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HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Memorial Day 2019 occurs on Monday, May 27. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and **became an official federal holiday in 1971**. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season. For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which **established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May** in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees; the change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday. Did you know? Each year on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.

Early Observances of Memorial Day

The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country’s first national cemeteries. By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers. In 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day. Waterloo—which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866—was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

Decoration Day

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land,” he proclaimed. The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn’t the anniversary of any particular battle. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there. Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday. Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor their dead on separate days until after World War I.

Memorial Day Traditions

Cities and towns across the United States host Memorial Day parades each year, often incorporating military personnel and members of veterans’ organizations. Some of the largest parades take place in Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C.

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#### From the War of Independence to Operation Enduring Freedom - blood spilled from sea to shining sea.

The following is a listing of US casualties in the various conflicts that have been a part of the country's history. The following numbers reflect only reported war deaths and exclude those wounded and/or missing. The Civil War maintains the highest American casualty total of any conflict.

In its first 100 years of existence, over 683,000 Americans lost their lives, with the Civil War accounting for 623,026 of that total (91.2%). Comparatively, in the next 100 years, a further 626,000 Americans died through two World Wars and several more regional conflicts (World War 2 representing 65% of that total). Using this comparison, **the Civil War becomes the costliest war that America has ever fought.**

Sources: U.S. Army Military History Institute; iCasualties.org; Wikipedia.

| Conflict                                 | Span      | Casualties |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| American Revolutionary War               | 1775-1783 | 25,000     |
| Northwest Indian War                     | 1785-1795 | ~1,056     |
| War of 1812                              | 1812-1815 | ~20,000    |
| Mexican-American War                     | 1846-1848 | 13,283     |
| American Civil War                       | 1861-1865 | ~625,000   |
| Spanish-American War                     | 1898      | 2,446      |
| Philippine-American War                  | 1898-1913 | 4,196      |
| World War 1                              | 1917-1918 | 116,516    |
| World War 2                              | 1941-1945 | 405,399    |
| Korean War                               | 1950-1953 | 36,516     |
| Vietnam War                              | 1955-1975 | 58,209     |
| Persian Gulf War                         | 1990-1991 | 258        |
| Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) | 2001-2014 | 2,356      |
| Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq)           | 2003-2012 | 4,489      |

# Honoring Our Heroes

By Dr. Martha Poole Simmons



## Robert Lee Harwell

Robert Lee Harwell (11/1/1922- 10/15/2018) was a World War II pilot of the B-26 who flew 66 missions from England to France, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holland and Germany surviving the loss of one engine on three flights. The Martin B-26 was an American World War II twin-engine medium bomber earning the name of



“Widow Maker” due to the early models’ high accident rate during takeoffs and landings. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism and extraordinary achievement, the ETO Medal with 5 Battle Stars, the American Theater of Operations Medal, two Silver Palms and two bronze Palms for 65 missions, the Victory Medal and the Air Medal.

After completing two years of college at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (A.P.I.) majoring in agriculture and participating in R.O.T.C., Robert joined the United States Army Air Corps. In preparation for becoming a B-26 pilot, he received pilot’s training at Nashville, TN, Maxwell Field, Montgomery, AL, and Camden, AR, flying the two-winged PT-17 Stillman, Greenville, MS, flying the BT-13 and Columbus, MS, flying the AT-9 and AT-10. Robert graduated and received his pilot’s wings at the rank of 2nd Lt. at Columbus, MS, and completed his B-26 training at Shreveport, LA. His military service included two years of army field artillery at A.P.I., four years of active duty in the Army Air Corps 1943-1946, four years in the Air Corps Reserve 1947-1950 at Gunter Field and three years of service in the AL National Guard Tank Company 1950-1953.

After discharge from the military, Robert returned to AL where he completed his B.S. Degree and M.S. Degree in Agriculture at AL Polytechnic Institute. He taught vocational agriculture education for 23 years at schools in Fayette, AL. He earned his Master’s Degree in Supervision and Administration from the University of AL at Tuscaloosa. Robert worked 13 years at the AL State Department of Education supervising the program regulating the use of the G.I. Bill for veterans at colleges and tech schools.

Robert was born at Ward, AL. He and his first wife, Erma Rew Harwell, were married 27 years until she passed away in 1972. He has two children, five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Robert was married to Helen Harwell for 34 years, and they were residents of Autaugaville, AL. Robert was a blood donor of 15 gallons of blood minus one pint to the American Red Cross. Two units of blood were given directly from Robert to a patient in the Fayette Co. AL, Hospital.

For 12 years, Robert served on the Board of Directors for the B-26 Marauder Historical Society whose members are from across America. He served as President for five and one-half years leading the process of setting up archives for this Society at Yuma, Arizona. He has written articles for the Friends Journal for the U.S. Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio. His only regret about his military service is that he didn’t get a chance to remain in service after WWII because the military had no more need for the thousands of personnel who had served.



## J. C. Collins

Mr. J. C. Collins served in the United States Army from July 7, 1944 to January 25, 1946. He was inducted at Ft. McClellan, AL, and sent to Camp Shelby, MS. J. C. received a Combat Infantry badge, April 3, 1945, and a Purple Heart, June 13, 1945, for wounds suffered while at the Battle of Okinawa serving with Co. 205 Hg 77 INF Division. Because his helmet was too large, he had



stuffed mosquito netting in the top of his helmet to keep it from falling down in front of his eyes. A Japanese shot his helmet leaving a hole between the top of his head and the top of the helmet. He participated in action against the enemy at Okinawa, the largest island in the Ryukyu Islands, Kerame Retto, a group of islands used as a major starting point for the Battle of Okinawa and Ie Shima, a staging area for the surrender of Japan.

J. C. Collins was born November 20, 1923. Before entering the military, he was a farmer. He and his wife, Wilma Louise Collins, had two sons, and they were married for 55 years. They have four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Besides serving in the Army, he was a farmer for his entire life. J.C. has a fine tenor voice and for many years sang tenor in the New Hope Baptist Church Quartet. For the past 20 years, he has sung tenor in the choral ensemble, Sing Alongs, performing at nursing homes.

## Lloyd Ray Bozeman

Lloyd Ray Bozeman was a WWII Naval hero who escaped two life-threatening incidents in the Pacific Theater. Ray was born October 18, 1925, in Montgomery, AL, where he was reared except for his final two years of high school in Tallahassee, FL. At age 18, he was drafted into the Navy in 1942. He went to Jacksonville, FL, where he was inducted and went to boot camp. At



Gulfport, MS, he attended a machinist mate school and a firefighters’ school at Rhode Island. He was ordered to serve as a machinist mate on the landing craft, the USS Montour (APA 101), a Bayfield-class attack transport, which served as an amphibious personnel assault vessel in the Pacific area. He sailed to Pearl Harbor after the Dec. 7th attack, and his ship made five invasions in the South Pacific. Although he was discharged temporarily, he was called back up and participated in invasion landings on the Philippine Islands.

The first life-threatening event occurred one night when he was doing reconnaissance on a Philippine Island, and he heard some Japanese soldiers approaching. He quickly jumped into a ditch covering himself with leaves, limbs and other debris. Although a Japanese soldier actually stepped on him, Ray remained silent and was not discovered. This frightening experience affected him as all of his hair fell out resulting in his becoming bald within two weeks. Ray was found and rescued by American troops two days later and eventually returned to the USS Montour, APA101.

His second harrowing ordeal occurred when he was temporarily assigned to serve on a small submarine chaser (PC boat) which was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. His boat was sunk, and for five days he floated in the Pacific Ocean with 12 other U.S. service men using only one small five-man raft and Mae West life-preservers taking turns in and out of the raft every two hours to prevent the life vest becoming water-logged until finally they were rescued.

His only injury during his service was a damaged finger nail from a faulty discharge of ammunition. Ray returned home to Norfolk, VA, where his ship was decommissioned. WWII was over, and he was discharged in Massachusetts and sent home having served a total of four years.

Ray attended Huntingdon College under the G.I. Bill for one year. Next, he opened Time Drycleaners and operated it for two and one-half years. He then spent 24 years selling insurance for Liberty National Life Insurance Company. His last employment for 11 years before final retirement at age 91 was his working for the FHA inspecting houses about to be foreclosed and remodeling some houses to be put up for sale.

Ray and his wife, Ruth, had one daughter and one son, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. They enjoyed family camping. In 1952 his wife was stricken with Polio and confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life. For the next 64 years Ray and her mother were her sole caregivers. Ray rarely left her side except to work. He and his wife were charter members of the Gateway Baptist Church of Montgomery.

Ray stated, “I made a contribution to the betterment of the country in a small way. I learned a lot in the travel opportunities that I got to do and the things that I learned to do such as being a mechanic.”

Ray passed away March 16, 2018, at the age of 92.



## Edward Aubrey Blankenship

Edward Aubrey Blankenship (10/10/1920-11/10/2017) served in the 81st Infantry Division of the United States Army for 3 1/2 years during WWII. Edward served at Camp Rucker where he suffered an injury to one leg which prevented him from combat. He then served as a dental assistant at Fort Benning, Fort McClellan, Fort McPherson and Maxwell Air Force Base. He



maintained that he entered the Army classified as 1A and was discharged from the Army as 4F because of the injury to his leg.

After discharge from the Army, Edward worked as a trouble shooter in railroad construction and as a truck driver for hauling gravel. One of the things that he is proud of is: He killed two squirrels with one shot.

Edward and his wife, Alma, were married for 73 years, and they had five children, 11 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren and 12 great-great-grandchildren. They lived in Marbury, AL, in Elmore County for many years. He was a member of the Chilton County Chapter 33 Disabled American Veterans.

## Col. Milton J. Ganier

Colonel Ganier was born and reared in the Lower Ward Nine, a low socio-economic area in New Orleans, Louisiana. Upon graduation from high school in June, 1963, he immediately entered the United States Marine Corps and served for over 30 years.



Colonel Ganier served as a Field Telephone Lineman, Radio Telegraph Operator and communication instructor before receiving orders to Officer Candidate School (OCS) in 1968 under the Enlisted Commissioning Program. Following commissioning and graduation from the Basic School in July, 1969, Colonel Ganier was assigned to the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Cherry Point, NC, as an Air Defense Control Officer. Five months later, he was transferred to Pensacola, Florida for Naval Flight Officer training. Ganier graduated from the Basic Naval Flight Officer School at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, FL, in July, 1970, and received his wings of gold as a Radar Intercept Officer at NAS, Glynco, GA, in November, 1970.

Colonel Ganier completed his initial F-4 squadron tour at MCAS, El Toro, CA, before transferring to Thailand where he flew more than 195 combat missions in Southeast Asia between June, 1972, and July, 1973. In July, 1975, Ganier graduated from the Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) while serving the first of three tours (9 years) in Hawaii. In February, 1978, Colonel Ganier graduated from Chapman College in Orange, CA, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration. He spent the next three years in Pensacola, FL, as a flight instructor at the Advanced Naval Flight Officer School (VT-86). In 1985, after spending four years in the Fleet Marine Force with the 3rd Marine Division and the 1st Marine Brigade, Ganier was assigned to the Pentagon to work with the Chief of Naval Operations for Research, Development and Acquisition (OP-098) as the Special Assistant for Close Air Support Weapons Systems. In 1986, he was selected for the top level school and assigned to the Air War College (AWC) at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL.

In July 1987, after graduating from the AWC, Colonel Ganier reported to Headquarters, U.S. Commander in Chief of Pacific Command (USCINCPAC) and assumed duties as Chief, Personnel Plans and Policy Division (J12). In August, 1990, after finishing what amounted to a total of nine enjoyable years in Hawaii, Colonel Ganier was transferred to New Orleans where he was assigned to the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing as the Assistant Chief of Staff G-6 as Director of Communications, Electronics and Computer Systems. On June 6, 1992, he was reassigned to The Headquarters of the newly formed Marine Reserve Force where he continued to serve as Assistant Chief of Staff G-6 until his retirement on August 31, 1993.

Colonel Ganier has made significant achievements in the military and in the educational profession. His personal military decorations include the Meritorious Service

Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Air medal (w/12 combat stars), the Navy Unit Commendation, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, the Good Conduct medal, and many additional service, campaign, and commendation medals, ribbons, and awards. Colonel Ganier has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree from the University of New Orleans (UNO), and a Master of Education Degree in Special Education (Mental Retardation (MR) and Learning Disabilities (LD) from Auburn University at Montgomery and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management and Economics from Chapman College.

Colonel Ganier's teaching career spanned over 15 years as a mathematics and special education teacher in the Montgomery County Public School System (M.P.S.). He retired from M.P.S. in August, 2011. He has A-Level Certification in Educational Leadership, and he holds membership in Kappa Delta Pi (Honor Society in Education) and on Math Partners, Inc. Board. He was selected Teacher of the Month and received the Outstanding Teacher Award, the WSFA T.V. Class Act Award and the Susan D. Bear Award for Scholarship, Leadership and Christian Character.

Colonel Ganier has been married for 32 years to the former Cassandra Cynthia Barnes of Montgomery, AL. They have five children: Donna Lisa, Erika Lynn, Dionne, Cedric and Julian (Brad); and one grand-son, Brandon. Colonel is family oriented, lives by Christian values, enjoys Biblical research, and his special interests are people, tennis, bowling and participation in team sports.

Col. Ganier experienced two life-threatening events that have remained sharply in his memory of his Vietnam experiences and formed his life's philosophy:

Vietnam Incident 1 (May, 1967): "I was communication troubleshooter for 12 Vietnamese villages protected by Popular Forces (squad size Marine and South Vietnamese troops). These villages were located in a 15 mile area between the Troy Bridge and Hue City. I was approaching village no. two in my jeep filled radios and batteries when I came around the curve and saw six armed young Vietnamese soldiers standing in front of the village general store. There were no young people in these villages. The young ladies were working in the large cities and young men were in the Vietnamese Army or fighting as Viet Cong soldiers. Vietnamese Army deserters were just as dangerous as the Viet Cong soldiers. I was alone in my jeep with a single .45 pistol on my right hip. Fortunately, I knew almost all of the village leaders, merchants, and children because I would bring food and supplies to the local schools. The store owner jumped in front of the soldiers, pushed them inside her store, closed the door and stood in front of the door. I said good morning as I nervously drove in front of the store. The owner and the villagers who were standing around returned my greeting as I drove around the next curve toward village no. 3. When I drove through the village the next day, everything was normal; everyone was friendly to me as usual, and I never saw any soldiers during the remainder of my tour as communication troubleshooter."

Vietnam Incident 2 (July 1967): I was the head radio operator for the battalion commander during a 10 day search and destroy mission in the jungles of central Vietnam. I had been on duty in the combat operation center for 48 straight hours. I was relieved of duty around two a.m. and went immediately to my pup tent to get some well-deserved sleep. I was awaked around four a.m. and told to get a head count of the other communicators because our battalion area had just been hit by 129 Viet Cong mortar rounds. Only one of my men was slightly wounded. On the next morning, I was surprised to see numerous metal fragments all over the top part of my tent. The soundness of my sleep kept me from waking up, and probably saved my life, as I laid flat on the ground beneath the fragments from the mortars.

1. Words of wisdom that I have tried to pass on to my troops and students:

- Be all you can be, and strive with all your heart to accomplish all that God gave you the ability to become.
- Do all things as if you were doing them for someone you truly love.
- Surround yourself with people who support you and have a positive attitude.
- Establish and maintain a dedicated work ethic.
- Do all you can to maintain your mind and body in great shape.
- Strive always to be a giver and not a taker.

## James Winfred Brown

James Winfred Brown (2/10/1922-12/11/2018) served in the United States Navy during WWII in the south Pacific all the way from the Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, and Guam to Okinawa. Winfred was born and reared at Rocky Head, Dale County, AL, finishing high school at Ariton, AL.

He attended Howard College (Samford University) studying pharmacy; however, he volunteered to serve during WWII. Howard College had a V-12 program which was



designed to supplement the force of commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy, and Winfred joined this program and attended officer training school receiving his midshipman commission and obtained the rank of Navy Ensign at Plattsburg, New York, in 1944. Working under hazardous conditions, Winfred delivered Marines and Army troops at the battle of Okinawa which was the largest amphibious landing during WWII. This battle resulted in 100,000 casualties in the Japanese Imperial Army and 50,000 casualties in the Allies. His ship was a Landing Ship Tank (LST) which opened bow doors allowing tanks to land on the beach where no pier or dock was available. Winfred stayed in the Navy for one year after the War and was promoted to Lt. Jr. Grade and became the commanding officer of the ship, LCI Landing Craft Infantry #533, a seagoing amphibious assault ship which could hold 200 infantry for landing on the beaches. He commanded the ship on the way home to America.

In 1946, Winfred returned to AL and finished his degree in pharmacy at Howard College in 1947 where he also served as President of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and co-manager of the football team. He worked as a pharmacist in Talladega for five years. He won a free wedding ceremony on the radio program, Bride and Groom, which aired at Los Angeles, California. The 1949 wedding ceremony for Winfred and his bride, Maude Ellen Jordan, was performed on the radio program, and they were married 64.5 years. Then they moved to Selma, and in 1952 he opened the drug store, Brown Drug Co. They had two sons and one daughter, four grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Besides being a pharmacist at Selma, Winfred was an active member of the Selma Chamber of Commerce and often won the membership drive. He served as the Chairman of the Selma Polio Drive during the 1960's. Winifred and Maude Ellen were charter member of Selma's Elkdale Baptist Church. They were faithful to visit shut-ins, taking meals, praying and visiting at hospitals with patients and their families. He drove the Church bus and served as chairman of the Elkdale deacons and the finance and building committees and as Sunday school Director winning the Eagle Award for the most people attending Sunday School. Brown served as Chairman of the Brotherhood and planned many Church anniversary and milestones for the Church. In addition, he also became a beekeeper maintaining eight hives.

When Winfred reflected upon his service to his country during WWII, he stated, "I think that we did a tremendous job. Patriotism was high back home. I think that everyone who served considered it as an extreme honor to serve. If I had to do it again, I would do it again in a heartbeat."

## Leonard Ryals

Leonard Ryals (5/5/1922-4/5/2018) was a valiant WWII hero who landed by boat on the shores of Utah Beach four hours after the initial landing of the Allies on D-Day serving in the Army, and he also served during the Korean War. During his military service, Ryals received two Purple Hearts and the Silver Star.

Having been born in Coneuch County, AL, near Repton, AL, and after graduating from W. S. Neil Highschool at Brewton, AL, he worked as a ship fitter leader man for



two years at the Diluthin and Ewing Ship Yards at Mobile, Alabama. Ryals was drafted at the age of 22 into the U. S. Army, and he was inducted at Ft. McCellan, AL. From there he was sent to Camp McQuaide, CA, for basic training and then to Ft. Benning, GA, for paratrooper training and for additional training at Ft. Hood, TX, with the 473rd Battalion. Ryals volunteered to become a paratrooper because he had no fear of jumping out of planes. One of his commanding officers was quoted as saying, "If Leonard Ryals had as much sense as he had guts, he would be the best man in the Army." He received further training in maneuvers at Camp Polk, LA. After reporting to the Army's staging area for deployment at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, he was sent to England for three months in preparation for the invasion of Europe.

Ryals was part of the Army's invasion of France with the 4th Infantry Division, and he continued fighting as the Army liberated France and conquered Germany. He suffered a head concussion when ordinance from the Germans exploded near him where he was guarding a bridge waiting for General Patton and his troops to cross, but he returned to active duty the very next day. Leonard had vivid memories of the view of Omaha Beach which was stained red from the blood of so many wounded military at that historic landing. Ryals also recalled liberating thousands of prisoners of war and civilians that were being held in concentration camps. Ryals remained on active duty until one year after WWII ended, and then he reenlisted returning to active duty serving three years during the Korean War.

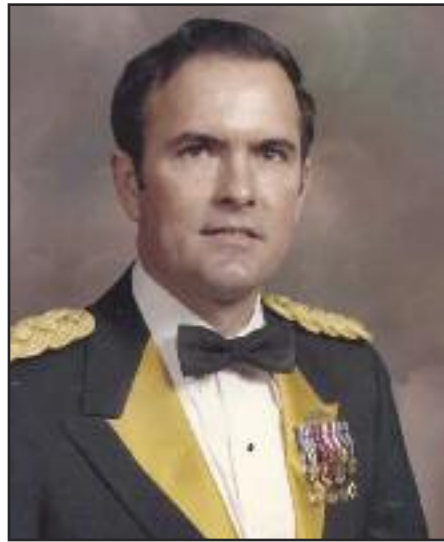
After discharge from military service, Ryals went into the timber and wood producing business with Coosa Newsprint, a paper company that later became Kimberly-Clark Corporation. Then he started buying and selling land for five paper companies totaling over a half of a million acres of land. He had five wood yards where pulp wood was brought to be sold to paper companies.

Ryals was married to Vergie Howell for 68 years, and they had four children, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He lived the latter part on his life in Alexander City, AL.

Ryals acknowledged that he had accomplished much and had a great life, but he always gave thanks to God for many blessings especially his being able to survive during two wars which he concluded was a result of many prayers for him by people back in Alabama.

## Col. William C. Allison

Col. William C. Allison is the consummate example of a dedicated United States Army officer. Bill concludes that his three overseas assignments were his most interesting and rewarding times in the Army. His first overseas assign-



ment was in Korea where he initially served in the Demilitarized Zone with the 9th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division before joining the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) and served as the Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of KMAG.

His second overseas assignment was as a captain; he was detailed to the Infantry Branch and subsequently assigned to duty in Vietnam as an Infantry Company Commander in the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. He was put in command of "Charlie" Company three times, replacing commanders who were relieved or killed in action. Allison was commanding the company at Fire Support Burt near the Cambodia border when it was attacked by a 1,500 man Viet Cong force and during the Tet Offensive of 1968. For his action in combat, Captain Allison was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action, three Bronze Stars, two Bronze Stars were for valor, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He is a Parachutist, Ranger and Jungle Warfare Expert.

During the next twelve years, he assumed much responsibility and provided leadership wherever he was assigned for service. Following the 1973 Yom

Kippur War, Major Allison was assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine with duty as a UN Military Observer in Damascus, Syria and on the Golan Heights. Initially, Allison was the only American military person in Syria where he worked daily with 18 Soviets KGB Officers. Then in 1975, LTC Allison assumed command of the 3rd Battalion, 77th Armor, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. After completing his command tour, he served in the Pentagon as an action officer on the Army General Staff in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. LTC Allison was selected to attend the Army War College, Class of 1981, at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Upon completion of the War College Course, he was retained on the faculty. In 1985, he was assigned as Chief, Army Advisor to the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. In 1988, Allison retired from 27 years of service in the United States.

Col. Allison was born at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and reared at Columbus, GA, by his parents, Sam and Mary Frances Allison. He graduated from Auburn University in 1961 and received his commission as an Armor Officer through the R.O.T.C. program; he received a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Shippensburg University. Allison and his wife, Martha John, have been married for 57 years, and they have two daughters. Bill is quick to say that Martha John was the ideal, supportive Army wife; she has always said that Bill's Army career had been her career also.

Allison has been an active member of the River Region Salvation Army Advisory Board for over 25 years. Several times he has been recognized as the Salvation Army volunteer of the year; in September 2014, the Territorial Commander conferred on Bill the honor of Life Member of The Salvation Army Advisory Board. Bill said that he enjoys providing members of local churches, clubs and businesses the opportunity to volunteer to support the Red Kettle Drive. Frazer's Sunday school classes support the Salvation Army with more volunteer bell ringers (aka Ding-A-Lings) than any other group in the River Region. Bill said that more than 500 Frazer members will be ringing the bells at the Sam's Club and Chantilly Wal-Mart this year; he also said that members of our local community willingly sign-up to support the Salvation Army.

Bill has given countless programs and lectures to civic clubs, churches, veteran reunions, schools and the Air War College. His most educational and receptive presentation and lectures have been on the Arab-Israeli conflicts and the Vietnam War. He supports his presentations with photographic images that he captured while serving as an Infantry company commander in Vietnam and as a Military Observer assigned to the United Nations in Syria.

Bill's continued patriotism is evidenced by his saying, "It was a great honor to lead a group of dedicated young Americans as the Commander of a Mechanized Infantry Company in Vietnam."

### Lives lost in combat.

|                    |                  |                |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>World War 1</b> | <b>1917-1918</b> | <b>116,516</b> |
| <b>World War 2</b> | <b>1941-1945</b> | <b>405,399</b> |
| <b>Korean War</b>  | <b>1950-1953</b> | <b>36,516</b>  |
| <b>Vietnam War</b> | <b>1955-1975</b> | <b>58,209</b>  |

Sources: U.S. Army Military History Institute; iCasualties.org; Wikipedia.

## Colonel Eugene F. Crooks

Eugene (Gene) Franklin Crooks at age 92 is one of the youngest of a group of fast dwindling veterans of World War II. His military career is unique in that he served in two different military services and in three wars, WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the last stages of WWII, he served overseas in the United States Marine Corps. Crooks later served thirty years as a Regular Officer in the United States Army. Crooks was born on February 16, 1927, in Concord, NC. His parents were William Welker Crooks and Ora Hall Crooks. His siblings were one brother and three sisters. After graduating from Concord High School in 1944, Crooks' dream was getting an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and ultimately a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps. After enlisting in the Marine Corps in October 1944, he was told to return home until called to active duty.

In January 1945, Crooks was ordered



Marine



Army

to active duty and Boot Camp at Paris Island, SC. While Boot Camp was physically and mentally demanding, Crooks said that he knew what to expect from talking to Marines and reading about the training. Following Boot Camp, most of the new Marines were assigned to Camp Lejeune, NC, for Advanced Combat Training (ACT). After completing ACT, Crooks tells of securing their gear including their rifles, and boarding a troop train to the West Coast and deployment to the Pacific. Upon arrival at Camp Pendleton, California, members of the Replacement Draft were informed that the new policy was that eighteen-year-olds must have six months in the States before being sent overseas. Members of the Replacement Draft were assigned to various organizations until the six months elapsed. They then redrew their equipment and rifles and prepared to board a troop transport for the Pacific. While sailing to Hawaii, they received news of the dropping of two Atomic Bombs on Japan in August, 1945.

Upon arrival at the Marine Corps Transit Center near Pearl Harbor, Crooks' group was informed that they were scheduled to go to Maui to join the 4th Marine Division preparing for the invasion of Japan; however, everything was now on hold because of the expected imminent surrender of Japan. Shortly after the surrender, the Replacement Draft members were informed that the 4th Division was being inactivated and the members of the Draft would be going on to Guam for further assignments. On Guam, Crooks was assigned as a Message Center Chief in a Battalion Headquarters. Demobilization was in process worldwide, but many veterans protested by demonstrations. One of the Air Corps units on Guam went on a hunger strike, but insofar as Crooks knew, no Marines on Guam participated in such activities. Crooks remembers that by January the battalion was inactivated, and he was assigned for a short time to an MP and Guard Company. He then was reassigned as a Message Center Chief

in a Joint Communications Center. In late July, 1946, Crooks boarded an Aircraft Carrier back to the states, and in August, 1946, Crooks received his Honorable Discharge. Crooks maintains his interest in the Marine Corps through his association with the Marine Corps League and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. Semper Fi! Looking back over his service with the Marines during WWII, Crooks says, "I was glad that the bomb was dropped ending WWII as I was not looking forward to the invasion of Japan. I think that everyone of my male relatives was involved in military service during WWII."

After discharge, Crooks enrolled in Davidson College, Davidson, NC. His primary goal was to enter the Army Advanced ROTC Program and obtain a commission in the United States Army. In 1948, he graduated from Advanced ROTC and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Army Reserve. He applied for Active Duty to obtain a Regular Army Commission. In November, 1949, he was ordered to active duty. While attending the Infantry Officer Basic Course, he married Ruth Lotshaw, Registered Nurse from Charlotte, NC. During the next thirty years, he experienced a very rewarding and successful military career. Crooks served in some of the best of the Army Divisions of that period. In 1950, he was assigned for three years to the 26th Infantry Regiment in Bamberg, Germany, which was a part of the famous 1st Infantry Division. His leadership positions were at Platoon and Company level with staff experience at Battalion and Regimental level. In the 82nd Airborne Division, his most challenging assignment was command of an Airborne Infantry Rifle Company. Assignment to the G2 Air Section of Headquarters 7th Infantry Division in the Republic of Korea (ROK) gave him experience at Division level. As a Rated Aerial Observer, he frequently flew as an observer on flights along the DMZ. Service assignments above Division level started as a Logistics Planning Officer in the G4 Section of Headquarters XVIII Airborne Corps. Selection in 1959 for Flight Training and the Army Aviation Program meant a new specialization in his career. Following Flight Training, he was assigned to the then 101st Airborne Division. There he served in the 101st Aviation Battalion as a Company Commander and Battalion Operations Officer. He served in Headquarters US Army, Europe as an Aviation Staff Officer. Assignment to the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was as an Action Officer in the Operations Directorate concerned with Northeast Asia. During a second tour in the Republic of Korea, he served as Chief of the Exercise and Training Division of Eighth Army and the US Forces Korea. Crooks served two tours in Germany, two in Korea, and one in Vietnam. Service in Vietnam was from July 1967 to July 1968. While there he commanded the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, then served as Operations Officer and later Chief of Staff of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

Among his numerous decorations, awards, and ribbons are the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with eight Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Asiatic Pacific Theater, WWII Victory Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, U.S. Vietnam Service Medal (four Campaigns), Korean Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Unit Award, and others.

His Professional Military Education includes the Infantry Officer Basic and Advance Courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, The Armed Forces Staff College, the Army War College and the Air War College. He served on the Faculty of both the Army and Air War Colleges. While serving on the Faculty of the Army War College, he was also assigned to the Strategic Studies Institute, an Army in house Think Tank. While at the Air War College, he was the Army Advisor to the Air University Commander. Crooks' civilian education includes a B.S. with a Major in Economics and Business Administration from Park University and a Master's in Public Administration from Shippensburg University. He is a Senior Army Aviator both Fixed Wing and Helicopter qualified, instrument rated, and multi-engine qualified. He also wears the Ranger Tab. Crooks retired on November 30, 1979, as a Colonel with thirty-one and a half years active military service. Crooks concludes, I had a great, satisfying career."

After retirement from the Army, Crooks worked with the AL Alcohol Beverage Control Board. He has been active with volunteer service at Montgomery's Memorial Presbyterian Church, the Exchange Club, the Kiwanis Club and the Military Officers Association of America. His first wife, Ruth Lotshaw Crooks, and he were married for 52 years until she passed away. They had two sons, one daughter, four grand-children and two great-grand-children. He and his second wife, Erin, have been married for 16 years.

# The Battle of the Bulge

In late 1944, during the wake of the Allied forces' successful D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, it seemed as if the Second World War was all but over. On Dec. 16, with the onset of winter, the German army launched a counteroffensive that was intended to cut through the Allied forces in a manner that would turn the tide of the war in Hitler's favor. The battle that ensued is known historically as the Battle of the Bulge. The courage and fortitude of the American Soldier was tested against great adversity. Nevertheless, the quality of his response ultimately meant the victory of freedom over tyranny.

## Overview

Early on the misty winter morning of Dec. 16, 1944, more than 200,000 German troops and nearly 1,000 tanks launched Adolf Hitler's last bid to reverse the ebb in his fortunes that had begun when Allied troops landed in France on D-Day. Seeking to drive to the coast of the English Channel and split the Allied armies as they had done in May 1940, the Germans struck in the Ardennes Forest, a 75-mile stretch of the front characterized by dense woods and few roads, held by four inexperienced and battle-worn American divisions stationed there for rest and seasoning.

After a day of hard fighting, the Germans broke through the American front, surrounding most of an infantry division, seizing key crossroads, and advancing their spearheads toward the Meuse River, creating the projection that gave the battle its name.

  
*victory of*  
**FREEDOM**  
*over tyranny*  


Stories spread of the massacre of Soldiers and civilians at Malmedy and Stavelot, of paratroopers dropping behind the lines, and of English-speaking German soldiers, disguised as Americans, capturing critical bridges, cutting communications lines, and spreading rumors. For those who had lived through 1940, the picture was all too familiar. Belgian townspeople put away their Allied flags and brought out their swastikas. Police in Paris enforced an all-night curfew. British veterans waited nervously to see how the Americans would react to a full-scale German offensive, and British generals quietly acted to safeguard the



*American engineers emerge from the woods and move out of defensive positions after fighting in the vicinity of Bastogne, Belgium.*

Meuse River's crossings. Even American civilians, who had thought final victory was near were sobered by the Nazi onslaught.

But this was not 1940. The supreme Allied commander, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower rushed reinforcements to hold the shoulders of the German penetration. Within days, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. had turned his Third U.S. Army to the north and was counterattacking against the German flank. But the story of the Battle of the Bulge is above all the story of American Soldiers. Often isolated and unaware of the overall picture, they did their part to slow the Nazi advance, whether by delaying armored spearheads with obstinate defenses of vital crossroads, moving or burning critical gasoline stocks to keep them from the fuel-hungry German tanks, or coming up with questions on arcane Americana to stump possible Nazi infiltrators.

At the critical road junctions of St. Vith and Bastogne, American tankers and paratroopers fought off repeated attacks, and when the acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne was summoned by his German adversary to surrender, he simply responded, "Nuts!"

Within days, Patton's Third Army had relieved Bastogne, and to the north, the 2nd U.S. Armored Division stopped enemy tanks short of the Meuse River on Christmas.

Through January, American troops, often wading through deep snow drifts, attacked the sides of the shrinking bulge until they had restored the front and set the stage for the final drive to victory.

Never again would Hitler be able to launch an offensive in the west on such a scale. An admiring British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill stated, "This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American victory." Indeed, in terms of participation and losses, the Battle of the Bulge is arguably the greatest battle in American military history.

*Courtesy of the U.S. Army Center of Military History*



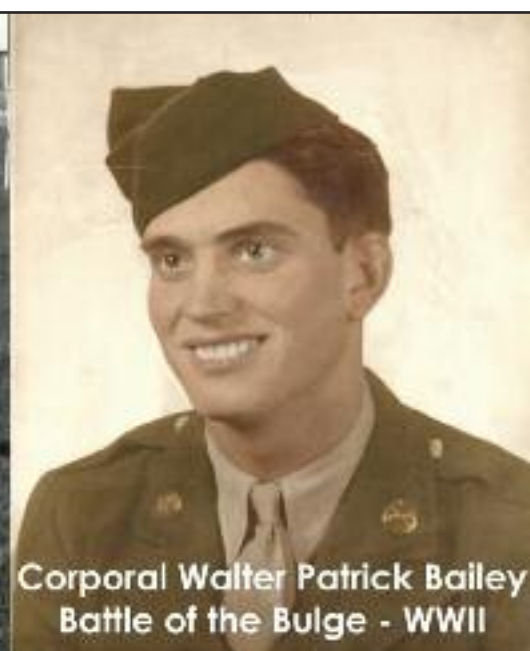
*Three members, of an American patrol, Sgt. James Storey, of Newman, Ga., Pvt. Frank A. Fox, of Wilmington, Del., and Cpl. Dennis Lavanoha, of Harrisville, N.Y., cross a snow-covered Luxembourg field on a scouting mission in Lellig, Luxembourg, Dec. 30, 1944. White bedsheets camouflage them in the snow.*

**"Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."**

— Gen. John J. Pershing



*Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Belgium*



**Corporal Walter Patrick Bailey  
Battle of the Bulge - WWII**

## Walter Patrick Bailey

He was the youngest of 9 children, born January 12, 1924 to Morris and Dan... Bailey. He married Eloise Youngblood on October 3, 1942 and a daughter Judy Bailey was born in August 16, 1943.

He was employed as an electrician on his enlistment date of April 27, 1943. He was killed in action on December 21, 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge, where he served in the 275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. This December will mark the 75th anniversary of the battle and his death. He is buried at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Hombourg, Belgium.

My Grandmother, Eloise Bailey would talk about him very fondly, using the nickname "Bailey" however when discussion would turn to details of his time in the service, but his death she would not talk about the details.

In fact, when we would inquire about his burial, she indicated he didn't have one due to the nature of his death. It wasn't until her death in 1997 and the ability to research online that we discovered his final resting place in Belgium, Germany.

*Note: It is a pleasure as the editor and a owner of the Alabama Gazette to honor my uncle, Walter Patrick Bailey with this memorial tribute. He was the hero of the Bailey family of Montgomery. May his memory live on in the lives of his granddaughters Samantha Casey and Angelique Pugh.*

*Loretta Grant*

# Overview of the Vietnam War

Vietnam was the longest war in American history and the most unpopular American war of the 20th century. It resulted in nearly 60,000 American deaths and in an estimated 2 million Vietnamese deaths. Even today, many Americans still ask whether the American effort in Vietnam was a sin, a blunder, a necessary war, or whether it was a noble cause, or an idealistic, if failed, effort to protect the South Vietnamese from totalitarian government.

## Summary:

Between 1945 and 1954, the Vietnamese waged an anti-colonial war against France, which received \$2.6 billion in financial support from the United States. The French defeat at the Dien Bien Phu was followed by a peace conference in Geneva. As a result of the conference, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam received their independence, and Vietnam was temporarily divided between an anti-Communist South and a Communist North. In 1956, South Vietnam, with American backing, refused to hold unification elections. By 1958, Communist-led guerrillas, known as the Viet Cong, had begun to battle the South Vietnamese government.

To support the South's government, the United States sent in 2,000 military advisors--a number that grew to 16,300 in 1963. The military condition deteriorated, and by 1963, South Vietnam had lost the fertile Mekong Delta to the Viet Cong. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson escalated the war, commencing air strikes on North Vietnam and committing ground forces--which numbered 536,000 in 1968. The 1968 Tet Offensive by the North Vietnamese turned many Americans against the war.

The next president, Richard Nixon, advocated Vietnamization, withdrawing American troops and giving South Vietnam greater responsibility for fighting the war. In 1970, Nixon attempted to slow the flow of North Vietnamese soldiers and supplies into South Vietnam by sending American forces to destroy Communist supply bases in Cambodia. This act violated Cambodian neutrality and provoked antiwar protests on the nation's college campuses.

From 1968 to 1973, efforts were made to end the conflict through diplomacy. In January 1973, an agreement was reached; U.S. forces were withdrawn from Vietnam, and U.S. prisoners of war were released. In April 1975, South Vietnam surrendered to the North, and Vietnam was reunited.

## Consequences

1. The Vietnam War cost the United States 58,000 lives and 350,000 casualties. It also resulted in between one and two million Vietnamese deaths.
2. Congress enacted the War Powers Act in 1973, requiring the president to receive explicit Congressional approval before committing American forces overseas.



## Maya Lin's Memorial

Maya Lin was born in Athens, Ohio, the year Kennedy was elected President. She was the Chinese-American daughter of two college professors. Our long slide into the Vietnam War had barely begun. Maya Lin was too young to've been involved in the domestic conflict that tore America apart as the war ran its course. By 1980, with the war long since lost, she was studying architecture at Yale. Her generation had given scant thought to the 58,000 Americans who'd died in Vietnam.

*Maya Lin Architect of the Vietnam War Memorial*

(Photo: © Maya Lin Studio/The Pace Gallery/Photo by Terry Adams/National Park Service)

*An aerial view of Maya Lin's v-shaped design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.*



*President Johnson speaks on TV.*

## Renunciation Speech by President Lyndon Johnson

In this speech, President Johnson restates his offer to the North Vietnamese to begin talks for making peace, and he discusses the economic problems and solutions in the United States. At the end of the speech, after urging both Congress and Americans to end their divisions, the President announces his decision not to seek re-election.

Mintz, S., & McNeil, S. (2018). Digital History. Retrieved April 11, 2019 from <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu>



## Kenneth V. Roberts

Kenneth Roberts served in the Vietnam War as a forward air controller surveying areas to determine where planes should be deployed for combat action. He received the following medals and commendations for his heroic



Force Commendation Medal and (7) Vietnam Service Medal.

Kenneth was born August 27, 1934, at Oak Grove, LA. Growing up on a farm, he learned mechanical skills repairing machinery used in agriculture. His participation in the Future Farmers of America taught him leadership skills and developed his determination to succeed. He graduated from Louisiana State University with a B.S. Degree in Agriculture. Having trained in R.O.T.C. during college, Kenneth volunteered to serve in the military. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the Air Force and trained as a pilot receiving his wings and later serving as an instructor of pilots. He was deployed to Howard AFB at Panama where he flew the T-28 protecting the Panama Canal. Roberts was sent to Bolivia to train its pilots who then provided protection from Fidel Castro and his allies who were attempting to overthrow the Bolivian government. Kenneth was sent to Pleiku, Vietnam, spending time at An Kha with the Army where he flew the O-2 airplane, a converted Cessna Skymaster, totaling 700 hours with hazardous duty to locate and to mark targets with white phosphorus rockets and then to call in air strikes. Returning to the USA, he trained new pilots at Craig Air Force Base at Selma and became Base Operations Officer. His last assignment was his service at Grissom AFB, Indiana, as the Base Operations Officer until his retirement.

Returning to civilian life, Ken and his wife, Melba, settled at Selma where they reared two sons, and they have four grandchildren. He worked 20 years with Wallace Community College as a diesel instructor and then as Dean of the Technical School.

Kenneth stated, "We came from a very patriotic family. All of my friends were going to serve. I had no doubts about volunteering. Whatever my country needed, I would go again if required."

service: 1. Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, (2) Air Force Longevity Service Award with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, (3) National Defense Service Medal, (4) Distinguished Flying cross, (5) Meritorious Service Medal, (6) Air

## Vietnam: Where Were You? Long Binh

Long Binh post was an Army base about 25 or 30 kilometers south-southeast of Bien Hoa and about 20 or 30 kilometers north of Saigon. At that time, it was the largest military installation in Vietnam and the home of the largest depot in

base at Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Cam Ranh and Da Nang. The initial price tag for Long Binh was \$59 million. Later, the firm of the Pacific Architects & Engineers would handle construction in the last phases of Vietnam. RMK-BRJ built air fields, bridges, buildings, roads, embassies and most of the useable infrastructure found in Vietnam – at U. S. taxpayer's expense.

At its peak, Long Binh was home to 43,000 U.S. military personnel in 1969. The USARV (United States Army, Vietnam) headquarters was located there as was the 1st Logistical Command. Ultimately, Long Binh was home to the II Field Force, 18th Military Police Brigade, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, 44th Medical Brigade and others. Both the 93rd and 24th Evacuation hospitals were located there as was the 266th Supply and Service Battalion which provided graves registration, clothes, petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) and construction supplies for the III Corps area in Vietnam. The 1st Aviation Brigade was headquartered here and operated aircraft out of Sanford Army Airfield at the eastern end of Long Binh.

The depot at Long Binh contained an ammunition supply dump, by far the largest in Vietnam. The ammo supply dump was a prime target for VC sappers. There were several successful attacks on the supply dump, one on February 4, 1967 resulting in the explosion of 15,000 high explosive 155 mm artillery projectiles. The depot was attacked three times in 1966, once in 1967, twice in 1968 and once in 1969.

Just outside the north perimeter of Long Binh laid the Vietnamese town on Hoi Nai, a known home for numerous Viet Cong. At the northwest corner of Long Binh was an area known as the Widow's Village, a home for South Vietnamese widows and orphans of Vietnamese soldiers. Here, during the Tet of 1968, was the site of a furious battle involving the VC, NVA, elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry, elements of the 9th Infantry and some Military Police units. This was a house to house, street to street operation eventually involving helicopter gunships before the enemy troops could be pushed out of the area.

Just outside the west perimeter of Long Binh and across Highway 1 laid the Vietnamese village of Tam Hiep. At the south perimeter were miles of rice paddies and thick jungle. To the east side laid Highway 15 to Bear Cat and a large stretch of cleared land for a killing zone. During the Tet offensive attacks of 1968 and 1969, large numbers of communist troops attacked from the south and east sides. The northeast quadrant of Long Binh was the location for the large depot.



the world – Long Binh Depot or USALBD. To get there from Bien Hoa AFB, you had to cut through a portion of the city of Bien Hoa and make a short drive down Highway 1A. (Highway 1A was the major Vietnam artery that would take you from the DMZ in the north all the way to Saigon in the south.) On our drive through the city of Bien Hoa, we were surprised at the variety of traffic. Anything from Army deuce-and-a-half trucks to bicycles to motorbikes to Jeeps to 10-ton military eighteen-wheelers to old French civilian automobiles to something called a Lambretta. We took special note of several buildings that showed numerous scars from bullets and some that were half-blown up. Looked like there might have been a war here. Every civilian building that seemed to be of some importance was surrounded by multiple strands of rusty barbed wire.

After short drive down Highway 1A, we merged onto Highway 316 south. Long Binh post was triangular shaped and bordered on all three sides by Vietnamese highways. The main part of Long Binh post was bordered on the east by Highway 316/1A. Highway 316/1A ran in a north-south direction, joined Highway 1 south of Long Binh going to Saigon, and joined Highway 1 at the north above Bien Hoa. The northern perimeter of the main Long Binh post was bordered by Highway 15, which ran in an east-west direction. The south border of Long Binh lay along Highway 317, which also ran in an east-west direction. Highway 317 merged with Highway 15 at the extreme eastern tip of Long Binh. From this merger point, Highway 15 continued on to the east toward Bear Cat, home of the 9th Infantry Division. Long Binh was located just east of the Dong Nai River and near the river port of Cogido.

Construction for the Long Binh post was started in late 1966. By the end of 1966, all that existed was just some rough cut roads and lots of fill dirt. Prior to the start of construction, the area was mostly marshes, jungle and rubber trees. In early 1967, construction of the facilities began in earnest. By late 1967, the massive base was really starting to take shape. Much of the construction was done by a combination of the SeeBees, Vietnamese labor, and the construction consortium of Raymond, Morrison-Knudson, Brown & Root and J. A. Jones or RMK-BRJ for short. This was the largest engineering/construction consortium in history and they were responsible for the construction of most, if not all, of the airfields in Vietnam including the huge



Next month we will visit another military post in Vietnam and cover other locations that most people have never heard of in Vietnam.

*Guest article and photos submitted by Jessie Donaldson*



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## Social Security Honors and Supports Military Members

Every year, on Memorial Day, the nation honors service members who have given their lives for our freedom. Social Security acknowledges the sacrifice of our military's service members, and we honor these heroes and their families who may need help through the benefits we provide.

Widows, widowers, and their dependent children may be eligible for Social Security survivors benefits. You can learn more about those benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/survivors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/survivors).

It's also important to recognize those service members who have been wounded. Social Security offers benefits to protect veterans when an injury prevents them from returning to active duty or performing other work.

Wounded military service members can also receive expedited processing of their Social Security disability claims. For example, Social Security will expedite disability claims filed by veterans who have a 100 percent Permanent & Total compensation rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Both the VA and Social Security have disability programs. You may find that you qualify for disability benefits through one program but not the other, or that you qualify for both. Depending on the situation, some family members of military personnel, including dependent children, and, in some cases, spouses, may be eligible to receive Social Security benefits. You can get answers to commonly asked questions and find useful information about the application process at [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors).

Service members can also receive Social Security in addition to military retirement benefits. The good news is that your military retirement benefit generally does not reduce your Social Security retirement benefit. Learn more about Social Security retirement benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retirement](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retirement).



*Rows of small American flag planted in the grass.*

You may also want to visit the Military Service page of our Retirement Planner, available at [www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/veterans.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/veterans.html).

Please share this information with a military family who may not know about these benefits. In acknowledgment of those heroes who died for our country, those who served, and those who serve today, we at Social Security honor and thank you.



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