

Potter County Veterans News

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Potter County Veterans Affairs Dept.

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Local Korean War Veteran Coming Home

William "Bill" Turner is coming home. After more than 60 years, the U.S. Air Force first lieutenant from the First Fork area near the Potter/Cameron County border is no longer missing. Military scientists recently made a positive identification of his remains, which were discovered at a 1952 crash site in Alaska.

A Defense Department spokesman said 1st Lt. Turner's body will be returned to the area. A burial and memorial service with full military honors will be held at the Gilmore Cemetery near Sinnemahoning State Park. Tentative date is Sept. 20. Details will be announced.

Identification has been made of some 17 of the 52 individuals aboard the C-124A Globemaster that went down Nov. 22, 1952, on a flight from Tacoma, Wash., to Elmendorf Air Force Base. Six hours into the flight, dispatchers lost contact with the plane. Strong winds were reported at its 9,000-foot elevation. The plane crashed hard into the side of the mountain. It was one of the largest non-combat tragedies of the Korean War.

Poor weather and a possible avalanche prevented any recovery at the time. But in June 2012, an Alaska National Guard helicopter crew spotted a debris field that decades of glacial movement and melting uncovered. A team was dispatched from the Hawaii-based Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Command, which confirmed the debris to be from the downed passenger aircraft. Most of the occupants were servicemen who had been in the lower 48 on leave.

Bill Turner was the son of Willis E. and Pearl Caldwell Turner of First Fork. He was a 1946 graduate of Coudersport High School. Many personal items -- a fishing kit, a compass, a survival kit, a survival suit, a hockey puck, and a mini-box of Camel cigarettes -- have been found. They're being saved for a future memorial.



(Photo above: The Douglas C-124C Globemaster II was the largest transport aircraft when it was introduced into service in 1950. At right, specialists search through a debris field revealed by the melting glacier ice in Alaska.)

Bridge Memorials For Vietnam War Casualties

Two young men from Coudersport who lost their lives in the Vietnam War are a step closer to having local bridges named in their honor. Members of the Pa. Senate Transportation Committee unanimously approved SB 1401. It is an act renaming the Chestnut Street Bridge as the Private Edwin Tubbs Memorial Bridge; and renaming the Rt. 872 Bridge near American Legion Post 192 as the Specialist Donald Stiles Memorial Bridge. SB 1401 now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

"This is excellent news for the Tubbs and Stiles families and their many friends and supporters," said Will Worthington, director of veterans affairs for Potter County. "The Potter County Commissioners and Coudersport Borough Council got the ball rolling and both Sen. Joe Scarnati and Rep. Martin Causer have been very supportive. Once this bill passes, it will mean that all of the Vietnam War casualties from Potter County have been memorialized with a bridge named in their honor."



Eddie Tubbs knew the risks when he decided to join the Army in August 1967. The son of Russell Tubbs and Marie Tubbs-Baker, he grew up in modest circumstances at the family home on Water Street in Coudersport. His decision to enlist was a tough one to swallow for another teenager, Jane Marie Haviland of Emporium. She and Eddie had just become engaged and she feared for his safety. Pvt. Edwin Franklin Tubbs was deployed to Vietnam with D Co., 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry Reg., 9th Infantry Division on Dec. 4, 1968. Just five weeks later, while stationed at Dinh Tuong, South Vietnam, on Jan. 12, 1969, he was fatally wounded as he set down his rifle to assist a friend who was injured on the battlefield.

A native of the Rubbertown village of north Coudersport, Army Specialist **Donald L. Stiles** was the community's first fatality in Vietnam. Spc. Stiles was raised by his grandparents, Edward and Belle Austin Stiles, after his mother Vivian Stiles died before he was 2. "Donnie" enlisted at the age of 17. He was deployed on Feb. 28, 1967, as an atomic demolition munitions specialist, serving with A Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery, 1st Infantry Division. He was killed in action in Binh Duong Province, South Vietnam on April 2, 1968, after taking another soldier's place on a mission and being hit by fragments from a land mine.



Documenting Local Revolutionary War Veterans



An effort to verify the connection of local men to the Revolutionary War will be the subject of a special program to be held at 7 pm on July 25 at the Potter County Historical Society Museum in Coudersport. Members of the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter have spearheaded the research to memorialize the soldiers who are buried in Potter County. DAR officers Ilene Altenhein and Nancy Glover are heading the project. Photographs and other research findings will be on display during the program, which is open to the public.

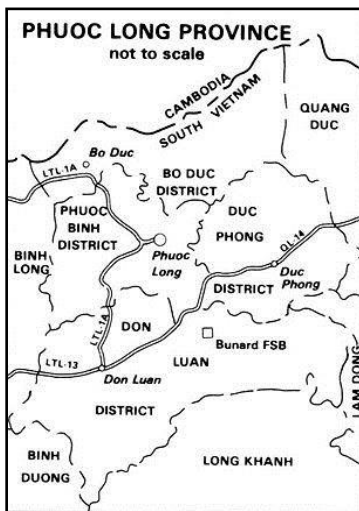
Galeton Vietnam War Casualty To Be Honored

PFC Clark Robert Douglas of Galeton made the supreme sacrifice for his nation and his Army brothers on Nov. 11, 1969, while serving in the Vietnam War. A special ceremony to dedicate a permanent memorial to PFC Douglas in his hometown will be held at 1 pm on Saturday, July 12. Family members and the memorial organizers have issued an invitation to the public to join them in the dedication of the PFC Clark Robert Douglas Memorial Bridge over Pine Creek on Mill Street in Galeton. PFC Clark was a 1966 graduate of Galeton High School and was serving as a medic with the United States Army 1st Air Cavalry Division, Charlie Company. He had been scheduled to leave Vietnam in May 1970. Spc/4 Douglas, 21, was in an aircraft landing zone, Firebase LZ Jen in Phouc Long Province, when the area came under attack by hostile forces. Although thrown to the ground by a burst of impacting mortar round, he persistently crawled in to the fusillade to assist his fellow soldiers when he was mortally struck by another round of fire.



His wife, Linda, was residing in Cameron Mills, N.Y., at the time of his death. In addition to his wife and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clark Douglas Jr. of Galeton, he also left a daughter, a sister and two brothers. Burial was in West Hill Cemetery.

Specialist 4 Douglas was awarded medals, including the Distinguished Service Cross, for bravery and heroism for rendering aid to wounded soldiers in the midst of enemy fire. A proposal to name the Mill Street Bridge in PFC Douglas's honor was presented to the Pennsylvania General Assembly with the support of family members, veterans' service organizations, the Potter County Board of Commissioners and Galeton Borough Council.



Representative Martin Causer championed the cause in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and legislation changing the name of the bridge was passed by the legislature and signed by Gov. Tom Corbett in 2013. Potter County Veterans Affairs Director Will Worthington reports that the long-standing mission to have bridges named in recognition of all nine Potter County soldiers who lost their lives in the Vietnam War is nearly completed. His office is also collecting information and photographs for all of the county's Vietnam War casualties to assure that they are properly memorialized at the new Education Center at the Wall in Washington, D.C. For more information, contact Will Worthington at 274-8290, Ext. 210.

Successful Project Healing Waters By Local TU Chapter



A special motorcade rolled through Shinglehouse, Coudersport and Austin as Project Healing Waters returned to God's Country for its seventh running. Military personnel who have been wounded in service to our nation received a motorcycle and American Legion squad car escort. God's Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited brought the veterans to the peace and serenity of Potter County to aid their physical and emotional recovery, in



cooperation with the Big Moore's Run Fish and Game Preserve and First Fork Lodge. The veterans learned to fly-fish and tie their own flies, under expert supervision. Fourteen veterans came from VA hospitals in Erie, Bath and Buffalo. Trout Unlimited dedicated Project Healing Waters to Korean War veterans this year and worked with local American Legion and VFW posts to include veterans from World War II and the Korean War in the parade through Potter County. Next year's Project Healing Waters will be dedicated to veterans of the Vietnam War.

Veterans Designation Now On Driver's Licenses

A new law allows for a designation on a Pennsylvania Driver's License or Identification Card that clearly indicates that the bearer is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces. Qualified applicants include those who have received a certificate of release or discharge from active duty (DD214) or equivalent for service in the Armed Forces, including a reserve component or the National Guard – as long as they were discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable. The designation includes an American flag. It can be helpful to veterans seeking discounts from certain retailers and to individuals who view the license or ID card. The designation was approved by the state legislature at the request of the Veterans and Military Service Committee of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.



Going To Bat For Veterans Through Legislation



Potter County's leadership in support of veterans and military families was recently reinforced in Washington, D.C. Two resolutions introduced by Potter County are poised for adoption by the National Association of Counties at the group's annual conference in New Orleans. NACo's registered lobbyists in Washington advocate for measures that the membership approves on its formal platform – and members of Congress have

traditionally responded favorably. Potter County Commissioner Paul Heimel is vice chairman of NACo's Veterans and Military Service Committee, which is pushing for the following initiatives:

- A resolution from Potter County calling on Congress and the Administration to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to pursue more outsourcing and partnerships with community providers for veterans' health care, including mental health treatment. Local providers such as Dickinson Center Inc. and Cole Memorial Hospital could benefit from such a policy shift.
- A proposal introduced by Potter County calling for federal criminal penalties to be imposed against those convicted of defrauding veterans or military families, or those fraudulently soliciting donations on behalf of veterans and military families.
- Legislation from St. Clair County, Ala., requiring the federal government to provide funding for certified county veterans' service officers. All VSOs in Pennsylvania must be certified, but county taxpayers are responsible for all expenses.
- A resolution from Salem, Oregon, calling for delays in the VA's requirement that all new claims be e-filed.

PFC Berwyn G. Cole Memorial Bridge Dedicated



A World War II casualty from northern Potter County was fondly recalled during a patriotic ceremony near Harrison Valley. Occasion was the dedication of the PFC Berwyn G. Cole Memorial Bridge that carries Rt. 49 over the Cowanesque River, where Cole and his friends often swam and played. His boyhood home is just a stone's throw from the bridge. Cole was 19 when he lost his life in the Battle of the Bulge. His daughter, Rosalee Cole Hill (holding sign), said, "He only got to hold me one time." Congressman Glenn Thompson, Rep. Martin Causer and Potter County Commissioner Paul Heimel offered remarks, as did several of PFC Cole's relatives and friends.



Boogie-Woogie Boost For LEEK Preserve



A colorful and musical fundraiser for Potter County's LEEK Hunting and Mountain Preserve in Orchard Park, N.Y., was a big success. American Legion Post 567 sponsored the benefit, which included a 100-mile motorcycle run and reception, ceremonial services by a military honor guard, refreshments and a musical revue. LEEK, located in a valley near the village of Oswayo, is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides wounded and injured service members a way to enjoy therapeutic outdoor recreational experiences and activities. For the last six years, LEEK has allowed these soldiers to re-engage with outdoor activities, re-establish their confidence, and enjoy fellowship. Time is

also carved out for counseling and spiritual reflection. LEEK has established a network of volunteers, which consists of military medical facilities, communities of northern Pennsylvania and western New York, Patriot Guard Riders, wildlife agencies, churches, military service organizations and numerous individual and corporate sponsors. Most recently, outdoor writer and photographer Charles Alsheimer was featured speaker during the annual LEEK open house. The facility hosted four wounded veterans and their families for the weekend. As he looked out on the vast fields and woods of LEEK available to veterans, Alsheimer, an Air Force veteran from the Vietnam era, said, "This is impressive. In fact, I've never seen an operation like this -- it's incredible. Our military guys need this kind of thing." LEEK is owned by brothers Ed and Lew Fisher and their wives Kate and Elaine. The Oswayo facility's name comes from the first letters of their first names. Volunteers and supporters are always welcome. More information is available online at leekpreserve.org.



(Charles Alsheimer, standing, is shown with Army Sgt. Dennis Leonard and his family. Photo by Kate Day Sager)

Offering Helping Hand To Potter County Veterans



Potter County Veterans Affairs Director Will Worthington is trained to help local veterans access benefits and services from the VA and other agencies. He can also assist vets with electronic filing for medical benefits and other services. The VA reports that wait time for claim processing is reduced by about 50% if a claim is filed by computer rather than on paper. Worthington is available at the Gunzburger Building in Coudersport Tuesdays from 8 to 4:30 (by appointment); Wednesdays from 8 to 4:30 (walk-ins and follow-ups), or by appointment at 814-274-8290, extension 210.

Pa. Veterans Trust Fund Off & Running



Pa. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has selected 10 organizations to receive \$342,000 in grants from the Pennsylvania Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF). The fund's balance has grown significantly

thanks to Pennsylvanians who have voluntarily made a \$3.00 donation when applying for a license or photo ID and renewing a motor vehicle registration, as well as proceeds from the sale of the Honoring Our Veterans license plate. Grants support programs and projects to support Pennsylvania veterans and their families. Among recipients of the first round of grants were:

- Berks Counseling Center: \$10,000 to provide supportive services to veterans and their families.
- Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania Foundation: \$10,000 for humanitarian aid grants to assist Marines and their families.
- Operation Homefront of Pa./Del. and Warren County Veterans Council: \$18,000 for emergency assistance to veterans in need.
- Veterans Multi-Service Center: \$10,000 for outreach and awareness support to women veterans; and \$120,000 for Veterans IT Training/Job Placement.
- Easter Seals Western and Central Pennsylvania, \$60,000 to offer retreat weekends for children of service members.
- Pennsylvania Wounded Warriors Inc.: \$50,000 for emergency assistance to veterans in need.
- Philadelphia Veterans' Comfort House: \$37,500 for mental health services to veterans.

The program was established in 2012. Tax-deductible donations can be made to: Pa. Veterans' Trust Fund, Bldg. 0-47 Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003. Fifteen dollars from each "Honoring Our Veterans" license plate sale goes to the Veterans Trust Fund. The plate features an American flag and an eagle with the words "Honoring Our Veterans." Cost is \$35.



Military Science Courses Offer Career Preparation

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford offers two-credit, no-obligation military science courses that teach skills such as time management and communication. Many enrollees are children of military veterans who are interested in learning more about possible career options, Pitt-Bradford has partnered with the Army ROTC at St. Bonaventure University and the Pa. National Guard to offer the courses. Here, Keanu Sorbelli, a business management graduate from Wilkes-Barre, is commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army after completing UPB's program.



Odds 'n Ends



Shysters On The Prowl! A marketing company acquired two toll-free phone numbers which are very similar to Veterans Benefits Administration numbers. The marketer seeks personal information, including credit card numbers. The two numbers are: 1-800-872-1000 (VBA main number is 1-800-827-1000); and 1-888-442-4511 (GI Bill number is 1-888-442-4551).

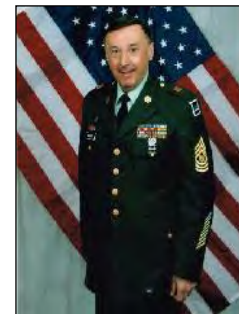
Dental Insurance Program. VA is partnering with two providers to bring affordable dental insurance to eligible veterans and their family members receiving care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program. This benefit is designed for veterans with no dental coverage, or those eligible for VA dental care who would like to purchase additional coverage. For more information, contact Delta Dental at 1-855-370-3303 or MetLife at 1-888-310-1681. Vets not enrolled in the VA health care system may call 1-877-222-8387.



Help Available 24/7. The Defense Department has revitalized the Military OneSource website to assist service members and their families. Military OneSource (militaryonesource.com, or 1-800-342-9647) provides free, round-the-clock consultants to assist with topics such as non-medical counseling, anger management and communication skills.

Employer Support For Guard/Reserve

A U. S. Defense Department organization dedicated to linking civilian employers with members of the Guard and Reserve recently made an outreach visit to Potter County. Tommy A. Wingard (shown) of Curwensville, who is Northwestern Pa. representative for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, is eager to work with employers. He can be reached at 814-236-1718 or tommywingard@verizon.net. Website is www.esqr.mil.



Potter County Veterans News is a publication of the Potter County Veterans Affairs Department. Copies are available for download from the county's website, pottercountypa.net. For more information, contact Paul Heimel at 814-274-8290, Ext. 203.