

VETERANS JOURNAL



PUBLISHED BY
FRANKLIN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION
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Winter 2006 Issue

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The information in this journal is being provided to make the veteran community aware of some current events, activities and veterans issues that are of mutual concern. From time to time, we will include some relevant information important enough to be repeated to insure that veterans and their families are aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them.

OHIO VETERANS HALL OF FAME

The Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs have announced the inductees into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2006.

They are:

John H Agenbroad USMC, Vietnam
Mordecai Bartley (dec) Ohio Militia,
War of 1812 and Mexican War
Dominic V Belloni (dec) USA, WW II
William C Boehm, USA, WW II
Erle H Bridgewater, Jr., USA, WW II
George H Cox, USMC, Korean War
James W Denver (dec), USA,
Mexican War and Civil War
Richard H Finan, USA, Cold War
Robert E Grim, USAF, Vietnam
James E Hoeh, USA, Vietnam
Arthur G James (dec) USA, WW II
Joseph W Johnston, USA,
Vietnam Era
Robert E Kreimes, USN, WW II
Christo H Lassiter, USMC, Gulf War
Harold J Leone, USA, Korean War
Robert R McMeens (dec), Union
Army, Mexican War and Civil War
Kenneth P Milenovic, USA,
Vietnam Era
Robert E Netzley, USN, WW II
Edwin M Robins, USA, WW II

Josephine D Trotter, USN, WW II

Congress Passes Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act

On Sept.30, 2006, the House passed S. 2562, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2006. S. 2562 will provide, effective December 1, 2006, a cost-of-living adjustment to the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain spouses and dependent children of service-disabled veterans.

VETERANS NEWS

SCAM ALERT!

It has been reported from 2 VISNs (15 and 23) there is a current phone scam happening for returning veterans from operations OEF/OIF. The caller starts out by asking

about deployment and post-deployment related questions, then a second caller comes on the line and asks for the veteran's Social Security Number.

NEVER give your social security number out to someone who calls you. It could lead to many unpleasant things happening to your credit.

Thinking of & thanking our troops

If you go to this web site, www.letsaythanks.com, you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and it will be sent to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to some member of the armed services.

Please send a card. It is FREE and it only takes a second.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the soldiers received a bunch of these? Whether you are for or against the

war, our guys and gals over there need to know we are behind them.

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December

Friday 22nd Winter Begins

Monday 25th Christmas



January

Monday 1st New Year's Day

Monday 15th Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



February

Monday 19th President's Day



Joyce Lilly has been awarded the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission's Employee of the Quarter for the Third quarter of 2006. Ms. Lilly has been with this agency since 1998.

Congratulations Joyce!!

Citizen Circles

Central Ohio Citizen Circle East is committed to opening doors and opportunities for those willing to walk the path of change.

What is a Citizen Circle?

Citizens committed to helping individuals make the change from "offenders" to "citizen".

Positive interaction and accountability for ex-offenders.

Communities make a difference in the outcome of Reentry.

Guiding Principles

- Focus on the future
- Strengths-based
- Motivational
- Acceptance
- Community-based
- Volunteer involvement
- Giving Back
- Planning for success
- Accountability
- Recognition

Location:

Columbus Urban League
788 Mount Vernon Ave
Columbus OH 43203

Two Meeting times monthly

2nd Thursday of each month
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

4th Tuesday of each month
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

**Questions or referrals?
Contact:**

Lisa Morgan 995-3771
Carol Hill 752-0831
Fax 752-0900

Or
Wesley Pullen 257-6300
At Columbus Urban League
Fax 257-6327

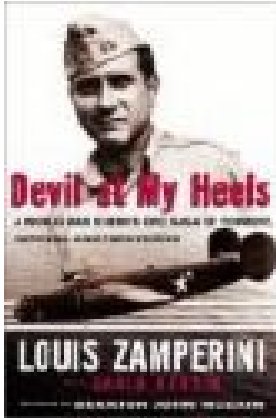
The Significance of Flag Folding

The American flag is folded precisely 13 times and each fold is symbolic.

- The first fold represents life.
- The second fold represents America's belief in eternal life.
- The third symbolizes our remembrances of veterans who dedicated their lives for our land globally.
- Fold number four stands for man's weaker nature and the sustenance given to man by the creator.
- Fold number five is devoted to our nation.
- The sixth fold symbolizes where our hearts lie.
- The seventh fold is dedicated to America's armed forces.
- The eighth fold is praise for those who entered the valley of the shadow of death.
- The ninth fold is dedicated to women, having shaped the character of men as love and commitment.
- Fold ten is a dedication to fathers.
- Fold eleven is representative of the lower portion of the seal of Kings David and Solomon.
- Fold twelve is representative of eternity

- The thirteenth and final fold is complete when the stars of the flag are faced up.

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A VETERAN'S LIFE

WWII plane crash, POW experience couldn't defeat his will or stop his love of living

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Rita Price

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Every month or so, Louis Zamperini calls the college student who volunteered to put his lists on a computer disk. He tells her what new experiences he wants to add, which old memories he forgot to record. At present, the file is divided into three parts: "Injuries, accomplishments, honors." The headings make Zamperini laugh, but they work well enough. "I've got this passion for what can be done in a life," the 89-year-old said. "I mean to be a participant, not a spectator."

Zamperini ran track in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, where he roomed with Jesse Owens and met Adolf Hitler.

He served in the Army Air Corps, crashed over the Pacific, spent 47 days stranded on a raft and was tortured in a Japanese prison camp.

The plane wreck supposedly killed him. A letter notifying Zamperini's parents of his death remains tucked in a drawer along with three Purple Hearts. One is for being wounded, a second is for being a prisoner of war and the last one, says the man nicknamed "Lucky Louie," is for being dead.

"I don't know the unknown, but somehow I've always been ready for it," he said.

The only thing Zamperini can't get over, besides freeway drivers talking on cell phones, is the fact of war. "Grinds on me," he said. "I meet all these kids, just 19, 20 years old, and they're wonderful.

"They ship out, and then I hear how they die. I can't get used to it."

For this Veterans Day, Zamperini will offer lessons from his long, large life in speeches and ceremonies Wednesday and Thursday at Cedarville University.

Plenty of things can't be changed, he'll say. They often can be endured.

The son of Italian immigrant parents, Zamperini was born in New York on Jan. 26, 1917, and moved to southern California in 1920, before he could speak English.

He started out poor and quickly arrived at incorrigible.

"I was a desert rat, a juvenile delinquent," he said. "My brother Pete got me running."

Competition suited Zamperini. He picked up his first nickname, the Tornado from Torrance, after setting a high-school world record for the mile. His time of 4:21.2 would stand for 20 years.

Zamperini then went to the University of Southern California on scholarship and set a national collegiate mile record that held for 15 years.

By 1936, he was on a ship to Europe and the Olympic Games in

Berlin. Zamperini had never seen so much good, free food.

He settled in at Olympic Village with an Ohio State University bunkmate named Jesse Owens and 14 extra pounds.

"I medaled in eating," he said.

Zamperini paid for his excesses with an eighth-place finish in the 5,000-meter run. But he still managed to thrill the crowd, burning the last lap in 56 seconds.

Hitler asked to meet the boy with the fast finish.

Zamperini shook the Nazi leader's hand and thought the man odd. "Like a dangerous comedian," he said.

The young runner made plans to win a gold medal in the 1940 Olympics. He went off to war instead.

In 1943, Zamperini's B-24 plunged into the Pacific. He and two buddies were hundreds of miles at sea, with only a life raft and rations to last a few days.

Zamperini refused to think he might die. "I knew I would put to use all I'd ever learned," he said. "A survivalist never gives up."

When starvation loomed, the men turned to raw fish, shark liver and birds. They fought off sharks with paddles and barely lived through a Japanese aerial attack.

Fearing delirium and hallucination, Zamperini made them walk their wits. The three sang, cooked imaginary meals, added columns of numbers and talked about what they would do with the rest of their lives.

On the 33rd day, the tail gunner died.

Two weeks later, Zamperini, down to 75 pounds, and the other survivor reached the Marshall Islands. They had lasted 47 days and drifted 2,000 miles.

Japanese troops took them into custody.

Zamperini soon found that there are worse things than being lost on the ocean.

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For the next two years, guards beat, starved and experimented on him and other prisoners. Zamperini ate rice grains off the floor and had his head pushed into latrines.

"The pain didn't bother me," he said. "It was the humiliation and the loss of dignity."

Liberation finally came in 1945. Zamperini's family had thought him long dead. An airfield back home in Torrance, Calif., had been named in his memory.

Zamperini proved his identity and basked in a hero's welcome. Newspapers put his story on their front pages. Hollywood studios threw parties. He met a beautiful woman named Cynthia Applewhite, fell in love on the spot and proposed two weeks later.

He began working in warsurplus sales and commercial real estate. On the surface, things looked great. Zamperini's mind, however, was a mess. "I fell apart," he said.

The worst of the Japanese guards, a man the U.S. prisoners called "the Bird," visited in dreams every night. Zamperini stayed angry and drunk. He wanted revenge.

Cynthia wanted a divorce.

Before she left for good, she asked her husband to come with her to see a young preacher. The Rev. Billy Graham was hosting a revival in southern California.

Zamperini thought, "I don't need anybody to tell me I'm a sinner. I know that."

He went and walked out early.

"The second night they got me down there again," he said. "I was getting ready to leave, and I had a flashback to the lifeboat."

Zamperini asked himself what he'd been doing as he fought for his life. "I was praying," he said. "I'd been praying and making promises to God."

Somehow, he'd forgotten. He'd wiggled out of all those messes, come home and turned into "a scoundrel."

"That was the third miracle in my life," he said of his awakening. "I was through drinking and smoking right then. I got out my Bible, something I'd never been able to understand."

Zamperini zeroed in on his torment. On a trip to Japan in the 1950s, he tracked down many of his captors and told them of the forgiveness in his heart.

"Hate will destroy you," he said.

Today, the "Accomplishments" column in Zamperini's life list stands at 112 entries and counting.



He still flies planes, drives cars and climbs mountains. He didn't give up skateboarding until age 81. He founded the Victory Boys Camp for high-school dropouts and wrote a book, *Devil at My Heels*, now in re-release with a foreword by U.S. Sen. and Vietnam War POW John McCain.

"I have a lot of fun," Zamperini said. "I'm one for humor and laughter."

Although doctors pronounce him in perfect health, Zamperini tours nationally a little less often. He prefers to visit children at area schools and talk with Marines at nearby Twenty-nine Palms Air Ground Combat Center.

Zamperini counsels young troops on perseverance, being prepared, patriotism and how to forgive. "I tell 'em to use all the parts of their brain."

He and Cynthia had two children and remained married 54 years, until her death five years ago. Zamperini's mother made it to 96, brother Pete is 92 and two sisters are in their 80s.

For whatever time he has left, Zamperini said he wants to spread kindness and faith. "All things work together for good," he said. "Where there's life, there's always hope."

Social Security Disability - Evaluation of Mental Impairments

Dear Reader,

In this correspondence I limit the content to the most important requirements of the Social Security Administration relative to mental impairments. In over one half of the cases we are handling a mental impairment is part of the disability. Many of our clients are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is very important that individuals dealing with clients who suffer from mental impairments recognize that the individual is often ashamed and do not want to admit to or seek treatment for their impairment. It is important to treat these individuals with compassion and respect.

Since 1986, Kennedy & Associates has provided a valuable service to disabled people nationwide. Our staff of professional representatives has helped thousands of people secure their Social Security

Disability benefits. We have successfully represented persons from across the country. In those cases where an in person Hearing is required, Kennedy & Associates Representatives will accompany the individual at that Hearing. Kennedy & Associates effectively represents individuals from across the country.

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Continuing of Social Security Disability - Evaluation of Mental Impairments

Over the 20 years that we have been in business we have developed an excellent reputation with clients, referring sources, and the Social Security Administration itself. Additionally, Kennedy & Associates is one of the very few individual organizations that have been certified by the Social Security Administration competent to provide valuable service to disabled individuals in their claims before the Social Security Administration.

Social Security's Evaluation of Mental Impairments The Social Security Administration evaluates mental disorders primarily by medical evidence from a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist and therapists.

Service providers can assist individuals by encouraging them to see their therapists frequently. Too often an individual with a mental impairment will avoid therapy. It is important that the individual understand that Social Security is looking for their impairments to be documented by trained professionals.

There are specific Social Security requirements common to all mental impairment disabilities. These four areas are as follows:

1. the individual's activities of daily living (independently pay bills, grocery shop, care for one's self, bathing, etc)

2. social functioning, (get along with grocery clerks, interact with others, cope with crowds, etc.)

3. concentration persistence or pace, (ability to complete tasks in a timely basis)

4. frequency of periods of decompensation or deterioration of their mental state. (periods that are of significant duration and/or frequency) Limitations in these areas are assessed as slight, moderate, marked or extreme. As stated above, common to all of the mental impairment requirements of the Social Security Administration is that the individual suffer "marked" or "extreme" restrictions in these areas. If any two of these areas is noted as "marked" the individual will be found disabled. If any one of the 4 areas is noted as "extreme", the Social Security Administration will find the individual disabled.

When discussing with clients their frustration with the Social Security Administration denying their claims, it is important that the individual understand that he/she needs to have their mental impairment and limitations documented by a licensed psychiatric professional. Absent treatment/documentation of the individual's limitations from a licensed professional, Social Security Administration will usually set up a Consultative Examination with a licensed psychologist paid by the Social Security Administration. Generally the testing that is purchased is referred to as a "mental status" evaluation. Unfortunately, these exams are too superficial to provide sufficient information for securing a favorable outcome. They usually involve simple tests, which rarely, if ever, provide a basis for finding the individual disabled.

In the event the individual doesn't have a therapist the service provider should direct the individual to one of the many County Mental Health Clinics available to individuals. Usually, these services

are available to individual at no cost.

E-MAIL us at SSAaid@aol.com or VISIT our web site www.SSAaid.com
<http://www.ssaaid.com/>
1-800-637-0593

Ground broken for Veterans memorial

The Messenger
October 2, 2006
By David Treadwell, Staff Writer

Under somber skies, as military honor guards stood smartly by with colorful flags held high, ground was broken Sept. 23 for the Medal of Honor-Freedom Square Veterans Monument and Burial Garden at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens on East Broad Street.

The ceremony marked the start of construction of a 2.2-acre site at the cemetery that will feature a 2,500-square-foot patio supporting a giant black granite star engraved with the names of Franklin County's 22 Medal of Honor recipients.

The recipients date back to the creation of the medal during the Civil War as a way to recognize the country's bravest service members.

Surrounding the star, which replicates the shape of the Medal of Honor, will be five 10-foot by 6-foot walls that will hold black granite memorial plaques honoring Franklin County veterans.



Messenger photos by David Treadwell Wearing hardhats with patriotic designs and wielding shovels at the Sept. 23 groundbreaking for the Medal of Honor-Freedom Square Veterans Monument and Burial Garden at Forest Lawn cemetery are, left to right: Ben Aycok, Douglas Lay, Ed Hickman, Alan Smith, Jim McCollouch and Bill Ellis. Lay is director of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission.

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Continuing of Ground Broken for Veterans Memorial

“This is truly something that we will all benefit from by having a place where our loved ones and their children and grandchildren can come to honor our veterans and keep them in their prayers,” said Reynoldsburg Mayor Bob McPherson, the keynote speaker.

Wearing hardhats with patriotic designs and wielding ceremonial shovels at the groundbreaking were Douglas Lay, Franklin County Veterans Service Commission director, and five Army veterans: Ben Aycok, Bill Ellis, Ed Hickman, Jim McCollouch and Alan Smith. Smith, 91, and Junior Frye, 82, both World War II veterans from Columbus, were also presented with commemorative medals honoring the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in which they fought. Smith is a veteran of the campaign in Europe, while Frye saw action in the South Pacific.

“It’s just wonderful,” Frye said of the veteran’s monument.

Serving as honor guards for the ceremony were members of Columbus’ Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3424 and VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 3424, and Reynoldsburg’s VFW Post 9473. Bishop Ready High School student Emily Vanduran kicked off the ceremony with her rendition of the National Anthem. She was joined by fellow Bishop Ready student Zachary Justus at a later point in the program for a stirring performance of the patriotic song “I’m Proud To Be An American.”

Scott DeMattei, Forest Lawn’s family service director and one of the prime movers behind the veterans monument, said the site would also feature niches to hold cremated remains and a burial garden with space for 2,300 plots.

“This site will service as a healing place for the families of veterans and as a historical site for tourists coming to Franklin County,” DeMattei told the crowd of about 100 people at the ceremony.



World War II veterans Alan Smith, left, and Junior Frye proudly show off the special commemorative medals they received during groundbreaking ceremonies. The commemorative medals honor the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Smith, 91, fought in Europe, while Frye, 82, saw action in the South Pacific.

The monument is to be formally dedicated in ceremonies on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. DeMattei said that each month after the dedication a memorial service will

be held for any Franklin County veterans who died in the month before.

During the service, “Taps” will be played and a ceremonial bell — a replica of the Liberty Bell that will be part of the monument site — will be rung after the reading of each name of the deceased service members.

“This site is a small way for us at Forest Lawn to give back to veterans the freedoms they fought for us today,” DeMattei declared in his formal remarks.

The Franklin County monument is modeled after a virtually identical memorial at Sunset Hills Burial Park in the suburban Canton community of Jackson Township in Stark County.



All Old Veteran Identification Cards And Patient Identification Cards To Be Replaced

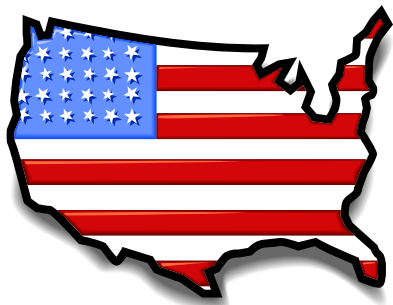
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that all VA health care facilities are beginning an aggressive campaign to assure that enrolled veterans with old versions of its ID cards are issued the new Veterans Identification Card (VIC). VA decided to initiate the mass replacement to reduce veteran vulnerability to identity theft and to demonstrate VA’s commitment to securing the confidential personal information of all enrolled veterans.

VA indicates that prior versions of its identification cards display sensitive information such as social security number and date of birth on the front of the card. The new VIC, which was introduced in 2004, removed the sensitive information from the face of the card.

Since the new VIC was introduced in March 2004, approximately 2.4 million enrolled veterans have been issued the new VIC. VHA estimates that between 3 and 4 million enrolled veterans have not yet been issued a new VIC. VA hopes to complete the massive replacement program within the next 12 months.

For more information about the new VIC card, contact your Medical Center's Eligibility & Enrollment Office or visit the VA's Eligibility Web site at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>

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The long road ahead: Iraq vet sets out to see the country he fought for - all of it

By DAN SIMMONS / La Crosse Tribune

What do you do when you're back on U.S. soil after a year spent driving a Humvee 30,000 miles through the desert in Iraq?

Most of the 80 National Guard soldiers in the 32nd Engineer Company of Onalaska, Wis., went back to college or back to work.

Today, they'll gather for their first drill weekend since returning from Iraq in August. But one of them decided he wasn't ready for college or work.

So 21-year-old Spc. Eddy Krogman of La Crosse, who plans to return to Winona (Minn.) State University at some point, kept driving — this time in his silver Toyota Corolla, this time on the safe roads of his home country, this time with his girlfriend, Gretchen Guinn, 20, of La Crosse.

He and Guinn have hit every state east of here, seen sights they've always wanted to, made friends with strangers and renewed acquaintances with relatives and friends along the way. They were home this week — he for his mandatory Guard drill, and she to earn some much-needed cash.

Monday, they'll head west. Omaha, Neb., is their first stop, then the Four Corners region, then to southern California and up the coast. They've been invited to Thanksgiving dinner with Guinn's aunt and uncle in Portland, Ore. They'll ski in Colorado. They'll stop in every state west of here, except Alaska and Hawaii.

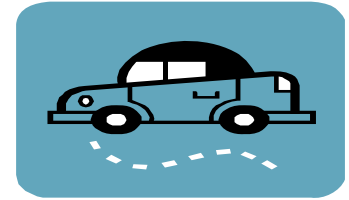
"I wanted to see this country that I fought for," said Krogman. "I learned in Iraq that I could drive and drive. I thought, why not keep going?"

He mentioned the trip to Guinn while he was still deployed. He had been planning it for almost a year with his roommate and best friend, Andy Towner of Onalaska, Wis. Ultimately, though, Towner decided to return immediately to college — and college football — at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The first Guinn heard of the trip, she said, "Let's go." Her response points to one difference between Krogman and Guinn. He's compulsive. She's impulsive. He plans. She dreams.

"We're a work in progress," she said with a smile. But they both love to travel, and they knew now's the time for a big American adventure. She was planning a semester off

school anyway. She had been going to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse but wasn't happy with college life.



He got home in August. She helped him pack up the Corolla. They brought a box of crayons and coloring books to pass the time. They grabbed an atlas and a highlighter to mark their route as they went: east to Maine, south to the Florida Keys, west to Dallas, north to La Crosse.

There would be detours and wrong turns and flat tires, just like in Iraq. But there'd be no insurgents or bombs or suffocating heat.

And there would be music. He set up the stereo so it would play through his iPod and its 5,000 songs. She set ground rules. He couldn't play his Metallica or AudioSlave. "No screaming music," she said. She agreed to rules, too: no Ani Difranco or other "angry-girl music."

Guinn, 20, said she felt some anxiety at first. "It was scary for me," she said. "We went from a year of never seeing each other to being together every second of our lives."

Relatives put them up on the first half of the trip, and then they were on their own, sleeping in bargain motels or in the car. One morning, they woke up in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Daytona, Fla., after crashing there for the night. An old man named Bob greeted them. "Why aren't you in school?" he asked.

They told their story. He warmed up.

"Get out your map," he said. He pointed them to places they'd never

know to go without a local's knowledge: a beach in Venice, Fla., made of crushed shark bones and the Ringling Bros. Circus Museum.

Mostly, they talk about each other. The two went to Central High School together but never dated until Krogman returned on two-week leave from Iraq in February.

They always had feelings for each other, she said, but she had hang-ups about his attitude and partying lifestyle. Then something happened to him in Iraq, she said, "some of it good, some of it just different."

"It matured him almost into a different person," she said. "He used to be 'crazy party kid,' now he's more of an 'experience life' kind of person."

Krogman agreed. He admitted he used to drink more than he should. He teased Gretchen about being a hippy more than he should. He said being in Iraq with his life and the lives of his comrades on the line put everything in focus.

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Story continued from page 7

On his last mission, a roadside bomb exploded on the right shoulder of the road, setting off what he called "a storm of metal." Shrapnel tore apart their Humvee, lodging itself everywhere but in their bodies. No one was hurt. "It was some kind of miracle," he said.

Krogman said days go by without a thought of the war. But sometimes he'll catch a hint of a smell that reminds him of it, and he'll zone out for a minute.

He knows about survival. He said Iraq taught him he could survive any stress without touching a drink. He said it taught him to trust his friends and fellow soldiers. "They'll literally give their lives for you, and I felt I would for them, too."

But he also recognizes the feat of survival under way now: two

months, 5,000 miles together and his relationship with Guinn remains closer and stronger than ever.

"As boyfriend and girlfriend, to be able to go that many miles together without killing each other is pretty impressive," he said.

"Don't get ahead of yourself," Guinn joked back. "We haven't done the West Coast yet."

Dan Simmons can be reached at (608)791-8217 or dsimmons@lacrossetribune.com.

COMMUNITIES SALUTE VETERANS WITH MEMORIALS

One monument complete, more planned

By: Jeb Phillips
November 1, 2006
The Columbus Dispatch

For more information on central Ohio **veterans** memorials, including designs and how to donate, visit or contact:

- Franklin County's Medal of Honor Memorial: www.columbusheroes.com
- Union County **Veterans** Memorial: www3.co.union.oh.us/vetmemorial
- Greater Powell **Veterans** Memorial: www.greaterpowellveteransmemorial.org
- North Union School District **Veterans** Memorial (Richwood): Gail DeGood-Guy at 740-943-3604
- Licking County **Veterans** Memorial: Licking County **Veterans** Office at 740-670-5430

World War II **veterans** are among the people behind a push in Powell. They want to make sure all **veterans** get the honor they deserve.

The family-service director for a cemetery is behind one in

Franklin County. He's no a vet, but he has seen plenty of them buried, and he'd like to make sure they're appreciated.

At least five community **veterans** memorials are planned or are being built in central Ohio: in Powell, Newark, Marysville, Richwood and Columbus. A sixth was dedicated in Sunbury in July.

No organization seems to be keeping close track of numbers, but news-media reports and other anecdotal evidence suggest communities are building memorials all over the country.

Orders for monuments and plaques are up since Sept. 11, 2001, but those orders have been especially strong in the past two years, said Corinne Laboon, a spokeswoman for the bronze division of Matthews International Corp., a major memorial-products company in Pittsburgh.

Only one of the central Ohio memorials, the Ohio Fallen Heroes memorial in Sunbury is solely for troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. But it's clear, say many of the people promoting the memorials, that there's a renewed interest in memorials, that there's a renewed interest in memorials because of those wars.

It's certainly making fundraisings to build memorials easier, they said.

"It's on people's minds," said Ken Blaney, a civilian Air Force employee and an organizer of the memorial in Newark. "It makes (a memorial) more wanted or needed. People recognize that it's almost a requirement."

Of the area memorials, the Newark one is the most expensive. Honoring Licking County **veterans**, it will be a rotunda inside a new 5,000-square-foot building, which will

also house classrooms and a museum. Some community leaders have pledged about \$250,000 toward the construction of the building, which may cost as much as \$700,000, Blaney said.

The snag, as it has been for more than a year, is a building site. Blaney and others are still negotiating with the Licking County commissioners and a few private organizations for a downtown Newark location.

The smallest of the memorials is in Richwood, in northeastern Union County near Richwood Lake. It's meant to honor Richwood-area **veterans**, and should cost about \$90,000, said Gail DeGood-Guy, an organizer and Air Force **veteran**. AS with the other memorials, the Richwood organizers have raised money any way they can, selling engraved bricks to be included in the memorial and auctioning off a 1995 Buick LeSabre for \$2,400.

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Communities salute Veterans with Memorials

The organizers of the Union County memorial, honoring all of the county's **veterans**, will break ground on **Veterans Day** Nov. 11, on the courthouse lawn in Marysville. The final cost will be about \$500,000, and World War II **veterans** were the driving force behind it.

"That generation saw their counterparts dying and wanted to do this before it's too late," said Don Bergwal, an organizer.

The Columbus memorial, which is being built inside Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens on the Far East Side, specifically honors Franklin County's Medal of Honor winners. Forest Lawn is paying about

\$200,000 to build it and hopes to recoup that money by selling engraved bricks and paving stones.

The cemetery plans to hold a memorial service every month so names of recently deceased Franklin County veterans can be read aloud, and they can be remembered, said Scott DeMattei, Forest Lawn's family-service director.

The Greater Powell **Veterans Memorial** organizers, largely Vietnam **veterans**, came up with the idea for their memorial about three years ago, said Michael Crites, a Vietnam **veteran**. With the war in Iraq, people began thinking every Powell-area **veteran** needed some recognition.

"It's appropriate that we honor them this way," he said.

Construction won't begin in Village Green Park until all of the money, about \$180,000, has been raised. Crites said organizers would like to break ground on Memorial Day, May 28, 2007.



Author, Major Bruce W. Lovely

***Twas the night before Christmas,
he lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house made of
plaster & stone.
I had come down the chimney
with presents to give
And to see just who in this home
did live.
I looked all about a strange sight
I did see,
No tinsel, no presents, not even a
tree.
No stocking by the fire, just
boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures of far
distant lands.
With medals and badges, awards***

***of all kind
A sober thought came through
my mind.
For this house was different, so
dark and dreary,
I knew I had found the home of a
soldier, once I could see clearly.
I heard stories about them, I had
to see more
So I walked down the hall and
pushed open the door.
And there he lay sleeping silent
alone,
Curled up on the floor in his one
bedroom home.
His face so gentle, his room in
such disorder,
Not how I pictured a United
States soldier.
Was this the hero of whom I'd
just read?
Curled up in his poncho, a floor
for his bed?***

***His head was clean shaven, his
weathered face tan,
I soon understood this was more
than a man.
For I realized the families that I
saw that night
Owed their lives to these men
who were willing to fight.
Soon 'round the world, the
children would play,
And grownups would celebrate
on a bright Christmas day.
They all enjoyed freedom each
month of the year,
Because of soldiers like this one
lying here.
I couldn't help wonder how many
lay alone
On a cold Christmas Eve in a
land far from home.
Just the very thought brought a
tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and
started to cry.
The soldier awakened and I heard
a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my
choice;
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for
more,
my life is my God, my country,
my Corps."
With that he rolled over and
drifted off into sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to
weep.
I watched him for hours, so silent
and still,
I noticed he shivered from the***

*cold night's chill.
So I took off my jacket, the one
made of red,
And I covered this Soldier from
his toes to his head.*

*And I put on his T-shirt of gray
and black,
With an eagle and an Army patch
embroidered on back.
And although it barely fit me, I
began to swell with pride,
And for a shining moment, I was
United States Army deep inside.
I didn't want to leave him on that
cold dark night,
This guardian of honor so willing
to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over,
whispered with a voice so clean
and pure,
"Carry on Santa, it's Christmas
Day, all is secure."
One look at my watch, and I knew
he was right,
Merry Christmas my friend, and
to all a good night!*

*Seasons Greetings and Best
Wishes For a Safe and Happy
Holiday!*

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