Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemoration Update

Vietnam 50th Preview

As plans for the Vietnam 50th weekend progress, we want to give you a sampling of some of the activities we have lined up.

- The Sky Soldiers from the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation will be arriving with multiple aircraft, including a Huey, a Cobra, and a “Bird Dog”. In addition to an air demonstration of a simulated rescue of a downed airman each day, the pilots will be offering rides in the Huey and/or Cobra.
- The Collings Foundation will be flying in with their Skyraider.
- AC-47 gunship, “Spooky” will be flying in for the weekend.
- Three national speakers who will speak include: Connecticut Medal of Honor recipient, Paul “Buddy” Bucha, four-star Air Force General William Begert who flew as a Forward Air Control (FAC) pilot in Vietnam, and Air Force General Edward Mechenbier who spent almost six years as a POW in the infamous Hanoi Hilton.
- Authors who have written books about the Vietnam War will be on hand to talk about their books and be available for book signings include: Robert Dorr (authored 75 books on international affairs, military issues and the Vietnam War), William Guenon (Secret and Dangerous; Night of the Son Tay P.O.W. Raid), James Jordan (Over and Out, a memoir about a Marine grunt in Vietnam), and Arthur Wiknik, Jr. (Nam sense, his story about Vietnam combat as a member of the 101st Airborne Division).
- The 55 member internationally acclaimed Coast Guard Band will perform in concert.
- Gold Star Project magazine and display - an exhibit created by CCSU Professor Mary Collins’s English 483 class which highlights the “Gold Star” family perspective of war
- American Red Cross and Donut Dolly exhibit will highlight the role of the ARC in Vietnam with veteran Donut Dollies sharing their experiences.
- Wall of Letters exhibit displaying personal letters from troops “in country”
Dancing With Our Heroes Gala

The Fred Astaire Franchised Dance Studios of New England joined together for a second year to celebrate Connecticut’s service men and women and to raise funds for the Friends of Fisher House Connecticut. Funds will be used for the construction of a Fisher House at the West Haven, CT VA facility. On September 13th, 2014, the Dancing With Our Heroes gala showcased almost 40 veterans partnered with professional Fred Astaire dancers at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The event also featured public dancing, a lovely sit-down dinner, and a silent auction.

The military heroes who competed in the event trained with their professional dance instructors/partners for many weeks prior to the event in order to be prepared for a competition that featured a mix of Latin and Ballroom Dance. Winners were decided by both audience votes ($1/vote) and a panel of celebrity judges. World War II veteran Jack Rodin of West Hartford swept the house. Jack took first place for the judges’ vote and nudged veteran Brian Durbin out by $57 for the popular vote.

Come Fly With Me Event

by Adriana Dunn

The New England Air Museum, located in Windsor Locks, hosted the Come Fly With Me fundraising event on Saturday, September 6th, 2014. The evening included enjoyable music, delicious hors d’oeuvres, and the featured drink of the night: the Huey Cocktail. Guests also had the pleasure of exploring the New England Air Museum after-hours and received guided tours. All the proceeds benefited the Vietnam 50th War Commemoration that will take place July 10-12 of 2015. The gathering was a huge success, giving those who attended the opportunity to observe historic aircraft throughout the museum while benefiting a great cause.
U.S. Code, Title 42, Chapter 126 outlines the need for equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities; Oak Hill opened a new facility this October in Bristol, Connecticut under the same name. Chapter 126 Sports and Fitness is a brand new state of the art adaptive sports and fitness facility offering year round programs that cater to individuals with disabilities. At 25,000 square feet, including a fully accessible fitness facility and regulation high school gymnasium, Chapter 126 is the first facility of its kind in New England. Staffed with certified fitness professionals and experts in adaptive sports programming Chapter 126 offers unique opportunities for our disabled service men and women to return to both team sports as well as pursuits in physical fitness. As an inclusive sports and fitness facility Chapter 126 strives to provide a center that helps people of all physical abilities develop lasting relationships while on their journey to increased overall health and wellness.

In order to assure that these programs are made available to all of Connecticut’s veterans Chapter 126 offers discounted memberships. Financial assistance is also available through the VA. The state of the art fitness center features accessible resistance and cardiovascular machines, in addition to the new AlterG anti-gravity treadmill, one of only six in the entire state. Adaptive sports programs are being held year round and include wheelchair basketball, handball, and sports for individuals with visual impairments. There are also future plans to provide veteran specific team sports, where members of various military branches will be invited to engage in healthy competition with one another.

The opening of this new facility is a step forward in providing inclusive programming for individuals with a disability that is more than comparable to those programs offered for able-bodied persons. It is the overriding goal of the staff at Chapter 126 to offer programs that are inspiring while providing a community centered on a shared love for sports and healthy living. At Chapter 126 we strive to provide all individuals with a facility that revolves around the pillars of Sports, Fitness, and Community. We look forward to serving the men and women who have served for all of us. We will see you in the gym!

**Sergeant's philosophy**

The Company Commander and the First Sergeant were in the field. As they hit the sack for the night, the First Sergeant said, "Sir, look up into the sky and tell me what you see?"

The CO said, "I see millions of stars."

1st Sgt.: "And what does that tell you, sir?"

CO: "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Top?"

1st Sgt.: "Well sir, it tells me that somebody stole our tent."
George Henry Burr, of Trumbull, CT passed away on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at the age of 96. Burr served the United States as a member of the 29th Division of the U.S. Army. Basic training in Fort Meade prepared Burr for action in WWII. Burr was part of the amphibious invasion at Omaha Beach in Normandy, where he lost some of his fingers when a shell exploded near him. After being awarded a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Burr returned home, met his wife (Vivian Liburdy), married, and had two children.

Robert J. Grimord, of Meriden, CT passed away at the age of 95 Sunday, March 23, 2014. In 1939 Grimord enlisted in the U.S. Navy. His destroyer took him to Midway, Guadalcanal, Leyte Gulf, Okinawa, and other locations in the Pacific Ocean. After his military service ended in 1946, he was discharged and worked as an employee of the U.S. Postal Service for 34 years.

John Cubeta, of Middletown, CT passed away at 89. Cubeta enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943 during World War II. He served with the 4th Marine Division and was one of the first to land on Iwo Jima. When Cubeta returned to civilian life, he played semi-pro football and was inducted into the Middletown Sports Hall of Fame in 1998.

Edward Andrew May Sr., of Hartford, CT passed away at 94 Wednesday, July 23, 2014. May enlisted in the Army Air Corps during the build up to World War II. He completed 50 combat missions aboard B-17s and was a proud member of the Connecticut Flying Yankees. When May returned from abroad, he played professional baseball with the Miami Flamingos. He returned to his hometown of Hartford and worked for a long time as a baseball umpire and was an active member in the community. May is survived by his wife (Jodi) and his son (Edward A. May Jr).

Lewis J. Myers, passed away on Tuesday, July 8, 2014 at the age of 88. Myers was a Private First Class in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was drafted, then attended Basic Training at Camp Croft in 1944. Myers served abroad in France, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. He was awarded medals for serving in the European, African, and Middle Eastern Campaigns, as well as a Bronze Star, and a Presidential Citation from the President of France. When he returned home he began his 27 year long career with Pratt & Whitney as an electrician.
Richard Andrews, of Sandy Hook, 90, passed away on Tuesday, June 6, 2014. Andrews was drafted while living in Danbury, CT. He joined the U.S. Army and served during World War II. He was captured by the German Army and was taken as a POW to Stalag XII-A. Andrews earned the Combat Infantry Badge, two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, and several other citations. Andrews returned to Connecticut where he founded A&S Builders with his partner. Andrews is survived by his wife, Louise Ingram Andrews.

Richard W. McDonald, of New Britain, passed away at the age of 82 on Wednesday, May 28, 2014. McDonald left the National Guard to join the U.S. Army when the Korean War broke out. After Basic Training at Fort Dix, McDonald served abroad. He was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, a Purple Heart, Korean Service Medal, and three Battle Stars. When McDonald returned home, he worked for various trucking and bus companies and joined the First Company Governors Horse Guard. McDonald is survived by his wife, Masako Uchida.

Vincent A. Treglia, of Rocky Hill, CT passed away on August 14th, 2014 at the age of 89. Treglia enlisted in the U.S. Navy the same year he graduated from Hartford High School. He was stationed in England as a Pharmacist’s Mate, spent time on the USS LST-583, and was present at the Battle of Normandy during World War II. Treglia was honorably discharged in 1946 and married his wife two years later. He was a Lieutenant in the Hartford Fire Department. Treglia is survived by his wife, Josephine Treglia.

Joseph Michael Angelillo, of Southington, 91, passed away on Wednesday, June 11, 2014. Angelillo served the U.S. Navy as a maintenance fleet crew chief during WWII. During his naval career Angelillo was one of the best students, and when he graduated from the Naval Air Transport School in 1944, he posted the highest grade ever recorded. This accomplishment was chronicled by his local newspaper. Angelillo was attached to a VR-2, which he flew between Alameda, California and Honolulu, Hawaii ensuring the troops in the Pacific were supplied. After the war, Angelillo returned to Connecticut to work on engines for Pratt & Whitney. Angelillo continued to serve his community on the Southington Board of Education, Parks and Recreation Commission, and many other charitable endeavors.
CCSU Professor Mary Collins and her English 483 students are currently working on a two-part Gold Star Project for exhibit at the *Vietnam 50th*. The first phase of the Gold Star Project is a publication of collected narratives and interviews of families who lost servicemen in the Vietnam War conducted by Professor Mary Collins’s Advanced Creative Nonfiction class. These stories hold great importance because many of these families’ accounts have not been brought to light until the present day. The stories are extremely moving and exhibit the raw and true feelings these families endured in the past that still affect them to this day. Professor Collins’s class has done an extraordinary job putting together this project and making the accounts of these Gold Star families known.

The second part of the project will entail the creation of panels with text and images to honor and remember the Gold Star family’s perspective of war. Once finished, this exhibit will be available to travel throughout the state to libraries, museums and schools. The opening exhibit of the Gold Star Project will be held at the Trumbull Library during the spring of 2015.

The Gold Star Project has been made possible by the hard work of Professor Collins and her students and the financial donations of generous and patriotic citizens. This entire project was funded using the donations of supportive benefactors. Many members of the Trumbull Rotary Club have personally been very generous in their donations to the project. The Rotary Club also encouraged Professor Collins to apply for the Rotary Grant, which she received and will use towards the printing of the magazine and the production of the panels. Printing of the magazine was also made possible by Art Payne and Fairfield Press. Major Gold Star donors include Raymond G. Baldwin, Jr., Hughes & Cronin Public Affairs Strategies, and Robert Pirizzolo. In addition to the English 483 students, CCSU supporters of the project include: Provost Carl Lovitt, the English Department, Dean Susan Pease, and Assistant to the Dean Dr. Brian Sommers.

**Vietnam 50th Preview (contd.)**

- Collections of Vietnam War memorabilia and military vehicles

- Much more!

**Vietnam 50th Merchandise**

Vietnam 50th merchandise for sale now! For more information or to order, call Eileen Hurst at 860-832-2976.

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The staff and volunteers of the Veterans History Project here at Central Connecticut State University converged on the New Britain visitors center in an effort to create a display that represents just a small sampling of the thousands of images, documents and stories in our Connecticut veterans’ collections.

The grand opening held on October 17th was well attended by more than sixty of our veteran friends and interested citizens. President Jack Miller of Central Connecticut State University was the guest speaker for the grand opening. Mr. Gerry Amodio, Executive Director of the New Britain Downtown District provided the space for the VHP display and directed the grand opening.

Many of the veterans whose collections were included in the display were in attendance at the grand opening. This provided a great opportunity for the visitors in attendance to speak with and hear first hand the stories and experiences of our Connecticut veterans.

All of the photographs and memorabilia in the exhibit belong to Connecticut men and women who have served from World War I through present day conflicts. Visitors to the display will also see several static displays that represent the items worn or used by our veterans during their time of service. To view more of the thousands of photographs in our collection or to view incredible interviews of Connecticut’s own heroes please visit our website at www.ccsu.edu/vhp.

The display will remain at the New Britain Visitors Center through December. We encourage all to come and learn from Connecticut’s veterans through their photos and static displays. The New Britain Visitors Center is located at 66 West Main St., New Britain, Connecticut. They are open from 9-5 Monday through Friday.
NEW EMPLOYEE

In August 2014 the Veteran’s History Project welcomed Shaun Winton as a member of the team. Winton graduated with a degree in History from Grand Valley State University (Michigan) and is working on his Masters in Public History at Central Connecticut State University.

When he is not working at the Veterans History Project or working on school related work, he likes to hike, play tennis, and be outdoors. Winton is excited about being part of the VHP, “because it is important to collect the stories while we still have the chance.”

NEW EMPLOYEE

By Austin Sullivan

Veteran Spotlight: James F. Jordan


Following training, he was shipped over to Vietnam, assigned to Golf Company, Second Battalion, First Marine Division.

He was involved in over 250 patrols, concentrated south of Da Nang. In late June, 1969, Jordan and four of his fellow Marines were wounded on a patrol. Recovering from his wounds, the Marine was discharged in September, 1969. Jordan wrote about his time in the Marines in Over and Out, published in 2013. He will be one of the featured authors for the Vietnam 50th Commemoration in July. Come hear his story and get an autographed copy of his book.

NEW EMPLOYEE

Austin Sullivan, a native of Stafford Springs, started working for the Veterans History Project in June of 2014. Austin is halfway through completing his Master of Arts Degree in Public History. He currently holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences from Lyndon State College. His goal is to enter the field of museum interpretation or education, having a keen interest in history since he was a child. A supporter of the military, he hopes his work at the VHP will help Connecticut’s veterans.

Remember Our Heroes this Veterans Day.

For more information or to participate please contact:

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Visit the Veterans History Project!

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