

HONORING FOREVER

Newsletter

Celebrating Our Veterans & America's 250th Anniversary



Veterans Memorial Pays Tribute to Vietnam Veterans

Sunday March 29th was National Vietnam Veterans Day and the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum paid tribute to all those local and N.E. Indiana veterans whose names appear on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Over 80 people attended the ceremony held in the Sterling Chapel in the Memorial Park.



Eric Johnson delivered the opening remarks followed by Second Vice Pat Fraizer; Singing of the National Anthem by Angie Newkirk and Opening prayer by Chaplain John Ray. Each veteran read the names of Allen County vets killed in combat along with many soldiers from surrounding counties. Joe Eichman played the bagpipes before and after the ceremony. Tom Schmitt concluded the program with the playing of taps.



Thirteen veterans read the names of local Vietnam Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. First Vice Commander



"Where No Veteran Will Ever Be Forgotten."

2122 O'Day Road • Fort Wayne, IN 46818
260-267-5022
honoringforever.org

Fund Raising Drive Announced for Agent Orange Memorial



By Eric Johnson 1st Vice Commander

On Sunday March 29th the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum announced the start of a fundraising drive in hopes of raising \$60,000. The funds will be used to build a permanent memorial to all those soldiers who made it back from the war but later died after suffering the effects of being exposed to agent orange, a chemical used in Vietnam to kill vegetation and jungle foliage. Estimates are that 800,000 Vietnam Veterans have already died from the effects of this toxic dioxin. The Veterans Administration cannot tell us how many vets are suffering from agent orange exposure, only conditions and benefits of veterans they serve. Over 2.6 million soldiers served in Vietnam and over 600,000 are still alive today. If you would like to make a donation on behalf of a loved one you lost to agent orange, they can be made at the War History Museum 2122 O'Day Road, Fort Wayne, IN or by

mailing a check to Veterans Memorial P.O. Box 26 Arcola, IN 46704.



Patch designed for the Agent Orange Memorial Fundraiser.

Special Dedication to be held May 16th at the Veterans Memorial

Concordia Lutheran High School will honor two of their very own in a ceremony to be held on Saturday May 16th at 11am at the Veterans Memorial Park. Neale Shank and Kevin Pape were both childhood friends and both served in the middle east wars. Neale was killed in Iraq during Iraqi Freedom campaign and Kevin was killed Afghanistan during the Enduring Freedom campaign.

Friends, families and students have raised the necessary funding to be able to honor both soldiers with two beautiful black granite benches which will sit in front of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial at the Veterans Memorial Park.

Many thanks go out to Tommy Franke, Martin Carbaugh and all the grade school and high school students from Concordia Lutheran and the JROTC that helped raise all the funding for this memorial.

★ Memorials ★

Donations received in memory of:

Charlie Momper
Carl Fowler
Norman E. Grayless

A Message from the Commander



By Greg Bedford

As most of you know, the War History Museum has been closed since the end of December. We re-opened on Friday April 3rd with a refreshed look and organization.

Over the last four years we just took in so many military items that we literally ran out of space. With the help of many volunteers who donated hundreds of hours, we have taken a giant step in re-organizing storage for all existing artifacts and military items.

Through this process we have changed exhibits, put out new artifacts, uniforms and added new display cases. When you go through the museum you will see the difference immediately. We have an updated tracking system for our entire inventory.

Calendar of Events

April

- April 23 Army Reserve Birthday
- April 30 American Legion National Commander
Dan Wiley visits 9:30am

May

- National Military Appreciation Month & Month of Military Caregiver
- May 1 Silver Star Banner Day
- May 8 Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- May 13 Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- May 16 Dedication Day- Concordia Soldiers Tribute
Benches for Neale Shank & Kevin Pape
11am Veterans Memorial
- May 16 Armed Forces Day
- May 22-23 Annual Watchfire 6pm Fri-6 pm Sat
- May 25 Memorial Day Parade

June

- June 6 D-Day Anniversary
- June 14 Flag Day & Army Birthday
- June 23 Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- June 27 National PTSD Awareness Day

Many thanks to Sharon, Karen, Cheryl, Wayne, Sheldon, Kevin, Kenny, Joni, Robert, Bonnie, Pat, Garrett, Sheryl and of course Tim Schild who was instrumental in organizing the overall plan and executing it. What a wonderful job all our team did.



We are not accepting any new artifacts at the present time. Now we are asking area museums to stop in and see if they can use any of our duplicate items and will also reach out to veteran organizations to see if they can take any items for their posts.

Remember we are now open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 11 am to 4 pm at the War History Museum. The Memorial Park grounds are open 24/7 with Free parking. There is no admission charge at our museum. Have a great summer!

- Greg

In Memoriam



Carl Fowler

This past month we have lost two very important Korean veterans who are part of our Korean Soldiers Memorial at the Veterans Memorial. Carl Fowler a long time friend and associate of the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum passed in the last month. Also one of our soldiers and important associate of the Shrine, Charlie Momper just recently passed also. These two men not only were respected in our community but served their country during the terrible war from 1950-1953. Their legacy will be carried on in our Memorial Park, each and everyday as their statues stand tall.. God Bless both these brave souls. May they both rest in Peace.



Charlie Momper



Memorial Day Parade 2026

Monday May 25th at 11:00am

Check-in for the lineup guidance begins at 10:00am at the corner of Nettie Drive and Parnell Ave. (Next to the tennis courts)

The parade is from East State St. and Parnell Ave. to Coliseum Blvd.

Please join us at the ceremony following the parade at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

For Additional information, contact commanderaccov@gmail.com



Register at: [Parades-Allen County Council of Veterans Organizations \(weebly.com\)](http://Parades-Allen County Council of Veterans Organizations (weebly.com))

Black History Month Program Held on February 28th



Clarence Eldridge Jr.



Clifford Buttram Jr.



Joseph Ayers

Since our Event Center was closed during reorganization American Legion Post 148 on E. Lewis Street was kind enough to host our tribute to African Americans who served and sacrificed during wartime. Major Clifford Buttram Jr. was host and guest speaker. Guest speakers included Petty Officer 1st Class Clarence Eldridge Jr.; Sgt Joseph Ayers U.S. Army and Clifford Buttram. Singers from the Unity Performing Arts Foundation were the musical guests. At the conclusion of the program Post 148 Commander Anthony Payne and Finance Officer Sheryl Edwards presented the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum with a check for \$1,000. What a wonderful program it was.

Jim Turcovsky, Board Member from the Veterans Memorial, coordinated the program and set up a photo display of African American Medal of Honor winners and famous units they served in during the war. Thanks to Robert Thomas, the Museum Curator for his involvement in the photo displays. We look forward again to next February to Post 148, who will host the Black History Month program.

Thank You!



Post 148



Eric Johnson, 1st Vice Commander and Pat Fraizer, 2nd Vice Commander from VNMSM receive a check from Sheryl Edwards and Anthony Payne from American Legion 148.

David Milner...Award Winning Photo Journalist

You have probably seen Dave Milner at many of the Veterans Memorial Events taking photographs of the dedications and ceremonies. Dave is a Photo-journalist for American International News Service. He has won a Merit Award for this U.S. Navy's Delta Force Formation Bursts in January of this year. Last year 1st Vice Commander Eric Johnson presented Dave with our Spirit of Excellence Award from the Board of Directors for his dedication and work on behalf of the Veterans Memorial Shrine and Museum. Thank you Dave for helping us ensure our mission "where no veteran will ever be forgotten" is carried forward. You are making a difference my friend!



*David L. Milner, Photojournalist,
American International News Service*

★ The Mission of the Shrine ★

- To provide a forever memorial for all military Veterans of the United States.
- To educate today's youth on the history of war and conflicts that the United States has been involved in defending the freedoms we enjoy every day.
- To preserve artifacts of their service; to give future generations a better understanding and appreciation of the historical past of the United States.

8th Annual Veterans Memorial Golf Tournament August 26th

Save The Date



8TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Wednesday
August 26th, 2026



Reserve your foursome today
by calling the Veterans Memorial
at **260-267-5022**.

honoringforever.org

War History Museum Open

Friday, Saturday,
Sunday and Monday
11 am to 4 pm

Memorial Grounds
Open 24/7 Everyday

Group Tours by Appointment call
260-267-5022
FREE Admission



Did You Know...?

- Troop levels in South Vietnam peaked at 543,000 service members in 1969. By 1972, less than 27,000 U. S. personnel remained in-country in advisory or support roles. The last combat unit to Vietnam as part of the 1973 withdrawal was the 3rd Marine Amphibious Brigade (3d MAB), which left Da Nang on March 29.
- The history of the 1st Division, the Big Red One, traces back to the Revolutionary War with Battery D of the 5th Field Artillery under Captain Alexander Hamilton. This battery has the longest record of continuous service of any unit in the U. S. Army.
- The NSA secretly developed one of the first electronic computers, the "Harvest" system, in the 1960s to automate code breaking, giving the U.S. a major technological edge in deciphering complex Soviet encryption.
- In 2002 during the war in Afghanistan, U.S. and coalition forces fought a massive battle in the Shah-i-Kot Valley against entrenched Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters. Operation Anaconda highlighted the challenges of modern mountain warfare and coordinating close air support.
- In 1847 at the Siege of Veracruz during the Mexican American War, U.S. forces conducted the first large-scale amphibious assault in American military history at Veracruz, landing 10,000 troops under heavy fire. The operation is often overshadowed by battles further inland.



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July 4th Celebration of America's 250th Anniversary

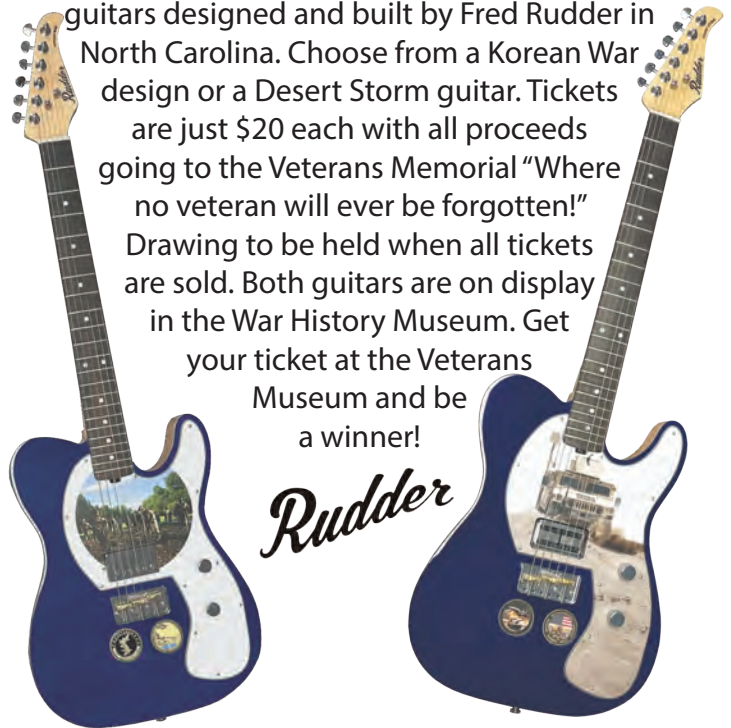
To honor all Veterans who served the Veterans Memorial Shrine and Museum is publishing a special 250th Anniversary magazine saluting all Veterans as "We Stand For Freedom." The magazine will feature articles on all branches of service with interviews with a host of veterans. It will trace the 250 years of history around Fort Wayne and its military significance. It will be a memorable magazine to keep for years to come. Advertising is available to any corporation, veterans organization or business in the area. Just contact the Shrine office or contact Eric at 521johnson@comcast.net. Deadline for advertising space and artwork is June 1st. Publication date is the 4th of July.



Win A Custom Made Guitar to honor our Military Veterans!

Now you could win one of two custom made guitars designed and built by Fred Rudder in North Carolina. Choose from a Korean War design or a Desert Storm guitar. Tickets

are just \$20 each with all proceeds going to the Veterans Memorial "Where no veteran will ever be forgotten!" Drawing to be held when all tickets are sold. Both guitars are on display in the War History Museum. Get your ticket at the Veterans Museum and be a winner!



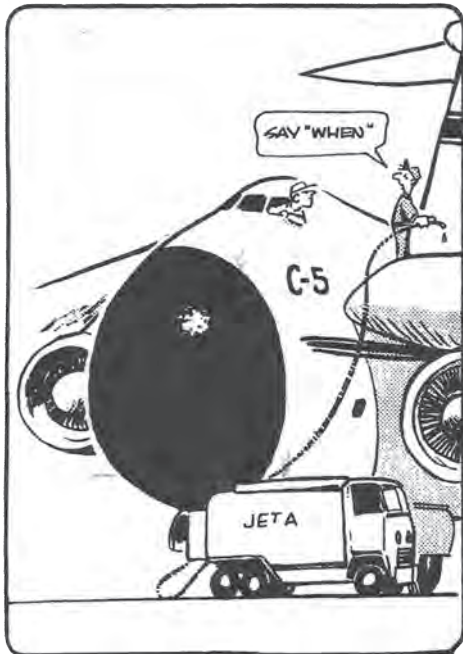
Volunteers Always Welcome at The Veterans Memorial

Whether you would like to help with our Memorial grounds or work in the War History Museum, we can always use volunteers. No matter if it's a couple hours a week or a few hours a month, give Bonnie Davis a call. She is our volunteer coordinator and would welcome the opportunity to tell you about our needs. You can reach Bonnie by calling the Shrine office at 260-267-5022

Columbarium Niche's Now For Sale



We have had more interest from Veterans and their families on purchasing a niche in our beautiful new memorial columbarium. More veterans are choosing cremation and inurnment for their final resting place. The final two sections will be delivered in June. If you would like more information or to schedule an appointment on purchasing a niche, please contact Sharon Hudson at 260-267-5022.



Kroger Cares & You Can Too!



Do you want to help the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum without doing anything besides your normal grocery shopping? You are able to do this by using Kroger Community Rewards! It doesn't cost you a thing, and Kroger will donate a percentage from your grocery bill to us.

To Use the Kroger Community Rewards Program: Visit www.kroger.com. Once logged into their Kroger account, search for "War Veterans Memorial Shrine of American History Inc" either by name or MK539 and then click Enroll. New users will need to create an account which requires some basic information, a valid email address and a rewards card.

- Customers must have a registered Kroger rewards card account to link to your organization.
- If a member does not yet have a Kroger rewards card, please let them know they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. REMEMBER, purchases will not count for your organization until after your participants register their rewards card. Participants must swipe their registered Kroger rewards card or use the phone number that is related to their registered Kroger rewards card when shopping for each purchase to count.

