10 Years Service Navy Achievement Medal National Defense Medal Good Conduct Medal Navy Recruiting Service Medal Navy Expert Rifle Medal Navy Expert Pistol Medal</p>	

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and continue to serve. Thank You!**

Veterans Day 2017 official statements

Rear Adm. Brian Corey, NAWCWD

Census data tells me that more than one in 10 of you reading this today are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, so this is for you.

Thank you for your service. Whatever branch, whatever era, however long your tour, you raised your right hand and swore to defend your nation. As an active duty naval officer, I can tell you that following in your footsteps feels like standing on the shoulders of giants.

This Veterans Day, people across the country will pause to honor your service. They'll do it with parades and picnics, concerts and dinners. For one day, all eyes will be on you.

Here in the Indian Wells Val-

ley, your service is saluted daily. Whether it's someone holding a door, going out of their way to thank you when they see you wearing your service ball cap, or a high school football team taking the field waving American flags, the people of this community live and breathe the patriotic spirit our veterans embody.

We are blessed to live in such a supportive community, one that values service and commitment the way the men, women, and children of the IWV do.

Happy Veterans Day to all those who've served, and thank you to everyone who continues to support our veterans and the men and women of the U.S. military.

Sen. Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) issued the following statement to commemorate Veterans Day and to honor our Veterans:

"Our Veterans have earned our respect and deserve our praise.

"Since the founding of our nation, the men and women of our military have defended our borders. They have secured our freedom and, throughout history, have secured freedom for millions of people around the world.

"For generations, the commitment displayed by our Veterans to the ideals contained in our Constitution for freedom and liberty is unparalleled.

State Sen. Jean Fuller

"Our Veterans have put their lives between us and evil. This tradition for selfless service continues today with the heroic actions by our active-duty military personnel. They stand up to terrorists who hate us for our religious freedom and are prepared around the clock to defend us against rogue nations determined to destroy our way of life.

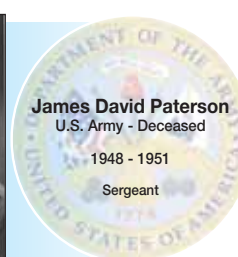
"Veterans Day is our opportunity to celebrate this selfless service that our Veterans have provided to promote peace, protect our borders, and advance the cause of freedom that our country was founded on.

"Our Veterans have provided an extraordinary service to our

nation and our allies around the world. They stood up for us by pledging allegiance to our country and a flag that represents more than any one individual. That flag, and their service, represents freedom. It represents the immense costs made to achieve a more free society and the tremendous sacrifices to maintain that freedom.

"Because of their service, sacrifice, and commitment, I can proudly stand for a flag that represents so much, to so many, and show gratitude for our Veterans who have earned our respect and deserve our praise.

"Thank you to all of our Veterans and have a great Veterans Day!"




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HSUMD takes lead in services for local vets



PHOTOS BY JACK BARNWELL/DAILY INDEPENDENT

ABOVE AND BELOW: Scenes from Veterans Breakfasts held this past summer by the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert.

The Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert has taken an active lead in providing services for veterans in the Ridgecrest and Trona area, starting with a monthly breakfast and a veterans group stress talk. According to HSUMD

board president Tex Hoppus, the breakfast is a way to say thank-you to veterans.

Every third Thursday, from 8 to 10 a.m., HSUMD, along with a cadre of volunteers led by Chuck Griffin and his family, has invited veterans to join in a Veterans Breakfast at the Historic USO Building, 230 Ridgecrest Blvd. Vets and their spouses will be treated to a free breakfast and lots of catching up with fellow vets and friends.

The monthly free breakfast for venerated veterans is hosted by the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert, but they have lots of help from others who also honor our veterans: Chuck and Ronda Griffin and their family are donating time and talent and love to preparing, cooking and leading volunteers in serving the breakfast.

The American Legion Post #684 and its Legion Riders and the Honor Flight Kern County with Gary and Karen Zuber are helping, as always. Mather Brothers, Inc., and its dairy operation are donating drinks and ice and other items. Rod Stiefvater and Mojave Pistachios also pitch in and donate. It is truly the community and its giving volunteers coming together and honoring our veterans at this free monthly breakfast.

In addition to the breakfast, the HSUMD also facilitates a Combat Stress

Support Group. Every other Wednesday evening, starting at 1800 hours at the Veterans Memorial Building located at 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd, the Combat Stress Support Group meets under the leadership of Dr. Jiselle Esparza.

Exposure to traumatic combat and operational experiences affects service members and veterans spiritually, psychologically, biologically, and socially. A veteran with a good job, good social supports, and a healthy leisure routine may have an easier readjustment to civilian life. If you or a loved one thinks that they could benefit from coming to a meeting of this Support Group, please call John Abbott at 619-808-2223.

Abbot himself has utilized the group as a way to speak about stress that used to be bottled up. According to him, talking things out can be a healthy release, especially since veterans are speaking among themselves.

The Historical Society's Veterans Memorial Building itself is a archive of information about local veterans. According to Hoppus, the building used to be an old school house that was refurbished and relocated to its current spot. It displays and honors the stories of our local veterans and their service.

"What's important is that this isn't a general veterans memorial building, it's about our local veterans," he said.



Operation Family Fund helps vets and their families

A national organization based in Ridgecrest, Operation Family Fund aids veterans and veteran families. It was founded to help veterans and civilians who were injured during the wars and conflicts following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Its mission is "To assist the injured and families of the those who have been injured as a part of the Global War on Terrorism, whether domestic or abroad, military or civilian, with financial grants for transitioning to their new circumstances and achieving financial self-sufficiency."

The organization is a private nonprofit organization sponsored by private donations and founded with private money. Operation

Family Fund's goal is to disburse \$5 million for eligible members and families over 20 years.

Eligibility includes those members or families of military and civilian personnel who have been or were severely injured while serving the nation as a result of Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom both at home and abroad. Members are defined as any person serving officially as an employee of the U.S. federal government or contractor to the U.S. federal government."

For more information, to donate or apply for assistance, contact Operation Family Fund at 760-793-0053 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, or by email at support@operationfamilyfund.org. People can also visit online at operationfamilyfund.org/about-operation-family-fund.

Monroe Middle School teacher's year of research published

Mr. Leif Liberg, a teacher at James Monroe Middle School in Ridgecrest, spent the first half of 2017 researching the life of Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. as part of the Understanding Sacrifice program. On Veterans Day, Liberg's eulogy for Ensign Hopper and lesson plan, titled Making A Difference: Service & Sacrifice At The Battle Of Midway, will be published on ABMCeducation.org.

The 2017 Understanding Sacrifice program is a partnership between National History Day, the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. The year-long professional development program centers on Fallen Heroes of World War II who are buried or memorialized at an American cemetery in the Pacific Theater of World War II. In July 2017, Liberg joined 18 other exceptional educators as they traveled to San Francisco, Honolulu, and Manila, walking in the footsteps of history. Using their research, teachers created lesson plans, Fallen Hero profiles, and eulogies now published on the award-winning ABMCeducation.org.

Designed to reinvigorate the study of World War II in American classrooms, the lesson plans are multi-disciplinary. Using primary and secondary sources, videos, and hands-on activities, students are transported from the modern-day home front to the war front of the past. Liberg's lesson plan is based upon solid primary and secondary source research.

"It is important to remember that victories, like the one at Midway, came at great cost," Liberg said. "This lesson brings together some of the most important aspects of the battle through the story of one participant."

Accompanying the lesson plan is a Fallen Hero profile for Ensign Hopper.

"Ensign Hopper was a regular guy trying to do right by his country and his family. He gave his life trying to make the world a better place for others," said Liberg.

"This partnership with the ABMC, NCA, and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University has allowed us to uncover the history of 20 fallen heroes of World War II," said National History Day Executive Director Dr. Cathy Gorn. "Their unique experiences can

now help teachers around the world bring history to life with the materials added to ABMCeducation.org. It is my hope this resource helps students discover a vivid understanding of the high cost paid by all Americans during this war."

Each lesson plan is integrated with Common Core Standards, aligned to the C3 Framework, and makes use of interpretive materials provided by ABMC and NCA. They are accompanied by research about fallen heroes of World War II who are honored at American cemeteries in both the Pacific and European theaters of World War II.

About National History Day:

National History Day is a non-profit education organization based out of College Park, Md. Established in 1974, National History Day seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history through a variety of curricular and extracurricular programs that engage over half a million secondary students around the world each year. More information is at nhd.org.

About ABMC:

Established by Congress in 1923, the

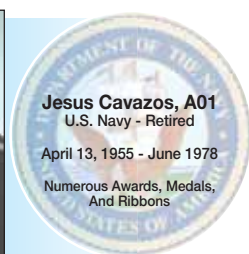
American Battle Monuments Commission commemorates the service, achievements, and sacrifice of U.S. armed forces. ABMC administers 26 overseas military cemeteries, and 29 memorials, monuments, and markers.

About VA National Cemetery Administration:

Established in 1974, VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) operates 135 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots and monuments sites. More than 4.3 million Americans, including Veterans of every U.S. war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, VA provides headstones, markers, or medallions for placement in private cemeteries around the world.

About the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media:

The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University uses digital media and computer technology to democratize history—incorporating multiple voices, reaching diverse audiences, and encouraging popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. For more information, visit <http://rrchnm.org>.



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	<p>Jessie Miles Orton U.S. Army - Discharged Deceased 1955</p> <p>4 Years Service</p> <p>Sharpshooter Served On Mexican Border With Patton</p>		<p>Tony Wilmoth CPO U.S. Navy - Cryptologist Retired</p> <p>1979 - 2001</p> <p>"The 'best' honor received was serving my country alongside some of the best the country has to offer. God bless America. (MAGA)."</p>
	<p>Adrian Montero Villa U.S. Army - Sergeant First Class (E-7), Airborne, Air Assault, Instructor Qualified - Retired</p> <p>1998 - 2015</p> <p>Bronze Star, ARCOM with Valor, ARCOM(7), Purple Heart (Pending), AAM(5), Global War on Terrorism, Iraq Expeditionary, Over Seas Medal (2), Humanitarian Aid Medal (Haiti Earthquake)</p>		<p>Simeon Johnston U.S. Army - Deceased</p> <p>Sept 5, 1862 - May 28, 1865</p> <p>Captured at Berry's Ford, near Millwood Virginia, December 17, 1864. Confined as a prisoner of war at Richmond Virginia, December 21, 1864. Exchanged at Cox's Wharf, Virginia, February 5, 1865.</p>
	<p>Richard K. Cox U.S. Air Force - Staff Sergeant Deceased</p> <p>Served During The Korean War 1951 - 1955</p> <p>Korean Service Medal United Nations Service Medal Good Conduct Medal National Defense Service Medal</p>		<p>William L. Linck U.S. Army - TEC 4 - Deceased</p> <p>Served In WWII 1943 - 1946</p> <p>American Theatre Ribbon, European African Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal</p>
	<p>ADR1 Robert Cass U.S. Navy - Retired</p> <p>23 Years Service</p> <p>WW2 Veteran</p>		<p>Rick Polton U.S. Marine Corps - Retired</p> <p>1965 - 1969 1973 - 1976</p> <p>Operation Starlite Ribbon Chual Vietnam, 1975 USS Hancock, Cambodia, Saigon Evacuation</p>

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*List was compiled from responding Chambers Members

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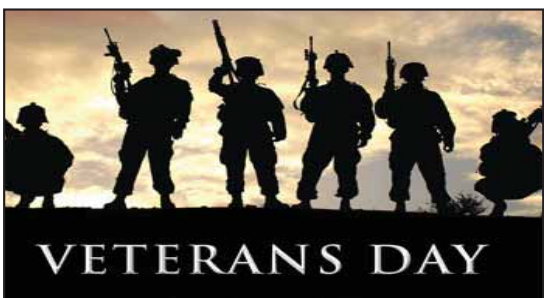
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