

USS BRISTOL DD857

VETERANS ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2021

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Rolling Thunder Washington, DC



Today we celebrate the life of Gerald McCullar, fervent POW/MIA activist, Rolling Thunder member, Vietnam era Veteran, and friend, who passed away last night at the age of 79. Gerald is remembered for his grueling and tenacious reenactment of life as a prisoner of war in Southeast Asia. For 29 years, Gerald would sit cramped into his replica of a bamboo "tiger cage" wearing tattered clothes and refusing food and water for the duration of the annual Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Rally in Washington, DC. His mission was to actualize the POW issue for which Rolling Thunder was held. He did this well into his 70's despite the heat and his own health issues. He will always be remembered for this but we also wish to remember our friend and a great American--God Speed, Gerald. Today I Remember...

Contributed by Earl "Charlie" Weaver

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Tuesday January 19, 2021

Lanier W. Phillips, United States Navy

USS TRUXTUN (DD-229)

March 14, 1923 – March 11, 2012

Lanier W. Phillips was a survivor of the wreck of USS TRUXTUN (DD-229) off the coast of Newfoundland.

Lanier had a career as an oceanographer and was a recipient of the U.S. Navy Memorial's Lone Sailor award for his distinguished post Navy civilian career. Phillips was an African American who was raised by sharecroppers in Lithonia, Georgia and who became the United States Navy's first black sonar technician.

Lanier W. Phillips passed away on March 12, 2012, at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Phillips grew up in the South where the Ku Klux Klan was active and influential. Following in his parent's footsteps, Phillips aspired to be a sharecropper however when America entered WWII, Phillips joined the Navy.

On February 18, 1942 Phillips was aboard USS TRUXTUN (DD-229) while it was battered by a severe winter storm. Eventually USS TRUXTUN (DD-229) and USS POLLUX (AKS-2) were forced onto the rocks of the southeast coast of Newfoundland. Hundreds of men from both ships died, but Phillips was among the survivors.

Initially afraid to leave his doomed ship because he thought he was off the coast of Iceland where he had been told blacks were forbidden to go ashore, Phillips boarded a lifeboat which capsized as it reached land. Exhausted and covered in oil that had leaked from the sinking ships, Phillips collapsed on the beach. Gently prodded to his feet by a local resident who told him he'd freeze to death if he didn't get up, Phillips was confronted by an experience that was totally new to him: "I had never heard a kind word from a white man in my life."

Phillips was taken to a place where the local women were washing oil from the survivors, and when they realized they could not scrub his skin white he was afraid their kind treatment would end. Instead, a local woman, Violet Pike, insisted that he come home to her house where she nursed him with soup and put him to bed with blankets and rocks she had warmed on her wood stove.

Profoundly touched and forever changed by the kindness of the residents of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, Phillips went on to become the Navy's first black sonar technician and vowed to do everything in his power to repay the kindness he had experienced, eventually donating enough

money to St. Lawrence for them to build a children's playground.

After giving speeches at schools across the United States, Phillips was awarded an honorary degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2008 for his efforts to end discrimination.

In 2011, Phillips was given honorary membership into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador for his work in civil rights in the U.S.

In 2012 Oil and Water, a play about Lanier's experience in St. Lawrence after the shipwreck and the influence it had on him, was produced by Newfoundland's Artistic Fraud theater company.

In 2016, a picture book on Phillips' life, A Change of Heart, (ISBN 9781771083713, © Thomas Joseph Simpson be Nimbus Publishing) was released, written by Alice Walsh and Erin Bennett Banks.

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In memory of Lanier W. Phillips.

They shall not be forgotten.

Remember, Reflect and Respect.

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FOR NAVY VETERANS ONLY THE BEST DESCRIPTION OF A GOOD SAILOR BAREVER WRITTEN.

A walk down Memory Lane. Our favorite liberty bars were unlike no other watering holes or dens of iniquity inhabited by seagoing men. They had to meet strict standards to be in compliance with the acceptable requirement for a sailor beer-swilling dump. The first and foremost requirement was a crusty old gal serving suds. She had to be able to wrestle King Kong to parade rest. Be able to balance a tray with one hand, knock sailors out of the way with the other hand and skillfully navigate through a roomful of milling around drunks. On slow nights, she had to be the kind of gal who would give you a back scratch or put her foot on the table so you could admire her new ankle bracelet some "mook" brought her back from a Hong Kong liberty. A good barmaid had to be able to whisper sweet nothings in your young sailor ear like, "I love you no shit, you buy me Honda??" "Buy a pack of Clorets and chew up the whole thing before you get within heaving range of any gal you ever want to see again." And, from the crusty old gal behind the bar "Hey animals, I know we have a crowd tonight, but if any of you guys find the head facilities fully occupied and start pissing down the floor drain, you're gonna find yourself scrubbing the deck with your white hats!" The barmaids had to be able to admire great tattoos, look at pictures of ugly bucktooth kids and smile. Be able to help haul drunks to cabs and comfort 19 year-olds who had lost someone he thought loved him in a dark corner booth. They could look at

your ship's identification shoulder tab and tell you the names of the Skippers back to the time you were a Cub Scout. If you came in after a late night maintenance problem and fell asleep with a half eaten Slim-Jim in your hand, they tucked your peacoat around you, put out the cigarette you left burning in the ashtray and replaced the warm draft you left sitting on the table with a cold one when you woke up. Why? Simply because they were one of the few people on the face of the earth that knew what you did, and appreciated what you were doing. And if you treated them like a decent human being and didn't drive 'em nuts by playing songs they hated on the juke box, they would lean over the back of the booth and park their soft, warm tits on your neck when they sat two San Miguel beers in front of you. And the Imported table wipe down guy and glass washer, trash dumper, deck swabber and paper towel replacer. The guy had to have baggy tweed pants and a gold tooth and a grin like a 1950 Buick. And a name like "Ramon", "Juan", "Pedro" or "Tico". He had to smoke unfiltered LUCKIES, CAMELS OR RALEIGHS. He wiped the tables down with a sour wash rag that smelled like a billy goats crotch and always said, "How are choo navee mans tonight? He was the indispensable man. The guy with credentials that allowed him to borrow Slim-Jims, Beer Nuts and pickled hard boiled eggs from other beer joints when they ran out where he worked. The establishment itself. The place had to have walls covered with ship and squadron plaques. The walls were adorned with enlarged unit patches and the dates of previous deployments. A dozen or more old,

yellowed photographs of fellows named "Buster", "Chicago", "P-Boat Barney", "Flaming Hooker Harry", "Malone", "Honshu Harry", "Jackson", "Douche Bag Doug", and "Capt Slade Cutter" decorated any unused space. It had to have the obligatory Michelob, Pabst Blue Ribbon and "Beer Nuts sold here" neon signs. An eight-ball mystery beer tap handle and typical signage found in any good liberty bar read: "Your mother does not work here, so clean away your frickin trash." "Keep your hands off the barmaid." "Don't throw butts in urinal." "Barmaid's word is final in settling bets." "Take your fights out in the alley behind the bar!" "Owner reserves the right to waltz your worthless sorry ass outside." "Shipmates are responsible for riding herd on their ship/squadron drunks." You had to have a juke box built along the lines of a Sherman tank loaded with Hank Williams, Mother Maybelle Carter, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash and twenty other crooning goobers nobody ever heard of. The damn thing has to have "La Bamba", Herb Alpert's "Lonely Bull" and Johnny Cash's "Don't take your guns to town". The furniture in a real good liberty bar had to be made from coal mine shoring lumber and was not fully acceptable until it had 600 cigarette burns and your ship's numbers or "F**k the Navy" carved into it. The bar had to have a brass foot rail and at least six Slim-Jim containers, an oversized glass cookie jar full of Beer-Nuts, a jar of pickled hard boiled eggs that could produce rectal gas emissions that could shut down a sorority party, and big glass containers full of something called Pickled Pigs Feet and Polish Sausage. Only drunk Chiefs and

starving Ethiopians ate pickled pig's feet and unless the last three feet of your colon had been manufactured by Midas, you didn't want to get anywhere near the Polish Napalm Dogs. No liberty bar was complete without a couple of hundred faded ship or airplane pictures and a "Shut the hell up!" sign taped on the mirror behind the bar along with several rather tasteless naked lady pictures. The pool table felt had to have at least three strategic rips as a result of drunken competitors and balls that looked as if a gorilla baby had teethed on the sonuvabitches. Liberty bars were home and it didn't matter what country, state, or city you were in. When you walked into a good liberty bar, you felt at home. These were also establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to "tell" and "listen" to sea stories. You learned about sex at \$10.00 a pop -- from professional ladies who taught you things your high school biology teacher didn't know were anatomically possible. You learned how to make a two cushion bank shot and how to toss down a beer and shot of Sun Torry known as a "depth charge." We were young, and a helluva long way from home. We were pulling down crappy wages for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a-week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn't know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. And a lot of that association took place in bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal. While many of our

classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo's Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror. But when we came ashore on liberty, we could rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of, in saloons and cabarets that would live in our memories forever. Long live those liberties in WestPac and in the Med - They were the greatest! "Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction; I SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY." "When we are asked in this century, what was a proud accomplishment in life. I wil answer "" I served in the United States Navy!" - JFK

I'M FINE,THE REST OF YOU NEED COUNSELING

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On January 6, 1943, Japanese capture 11 Navy nurses in Manila, Philippines. They served most of their internment at Los Baños before being liberated in February 1945.

The ANGELS OF BATAAN of Bataan were the members of the United States Army

Nurse Corps and the United States Navy Nurse Corps who were stationed in the Philippines at the outset of the Pacific War and served during the Battle of the Philippines (1941–42). When Bataan and Corregidor fell, 11 Navy nurses, 66 army nurses, and 1 nurse-anesthetist were captured and imprisoned in and around Manila. They continued to serve as a nursing unit while prisoners of war. After years of hardship, they were finally liberated in February 1945.

At the outset of World War II, US Army and US Navy nurses were stationed at Sternberg General Hospital in Manila, and other military hospitals around Manila.

During the Battle of the Philippines (1941–42), eighty-eight US Army nurses escaped, in the last week of December 1941, to Corregidor and Bataan.

U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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© Thomas Joseph Simpson

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Here's What You Need To Know about the unluckiest Fletcher in the Navy:

On December 29 she arrived at Dutch Harbor, Alaska for her new assignment. While partying on New Year's Day, a drunk sailor discharged one of her 5" guns, sending a 55-pound shell arcing into the backyard of the base's

commandant, who was hosting a holiday party—leaving his flower garden the worse for wear.

Named after a swashbuckling Union Civil War captain, the Porter was one of 175 Fletcher-class destroyers built during World War II.

The “Willy D” under Lt. Commander Wilfred Walter in November 1943 was assigned to a secret task force charged with escorting President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard the battleship USS Iowa to conferences in Cairo and Tehran.

As Porter slipped from her quay in Norfolk, Virginia on November 12, things immediately began to go wrong. Her crew failed to properly raise the anchor, which went rattling across the deck of a neighboring destroyer, tearing away railings and lifeboats.

The following day, Iowa, Porter and two other ships were underway in the Atlantic when an underwater explosion shattered the calm. The taskforce began evasive maneuvers in response to the apparent submarine attack.

Porter then signaled it was a false alarm: one of her depth charges had accidentally rolled off deck and detonated—because nobody had secured the charge's safety.

Then a violent wave slammed into the destroyer, sweeping a man overboard, who was tragically never rescued, and flooding one of her boilers. The Porter fell behind and broke radio silence to update the Iowa on her repairs—eliciting an irate message from Admiral King.

Then on November 14, Roosevelt—who had asked to observe air defense and torpedo drill.

Two mock torpedo launches went smoothly. But upon the third firing command at 2:36 PM, a 24-foot-long Mark 15 torpedo left from the Porter and surged towards the Iowa. Wilfred, reluctant to break radio silence again, insisted on conveying the disastrous news using a signal lamp.

Unfortunately, the signalman garbled the messages twice. Finally, Wilfred radioed “Lion, lion! Turn right!” (“Lion” was Iowa’s codename.) When the Iowa’s operator responded in confusion, the captain clarified “Torpedo in the water!”

Iowa turned hard to port and accelerated to flank speed; the torpedo struck the Iowa’s wake and detonated a safe distance away. Chief Torpedoman Lawton Dawson admitted to having forgotten to remove the primer from the torpedo. The inexperienced seaman was sentenced to fourteen years hard labor, but Roosevelt intervened to wave his sentence.

As FDR was a Democrat, legend has it Navy ships henceforth greeted the Porter with “Don’t shoot! We’re Republicans!”

June 10. At 8:15 AM a D3A1 ‘Val’ dive bomber plunged towards Porter in a kamikaze attack. As Porter’s guns roared, the obsolete aircraft smashed into the water beside her.

But the Val’s momentum carried it underneath the Porter, before the explosives packed inside it detonated. The eruption raised the 2,500-ton

destroyer out of the water. The impact as she smacked back down ruptured steam lines, causing fires to break out.

But the unluckiest ship in the Navy had one good turn left: every single member of her crew escaped with his life when ship was abandoned.

Sébastien Roblin

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It’s Rocky The Sailor Man?

Today in History -- On today’s date 153 years ago, Monday, January 27, 1868, an obscure Polish-American bartender & general laborer by the name of Frank “Rocky” Fiegel (1868-1947) was born in Poland. Late in his life, Rocky Fiegel became somewhat famous as the real-life inspiration for E. C. Segar’s ever-popular cartoon character Popeye The Sailor Man.

According to Wikipedia: Local folklore in Chester, Illinois, Segar's hometown, claims that Frank "Rocky" Fiegel was the real-life inspiration for the character Popeye. He had a prominent chin, sinewy physique, characteristic pipe, & a propensity & agile skill for fist-fighting. Fiegel died on March 24, 1947 never having married. His gravestone has the image of Popeye engraved on it. The town of Chester erected a statue of Popeye in Fiegel's honor, which still stands today.

The undated photograph depicts the visage of Rocky Fiegel, the real-life Popeye the Sailor Man.



When you conduct a Boot Camp Barracks Inspection, bring some Hershey's Chocolate Syrup and make sure you inspect the toilet alone while the recruits are standing by! Put some of that there syrup in the toilet like, so you get the very familiar mark we all know so well!! Then put on your furious face when you let it all out on the squad leader!!!

When he comes running, give him hell while asking...

"Whiskey Tango Foxtrot is this?"

... Of course he becomes speechless! Then you obviously put your finger in it and taste it!! You confirm it's shit and give him hell for it!!!

The look on his face is simply: PRICELESS!!!!

Lasting valor

DAV Magazine posted on January 12, 2021
By Matt Saintsing



After completing Officer Candidate School, World War II veteran Vernon Baker led troops in German-occupied Italy. His courage in spearheading an attack on an enemy stronghold resulted in him belatedly receiving the Medal of Honor. Photo credit: AP PHOTO/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW, JESSE TINSLEY, FILE

How a DAV member and courageous warrior became the first living African American World War II Medal of Honor recipient

Of the seven Black World War II Army veterans to receive the Medal of Honor in 1997, Vernon Baker was the sole survivor. More than half a century had passed between the day he led a fearless attack in German-occupied Italy to when President Bill Clinton belatedly presented Baker with the nation's highest award for valor.

Baker was a DAV lifetime member of Chapter 9 in Fort Sherman, Idaho. He remained the only living African American veteran awarded the Medal of Honor for World War II until he died from brain cancer at the age of 90 in 2010.

Navy veteran Bob Hunt, the adjutant for Chapter 9, recalled meeting with Baker at a fundraiser to help cover the costs of his treatment prior to his death, as the Medal of Honor recipient was, at the time, not receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“He was a nice man, and as some Medal of Honor recipients are, he was a bit reclusive, not wanting to trade on the medal,” said Hunt. “Our chapter was fairly small, but we donated a bit and made him a member of the chapter. We spend every penny on disabled veterans.”

Baker's memory lives on for those in his small community and is forever woven into American military history for the intrepid assault he led on the morning of April 5, 1945.



Photo credit: U.S. Army

First Lieutenant Baker—the only Black officer in his company—led 25 other infantrymen to assault a castle near Viareggio, a seaside town in northern Italy. After navigating his men through a daunting and dangerous web of German machine gun nests, he began to attack the well-fortified mountain stronghold.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, “when his company was stopped by the concentration of fire from several machine gun emplacements, [Baker] crawled to one position and destroyed it, killing three Germans. Continuing forward, he attacked an enemy observation post and killed two occupants.”

He engaged two additional machine-gun nests and occupied an exposed position to draw enemy fire away from the escaping wounded Americans. The following night, Baker volunteered to lead his battalion through German minefields and other heavy enemy defenses.

Under Baker’s leadership, the platoon killed 26 German troops and destroyed six machine gun nests, two enemy observation posts and four dugouts. In all, 17 Americans died in the battle. Baker’s “fighting spirit and daring leadership were an inspiration to his men and exemplify the highest traditions of the Armed Forces,” states the citation.

Of the 1.2 million African Americans serving during World War II, only a few were permitted to become officers—and they could only lead other Black men. Baker, who had enlisted five months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, was quickly singled out for his leadership potential. By 1943, he had completed Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a second lieutenant with the Army’s 92nd Infantry Division—one of two all-Black divisions.

While the military awarded more than 400 Medals of Honor during the war, not a single one went to a Black service member. In 1993, the Army asked researchers at Shaw University, a historically Black college in Raleigh, North Carolina, “to determine if there was a racial disparity in the way Medal of Honor recipients were selected.”

According to the study, race indeed played a pivotal role in which “the political climate and Army practices during the war guaranteed that no Black soldier would receive the military’s top award.” The Army had previously awarded Baker the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military decoration a soldier can receive for extraordinary heroism. However, after reviewing the report, a board of Army general officers selected Baker and six other African American World War II veterans to receive the Medal of Honor.

When Baker, who had settled in Idaho after the war, received a call notifying him he was to receive the Medal of Honor, he told Idaho public television, “it was something that I felt should have been done a long time ago.”

“There is a long and unfortunate part of our military history that overlooks the tremendous bravery, courage, honor and sacrifice of minority veterans,” said National Commander Butch Whitehead. “It’s important that we continue to advocate for those individuals whose contributions are deserving of merit.”

Of the other six men to receive the medal with Baker, four—1st Lt. John R. Fox, Pfc. Willy F. James Jr., Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers and Pvt. George Watson—had been killed in action. The two others—Staff Sgt. Edward A. Carter Jr. and 1st Lt. Charles L. Thomas, who retired at the rank of major—died in the years following World War II.

When asked by the New York Times what went through Baker's mind when being presented with the medal, he said, "I was thinking about what was going on up and on the hill that day."

Although Baker lived to see the proper recognition he was due, other African American World War II veterans remain in waiting. Legislation to award the Medal of Honor to the late Navy veteran Doris "Dorie" Miller—one of the last sailors to flee the sinking USS West Virginia at Pearl Harbor—ultimately died in Congress. A group of U.S. senators is hopeful the honor will be bestowed on Army Cpl. Waverly Woodson Jr., a veteran of D-Day who passed away in 2005.

In 1997, Baker penned his memoir, aptly titled, "Lasting Valor."

"Give respect before you expect it," Baker said in the book. "Treat people the way you want to be treated. Remember the mission. Set the example. Keep going."

Like this post, share with friends!

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Gulf War Veterans – 30 years later, posted on January 5, 2021
 By Mary Dever



Oil well fires rage outside Kuwait City in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm. The wells

were set on fire by Iraqi forces before they were ousted from the region by coalition forces. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. David McLeod/National Archives)

Gulf War veterans still facing hardships linked to service

In August 1990, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait triggered an international response and a coalition force buildup in the Persian Gulf region known as Operation Desert Shield. Several months later, in January, as it became clear Iraq would not withdraw its forces, the allied coalition—now more than 700,000 strong—began a weekslong air bombardment offensive, called Operation Desert Storm, to wipe out Iraq's defenses, weapons capabilities, communications networks and more.

The Gulf War, though short-lived compared to other, lengthier, conflicts in U.S. history, still has profound physical and psychological impacts on the men and women who lived through it. Ranging from combat injuries to invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, even toxic exposure to chemicals and oil fields, Gulf War veterans are still fighting for their health and well-being 30 years later.



National Employment Director Jeff Hall enlisted in the Army in 1988. Hall was injured during the Persian Gulf War when his vehicle struck an Iraqi anti-tank mine.

“It wasn’t until we talked about the fact that we were exposed to depleted uranium, oil well fires and burn pits that I realized how much I’d really been affected,” said National Employment Director Jeff Hall—an Army veteran who served as a member of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, Tiger Brigade, 2nd Armored Division, in Operation Desert Storm.

On March 11, 1991, while on combat operations west of Kuwait City, Hall was wounded when his vehicle struck an Iraqi anti-tank mine, resulting in concussion blast injuries to his lower and upper extremities.

Hall has dealt with those physical injuries over the last three decades. However, in 2017, he began experiencing irregularities with his heart and was ultimately diagnosed with cardiac and pulmonary sarcoidosis, an inflammatory disease that affects the lymph glands and organs such as the heart and lungs.

“When you’re a much younger person, you might be able to withstand it,” said Hall. “But as we’ve always said to other people with disabilities themselves, like a knee injury, it might not bother you today, but when you’re 55, it’s going to bother you differently.”

“Disabilities get older with time,” Hall added.

An Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient who survived a Scud missile attack that killed 28 American and allied forces and injured 98 more, Felecia Weston has lived every day for the last 30 years with crippling migraines and haunting survivor’s guilt.

“For a long time, I kind of punished myself, and I believe it’s one of the reasons why I never got married, because I don’t feel like I should be loved,” said Weston. “There are so many people who are not here, but I am, so I don’t deserve love. I don’t deserve to have kids. I don’t deserve to have all of these things other people have, because a lot of people that I was with didn’t come back.”

Weston said she made a promise to herself and to her God that if she did survive, she would spend her life caring for her fellow veterans. That’s exactly what she’s done as a DAV benefits counselor and advocate for more than 20 years.



Past National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster was injured in January 1991 while serving in Saudi Arabia in support of Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of first sergeant in 1996.

Past National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster—who served in Saudi Arabia in support

of Desert Shield and Desert Storm with the Grave Registration Company—said she often reflects on how her experience affects her daily life, even after three decades.

“This never has left any of us. As a matter of fact, it still comes up today,” said Metcalf-Foster. “I have talked to four of my company members since [the COVID-19 pandemic], and the mental toll of facing the unknown reminds them—and myself—of what we had to endure then. It was really devastating.”



Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese enlisted in the Army in 1984. He was a rifle squad leader in the 82nd Airborne Division during the war.

Wartime experiences—and the health effects suffered as a result—are part of what inspires one generation of veterans to fight for the next, said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese, a rifle squad leader in the 82nd Airborne Division during the Persian Gulf War.

Lessons from the past—in particular, the long-term effects of Agent Orange—more quickly informed action to create the VA Persian Gulf War Health Examination Registry, authorized in November 1992, and the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, in 2014, to evaluate the health problems and unexplained illnesses that may be caused by exposure to toxins.

“Thirty years seems like it was yesterday. We just got to keep that focus to make sure that each generation is handed the torch to bring their hand up to the next generation to continue our legacy at DAV,” said Reese. “Even when politicians say it’s over, that’s just not exactly right.”

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Military Branches Explained

The military branches explained: the Army, Navy, and Marines are all brothers in a family. Army is the oldest and mom and dad made all their parenting mistakes with him. The Navy is the middle son, they're the explorers who left home and no one cared. The Marines are the youngest who mom and dad let do whatever they want and they still have an inferiority complex due to their small size.

Well, mom and dad got divorced once all the boys were grown. Mom got remarried to a rich guy and quickly gave birth to a fourth son, the Air Force. Now she loves him the most, showers him with the best toys, and buys him whatever he wants. When they go on vacation they fly first class, stay in 5 star hotels, and enjoy the finest meals. The Air Force is spoiled rotten and his three older brothers have bitter resentment toward him for this.

Finally there's the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is the rich step dad's son from his first marriage and none of the other brothers think or act like he's part of the family.

That's the best way to explain the various service branches and their internal dynamics to civilians.

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Ocean Liner Normandie Dec 1941



U.S. Naval Undersea Museum

What does a \$60 million French ocean liner have to do with training Navy divers? More than you might think!

In December 1941, the U.S. seized the French liner Normandie for conversion to a transport ship. Two months later, #OnThisDay

in 1942, the newly renamed USS Lafayette caught fire and collapsed on her side at New York City's Pier 88. The ensuing salvage operation was one of the largest ever attempted by the U.S. Navy at the time.

Supervisor of Salvage Cmdr. William Sullivan made the best of a bad situation by establishing a salvage training school at Pier 88. Within a year, more than 430 students had gained first-hand salvage experience. More than half also qualified as salvors or second class divers.

*Contributed by Earl
"Charlie" Weave*

contributed by Gary Hults

Thought you might like looking at this if

In Memoriam



Laufer - Berthold J. "Bud"

September 22, 2020, of Hamburg, NY, son of the late Berthold F. and Irene (nee Eron) Laufer; beloved husband of "Dee" Dolores Laufer (nee Carson); devoted father of Mary (Robert) Hebner, Thomas (Carrie) Laufer, Karen (Kevin) Ludlow and Jodee (Richard) Doyle; cherished Poppy of Tanya (Aaron) Spurlock, Erik (Arielle) Hatch, Sarah (Lucas) Hebner, Tommy Laufer Jr., Staci (Justin) Hatch, Holly Hebner, Bethany (Kevin) Laufer, Devin Doyle, Jacob Ludlow, Tara Laufer and Jordyn Doyle; loving great-Poppy of Olivia Smith and Logan Wills; dear brother of Patricia Laufer; also survived by dear friends. Bud was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy and a dedicated steamfitter of 44 years with Local #395. Friends received Saturday,

September 26, from 9:30 AM-12:30 PM at LAKESIDE MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME, INC., 4199 Lake Shore Rd., Hamburg, NY. Mass of Christian Burial to take place at 1 PM at St. Mary of the Lake Church, 4737 Lake Shore Rd., Hamburg, NY, with a Graveside Service at Lakeside Cemetery to follow. In keeping with the safety and health of family and guests, please wear appropriate face coverings and maintain social distancing. Capacity restrictions may delay entry. Online condolences and flowers may be made at www.LakesideFuneralHome.com



Shipmates

I'm sorry to report that shipmate and Plank Owner John W. Hardt, GM3, 1945-1946 passed away on 11/11/20.

John was a Plank Owner and he was 93 years old.

There is no obituary available.

Tony

Photo from 2005 Reunion Book, Charleston, SC.

----- Forwarded message -----

Thought you might like looking at this, if not just delete. thanks, Gary

----- Forwarded message -----

CONTRIBUTED BY GARY HULTS



THE AMERICAN LEGION
VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

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Here are some highlights from the first year of podcasts:



Naveed Jamali, an American Legion member and Navy veteran, reveals his experience as a double agent who obtained secrets from the Russians. [LISTEN HERE](#)



Marine combat veteran Theresa Larson, an American Legion member, talks about her transition and how her early struggles placed her on a path to help veterans, adaptive athletes and others with physical therapy. [LISTEN HERE](#)



A documentary captures what U.S. Army soldiers go through as they learn what it takes to serve in the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment. Guests are Neal Schrodetzki and Ethan Morse, who are both Legionnaires who served in the Old Guard.