VHP SPEAKERS BUREAU
UP AND RUNNING

What better way is there to learn about WWII, the
Korean War or the Vietnam War than from an eye
witness, someone who actually participated in the
event? CCSU Prof. John Tully’s history class (Vietnam
Wars: Home and Abroad) was treated to a presentation
by two Vietnam veterans, Kjell Tollefsen and Joseph
Niedermayer at a recent class. The two men described
serving in the military during the controversial war.
Joe, a Navy man, described his duties aboard the
aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Enterprise, while stationed
off the coast of South Vietnam. Kjell, an Army
helicopter pilot, a.k.a. “Troll”, kept the students riveted
with his descriptions of the three helicopter crashes he
survived. The vets engaged the students for two and a
half hours while they recounted their experiences and
responded to questions from the appreciative class.
The vets answered questions ranging from the politics
of the war to living conditions to homecoming
experiences. While Professor Tully plans to invite
more veterans to his classes in the future, two WWII
veterans,

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SOCIAL STUDIES CONFERENCE FEATURES
VHP TEACHER LESSON PLANS

The VHP is expanding into high school and
middle school classrooms thanks to two energetic
and creative teachers. The VHP is focusing this
year on collaborating with CT teachers to
enhance their curriculums and provide teachers
with additional resources they can use to teach
our young people about America’s history.
History teachers Kristen Duke of Coventry H.S.
and Michael Sturges of Nonnewaug H.S. created
the first two curriculum units of study based on
veteran interviews and materials in the VHP.
They presented to a standing room only crowd at
the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies’
annual fall

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conference on October 30. Kristen presented a tutorial on using the VHP in the classroom and her unit on Women in War, while Michael presented his unit on Prisoners of War. Their creativity and thoughtfulness resulted in lessons which focused on geography, film making, the changing role of women in war, and other fascinating topics. All of the lesson plans created for these two units will be mailed to all high school teachers in the state and are also available on the VHP website for any teacher to use.

Future units of study will include medicine in war, the role of helicopters in Vietnam, minorities in the military, “profiles in courage”, and many others.

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**The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

When an unknown soldier has died in a war, that means that he or she has no family to claim them and secure a proper burial. The United States’ tradition of honoring these soldiers began after the Great War. The very first unknown soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on November 11th, the symbolic end of World War I, commemorating the armistice signed between the allies and Germany.

In 1958, two more unknown soldiers, one from World War II and one from the Korean War, were placed in Arlington next to the World War I soldier. In 1984 an unknown soldier from Vietnam was also placed there. It is now customary in the United States to place these soldiers next to their fallen comrades.

To honor these men and all Americans who gave their lives in each war, an Army honor guard, the 3rd U.S. Infantry, keeps a day and night vigil. Every November 11th, at 11 A.M. there is a ceremony at the Memorial Amphitheater to honor them as well.

**Source:** http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/visitor_information/tomb_of_the_unknowns.html

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**VHP Speakers Bureau continued from page one**

Morton Katz and James Hurst, will be describing their wartime experiences at Newington High School later this month.

Both veterans are members of the newly established VHP Speakers Bureau, now on-line at the VHP website, [www.ccsu.edu/vhp](http://www.ccsu.edu/vhp). Educators or civic groups can now request veterans to come and speak to their students or group. Many of the veterans who have been interviewed for the VHP have graciously volunteered to share their stories and knowledge as they continue to give to our country and state.
Gregg Cerosky, a history major from Glastonbury, just completed his undergraduate program in History at CCSU and is planning to pursue a master’s degree in Public History. He has been working with the VHP since June. After spending more than twenty years in the business world, Gregg returned to college full-time in 2007 to fulfill his lifelong passion for history, originally planning on becoming a high school social studies teacher. Since he enjoys researching all things historical, he decided to change his major to Public History. Gregg became familiar with the VHP when his father, a WWII veteran, was interviewed for the VHP. Gregg is truly fascinated by the stories the veterans have to tell and has personally interviewed seven veterans in the past five months. He believes that the VHP provides an invaluable resource for researchers and historians who benefit from the unique personal stories that the veterans have to offer.

Tom Bienemann vividly recalls his father's description of landing at Normandy and celebrating his 20th birthday getting shot at on Omaha Beach. Ever since that story, Tom has had an interest in military history and the life of the GI. He brings that passion along with a background as a television news reporter to his work as a volunteer for CCSU and the Veterans History Project. "My first interview was a WWII Navy vet from the Pacific theater. He won four Purple Hearts. Like my father, he considers himself lucky to be able to talk about his military experience." Tom is a Granby resident. He holds a sales position with the XL Center in Hartford and has worked at Fox 61 News in Hartford. Tom earned a BA in history and journalism from the University of Minnesota.

Jon Ault graduated from the University of Connecticut with a BA in History, the College of William & Mary with an MA in History, and Southern Connecticut State University with an MLS in Library Science. From 2000 through 2004, he served as the Reference Archivist for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Mashantucket, Connecticut, and he was its Head Archivist from 2004 through 2005. Military history has long fascinated him. He is a member of the Company of Military Historians, and his main areas of interest are the Revolutionary War, the Spanish-American War, and world military history of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
Ethel C. Smith served in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War II. When she joined the service, Ethel was living in Orange, New Jersey, doing graduate work in nursing at Orange Memorial Hospital. In her interview for the VHP, she says she joined “to use [her] profession and see some of the world,” despite her parent’s preference that she stay home.

Ethel’s first military assignment was Tilton General Hospital, located at Fort Dix, New Jersey. As part of the 308th General Hospital Unit, she was deployed to the island of Tinian, one of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean. After the atomic bomb was dropped, she was also sent with the occupation forces to Etajima, Japan.

Ethel was known for her special treatment of wounded soldiers. One Christmas, she walked her ward with a pen and pad of paper, asking each soldier if she could pick up a small gift “for a mother or wife or sweetheart. . .[so] that they could give them a present” when they were released from the hospital. One veteran was so taken with Ethel that he drew cartoons about her.

Donald Guy Martin, 83, longtime resident of Avon, passed away suddenly on September 8, 2009 in Lynn, MA. Born in Pittsburgh, PA, he was an industrial engineering graduate and alumnus of Penn State University. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and the Korean War. During WWII he was in the Pacific Theater as a Ward Corpsman at the Naval Hospital on Tinian. He helped to “take care of approximately 12,000 Japanese and Korean civilians.”

He was recalled to active service in 1950 as a Charlie Med Corpsman and later as a Line Company Corpsman. He was discharged in 1952. He was the recipient of the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/bronze star, Korean Service Medal w/ bronze star, and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, among others.

Donald was an active member of the VFW Post 3272 in Avon.