



FOR THE FALLEN

ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rolling Thunder ready for its annual ride **D2**

Reagan's 1984 D-Day speech at Normandy **D8**

Memorial honors roles of women in military service **D13**

Rolling Thunder ready for 27th ride through D.C.

Aging vets look to younger riders to carry on tradition

By MEREDITH SOMERS

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Independence Day has fireworks, Christmas has carolers, but the soundtrack to Memorial Day features the thunder of a half-million roaring motorcycles.

This weekend is the 27th annual Rolling Thunder event, an enormous rally that brings motorcycle riders from across the country to the D.C. area, where they cruise around the Mall to raise awareness for veterans, prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action.

"This isn't a ride. This is a demonstration," said Rolling Thunder national spokeswoman Nancy Regg. "This is not a biker event. There's no picnic at the end. It's to show the government that we're still here, we want answers, and we want our veterans taken care of."

Named for the low rumble created by the thousands of motorcycles weaving their way through D.C. streets, the event highlights the work still to be done to bring home POWs and MIA troops, or at the very least provide some closure for their families.

"We have made tremendous strides in helping our veterans, our POWs and MIAs," Ms. Regg said. "Almost monthly a family gets closure — as far back as World War II and Korea. So we are getting closure for families and that's really important."

That's where the behemoth rolling demonstration comes in, explained Edward Rutledge, co-chairman of the government affairs arm of Rolling Thunder.

Motorcycles are assembling in the north and south Pentagon parking lots from 7 a.m. Sunday, with an anticipated start at 12 p.m. The speakers' program is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m.

"If we came in cars, D.C. police would just say it's a traffic jam," Mr. Rutledge said. "Bikes let you know we are here. It's impressive. People have to stop and say, 'Hey, Rolling Thunder is here. What's it all about?'"

While Sunday is a day to watch and cheer as more than 500,000 motorcycles pass by the monuments and memorials, that doesn't mean attention to military members should stop after the ride is over.

Mr. Rutledge's arm of Rolling Thunder follows the various pieces of legislation important to the organization during each congressional session.

Legislation on the group's radar this year includes House and Senate resolutions that support leaving no member of the armed forces unaccounted for as the country withdraws from Afghanistan, as well as a Senate bill that directs the



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Thousands will ride motorcycles around the monuments Sunday in honor of POWs and MIAs in Rolling Thunder's 27th annual ride.

architect of the Capitol to place a chair on the Capitol grounds in remembrance of POWs and MIAs.

"It's very, very important we understand POW/MIA issues," Mr. Rutledge said. "Get some of the legislation passed into law, bring them all home and concentrate on all vets, too."

For the past quarter-century, Rolling Thunder has highlighted the plight of Vietnam veterans, and relied on support of their advocates to bolster the number of riders.

Ms. Regg pointed out, however, that each year Rolling Thunder ages, so does everyone involved.

That means it's about time the next generation began to take up the reins, and Nikki Mendicino is one of those to do it.

This will be Ms. Mendicino's 15th Rolling Thunder, and she'll be one of the event's featured speakers.

At 25, she has attended the rolling rally more than half her life. She first became interested in veterans' causes when she was introduced to a World War II veteran who spoke at her grade school.

She said in recent years, more veterans from the nearby hospitals have come to watch Rolling Thunder, many of them returning to watch the next year.

"I think there definitely needs to be a push of younger members, getting the younger generations out there," she said.

Ms. Mendicino said the way to do that is exposure. Whether that means introducing



Motorcyclists ride across the Memorial Bridge into Washington as Jen Caryl, right, and her mother Connie of Dale City, Va., hold appreciative during last year's Rolling Thunder ride.

a veteran to a classroom or bringing one's children to a rally like Rolling Thunder.

"It's not that the younger generations don't care, they don't know," she said.

Ms. Mendicino's fellow speakers on Sunday include Navy veteran Shane Osborn, a candidate for Nebraska state treasurer; Air Force veteran Myke Shelby, owner of Harley-Davidson outlet in San Diego; and Lynn O'Shea, research director for the National Alliance of Families.

Rolling Thunder will likely be the most attended event of the weekend, but others

are scheduled for the holiday. At 9 p.m. Friday a candlelight vigil is scheduled at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Harley-Davidson of Washington is hosting a barbecue from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, and a visit to the U.S. Navy Memorial is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday.

"There's a lot of real personal moments," Ms. Regg said. "You cry, you laugh, you cry some more, laugh some more. You see people you haven't seen in a year, meet new friends, meet old friends. It's just an amazing weekend."

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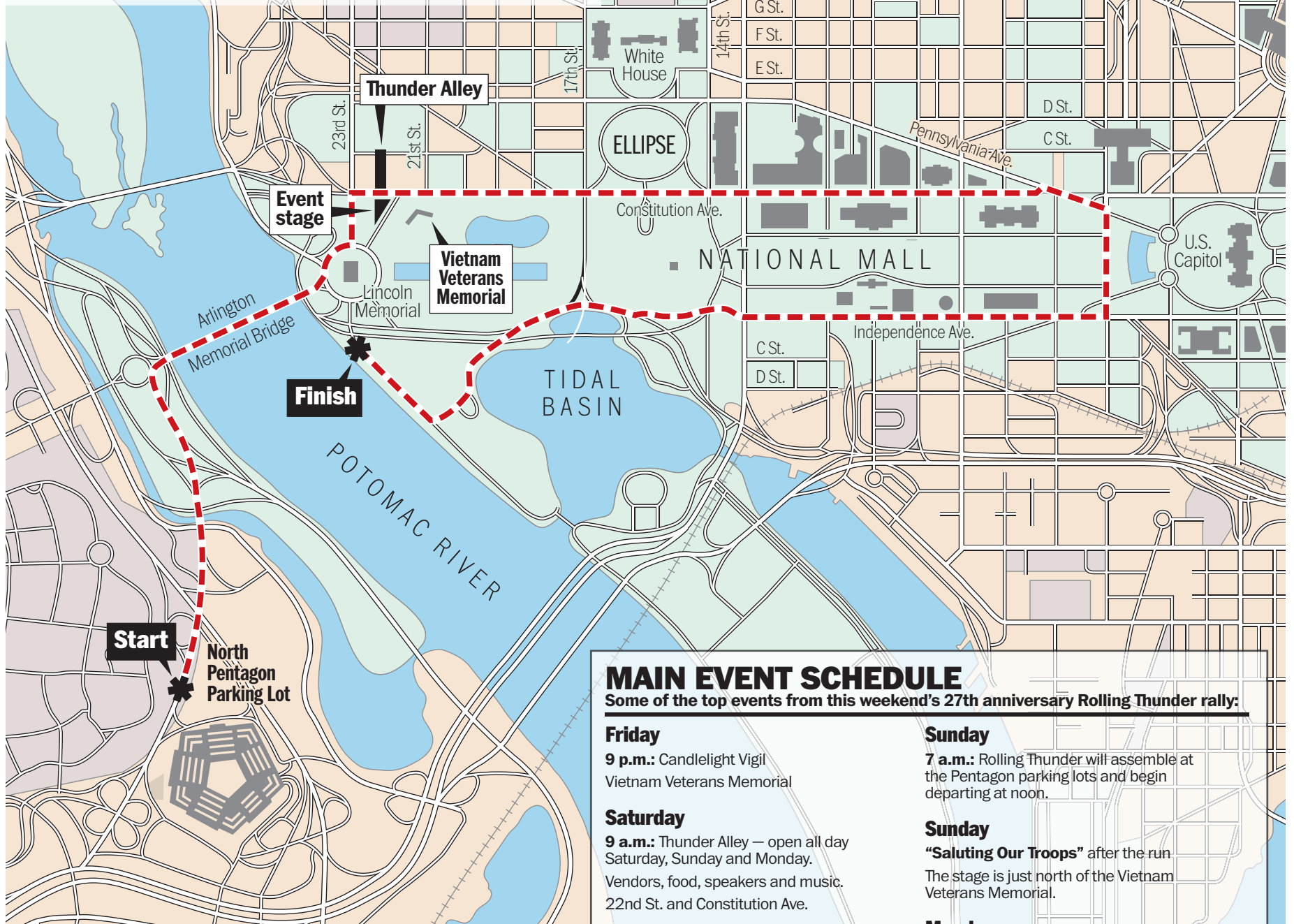


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Memorial Day weekend



MAIN EVENT SCHEDULE

Some of the top events from this weekend's 27th anniversary Rolling Thunder rally:

Friday

9 p.m.: Candlelight Vigil
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Saturday

9 a.m.: Thunder Alley — open all day
Saturday, Sunday and Monday.
Vendors, food, speakers and music.
22nd St. and Constitution Ave.

Saturday

11 a.m.: Wreath-laying Ceremony
U.S. Navy Memorial
701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (on the plaza)

Sunday

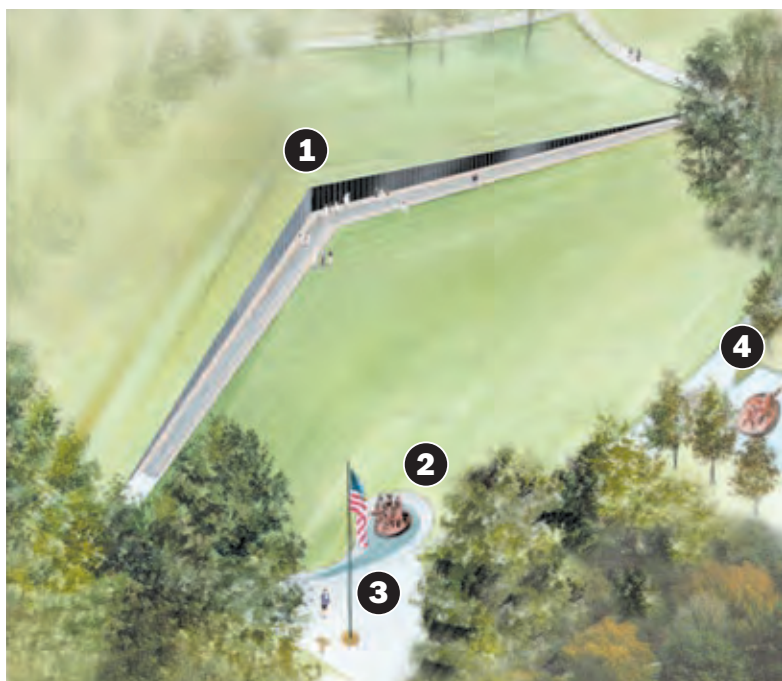
7 a.m.: Rolling Thunder will assemble at
the Pentagon parking lots and begin
departing at noon.

Sunday

"Saluting Our Troops" after the run
The stage is just north of the Vietnam
Veterans Memorial.

Monday

National Memorial Day Parade
Constitution Avenue and Seventh Street
Northwest



1. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

Height: 10 feet Overall length: 500 feet

Names are listed with these symbols:

◆ Confirmed dead † Missing in action or prisoner of war

2. Three Servicemen Statue

Controversy over the wall design led to a compromise and expansion of the memorial in 1984. The 7-foot bronze statue by Frederick Hart was erected near the wall.

3. Bronze flagpole

60 feet tall, honors Vietnam veterans. Installed in 1983.

4. Vietnam Women's Memorial

Eight-foot bronze statue honors women who served in Vietnam. Eight yellowwood trees in memory of eight nurses killed in Vietnam. Dedicated in 1993; designed by Glenna Goodacre.



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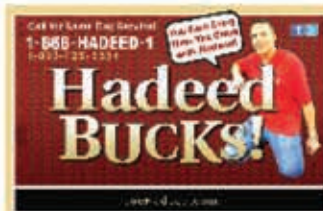
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MEMORIAL EVENTS

A host of weekend events around the D.C. area will mark Memorial Day. Among the activities:

Friday:

10 a.m. Northwest D.C. — Memorial Day Flowers and Taps Tribute: Volunteers with the Memorial Day Foundation gather at the American flagpole near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial where a bugler will sound taps and a service will precede the placing of 3,000 red rose bouquets at memorials on the Mall and throughout the District.

Saturday:

10 a.m. Chesapeake Beach, Md. — Stars and Stripes Memorial Day Festival: The town of Chesapeake Beach holds its Stars and Stripes Memorial Day festival from Saturday to Monday. The event begins at 10 a.m. Saturday with a ceremony at Veteran's Memorial Park and ends at 10 a.m. Monday with a closing ceremony.

11 a.m. Northwest D.C. — Wreath-laying ceremony: A memorial event will be held at the United States Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Ninth streets in Northwest.

11 a.m. Bowie, Md. — Memorial Day Parade: The city of Bowie holds its Memorial Day Parade.

11 a.m. Sharpsburg, Md. — Memorial Day Commemoration: Sharpsburg holds its annual Memorial Day Commemoration at the Inn at Antietam.

Sunday:

3 p.m. Northwest D.C. — National Memorial Day Choral Festival: The festival, featuring the United States Air Force Orchestra and the Memorial Day Festival Chorus, will be held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

8 p.m. Vienna, Va. — The U.S. Marine Band: The U.S. Marine Band will perform at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.

8 p.m. Northwest D.C. — National Memorial Concert: The 25th National Memorial Day Concert on the west lawn of the Capitol will feature performers and guests that include Gen. Colin L. Powell, actors Joe Mantegna and Gary Sinise and country music performer Jennifer Nettles.

Monday:

9 a.m. Northwest D.C. — Wreath-laying ceremony: A memorial event will be held at the National World War II Memorial at 17th Street in Northwest.

9 a.m. Arlington, Va. — Wreath-laying ceremony: A memorial event will be held at the United States Air Force Memorial at 1 Air Force Memorial Drive.

9 a.m. Rockville, Md. — Rockville Memorial Day Parade: The annual Memorial Day ceremony features a 21-gun salute and wreath-laying ceremony with veterans groups.

9 a.m. Falls Church, Md. —

Falls Church Memorial Day Parade: An all-day event that includes musical performances, arts and crafts, activities and a parade.

10 a.m. Northwest D.C. —

President Lincoln's Cottage tours: President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home will hold a wreath-laying ceremony and free guided tours of the United States

Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery at 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

10:30 a.m. Arlington, Va. — Arlington National Cemetery wreath-laying ceremony and concert: The wreath-laying ceremony at 11 a.m. at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier follows a concert by the United States Navy Band at the Memorial Amphitheater at 10:30 a.m. and will be followed by a formal military ceremony for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at 4 p.m.

1 p.m. Northwest D.C. — Wreath-laying ceremony: A memorial event will be held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rep. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois lays a rose during a ceremony for women at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

2 p.m. Northwest D.C. — National Memorial Day Parade: The parade, sponsored by the American Veteran's Center, will start at Seventh Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest and feature musical performers and public figures including actor Gary Sinise and Miss America Nina Davuluri.

4 p.m. Arlington, Va. — Annual Women's Memorial Memorial Day Ceremony: The memorial at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery holds its 17th annual Memorial Day observance, which includes addresses and the traditional scattering of rose petals.

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The boys of Pointe du Hoc



On this Memorial Day Weekend and as veterans and world leaders prepare to commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day, The Washington Times reprints the remarks President Reagan made at Normandy June 6, 1984, on the 40th anniversary of D-Day. On that day, Mr. Reagan spoke at the site of the U.S. Ranger Monument at Pointe du Hoc, on the northern coast of France where Allied soldiers began the onslaught to liberate Europe from the Nazis.

We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied peoples joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For four long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here the Allies stood and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history. We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon.

At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission was one of the most difficult and daring of the invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns. The Allies had been told that some of the mightiest of these guns were here and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers at the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After two days of fighting only 90 could still bear arms. Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life...and left the vivid air signed with your honor."

I think I know what you may be thinking right now - thinking "we were just part of a bigger effort; everyone was brave that day." Well, everyone was. Do you remember the story of Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders? Forty years ago today, British troops were pinned down near a bridge, waiting desperately for help. Suddenly, they heard the sound of bagpipes, and some thought they were dreaming. Well, they weren't. They looked up and saw Bill Millin with his bagpipes, leading the reinforcements and ignoring the smack of the bullets into the ground around him.

Lord Lovat was with him - Lord Lovat of Scotland, who calmly announced when he got to the bridge, "Sorry I'm a few minutes late," as if he'd been delayed by a traffic jam, when in truth he'd just come from the bloody fighting on Sword Beach, which he and his men had just taken.

There was the impossible valor of the Poles who threw themselves between the enemy and the rest of Europe as the invasion took hold, and the unsurpassed



President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan walk through the graves at Normandy American Cemetery in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1984.

courage of the Canadians who had already seen the horrors of war on this coast. They knew what awaited them there, but they would not be deterred. And once they hit Juno Beach, they never looked back.

All of these men were part of a roll call of honor with names that spoke of a pride as bright as the colors they bore: The Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armored divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet" and you, the American Rangers.

Forty summers have passed since the battle that you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs; some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it? What impelled you to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here? We look at you, and somehow we know the answer. It was faith, and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead or on the next. It was the deep knowledge

— and pray God we have not lost it — that there is a profound moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. You were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt.

You all knew that some things are worth dying for. One's country is worth dying for, and democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of you loved liberty. All of you were willing to fight tyranny, and you knew the people of your countries were behind you.

The Americans who fought here that morning knew word of the invasion was spreading through the darkness back home. They fought - or felt in their hearts, though they couldn't know in fact, that in Georgia they were filling the churches at 4 a.m.; in Kansas they were kneeling on their porches and praying - and in Philadelphia they were ringing the Liberty Bell.

Something else helped the men of D-day: their rock-hard belief that Providence would have a great hand in the events that would unfold here; that God was an ally in this great cause. And so, the night before the invasion, when Colonel Wolverton asked his parachute

troops to kneel with him in prayer he told them: "Do not bow your heads, but look up so you can see God and ask His blessing in what we're about to do." Also that night, General Matthew Ridgway on his cot, listening

... Democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of you loved liberty. All of you were willing to fight tyranny, and you knew the people of your countries were behind you.

in the darkness for the promise God made to Joshua: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

These are the things that impelled them; these are the things that shaped the unity of the Allies.

When the war was over, there were lives to be rebuilt and governments to be returned to the people. There were nations to be reborn. Above all, there was a new peace to be assured. These were huge and daunting tasks. But the Allies summoned strength from the faith, belief, loyalty, and love of those who fell here. They rebuilt a new Europe together.

There was first a great reconciliation among those

who had been enemies, all of whom had suffered so greatly. The United States did its part, creating the Marshall Plan to help rebuild our allies and our former enemies. The Marshall Plan led to the Atlantic alliance - a great alliance that serves to this day as our shield for freedom, for prosperity, and for peace.

In spite of our great efforts and successes, not all that followed the end of the war was happy or planned. Some liberated countries were lost. The great sadness of this loss echoes down to our own time in the streets of Warsaw, Prague, and East Berlin. Soviet troops that came to the center of this continent did not leave when peace came. They're still there, uninvited, unwanted, unyielding, almost 40 years after the war. Because of this, allied forces still stand on this continent. Today, as 40 years ago, our armies are here for only one purpose - to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials like this one and graveyards where our heroes rest.

We in America have learned bitter lessons from two World Wars: It is better to be here ready to protect the peace than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We've learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with an expansionist intent.

But we try always to be prepared for peace; prepared to deter aggression; prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms; and, yet, prepared to reach out again in the spirit of reconciliation. In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so, together, we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever.

It's fitting to remember here the great losses also suffered by the Russian people during World War II: Twenty million perished, a terrible price that testifies to all the world the necessity of ending war. I tell you from my heart that we in the United States do not want war. We want to wipe from the face of the Earth the terrible weapons that man now has in his hands. And I tell you, we are ready to seize that beachhead. We look for some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward, that they share our desire and love for peace, and that they will give up the ways of conquest. There must be a changing there that will allow us to turn our hope into action.

We will pray forever that some day that changing will come. But for now, particularly today, it is good and fitting to renew our commitment to each other, to our freedom, and to the alliance that protects it.

We are bound today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions and beliefs. We're bound by reality. The strength of America's allies is vital to the United States, and the American security guarantee is essential to the continued freedom of Europe's democracies. We were with you then; we are with you now. Your hopes are our hopes, and your destiny is our destiny.

Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for. Let our actions say to them the words for which Matthew Ridgway listened: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their value, and borne by their memory, let us continue to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

Student nurses learn to nurture nation's veterans

By MEGHAN DRAKE

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Brigham Young University senior nursing student Jenna Bowles and her classmates are in Washington for an intensive course on properly caring for veterans, and they're taking in a lot of history along the way.

Clad in bright white polos with a black BYU nursing insignia, the group can be spotted at the war memorials lining Washington. As part of an assignment, each student prepared a brochure with each memorial's history.

Ms. Bowles explained the symbolism at the Vietnam Women's Memorial: faith, hope, charity. Swelling up with tears, she quoted sculptor Glenna Goodacre's goal for the memorial, "I want this to be a monument for the living."

On top of the presentations of each war memorial, nursing students complete classes on veteran's culture, meet with veterans and conduct clinicals in hospitals and veterans homes. Last week, the group picked up trash at a veterans' cemetery in Utah.

"We immerse them in the veteran culture," said Kent Blad, a BYU nursing faculty member who spent a total of 27 years caring for veterans.

Mr. Blad, one of two faculty members and veterans leading the trip, cited the motto of the entire semester: "To know them is to care for them."

The program attracts distinctive students from the 350 nursing students in BYU's college of nursing.

Take John Rossi, former Navy helicopter rescue swimmer turned nursing student. The 35-year-old said it was the "heart of nursing" that pulled him into this field.

Then, there is Kayli Wood. Her brother served in Iraq and Afghanistan in the Army National Guard. When he came back home, Ms. Wood noticed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Initially, I came into this program in hopes to be able to learn some things in how to better help him and to better understand him," she said. In November, Ms. Wood's brother took his life. Now, she hopes to use the training from this semester to work with veterans in the emergency room.

"If you ask them about when did you serve or what branch of military were you in, they light up and their story unfolds and you're able to better care for them because you understand their mental, physical and spiritual needs," she said.

During their trip to Washington, D.C., both Mr. Rossi and Ms. Wood have felt

Washington's Memorial Day buzz. For Ms. Wood, her brother will be thought of dearly.

"I've had ancestors that have passed away before, but usually they were older. Whereas with my brother, he was only 25," she said. "It will be great to be able to remember him even more especially on that day and to honor him and to show the respect and love for him and our gratitude for him and for his service."

Mr. Rossi said every day should be Memorial Day and that most Americans don't understand why war happens.

"It's because of Memorial Day. It's because of the freedoms that we have that we go to war and we help other people so that they can have their own Memorial Day and realize that the cost of being able to be who you want to be and speak what you want to speak comes at a very high price," he said.

The nursing students' trip to the Capitol coincides with the recent controversies over veteran deaths due to long wait times in VA hospitals. Although the semester isn't solely focused on sending students to VA hospitals, Mr. Blad expects the controversy to come up in talks with Utah's senators and veteran officials.

"The thing is, and we learned this working at the VA, any facility or any

organization that receives funding from tax dollars is always up for criticism from the media or others," he said. "So the VA will get targeted, sometimes fairly, sometimes not, and frankly we don't know all the facts that are going on."

Ron Ulberg, BYU nursing faculty member and retired Air National Guard lieutenant general, added, "That doesn't minimize the controversial situation going on. If it's all accurate, it's a horrible thing to have. We've both worked at the VA for 20 plus years, so we are aware of the challenges that the VA faces with our populations."

For Mr. Ulberg and Mr. Blad, who both served in the Army Nurse Corps during Operation Desert Storm, Memorial Day is a time to remind the younger generation of how important past sacrifices are to our present freedoms.

"It's more than picnics and barbecues," said Mr. Ulberg, who has a son deployed, "I think that's something that we have to be very careful that our children and grandchild understand. The only ones that are going to teach them that is us."

With tears in his eye Mr. Blad said, "I have a tremendous respect, a tremendous love, and a tremendous passion for that population, and it's not just because I am a veteran myself."

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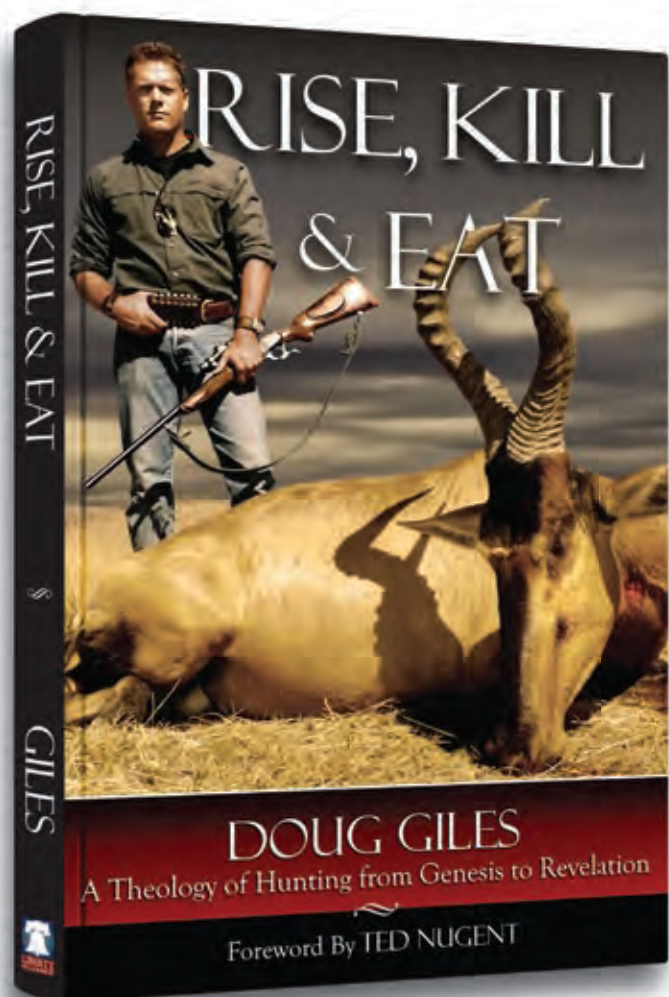
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Troops' challenges find supporters on Capitol Hill

Times event salutes many of the over 100 veterans in Congress

By **JACQUELINE KLIMAS**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Some veterans leave the battlefield behind to engage in political warfare on Capitol Hill, bringing with them the in-depth understanding of challenges faced by today's men and women in uniform.

More than 100 veterans are in the 113th Congress, and one of them, Rep. Mike Coffman, Colorado Republican, said they work to ensure Washington never forgets the trials of military life and the needs of the troops.

"It's absolutely critical to have members of Congress who have been in the military..." said Mr. Coffman, who was one of several warrior lawmakers honored Wednesday by The Washington Times at its first Salute to Veterans and Veterans in Congress at the Capitol Hill Club.

Mr. Coffman served seven years in the Army and Army Reserve and 13 years in the Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve before retiring in 1994. In 2005, he volunteered to return to the Marine Corps when its numbers started to drop, serving a tour in Iraq.

While Mr. Coffman is a veteran of recent wars, lawmakers in Congress have served in every conflict in recent history, including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rep. Ralph M. Hall, Texas Republican and one of the last World War II vets in Congress, is a "living legacy," according to Army vet Tony Arterburn. The praise was unexpected, since 91-year-old Mr. Hall bested Mr. Arterburn in the GOP primary this year.

But once the primary was over, Mr. Arterburn said he realized how much he and Mr. Hall had in common and gave him a glowing endorsement for the race in November.

"He's really an old-style conservative, there's very few left," Mr. Arterburn said. "He's a conservative of the heart, if that makes sense. He's of the people, it's about what's best for our country."

The percentage of veterans in this Congress represents a decline from previous sessions. While only about 20 percent of current lawmakers served or are serving, most during the Vietnam War-era; in the early 1980s, the percentage was 64 percent and it hit 73 percent in the early 1970s.

Rep. Howard Coble, North Carolina Republican and a Coast Guard veteran who served during the Korean War, said past wars should never be forgotten, particularly at a time when veterans are facing so many challenges.

"I oftentimes hear the Korean conflict ...



KHALID NAJI-ALLAH/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Rep. Ralph M. Hall, Texas Republican and one of the last World War II veterans in Congress, received the Founding Spirit Award during the Honoring Our Veterans and Veterans in Congress event on Wednesday. Sen. Ted Cruz, Texas Republican, congratulates Mr. Hall.



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Member of the Anacostia color guard perform the presentation of colors during the first Salute to Veterans and Veterans in Congress on Wednesday at the Capitol Hill Club.

is the forgotten war. I disagree, I don't think it is a forgotten war," he said. "I don't believe it is a forgotten war at all!"

But Capitol Hill is seeing a new influx of veterans as recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan come to an end. Seventeen

lawmakers, nine of whom came in the most recent freshman class, have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, though not all have seen combat. Most recently, Sen. John Walsh, Montana Democrat, became the first Iraq veteran to serve in the Senate when he was sworn in Feb. 11.

The gathering was held amid a growing Washington scandal over conditions in the Veterans Affairs health system, including allegations that at least 40 veterans died while awaiting care on a secret list at a Phoenix VA facility.

The scandal has caused many veterans organizations and GOP lawmakers to call for VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to step down, while other members of Congress have defended the VA, saying that the care veterans receive is good on the whole and the majority of staff provide quality care.

Rep. Charles Rangel, New York Democrat and an Army veteran of Korea, said if any issue in Washington should have bipartisan support, it should be helping veterans.

"When you're on the battlefield, no one checks out your [party] registration," he said.

"[Veterans] don't know how to say, 'We need help,' so they shouldn't have to," he added. "We should be there. We should never forget to say thank you for those faceless people who are the true heroes"

'I did something I thought I'd never be able to do'

Memorial honors role of women in military service

By **KRISTEN EAST**

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Master Sgt. Tessa M. Fontaine had no idea when she enlisted in the U.S. Air Force that she'd one day be responsible for catching spies.

But her role in helping to crack a Cuban spy intelligence ring was one of the stories featured this week at a ceremony at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, a story that also helped to shine a light on the contributions millions of female American vets have made to the nation's defense this Memorial Day.

According to the Air Force, Sgt. Fontaine "cataloged 16 hours of Cuban spy intelligence, orchestrated 148 hours of spy debriefs and thwarted threats to a \$5 billion national system." In 2013, the sergeant was named one of the service's 12 "Outstanding Airmen of the Year."

The counterintelligence work, she recalled, was exactly what she was looking for when she enlisted as an 18-year-old looking to "do something bigger than myself."

"I did something I thought I'd never be able to do," she said. "Having a direct impact on national security and working on an espionage investigation ... was pretty amazing. [It was] something that I thought I'd never be able to be a part of in my life."

The Holyoke, Massachusetts native is one of the more than 200,000 active-duty military women who will celebrate this Memorial Day with their service families, remembering the lives of their fallen friends. For those women who can't be with their families this solemn holiday, Sgt. Fontaine said, their fellow servicewomen serve as a second family.

An estimated 2.5 million women have served in military and military support roles since America's founding. Of the 1.4 million Americans currently serving in the military, roughly 206,000 — or 15 percent — are women. Women legally started serving in the armed forces in 1948 after the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act.

However, this act banned women from piloting any kind of military aircraft. But the barriers have steadily come down since then: The Air Force began enrolling women in flight training in 1975, pilot training in 1976, navigator training in 1977 and fighter pilot training in 1993.

The role of women in the U.S. military is set to expand dramatically once again after former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in January 2013 mandated that "unnecessary gender-based barriers to service" be



ANDREW HARNIK/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Air Force Master Sgt. Tessa M. Fontaine sits at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial after being honored during a wreath laying ceremony for service women at Arlington National Cemetery Tuesday.

eliminated by 2016. The burden will be on the individual branches of the service to defend any remaining gender barriers and to seek an exemption.

Tech. Sgt. Roz Perito, 34, also serves in the Air Force, and in the days leading up to Memorial Day was visiting the Arlington National Cemetery's women's memorial for the first time.

"This is definitely a field trip for me, to get familiarized with the area," she said. "It's interesting, how they have this place set up, it's just mind-blowing. Everything is so organized and people are actually interested in what we do in the military. It means a lot."

Sgt. Perito and Sgt. Fontaine both forwent college to enlist in the Air Force immediately upon graduating from high school.

"[I signed up] to serve my country, No. 1. And No. 2, I wanted to do something different," said Sgt. Perito, who is currently stationed at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. "I guess some folks go to college. I decided to enlist and see what the world had to offer, [because] we travel everywhere."

Honoring women

Some 200,000 people visit the Women in Military Service Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery every year. The memorial

for this country," said Ms. Duckworth, who lost both her legs and sustained injuries to her arm while serving as a U.S. Army helicopter pilot.

Sgt. Fontaine recalled how she started her basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas in 1998, after which she was deployed to Kuwait and later sent to Iraq as a radio/telephone operator and fire team leader. Upon her return to the United States, she was moved to the National Reconnaissance Office's Counterintelligence Division in Chantilly, Virginia where she was awarded the NRO Bronze Medal for her espionage investigations.

Both Sgt. Fontaine and Sgt. Perito have taken advantage of the military's support of continuing education while serving. Sgt. Perito is currently obtaining her degree, and Sgt. Fontaine completed her bachelor's degree online through the University of Phoenix.

Sgt. Fontaine said she originally thought she'd only enlist for four years and then attend college.

"My father was in the military and so I just went and showed up at a recruiter's office one day and said this is what I want to do," she said. "I thought I'd just do it for four years, and I've been in 16 years now, and I don't plan on getting out any time soon."

And life has nearly come full circle for the sergeant, who is back at Lackland AFB, instructing civilians who are currently in the same spot where she once found herself. She was selected by the Air Force to serve as a military training instructor at Lackland, giving the first introduction to about 1,000 civilians about life as an airman.

Asked if she sees herself as a role model, Sgt. Fontaine replied that's "a difficult thing to call yourself."

"If anything, [I'm happy] if I can just share the fact that there are opportunities, and [tell others] to always accept those opportunities, rather than look at them as obligations," she said. "Just don't turn anything down."

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Pentagon not revealing efforts to free Sgt. Bergdahl

By **ROWAN SCARBOROUGH**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

It will be five years next month that Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl fell into the hands of the most ruthless terrorists fighting U.S. and local troops in Afghanistan.

If the Pentagon and State Department are any closer to freeing him, or know more about his location, they are not saying.

This is known: Sgt. Bergdahl is America's last prisoner of war. He is in the hands of the Haqqani network, terrorism's mafia family tied to the Taliban and al Qaeda. It is responsible for some of the most horrible attacks on civilians in Kabul.

Sgt. Bergdahl is thought to be in relatively good, but not robust, health, based on sporadic videos and on contacts the U.S. has established with informants and with liaisons to the Taliban. The U.S. believes it knows his general, but not precise, location in Pakistan, where Haqqani fighters enjoy immunity compliments of Islamabad's intelligence service.

"There's good information on the type of care he's receiving and also his treatment," said a U.S. official familiar with the effort to free him. "That's pretty well understood. There is reason to believe he is in good health. That has been confirmed several times."

This fact, the official said, shows the Taliban-Haqqani axis's ultimate goal is use Sgt. Bergdahl to win release of their fighters.

"They do want to deal for Bergdahl," the official said.

Unclear are the exact behind-the-scenes efforts to free him. Media reports say the State Department has discussed a prisoner swap for Taliban held at Guantanamo Bay.

But the official said an exchange is now "off the table" and other unspecified



Bergdahl

avenues are being explored.

The official said Joint Special Operations Command, home to SEAL Team Six and Delta Force, has plans for a rescue, but not the crown jewel intelligence: his

precise location.

While State at some point pursued a prisoner exchange, such a move is distasteful to U.S. commanders. They sat in horror earlier this year as anti-U.S. Afghan President Hamid Karzai released 65 Taliban prisoners. Among them: makers of deadly improvised explosive devices.

Also unclear is how Sgt. Bergdahl, a home-schooled resident of Hailey, Idaho, was captured.

His unit, the 4th Combat Brigade Team, 25th Infantry Division, was doing its war tour in restive Paktika Province, on the Pakistan border, when he disappeared on June 30, 2009 from his forward operating base.

Within a month, he showed up on the first Haqqani-produced video, sitting on the floor, a white background, dressed in local garb.

"I was lagging behind a patrol and was captured," he said.

Questioned by someone off-camera, in English, he agreed with assertions that Americans deliberately kill civilians and torture prisoners, and that the U.S. invaded a "very independent state."

Rolling Stone magazine reported in 2012 on emails in which Sgt. Bergdahl had become increasingly disenchanted with the war after only two months in country. The article portrayed his unit as a bunch of bunglers, ill-prepared and ill-led for a

crucial time when the entire U.S. ground strategy was changing.

The story quoted fellow soldiers as saying that on the morning of June 30, after guard duty, he collected some survival gear and walked off the base, toward Pakistan.

"The basic belief is, he walked off," the official told The Washington Times.

The most recent video surfaced in January a month after it was made and three years after the last one. The soldier appears haggard, his face reddened in places.

His parents, Bob and Jani Bergdahl, released a statement with a plea to "please release him safely so that our only son can be reunited with his mother and father. Bowe, if you see this, continue to remain strong with patience. Your endurance will carry you to the finish line. Breathe."

A year ago, his parents received a letter from their son via the International Red Cross.

"He was scripted and redacted but he was no doubt alive and his faculties fully functioning as of two months ago," a family friend told local TV station KBOI.

"They are being very careful with him. He is still highly valued at high levels," the family friend said.

The parents have stayed mostly low profile. But in 2012, they granted an interview to Rolling Stone. For the first time, Bob Bergdahl made a video urging his son's release. "I can remain silent no longer," he said.

As often happens in such cases of undue hardship for individual military personnel, Rep. Duncan Hunter, California Republican, who served as a Marine officer in Iraq and Afghanistan, stepped in.

He wrote Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel that the administration seemed to be pursuing conflicting agendas to win the sergeant's release. It needed a free-Bergdahl czar.

Mr. Hunter said in a Feb. 18 letter to Mr. Hagel that, "While I am aware that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) is in direct control of the Bergdahl situation, I am concerned by the lack of cohesiveness and interagency coordination overall. Since CENTCOM is not designed to effectively implement and manage an 'all government approach,' I believe it would be extraordinarily beneficial to establish centralized control of the Bergdahl operation that is fully capable of linking broader government activity."

Mr. Hagel then appointed Michael Lumpkin, a former Navy SEAL and acting undersecretary of defense for policy, to lead the military's effort and coordinate with State and other agencies.

Mr. Lumpkin, who served in Afghanistan as a SEAL, wears two hats that make him especially qualified. Last December, he became the Pentagon's top civilian for special operations, meaning he has unique access to how commandoes might free Sgt. Bergdahl. And with the senior title of undersecretary, he can stand toe-to-toe with other senior administration officials.

The ongoing exit of U.S. troops from Afghanistan creates the impression the Army is leaving Sgt. Bergdahl behind. But if the two governments can finally ink a new agreement, the military will maintain a fairly robust air and ground presence in-country, including teams who specialize in hostage rescue.

"Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl has been gone far too long, and we continue to call for and work toward his safe and immediate release," said Navy Cmdr. William Speaks, a Pentagon spokesman. "We cannot discuss all the details of our efforts, but there should be no doubt that on a daily basis - using our military, intelligence and diplomatic tools - we try to see Sgt. Bergdahl returned home safely."

MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM ROW

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial is the latest addition to the growing number of memorials and museums on the Mall.



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|------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| 1. Lincoln Memorial | 6. Memorial to the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence | 10. National Museum of American History | 15. National Museum of African Art | 20. National Air and Space Museum |
| 2. Vietnam Veterans Memorial | 7. National World War II Memorial | 11. Freer Gallery of Art | 16. Arts and Industries Building | 21. National Gallery of Art East Building |
| 3. Korean War Veterans Memorial | 8. Washington Monument | 12. National Museum of Natural History | 17. National Sculpture Garden | 22. National Museum of the American Indian |
| 4. D.C. War Memorial | 9. Future site of the National Museum of African American History and Culture* | 13. Smithsonian Castle | 18. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden | 23. U.S. Botanic Garden |
| 5. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial | | 14. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery | 19. National Gallery of Art West Building | 24. U.S. Capitol |

*Estimated completion in 2015 NOTE: The Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson memorials at the south edge of the Tidal Basin are not shown.

Source: U.S. National Park Service Graphic: Tom Reinken, Doug Stevens, Los Angeles Times

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WWI memorial aimed for centennial of armistice

By Tom Howell Jr.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Members of Congress are pursuing a plan that at long last would establish a national monument to the veterans of World War I in Washington, D.C.

The proposal would rededicate a federal park near the White House as a national World War I memorial and address complaints that veterans of all the 20th century's major conflicts have been suitably honored in the nation's capital except for those who fought in "the Great War."

Organizers hope to redesignate Pershing Park and dedicate a memorial by Nov. 11, 2018, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, which marks the end of hostilities on the Western Front of the war, which began in 1914.

The project, if authorized, will be subject to a design competition and could cost about \$10 million in private donations, according to Edwin L. Fountain, a member of the World War I Centennial Commission that recommended the site.

"If it gets beyond that, we're getting too ambitious," he said in a recent interview.

Proponents of the effort say recognition of those who fought and died in World War I is long overdue. Memorials to World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are on the National Mall but not a formal tribute to the international conflict that preceded them all.

Congress enacted a law in 2003 that essentially banned new memorials on the Mall, and the dedication of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial in 2011 marked the coda for large-scale construction.

Pershing Park is outside the "reserve" area, in which new works are banned.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Celebrants cheer near New York City's Times Square as news of the Armistice spreads on Nov. 11, 1918.

The tree-lined space is named for Gen. John J. Pershing, a distinguished U.S. officer who led crucial campaigns against the German army during World War I. It features a duck pond surrounded by steps and small tables, which attracts tourists and workers looking for a midday respite.

Although Mr. Fountain said efforts to get a spot on the Mall failed, the memorial will still be built on prime real estate.

"Pennsylvania Avenue, after the Mall, is the most significant and symbolic concourse in the nation's capital," he said.

While it is unclear what the new memorial will look like, the park's small ice rink will probably have to go, and the site's raised perimeter might be opened to appear more inviting, Mr. Fountain said.

The early effort to establish a World War I memorial

centered around a push to "nationalize" the D.C. World War I Memorial, a separate edifice tucked in a park between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial that honors D.C. soldiers who fought in the war.

But city officials balked at that idea. By mid-2012, Rep. Ted Poe, Texas Republican at the center of the hunt for a fitting memorial, said he would look elsewhere for a monument location.

A bill he filed last month with Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, Missouri Democrat, specifically says the new memorial cannot "interfere with or encroach on" the D.C. memorial. It also says no federal funds may be used to enhance the park at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

The latest proposal has the support of locally elected officials in the District.

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson, a Democrat, called the effort "appropriate."

"I think Pershing Park is a beautiful park," he said, adding that the park already includes information about the war, and the creation of a memorial there could help to reverse some "deferred maintenance."

The District's nonvoting congressional representative, Eleanor Holmes Norton, agreed.

"Although Pershing Park was intended to be a national memorial to World War I veterans, it has not been given its proper recognition, honor and care, in part because most of the veterans it honors are long dead and are a part of the nation's history," she said. "However, Pershing Park, which is beautiful and centrally located near the White House, will now get the attention it deserves."

The House legislation also dedicates the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City as the "National World War I Museum and Memorial." Missouri's senators jointly introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

The true meaning of Memorial Day

By Alice Daniel

Editor's note: The following column was first published in May 2012 by The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

It is amazing how the meaning of Memorial Day has changed for me through the years.

I am somewhat ashamed to admit that before my sons enlisted in the Marine Corps and Army National Guard, the last Monday in May was simply a much anticipated day off work, a holiday, a week at the beach with my family, the beginning of a grand summer season.

When my Austin and Randy were deployed to Iraq, Memorial Day took on a whole new context. I was terrified my sons would be one of the heroes honored on what now became a solemn and important day in my life. I was jolted into a new appreciation for this special day in May.

On September 7, 2009, Memorial Day in an instant took on yet another meaning. My son, SSG Austin Daniel,

was now one of our great country's many fallen heroes. The last Monday in May became a sad, despondent day for me.

The Memorial Day weekend at the beach no longer meant joyous family times. Instead, Memorial Day became a day of sadness and mourning, tears and pain. How could anyone possibly display fireworks or celebrate with concerts and auto races? Didn't they know my son was dead?

I could not see past my grief to appreciate the day for what it really represented. I then had the good fortune to learn about the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. I slowly became involved, online at first. I next took the "giant leap" and attended a TAPS parents retreat. The weekend in Tampa was an incredibly positive experience. I became determined my family would attend the National Survivor Seminar in D.C.

Wow! Memorial Day was finally upon us. The last Monday in May had become a day to anticipate with joy and pride. Hotel reservations were made long ago and online peer mentor

training had been completed. My family attended our first TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar in 2012.

Even my little Anna Lee joined us. She is Austin's daughter and my precious granddaughter. She reminds me so much of her daddy. She was four-years-old at the time we attended the seminar, and she was old enough for the TAPS Good Grief Camp.

Jill, my daughter-in-law, had the opportunity to meet other widows, people just like her. There aren't many military widows in Baton Rouge and attending the seminar gave her a safe place to meet and talk with fellow widows.

My husband had the opportunity to meet other bereaved fathers, know that he's not unique and learn from the experience of others.

Memorial Day has taken on yet another meaning for me. What a privilege to attend Memorial Day services at Arlington as well as the concert and festivities on the Capitol Lawn.

Rather than sadness and mourning, there was celebration.

Rather than tears and pain, there was camaraderie and healing.

There was another week of family memories and invaluable time spent together. And finally, Memorial Day has become for me a day of pride, honor and celebration.

Instead of mourning Austin's death, I celebrate his life and service to our country.

It is with great appreciation I thank TAPS for helping me move forward in my journey of healing. And I thank Bonnie Carroll for the gift she has so graciously bestowed on grieving military families. May our fallen heroes rest in peace. God bless our wonderful United States of America.

• *The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is the national organization providing compassionate care for the families of America's fallen military heroes and has offered support to more than 50,000 surviving family members of our fallen military and their caregivers since 1994. For more information go to www.TAPS.org or call the toll-free TAPS resource and information helpline at 800-959-TAPS (8277).*

REMEMBERING AMERICA'S HEROES

FROM 1775 UNTIL TODAY.



During our nation's most solemn weekend, the employees and the management of Crystal Clear pay tearful, humble homage to those American military personnel and civilian police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation and for their countrymen. These men and women paid the price by dying or leaving their battlefield with torn and maimed minds and/or bodies that will forever impair their mobility until God greets them with new bodies that have neither spot nor blemish.

As a nation, we utter our own prayers, in our own ways, for these heroes, from those who fell in the fields at the bridge in Concord and on the road to Lexington, Massachusetts on April 19, 1775; or froze with Gen. Washington at Valley Forge; or fought for either the blue or grey at Antietam and Gettysburg. Or the gallant men—many under fire for the first and last times of their young lives when they fell in the Battle of Belleau Wood in June, 1918. Or the 1,177 officers and crew members who still stand their watch below the water at Pearl Harbor on the USS Arizona. Those silent sentinels represented almost half the total American dead that day—2,403 Americans died as the world went to war. Sixty-eight of them were civilians.

As we honor the dead warriors who fought to keep the United States free and strong, we need to also remember what governments call “collateral damage”—the noncombatants who many times are simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Or, sometimes, governments chose to simply sacrifice those they feel they can't rescue without sustaining more losses—as was the case of US Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens at the US Consulate in Benghazi. Also killed was IT specialist Sean Smith and former Navy Seals Tyrone Woods and Glenn Doherty, who sacrificed their own lives by going to the consulate to rescue those trapped there.

On this Memorial Day, we need to remember all of America's casualties, and in particular, we need to remember those who died at the hands of radical Islamic terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001 on American soil—just as Ambassador Stevens, Smith, Doherty and Woods died on American soil, because when the American flag flies over an embassy or consulate in a foreign land, it flies on US soil.

And, as we remember and honor America's heroes past and present with a silent prayer on Memorial Day, let also remember the words Hillary Clinton spoke when she was questioned by Congress about why the State Department appeared to be in no hurry to come to the aid of Benghazi during the seven hour Benghazi siege, when she shrugged off the Congressman by saying “What difference does it make?” The difference, Mrs. Clinton, is the stuff patriots like Tyrone Woods and Glenn Doherty were hewn from.

May God cradle America's heroes, past and present, in His arms for all eternity.

May God Bless And Prosper This Nation

John Ellis
*Founder and President
Crystal Clear*