



## Welcome Home, Lt. Turner



Potter County residents turned out in full force to pay tribute to a Coudersport High School graduate who perished in an Air Force cargo plane crash during the Korean War more than six decades ago. A memorial service was held at the Park United Methodist Church for 1st Lt. William Turner. It was followed by a military interment at the



Gilmore Cemetery near Sinnemahoning State Park. Members of Lt. Turner's family were at the Buffalo Airport when the lieutenant's remains arrived with appropriate Air Force decorum. A military and motorcycle escort transported him to Coudersport. Among speakers were U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Frank Sullivan; Roger Hill, vice president of the Korean War Veterans of America; David Mitchell, representing Pennsylvania Governor Tom

Corbett; Coudersport Mayor Brenda Whitman; and Nancy Glover, Allegewi Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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***'We strive to never leave a fallen comrade behind. It took 62 years, but Bill Turner is home . . . '***

—Brig. Gen. Frank J. Sullivan

(Memorial address excerpted on page 2)



Brig. Gen. Frank Sullivan speaks during the memorial service at Park United Methodist Church.

## Lt. Turner comes home (continued from front)

In June 2012, an Alaskan National Guard Blackhawk helicopter crew spotted wreckage from the 1952 crash site of a C-124 cargo plane. All 52 servicemen onboard perished. A special task force returned to the site and was able to identify 17 sets of remains, one of those being 1st Lt. Turner's. The plane had struck a mountainside as it flew from Tacoma, Wash., to Elmendorf Air Force Base. Weather conditions made recovery impossible and an avalanche covered the wreckage. Searches for the remaining 35 passengers and crew continue.



Even today, searchers are continuing their work in the C-124 Globemaster debris field.



From left, Debra Jones, Lt. Turner's niece; Mary Turner May, and Tonja Anderson-Dell.

William Turner was the son of Willis E. and Pearl Caldwell Turner of First Fork. He was a 1946 graduate of Coudersport High School. Among those who attended the service were Mary Turner May, Lt. Turner's only remaining sibling, and Florida resident Tonja Anderson-Dell, who has spearheaded the national campaign to bring home all 52 victims. Anderson-Dell's grandfather was among the casualties. His remains have not yet been recovered. ■

## Brig. Gen. Frank J. Sullivan memorial address



*Potter County native Brigadier General Frank Sullivan spoke words of respect and comfort for the family of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William Turner during the memorial service at the Park United Methodist Church, excerpted here:*

"We strive to never leave a fallen comrade behind. It took 62 years, but Bill Turner is home . . . All service members join for many reasons. They join for love of country, adventure, patriotism, a career, or a calling to serve. Most men and women don't freely put their lives on the line for a country's policies or stated national interest. They do, however, put their lives on the line for their comrades, and fellow servicemen and servicewomen. As any U.S. soldier, airman, sailor or Marine will say, they fight and freely give of their own lives, but wish to never be left behind. Today, we fulfill that commitment to one of our brothers – William Turner has finally come home." ■





# SCENES FROM LT. WILLIAM TURNER'S MEMORIAL



Photos by Curt Weinhold and Paul W. Heime



# Place of healing for wounded veterans

By Amanda Woods

Helping others seems to be ingrained in some people's genetic fabric. Take my friend Ed Fisher, for example. He and his family are totally committed to touching the lives of men and women who have served our country in the armed forces and returned from combat tattered and torn. Fisher and his family have a personal mission to give back to soldiers, many of whom are recuperating in U.S. military hospitals, their lives transformed in ways that only other war veterans understand. Ed and his brother Lew, veterans themselves, along with their wives, own LEEK Hunting and Mountain in Oswayo.



Ed Fisher (left) and Lew Fisher.

The 256-acre piece of property was originally purchased by the Fishers for recreational activities with friends and family. But after the death their father, the Fisher brothers transformed the property (in their father's honor) into a handicapped-accessible hunting and fishing preserve to be used by injured soldiers. At LEEK, volunteers give an entire getaway experience, to include guided hunts, to the injured soldiers. It's all free of charge. Fisher and his family accept donations and work with outfitters to get donated or discounted equipment, supplies, ammunition and everything else needed for a successful experience. They've fashioned their camp with hunting blinds accessible by all-terrain vehicles and handicap ramps. They can assist those with just about any



A wounded warrior participates in a small game hunt at the LEEK Hunting & Mountain Preserve in Potter County. The program, run by Ed Fisher, Lew Fisher and many volunteers, was recently presented with the armed services' Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award.

kind of disability. And in addition to reaching out to the military hospitals to find interested soldiers, the brothers also orchestrate travel, meals, and volunteer themselves as guides for the hunts, alongside about seven other men. The injured soldiers who participate in the hunts at LEEK are often missing limbs, bound to wheelchairs, or suffering from other physical disabilities as a result of combat.

LEEK Preserve is peaceful and scenic. Volunteers from area communities (including veterans service posts) provide hearty home-cooked meals and the soldiers feel right at home. The opportunity to break away from a military hospital and spend time doing something enjoyable with fellow veterans is always a welcome one. The Fishers have made this special place possible. They also continue to give of themselves. And there is no limit to their ambitions and plans for continued development of a permanent place of rest and recreation for wounded veterans. In that long-range plan are one-week family retreats with counselors and coordinated activities to assist with the

emotional healing process for both the soldiers and their families.

When I think about it, I can't identify anyone more deserving of an all-expenses paid retreat than those who have sacrificed themselves to serve and protect our freedom. Since the preserve is completely volunteer- and donor-supported, financial contributions are important. In the past they've covered food, hunting gear for the soldiers and construction of a handicapped-accessibility ramp. If you're interested in helping the Fishers help others, please check the LEEK website at [leekpreserve.org](http://leekpreserve.org).

## Helping veterans navigate VA's maze



Veterans who need help in navigating the maze to qualify for benefits and services have a friend in Potter County. Veterans Affairs Director Will Worthington recently attended a training conference in Warren to learn how to help veterans seeking assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). "The VA is turning to electronic filing for just about all claims," Worthington said. "It's a trend that's going to continue and our goal is to help our veterans work within the system." He pointed out that a large percentage of veterans are not adept at using online services, or they do not have access to computer and internet services. Electronic claims filings can greatly reduce delays, he added. The VA reports that filing a claim through the internet can reduce a veteran's waiting period by an average of 50 percent. Worthington is available at the Gunzburger Building in Coudersport on Tuesdays from 8 to 4:30 by appointment; on Wednesdays from 8 to 4:30 for walk-ins and follow-ups, or by appointment at 814-274-8290, extension 210. ■



Worthington

## County enlists for Vietnam War project



Potter County officials have signed on to a nationwide campaign to assure that all of the county's Vietnam War casualties are properly memorialized at the "Education Center at the Wall." A collaborative effort between the National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the center is planned for the National Mall site adjacent to the Vietnam Memorial. It will be a two-story underground learning facility designed to inform future generations of the honor and sacrifices made by those who served their country in war. A prominent feature will be the larger-than-life pictures of service members whose names adorn the polished black panels of The Wall. The pictures will be displayed on service members' birthdays and will add faces to the more than 58,000 names on The Wall and tell the stories of those who served. Like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Education Center at The Wall will be completely funded through private donations. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund has embarked on a campaign to secure the nearly \$85 million needed. A groundbreaking ceremony was held last November and sponsors are hoping to begin construction next year. More information is available at the website, [buildthecenter.org](http://buildthecenter.org).

County officials across the country are being asked to support the project. The Potter County Commissioners have adopted a resolution in support of the Education Center. The first assignment for counties is to collect photographs and information about Potter County's Vietnam War casualties: Capt. Edgar Nuschke, PFC Edward Ritsick, Sgt. Bruce Maynard, Sp/4 Donald L. Stiles, Staff Sgt. Garreth L. Kibbe, Sp/4 Gerald Stonemetz, Pvt. Edwin Franklin Tubbs and Spc/4 Clark Douglas. Potter County also plans to become a "Vietnam War Commemorative Partner" to suitably honor veterans of the war in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense. More details will be announced. For more information, call Will Worthington at 814-274-8290, extension 210. ■



## Veterans newsletter wins state award

Potter County received special recognition at the annual meeting of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP). During an awards ceremony at the Lancaster County Convention Center, CCAP presented Potter County with the 2014 County Newsletter of the Year Award for the quarterly publication, *Potter County Veterans News*. CCAP described the publication as “an effective communications tool for sharing information on available benefits and services for veterans, while raising public awareness of veterans’ issues and special events.” Several other Pennsylvania counties have expressed an interest in using *Potter County Veterans News* as a model. In accepting the award from CCAP President Jeff Haste, Commissioner Paul Heimel (left) said, “This is not really about a newsletter. This is about fulfilling our obligation to the men and women who served our country. A large proportion of military veterans across Pennsylvania are not receiving the benefits and services that they’re entitled to, and many of them are not even aware of them. I’d like to suggest that each of you work with your county’s director of veterans affairs for a concerted effort to reach out to your veterans.” Copies of *Potter County Veterans News* can be downloaded from the county’s website, [pottercountypa.net](http://pottercountypa.net). Copies can also be obtained by contacting Dawn Swatsworth at 814-274-8290, Ext. 207. ■



## Poll measures toll of prolonged war



Blue Star Families, a military families support organization, recently conducted its fifth annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey. Results showed the growing stressors from 13 years of war. Top concerns identified by military service members, veterans, and family members were pay/benefits and changes to retirement benefits.

Other issues included military spouse employment, the effects of deployment on children, military lifestyle uncertainty, the military/civilian divide, and VA disability backlog. More than 6,200 military-connected people participated. Some highlights:

- 53 percent of veterans and 55 percent of spouses described their transition from military service as “difficult,” and noted concerns about family, employment, health care, and education.
- 60 percent of respondents indicated that their family’s current financial condition caused stress. Top two obstacles to financial security were spouse employment and uncertainty in military life.
- 84 percent of spouses indicated that the military lifestyle had a negative impact on their ability to pursue a career.
- For children under age 18 who had lived at home during a deployment, separation anxiety and worry were the predominant negative impacts.
- Veterans and veteran spouses reported higher percentages of depression symptoms as compared to their active-duty counterparts. ■



# Documenting local revolutionary war veterans

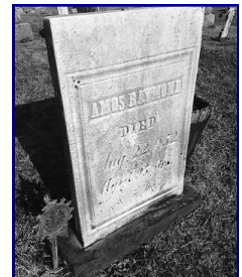


Decades of work to document and properly memorialize the Revolutionary War veterans who lived in Potter County culminated with a colorful presentation at the July meeting of the Potter County Historical Society. Members of the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter spearheaded the research to memorialize the 11 soldiers who are buried in Potter County. DAR members Nancy Glover and Joan Torrey presented the findings through photographs, anecdotes and other research findings. In doing so, they placed some key missing pieces into Potter County's historical puzzle. Searching for the background and gravesites of these veterans has been one of the most ambitious projects in the history of the Allegewi Chapter. The project dates back to the 1920s, when DAR members started seeking gravesites so bronze markers could be placed. Nearly a century later, the current membership set out to finish the task. Each man's service had to be authenticated by the National Society of the DAR, using enlistment records, pension documents and other reliable sources. None of the soldiers was native to the area; all moved here years after the war. There was conflicting and missing information, which made the verification process arduous. In many cases, tombstones were broken or missing, or gravesites were on private land. In some cases, soldiers had enlisted with different units during the course of the war, sometimes in different states.



## DAR members' work resulted in this roll call of Potter County's Revolutionary War veterans:

- **Roger Edgecomb** was born in 1757 at Norwich, Conn. He enlisted in the Continental Army three times before being discharged in 1779. He's buried at Lymanville. His monument, if any, has been lost.
- **Richard Ellis** was born in 1760 at Ashfield, Mass. He was drafted in 1778 and was wounded in battle. He ended up in Ellisburg, where he built a saw mill, grist mill and a tavern. He was married to two sisters from the Chilson family, who bore him a total of 19 children. Ellis is buried in Ellisburg.
- **David Kibbe** was born in 1745 at Enfield, Conn. He served from 1776 to 1783. Kibbe married twice and had eight children. He died at Whites Corners in 1835.
- **Major Isaac Lyman** was born in 1759 at Lebanon, Conn. He had a storied military career. Married three times, he fathered 17 children. Major Lyman is considered an important figure in the founding of Potter County. He died at Lymanville (now Ladona), the town that bore his name, in 1827.
- **Isaac Phillips** was born at Frederickstown, N.Y., in 1762. He enlisted at 15 as a drummer boy. Phillips moved to Clara Township with his son. He is buried in the Clara Cemetery.
- Prominent Potter County resident **Amos Raymond** was born in 1757 at Holden, Mass. He served as a Minute Man during the war, and assisted in the capture of British General John Burgoyne at White Plains, N.Y. after the Second Battle of Saratoga. He ended up in Allegany Township, where he died in 1852. He is buried in Raymond Cemetery.
- **Israel Rickey** was born in Cortland Manor, N.Y. He enlisted to fight against British and Delaware Indian forces in 1775. In 1777, he was drafted. Late in life, Rickey moved to Potter County. He died in 1851 and is buried in Roulette.
- **Daniel Rooks Sr.** was born at Uxbridge, Mass., in 1764. He and his family moved to Bingham Township, where Rooks died in 1840. He is buried in the North Bingham Cemetery.
- **Joseph Throcmorton** was born in Sussex County, N.J., in 1765. At 15 he enlisted, took part in the Pennsylvania Insurrection and later served in the War of 1812. After leaving the military he became a ship carpenter and later a farmer. In 1824, he moved to Hector Township, where he's buried at Douglass Cemetery.
- **Salmon Hawley** served in the Connecticut militia as a private. He died in Daniels, Potter County, in 1842.
- **Joseph A. Carpenter** enlisted under the alias E.W. Carpenter in Massachusetts. The real E.W. Carpenter was wounded at Princeton and died in 1788 from gangrene. Joseph Carpenter was at Yorktown, Va., when British Lt. Gen. Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General George Washington, ending the war. He arrived in Potter County around 1850 and died in 1854 near Clara. ▪



## 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. ▪



## Pa. Veterans' Trust Fund off & running



Pa. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs awards grants to support programs and projects that help military veterans and their families, through 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. 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. ▪



## Help for veterans 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. ▪

**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](http://pottercountypa.net). For more information, contact Paul Heimel at 814- 274- 8290, Ext. 203.