

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization

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January-February-March 2022



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



Veterans Day 2021 Washington, DC



*The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
and the Veterans Day National Committee
cordially invite you to attend the commemoration of Veterans Day
on Thursday, the eleventh of November 2021*

*Sixty-Eighth National Veterans Day Observance
eleven o'clock in the morning
Arlington National Cemetery, Memorial Amphitheater*

*R.S.V.P. by 7 November 2021
POC: [Click here to email question](#)
(202) 461-0054*

*Military: Service Dress
Civilian: Business Attire
Face masks required*

Invitation is non-transferable

Please click here to RSVP



Veterans Day National Ceremony

*Arlington National Cemetery
November 11, 10:30 a.m.*

Bench Seating
Veterans Day National Committee



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Veterans Day National Committee



*The President
requests the pleasure of your company
at an event in honor of
Veterans Day
to be held at
The White House
on Thursday, November 11, 2021
at nine o'clock in the morning*

*Please respond via this link
Kindly direct any questions to
The Social Secretary
The White House
(202) 456-6226
Social.Officer.R.F.P@whitehouse.gov*

January-March, 2022

table of contents

Officers/Directors	4
National Commander	5
CEO	6
Medsearch	7
Legislative	11
Andersonville	12
NamPOW	15
POW/MIA	18
Civilian	19
Community Honors	21
News	25
Long Overdue	27
New members	28
Contributions	29
Taps/Chaplain	30
Biography Form	33
Voluntary Funding	34

January, 23, 1968...

The *USS Pueblo* was originally constructed in Kewaunee, Wisconsin in 1944 as FP-344, a U.S. Army Transportation Corps general purpose supply ship. This designation was later changed to FS-344 and the ship was eventually retired from active service in 1954. In April 1966, it was transferred to the control of the U.S. Navy and was commissioned as USS Pueblo AKL-44 (Auxiliary Light Cargo). The ship was given its name after Pueblo, Colorado. Finally, in May 1967, the Navy gave the ship its final designation of AGER-2, an environmental research vessel. Lieutenant Commander Lloyd M. "Pete" Bucher was the first commanding officer of the USS Pueblo.

Pueblo was cruising in international waters between Japan and Korea when a North Korean patrol boat ordered her to heave to and she was boarded. One of the American crew was killed, and the ship was eventually taken to Wonsan, where the Americans were charged with violating North Korea's territorial waters. Although U.S. naval forces took up station, there were no reprisals. The crew—four of whom had been wounded in the attack—were detained for eleven months before their release on December 22, 1968.

Still held by North Korea today, the *USS Pueblo* officially remains a commissioned vessel of the United States Navy. Since early 2013, the ship has been moored along the Pothong River in Pyongyang and used there as a museum ship at the Victorious War Museum.

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A WELCOME NEW YEAR

With January 1, 2022 one calendar year succeeded to another; and with this new year, we have another opportunity to review our past, say farewell to our troubles, learn from our mistakes, and renew our

commitments to build a better future. In many ways, 2021 was much better for us than the previous dark year. In January, three effective vaccines became available for COVID-19, slowing the spread of the pandemic across the nation, if not the world. Even so, another half million American lives were lost to this insidious disease.

We all know the bad news, for that is about all we see in the media, but when we look around close to our homes we can see a lot of good news as well. American Ex-POWs continues to be alive and well, financially solvent, and striving to care for our members. The POW Network monitors and reports the progress of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in locating, identifying, and repatriating the remains of our fallen to lie at rest near their surviving relatives.

Some of us were able to resume some travel during the past year for POW/MIA Day in Andersonville GA, Veterans Week in Branson MO, and other traditional events, as well as for renewed face-to-face reunions with families and

comrades. The Vietnam POWs (NAMPOW) held a twice-delayed reunion in Colorado Springs and are planning a regional reunion in South Carolina later in 2022.

We must all remain diligent and careful in our efforts to maintain health and vitality. We have all lived through dark days in prison and have greeted with joy the day we returned to home and family. Because of that shared experience, we can have confidence in the future. We may not be able to accurately predict the day when life returns to the normal we knew a few years ago, but we can hold onto the hope of new life as we did back then.

As we make our usual resolutions for the new year, let us resolve to be particularly sensitive to and careful of our members who have had the most difficult times as a result of the pandemic, the economy, and the isolation. If you are unable to travel to them, reach out via letter, phone, email, text, social media, Zoom, or any other means at your disposal. We survived in the past through unit cohesiveness; and we will prosper into the future in the same way.



On December 16, 2021 National Commander Robert Certain presented certificates of appreciation to Ruben Gonzales and the Medina County (TX) Veterans Service Staff for the work they did to file a claim for John O. Davies, a POW from Vietnam held captive for 2,207 days, and a DIC claim for his widow, Anne, after his death. Without their efforts both claims would have been delayed.



from the CEO

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We're starting a new year, full of hope and fresh beginnings. Next to Christmas Day, the beginning of the new year is my favorite time...a chance to put the past year behind me (and this was a year that I definitely wanted in my rearview mirror!) and start anew. Maybe that's why it's called a new year – the chance to start anew.

The American Ex-Prisoners of War is doing very well. As our membership is declining due to age, our income is decreasing as well. But making that up in a big way, some of our members are making us beneficiaries in their wills. We are investing that money in our legacy – Andersonville. This year we funded both Museum projects and Wreaths Across America, placing wreaths at the graves of those buried at Andersonville. We've put aside money to continue that funding to preserve the memory and sacrifice of all of you.

2022 marks our 80th anniversary...starting on April 14, 1942 by 2 mothers whose sons were captured on Bataan. The Bataan Relief Organization transitioned into the Bataan Veterans Organization when the POWs came home, then another transition into the American Ex-Prisoners of War, welcoming All POWs from All wars. We've come a long way, and we're not done yet. You can read more about our history in the next issue of the Ex-POW Bulletin.

The COLA increase for 2022 is 6%. Social Security recipients are expected to receive a **6%** COLA increase in 2022 — one of the largest on record — but rising inflation and Medicare costs are thought to eat away at most of it. And for those receiving DIC, there was no increase - for yet another year. Each year, when AXPOW testifies before Congress, we ask our Congressmen and women if they would think it okay to have THEIR mothers try to get by on the small stipend that thousands of DIC recipients receive. We've never received an answer, but that won't stop us from asking again this year.

As I write this article, we are in the season of good will and giving. In that spirit, I want to tell you a story about my local sportsmen's club. I have been on their board for many years. The members are split between retired and working, men and women, shooters, archers, fishermen – and some, like me, are

members because of the club's strong commitment to conservation of our 250 acres, and the need to give back to the community in which we live. We have 800 members. Many of them are veterans. Some of them have their own small business. They all have been impacted by COVID.

This hasn't stopped them from giving, however. One of our members made a challenge. He would match donations to the Holiday toys program in town up to \$2,000. Members met that challenge in 4 days. Another member stepped up with the same challenge – expanding it to the local Vets Center and families in need. The next day, yet another member gave the same challenge. Two days later, yet another member stepped up with a match. The end result will be in excess of \$12,000 given to our Yarmouth Police Department for distribution by Christmas. This is in addition to our annual commitment of shopping cards donated by the club for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I'm very proud to be part of them. And it reminded me of AXPOW and the challenges we used to have at conventions. Pass the hat for "Build the Museum" and the Traveling Museum. Chapters and Departments used to stand up and make their donations public and that encouraged others to do the same. While I miss our "young and energetic" days, I can look back and see what we have built over the last 80 years. And as we continue our transition into a legacy organization, we still have much to offer.

That's a very good thing.

I wish you all a healthy and happy New Year.

Fondly
Cheryl

EPILEPSY & SEIZURES

Did you know that epilepsy is more likely to develop in older adults? Seizures can be easy to miss. Learn how to recognize the signs and how you can help.

Epilepsy is a brain disorder that causes repeated seizures. About 3 million US adults aged 18 or older have active epilepsy. Nearly 1 million of those adults are 55 or older. As our population ages, there will be even more older people with epilepsy in the coming years.

Epilepsy is more likely to develop in older adults because some risk factors for epilepsy are more common in older adults, such as:

- Strokes.
- Head injuries from falls.
- Diseases that affect brain function (such as Alzheimer's disease).
- Brain tumors.

About half of older adults who are told they have epilepsy do not know the cause.

What Is Active Epilepsy?

An adult aged 18 or older has *active epilepsy* if they report they have a history of doctor-diagnosed epilepsy or seizure disorder and

Are currently taking medication to control it and/or

Had one or more seizures in the past year

How Do I Know If It's Epilepsy?

It isn't always easy to tell when you or someone you care for develops epilepsy later in life. That's because seizures may be hard to recognize in older adults and may go unnoticed. For example, memory problems, confusion, falls, dizziness, or sensory changes like numbness are often blamed on "getting older." However, sometimes these can actually be signs of seizures.

There are many different signs of seizures because there are many types of seizures. In the movies and on TV, a person is often shown falling to the ground, shaking, and becoming unaware of what's going on around them. That's one kind of seizure, but it's not the most common. More often, a person having a seizure may:

- Seem confused.
- Stare into space.
- Wander.
- Make unusual movements.
- Be unable to answer questions or talk.

When these signs occur more than once and often in the same pattern, they could be signs of seizures.

When an older adult is showing these signs, it's important for them to talk to a health care provider. Most adults with epilepsy have good seizure control with medicines. Epilepsy

medsearch, cont'd...

specialists can help older adults find the right treatment.

How Is Epilepsy Challenging for Older Adults?

Adults who develop epilepsy may have a hard time managing the disorder. Eight in 10 adults aged 65 or older have more than one chronic health condition. It can be hard to balance epilepsy treatment with taking medicines for other health problems. Many epilepsy medicines also have side effects such as bone loss or dizziness, which can make someone more likely to fall and become injured.

Epilepsy can also affect a person's daily life if seizures limit their ability to drive or if they live alone. After a lifetime of being independent, losing the ability to drive or take care of themselves can be especially hard for older adults. Read more about the challenges faced by seniors with epilepsy.

Epilepsy can get in the way of life, mostly when seizures keep happening. You can learn how to manage your epilepsy to feel better and have a more active and full life. Practice these self-management strategies to better control your seizures and your health. Self-management is what you do to take care of yourself.

You manage your epilepsy well if you:

Know about your condition.

Take your seizure medicines as prescribed.



Check with your doctor before taking other medicines or supplements.

Keep a record of your seizures and seizure triggers to track patterns and learn how to avoid seizure triggers.

Get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

Exercise regularly and safely each day.

Follow a well-balanced diet and keep a healthy weight.

Don't use tobacco, drink alcohol excessively, or abuse other substances.

Practice ways to lower stress.

Keep in touch with friends and family for support.

Talk to your doctor about health concerns.

Keep other health conditions in check.

Get help for emotional problems.

Use memory strategies to help with memory problems.

Caregivers should learn how to recognize seizures in older adults.

Preventing Epilepsy

Sometimes we can prevent epilepsy. These are some of the most common ways to reduce your chances of developing epilepsy:

Prevent traumatic brain injuries

Brain injuries, also called traumatic brain injuries, are a frequent cause of epilepsy.

Ride safely. Use safety belts, child passenger seats, airbags, bicycle helmets, and motorcycle helmets to reduce motor vehicle and traffic injuries.

Step carefully. Falls are the leading cause of brain injury. Older adults and children have an increased chance of brain injuries from falls.

Get help for traumatic brain injuries if they happen. The chance of epilepsy is high with severe brain injuries. Taking good care of the injury may help to avoid epilepsy.

Lower the chances of stroke and heart disease

medsearch, cont'd...

Take steps every day to lower your chances of stroke and heart disease. These include eating well, exercising, and not smoking. These health actions may prevent epilepsy.

Get vaccinated

Protect yourself and your family from diseases. Immunizations (also known as vaccines or shots) lower your chances of infection that can sometimes lead to epilepsy.

Wash your hands and prepare food safely

An infection called cysticercosis is the most common cause of epilepsy world-wide. It is caused by a parasite and it is prevented through good hygiene and food preparation practices. Health screening and early treatment for cysticercosis can prevent epilepsy.

How Can You Help?

Seizure first aid is easy to give and involves keeping the person safe until the seizure stops on its own and knowing when to call 911 for emergency help.

The Epilepsy Foundation also has a free, online general training program anyone can take to become certified in seizure first aid.

Should You Call 911?

Seizures don't usually require emergency medical attention.

Only call 911 if one or more of these are true:

The person has never had a seizure before.

The person has trouble breathing or waking after the seizure.

The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.

The person has another seizure soon after the first one.

The person is hurt during the seizure.

The seizure happens in water.

The person has a health condition like diabetes, heart disease, or pregnancy.

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Centers for Disease Control

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA 800-CDC-INFO | (800-232-4636) | TTY: (888) 232-6348.



PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITIES

Public Law 97-37

by William Paul Skelton, III, MD F.A.C.P.

All ex-POWs should keep these. Whenever you open your claim, take them with you and make sure the adjudication officer sees them and have him read them! Make sure he knows all about them. Tell him your own story as it relates to your problem.....

1. ARTHRITIS, TRAUMATIC
Also known as articular trauma.
2. AVITAMINOSIS
The total lack of vitamins in the diet.
3. BERIBERI
Caused by a severe lack of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the diet.
4. DYSENTERY, CHRONIC
A disease characterized by frequent and watery stools, usually with blood and mucus, and accompanied by rectal and abdominal pain, fever, and dehydration.
5. FROSTBITE
The actual freezing of tissue.
6. HELMINTHIASIS
Infection with any type of worms that parasitize the human.
7. MALNUTRITION
Merely means bad nutrition.
8. PELLAGRA
It is caused by a virtual lack of vitamin B3 (niacin) in the diet.
9. ANY OTHER NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY
The lack of protein and calories in the diet generally produces no lasting side effects.

10. PSYCHOSIS
A generic term for any of the insanities.

11. PANIC DISORDER
Characterized by discrete periods of apprehension or fear.

12. GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

13. OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER
This may be either obsessions or compulsions.

14. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
The re-experiencing of a trauma of a past recognized stress or that can produce symptoms of distress.

15. ATYPICAL ANXIETY DISORDER
This is a category that is used for diagnosis when the affected individual appears to have an anxiety disorder that does not meet the criteria for entry into any of the other known anxiety disorders.

16. DEPRESSIVE NEUROSIS /DYSTHYMIC DISORDER
Characterized by depressive periods in which the patient feels sad and/or down and has a loss of interest in the usual activities that cause pleasure or involvement in usual pastimes.

17. PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
Literally Greek for the suffering of nerves outside of the brain and spinal cord.

18. IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME
Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder of the intestines that leads to crampy pain, gas, bloating, and changes in bowel habits.

19. PEPTIC ULCER DISEASE
A peptic ulcer is a sore or hole in the lining of the stomach or

duodenum (the first part of the small intestine).

20. CIRRHOSIS
Scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue, blocking the flow of blood through the organ and preventing it from working as it should.

21. STROKE & COMPLICATIONS
A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, spilling blood into the spaces surrounding brain cells.

22. HEART & COMPLICATIONS
Heart disease includes atherosclerotic heart disease, and hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease, and hypertension).

23. OSTEOPOROSIS
Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break.

Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are determined by VA to be disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service connected.

To be eligible for compensation, the Veteran must have been separated or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Monthly disability compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of eligible dependents. Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation (SMC). Disability compensation benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

legislative



Legislative officer
Charles A. Susino

I hope this bulletin finds you and your family healthy and happy for this Holiday season. This report will outline the recent activities in Washington as it pertains to the needs of our veterans and their families. As each year passes, partisan politics gets worse and hampers our country's ability to address problems. Change is needed in a big way. With 2022 here, we hope for change but the realist says more of the same, at best. Change begins with us. It requires us to get more involved and it all starts with voting.

President Biden has signed four new Bills into law on November 30th, namely S. 796, S. 894, S. 1031, and S. 1095. They are focused on more specialized areas such as improve maternal health care, increase coordination for hiring veteran health professionals at the VA, study racial and ethnic disparities in VA claims, and establish tuition fairness for those utilizing the Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance program. While we recognize these laws are unlikely to impact our members directly, we thought it is informative to advise of these changes impacting current and future servicemembers. As volunteer armed forces, how they are treated is carefully observed by current and future recruits.

The House of Representatives recently passed nine veteran bills among them:

- H.R. 147: The Brave Act which provides help for the servicemembers entering the workforce of available apprenticeship programs
- H.R. 4233: Student Counseling Eligibility Act
- H.R. 4626 The VA AIM Act which requires independent assessment of Health care delivery systems and management processes. We have found time and again that the VA would benefit from introducing proven successful approaches from large corporations.

The White House announced VA Actions for Toxic Exposure Presumptive Conditions: On Veterans Day, the Biden Administration announced a series of actions, that has been years in the making, that VA will take to address the health conditions veterans experience due to burn pits and other toxic exposures. We have previously reported on this general problem on exposures of our armed forces and appreciate the Administration's response. We are hopeful this is a sign the VA is more proactive to the veteran needs in this area. The VA will pilot a new model to accelerate the process to establish presumptive conditions by reviewing the available science from the National Academies, analyzing VA data, and gathering evidence from other scientific sources. The VA says it has successfully previously used this model when it added sinusitis, rhinitis, and asthma as presumptive conditions related to particulate matter last May. Within 90 days, VA will use the model to assess rare cancers and constrictive bronchiolitis. Over the next few months VA will use this model to consider additional presumptives. Additionally, the Department of Defense plans to accelerate the implementation of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER), which was contained in past legislation, that tracks service

members' environmental and occupational exposures.

S. 3003, the Comprehensive and Overdue Support of Troops of War Act, called the COST of War Act. This proposed bill addresses Comprehensive toxic exposure reform. Nomenclature and acronyms are important and catchy and that is certainly the case with this Bill, but in this case misleading. The Administration should study the true cost of war. This comprehensive study, if ever performed, should be updated and communicated.

The House at the Committee level advanced 18 Veterans Bills just ahead of Veterans Day. Therefore, although early in the process they include: H.R. 3944, H.R. 2916, H.R. 5029, H.R. 1596, and H.R. 3730. In general terms they would ensure equal benefits for Guard and Reserve members, expand VA's research capabilities, increase access to mental health services for veteran families, study inequities faced by LGBTQ veterans, and establish a VA Advisory Committee on Pacific Areas.

The Fiscal Year 2022 House National Defense Authorization Act passed the House of Representatives on September 23 by a vote of 316-113. The yes vote includes 181 Democrats and 135 Republicans, while 38 Democrats and 75 Republicans voted against it. As of this writing the Senate has yet to act. The administration has taken a position on a number of areas including unrestricted control over vaccine requirements of servicemen with respect to COVID.

Lastly proposed Bill S.3261 provides for additional options on Emblems and markers on Headstones. This particular Bill goes beyond the veteran's life and into their legacy, therefore impacting their families and the public at large. We ask for your support.

Stay safe.

andersonville



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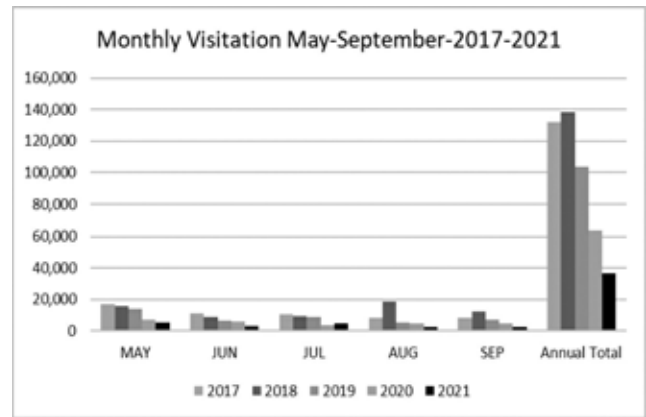
Greetings from Andersonville...

It was wonderful to finally meet with AXPOW board member Alan Marsh this past Fall. We all appreciate the commitment, time, and talent you share with the park more than we can express. We are especially grateful to Bill Arcuri for providing public programs twice this past year.

The National Prisoner of War Museum collection includes hundreds of oral history interviews recorded in audio or video format, including some in German and some with multiple individuals being interviewed. These irreplaceable, first-hand accounts of POW experiences present a wealth of information for researchers and for park educators and interpreters. But to use these accounts effectively, written transcriptions and translations are needed. The collection currently includes 634 oral histories that have never been transcribed. The estimated cost for transcribing and/or translating these 634 oral history interviews is \$245,592. Park staff propose to use all remaining approved AXPOW funds, approximately \$38K, to transcribe as many oral histories as possible. Transcription work will be done by professional contractors. AXPOW also donated funds to assist us with the development

and installation of an interpretive sign for the POW Memorial Grove; we have a draft of that ready to be completed this year.

The pandemic caused us to adapt nearly every aspect of our operations over the past year and a half, most notably at the National Prisoner of War museum which was closed to the public from March 18, 2020 until April 2, 2021. Visitation has been steady since re-opening but has been about 25% of the historical average during the pandemic. Much of the decrease can be attributed to larger groups and field trips that are not occurring. We are hopeful the public safety situation improves enough to allow people to travel normally soon.



Adapting or canceling events like Memorial Day, Wreaths Across America, and Living History Weekend were difficult as we see these as some of our more impactful and mission-focused activities. Outdoor roving interpretation and programs were offered to continue connecting with and providing information to visitors in the park. Digital interpretation was also used to continue sharing the stories of American POWs. Park interpretive and resource staff created an online exhibit focused on the 160th anniversary of the Civil War with photographs and personal stories of some of the POWs held at Andersonville.

This year we plan to resume holding our normal Wreaths Across America ceremony at noon on December 18, 2021. We hope you can join us. The FOA, Bennett International, the Taylor Foundation, our wreath ambassadors, AXPOW, and many others have been working tirelessly to get us to 20,200 wreaths this year to meet the goal of covering each headstone at Andersonville National Cemetery. There has been so much energy around this effort,

andersonville, cont'd...

we are hopeful that the groups meet their goal.

Andersonville National Cemetery

We have had a busy year in the national cemetery. We have exceeded our previous high number of burials per year which has led us to open new sections of the cemetery. In 2022, we anticipate beginning use of the sections near the flagpole and to the left of the rostrum. At current rates, we should have burial space for 10-15 years before the cemetery will close to new burials.

Section Q is the hilly area on the southeast end of the national cemetery and opening that section will provide us with several years of burial space. It is currently too steep for safe use of the heavy equipment used for burials. Our goals are to retain the natural contours, protect the historic cemetery wall, and reduce the steepness of the hills to allow for roughly 700-800 burial spaces. Working with an engineering contractor, we are in the design phase of opening this section which will be followed by environmental compliance, recontouring work, and then waiting for the soil to settle and stabilize before opening the area for burials.

We are initiating the restoration of the eastern historic cemetery wall this November. The project includes cleaning and replacement of missing or damaged brick and mortar. We are in the design phase for a project to assess the historic curbing and drainage needs through the center of the cemetery near the east-west road. Once complete, we will seek funding for the needed actions that will allow the sections near that road to open for burials.

Nationally, there has been a societal trend towards cremation versus traditional casketed burials and we are seeing that at our national cemetery as well. In fiscal year 2021, 48% of burials in our national cemetery were urns. Urn burials are less costly for the next of kin and they are also much less effort and risk for our staff.

Fiscal Year 2022

We are starting off our new year with 2 new employees. Caitlyn Edwards is our new Lead Interpreter for the National POW Museum. Caitlyn

is also a Captain in the Army Reserves. John Puchelt is our new maintenance worker. John was a seasonal employee for us in 2021 and he is an excellent addition to our team.

Through the generous donations from the Friends of Andersonville, we will be restoring the Michigan Monument that has been missing its wreath for over a decade.

We held a successful Civil War Day event this November. This one-day event included children's activities, special guest speaker Damien Shiels, and living history demonstrations. Thanks to our fantastic volunteers who helped us make the day fun and educational for all 200 in attendance.



NPS Staff and Volunteers at November's Civil War Day event. Our own Alan Marsh and Benjamin are at far right.

We are planning to hold additional events in 2022, including several one day living history events and POW-focused events and programs. We will continue to adapt programs and events to meet our mission of interpreting and sharing the stories of Andersonville and of all American POWs.

Thanks again to all of our AXPOW Friends who make our efforts easier! I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.

Gia

andersonville, cont'd...

Dear AXPOW friends,



After 6 years, it is with both sadness and anticipation that I announce I will be leaving Andersonville National Historic Site and transferring to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park at the end of January.

My time here at Andersonville has been life changing. Prior to my arrival in November 2015, I was casually patriotic but knew relatively little about the Civil War or the military. My brother served in the Air Force for a time, but I hadn't really thought about the depth of sacrifices made by American military men and women over our nation's nearly 250-year history. I have learned so much here, and now have a deep, heartfelt appreciation for the price paid for our freedom. I will never be the same, and I will always be grateful for that and for the experiences I've had and the people I've met.

Andersonville is such a unique and special place. It is not uncommon for visitors to remark about how depressing it must be to work at a place where such tragedy occurred, where stories of horrific suffering of American POWs are told, where funerals still take place. I tell them that while the stories we tell are marked with suffering and tragedy, the people we honor are sources of inspiration and awe. They went to fight for our country and found themselves in a very different battle. The instruments of war changed from fire power to will power, from thousands clashing on the battlefield to one unarmed soldier facing and resisting the enemy day after day.

Faced with impossible circumstances, they endured captivity so we could remain free. I have had the privilege of meeting some of these heroes in person, and I have been amazed by their strength of spirit and their ability to not only survive but thrive after their POW experiences.

I would be honored to continue serving here but need to move closer to my family in northeastern Tennessee. I look forward to new challenges and adventures at Cumberland Gap, but will sorely miss this place and the people whom I have met or worked with while here. I will carry part of Andersonville National Historic Site and the amazing stories of American POWs with me wherever I go. Thank you for allowing me to contribute in some small way to the mission of preserving and sharing the stories of Andersonville, all American POWs, and those who rest in honor in Andersonville National Cemetery.

Sincerely,
Jody Mays

Volunteers are instrumental in assisting park staff and visitors.

Andersonville National Historic Site offers a variety of volunteer opportunities including visitor services, living history, cemetery stewardship, resource management, and research.

The park offers housing opportunities through RV hook-up spaces and a studio apartment for longer-term volunteers.

For more information about opportunities to volunteer, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 229 924-0343 or send us an e-mail.

Current Volunteer Opportunities
National Prisoner of War Museum
Host (Andersonville National Historic Site - GA)
Dates: 06/25/2021-06/25/2022

Activities:
Computers; General Assistance; Historical Preservation; Other; Research/Librarian; Visitor Information



*Richard A. Stratton
Atlantic Beach Florida*

TALES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE DENTAL APPOINTMENT

"Someday, Stratton, You Will Thank Me."

Background on POW Treatment:

[On December 6, 1999 at a luncheon and round table discussion with four North Vietnamese officials at Brown University in Providence, RI, Professor Porter Halyburton of the Naval War College and a RPOW asked this question:

"What caused the change in treatment of the POW's after Ho Chi Minh's death in 1969?" Ambassador Huynh responded: "The change was because of the requests from the families of the prisoners and because we have to pay attention to public opinion. Also we knew that the prisoners would be important in negotiations at the end of the war."]

Did you ever have a tooth ache? I mean a real humdinger of a tooth ache that stretched from the point of your head to the tip of your toes. One that gave forth with a pain that throbbed, shot, rocketed and ricocheted all over your ever loving body whether you were vertical, horizontal or in the thumb sucking fetal position you started life in, all day and all night without respite.

Picture that pain creeping up on you for two weeks after sitting in a communist prison for three years where torture was a daily event and where medical treatment was only given just prior to propaganda events and then

only to parts of you that showed. If there was one thing your captors loved, it was self induced torture - it saved them a lot of work. To ask for help would be to open yourself to "I'addition", the bill. There was no free lunch in Vietnam.

However, it was time to take risks; this infection was too close to the brain. Things were subtly changing since the big Kahuna, Ho Chi Minh, had gone to his ever loving eternal reward on September 2, 1969.



*"Uncle Ho" and The Big Kahuna's Tomb,
Hanoi, Vietnam*

No one in the prison system knew why the changes, but it was time for us to explore and take the consequences. So we yelled for the duty officer and my cellmate pointed to my swollen and inflamed jaw. I remained silent. The duty officer roused out the duty Vietnamese medic who looked, poked, prodded, pried, wiggled the tooth and slapped me on the cheek. I made the appropriate noises of anguish. He nodded sagely and observed through the interpreter that there was something wrong with my tooth - a veritable Dick Tracy. He gave me an aspirin and told me to hold it against the gum line of the infected tooth. Each day for a week he would issue one aspirin. Actually, it did provide some relief.

The day of reckoning finally came. A guard opened the cell door, motioned for me to get into my dress prison uniform [striped pajamas] and to follow him.

dental, cont'd...



We thought it was going to be another of the interminable interrogations. Half way across the compound we stopped at a little shed and I was motioned to sit in an old beat up captain's chair that had a very large block of wood nailed to the top of its back cross piece. A venerable old man came in dressed in a white smock and face mask over his mouth. He too poked, prodded, pried, wiggled the offending tooth and slapped me on the cheek. He nodded sagely and observed "ouch" which was apparently the extent of his command of the English language. He and the medic must have gone to the same dental school [Georgetown?].

From behind me they produced a portable foot powered drill that must have been invented by Thomas Edison on a very dull day in Menlo Park. Covered with rust and dust, it did not inspire confidence. The old gent started to drill and got the bit tangled in the

cloth he was using to control the saliva. He would take out the drill and with his dirty fingers meticulously pick the lint off the bit and place the drill right back on the offending tooth. Naturally there was no anesthesia.

Every time I yelped, my guard would whack me on the top of my head. It was forbidden to make any noise. After a seemingly interminable time, the tooth snapped and the old gent tisk tisk. He reached in with a set of needle nose pliers and started to yank but nothing would give. So he just shook his head, packed up his gear and rambled off into the sunset from whence he had come.

The pain had diminished particularly in respect to the knot on the top and back of my head where the guard and the wooden block had a field day with my noggin. I got two aspirin that evening. Woopdie Do!

That night I had a flash back. In 1955 when I took my enlistment physical at NAS Anacostia for entrance into the Naval Aviation Cadet Program, I flunked the dental exam.



NAS Anacostia, Washington DC

The examiner told me that I had to have my perfectly healthy wisdom teeth extracted before he would pass me. Being a very obliging young man, I told him to pull them and get on with it. He patiently explained that things didn't work that way. I would have to go out on the economy

and have them pulled at my own expense.

This was a great blow since I had next to no money. I was living on White Tower hamburgers (5 for 25 Cents and all the condiments you could splash on them) and peanut butter sandwiches.

So I went out looking for the lowest bidder, my first and bias setting adventure with this exercise in cost effectiveness.

With a little effort, I found him in North East Washington, a recent Georgetown Dental School grad and former football player, who would do four wisdom teeth for \$100 cash. He got the two uppers out with a minimum of discomfort; but on the next visit, succeeded in breaking off the bottom two at the roots. He packed my mouth with gauze, sent me out to the nearby street car stop to wend my way across the District of Columbia to the posh Georgetown/ Wisconsin Av. section where his old Dental School mentor had a practice.

It was cash on the barrel head, \$100, right up front; even then prices were steeper on Wisconsin Avenue. "Yes, we'll take a check since you are a Georgetown Man." It left me with \$5 for 25 more days to go in the month before my next payday. They sat me in a comfortable dental chair and I heard the plaintiff cry of the good Doctor from the next room: "Oh no! He did it again!". He came in and poked, prodded, pried, wiggled the offending roots but at least did not slap me on the cheek. He reached over to his tray and pulled out a hammer and chisel - I kid you not. Granted they were diminutive in size but the same bloody things I got from Stanley tools for my tool box. Naively I started laughing and asked him if he was serious. He just curled his lip with exas

dental, cont'd...

peration and juiced me up with a generous amount of Novocain. Like a miner forty-niner he chipped and banged away getting the roots out. He stuffed my mouth with cotton and sent me out to the streetcar stop.

On the way out I made a date with his dental assistant who thought that I was something special for laughing at the dental instruments to the discomfiture of her boss. Upon finding out that she was the daughter of a four star Marine Corps General and I would have to pick her up at dad's house I decided that cowardice was the better part of valor. The hormones had gotten ahead of the brain cells. After all, I only had five dollars left to my name and the Georgetown dentists were using up all my streetcar tokens.

Back I went to Anacostia to see my friendly examining dentist. I passed my exam with flying colors. So I asked him what all this was about, since I just paid two hundred dollars to have four perfectly well formed and healthy teeth pulled out of my head. If I were a horse and going to pull the SNJ around with a bit in my mouth, I could see why they might want to make room in the oral cavity, I opined.



SNJ-5 Whiting Field, Milton FL

Kindly he explained that he was an examining physician for the repatriated Korean Prisoners of War. One of the most numerous

painful and deadly diseases they experienced were infected and impacted wisdom teeth. So he personally set about making sure that any aviator he examined would get rid of the useless and extraneous (in his opinion) teeth. "Someday, Stratton, you will thank me if you ever become a Prisoner of War." Me a prisoner? No way. Not in my Navy; not on my watch. I'd die like a man first.

Well the wound in the head gradually healed and the pain subsided. About a year later almost to the day the roots of the broken tooth became infected with double the effect, if such a thing were possible, as the pain of the original infection. The same routine was followed: poke & prod, aspirin, wait a week. [There is no complaint about the wait. Today it takes two months to get a dental appointment and three months a doctor's appointment with the Veterans Administration Clinic in Jacksonville.]

Into the PJ's, across the yard, and sit in the same chair. In walked the venerable old man even more venerable. He poked, prodded, pried, wiggled the offending roots but this time did not slap me on the cheek. He pulled out a syringe more appropriate for an enema than an anesthetic. He pumped what I imagined to be Novocain into the gum, the lips, the cheek, up my nose, in my eyes and down my neck - to no effect. [The next day we found vials that indicated that the medication from Czechoslovakia was four years out of date.]

Then came the - you guessed it - hammer and chisel; dirty, rusted and diminutive. He would bang on the jaw and my head would hit the block of wood. I'd

give a double yelp and the guard would whack me on the top of my head driving my jaw into my collar bone. Bang, yell, whack to a rhythm not unlike the "Anvil Chorus". Eventually, victorious, the old gent gave a big smile at his successful handiwork, packed the mouth with gauze he picked up off the floor, patted me on the shoulder and left the room. Mirabile dictu! The wound did not get infected. The repatriation dentists at Clark AFB said the old gent did a great job.

We kept waiting for the Communists to present the "bill" for the lenient and humane dental treatment. No reciprocity was ever demanded. They certainly weren't worried about malpractice suites. Times indeed were changing. Torture as a general rule stopped. They would torture newly captured senior officers and electronic warfare officers for military information. But torture for propaganda purposes was a thing of the past. A new day had dawned but we had to find out for ourselves the hard way. - sticking our necks out and taking a chance.

The Navy fixed me up with a nifty looking bridge replacement that looks great even today. However, I have a little trouble in the dental chair these days no matter how "painless" the procedures have become. And I do wonder about the similarities in bedside manner and competence between Hanoi and Georgetown.

I never did get to thank the Anacostia dentist for his wisdom regarding wisdom teeth; so I'll thank him now:

"Thanks Doc, wherever you are!"

pow/mia

Mary Schantag, Chairman
P.O.W. Network
info@pownetwork.org

Annual Accounting
Per DPAA's Fiscal Year 2021 report, the year closed with the agency stating "We accounted for 142 missing Americans in FY 2021 and identified 211 additional remains of previously accounted for service members."

Fourteen were from the Korean Conflict, including Medal of Honor Recipient Chaplain (Captain) Emil Kapaun, who has been nominated for Sainthood in the Catholic Church. One was from Vietnam, and the balance from WWII.

Investigations and recoveries occurred in 31 countries. The USS Oklahoma project saw its 350th identification for the ship. Additionally, the dental officer from aboard the Oklahoma was the 1000th I.D. since DPAA was formed 6 years ago. We also received six more sets of remains from South Korea. Lithuania, the site of POW Camp Stalag Luft 6, was the site of more remains recovery.

The DNA Identification lab now has automated equipment to process "whole genome mitochondrial DNA" that allows for 90 samples to be processed at one time.

Numerous family meetings, conferences, and updates were held over the year by webinar, allowing progress to be made despite continuing COVID travel restrictions.

DPAA also noted the history 50th Anniversary of the black POW/MIA flag, flown worldwide in its mission to "never forget" those yet to come home.

The amount of work done to recover one service member is still hard to fathom. While searching in Belgium for 1st Lt. Eugene Chauvin, whose C-47 crash in 1944, technicians excavated and screened 1,013 tons of soil from a 422 square-meter area in 72 days, by hand.

Excavations continue to be done in corn field and rice paddies, with the help of numerous NGO's. Underwater sites with new technology, numerous divers and extraordinary loss sites are also searched.

Family updates are scheduled for January 22 in Miami, FL; February 26, in Dallas, TX; February 28 in Honolulu, HI; March 26 I Spokane, WA; April 23 in Minneapolis, MN; May 21 in Boston, MA; June 22-25 at the National League of Families Meeting in Arlington VA; July 26-27 at the Korean/Cold War Families Meeting in Arlington, VA; and September 10 in Colorado Springs, CO.

While progress is being made with the Congressional mandate established for DPAA, thousands of families remain in limbo when their losses occurred "outside a combat zone." That can literally mean a few miles farther off a coast, or hundreds of miles away from a designated combat zone. Sailor lost off ships due to storms or accidents. Planes lost full of service members lost on their way to combat, in training missions, or transporting plane, crew or equipment around the world. Ships or submarines lost

in storms, attacks, or mechanical failures remain untouched.

Family torment and the need for answers is no less agonizing in these situations. In some cases, records are still denied, memorials delayed or non-existent, and congressional scrutiny or direction sorely lacking. These families lost a loved one in military service and have no answer either.

American hostages or political prisoners remain in limbo in enemy hands.

According to a Nov 24 article in AXIOS, U.S. Nationals or U.S. lawful permanent residents, are still held in Russia, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela, Mali, Uganda, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Syria, and China.

Families are still unable to meet with President Biden over the state of negotiations, or updates on their family members.

Myanmar did release Danny Fenster, after private hostage negotiations with New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson were successful.

Trevor Reed, held since August 2019, made news again detailing his horrific prison conditions in Russia.

Els Woodke, the wife of an American Aid worker was taken hostage in Niger in 2016. The family is calling on USG officials to "honor the promise" of negotiatin her homecoming.

Haiti is still holding 14 missionaries for ransom, and

families are desperate for answers.

Axios stated "**Behind the scenes:** In half a century in politics, Biden has long worn his empathy on his sleeve. Multiple hostage advocates told Axios they believe the president's key advisers are deliberately shielding him from the personal agony of these stories to minimize the potential for emotional decision-making."

In leaving Afghanistan, we had no "unknown," but one captive remains. Mark Frerichs is believed to still be held captive by the Taliban. The withdrawal occurred without answers or a release.

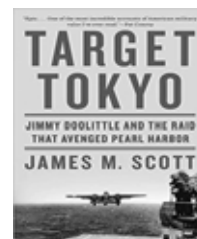
According to The Blaze, Nov 26, "Two sisters in North Dakota spent Thanksgiving without their beloved brother this year — but not because of work obligations, health problems, or any other reasons that one might expect.

Rather, Kurt Groszhans, a self-described "humble American investor" and farmer from Ashley, North Dakota, is currently detained in Ukraine under suspicion that he attempted to assassinate the country's minister of agriculture.

But his family insists he is the victim of embezzlement and is now being railroaded to cover up the foreign government official's crimes. Now they are pleading for help from the American government to ensure that their brother is treated respectfully and granted a fair trial.

TARGET TOKYO

Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor
By James M. Scott
W. W. Norton & Company, 2015



Reviewed by Angus Lorenzen

We think we know everything about the famous Doolittle raid on Tokyo in 1942, but James Scott proves in this book that there is far more to the story than is shown in the movies or described in innumerable stories, articles, and books. The research he has done provides amazing details about the planning, the men who flew the mission, what occurred at their destination in China or Russia, and the aftermath that affected the flight crews and the war.

Though the American military expected that events occurring in the early '40s would lead to war with Japan, the bombing of Pearl Harbor was a complete surprise. President Roosevelt and the upper echelon of the military immediately started planning a retaliatory raid at the heart of the Japanese Empire that would buoy the morale of Americans and convince Japanese military leaders that their mastery of the Pacific would be challenged. It also convinced Japan that the U.S. was going to fight and not simply negotiate for an early peace settlement as they had expected.

From the start, American military planners and the President knew they were taking a huge risk. The attack on Pearl Harbor had severely reduced America's Pacific battleship fleet, leaving only one battleship undamaged and 4 with light to moderate damage. America had only three aircraft carriers in the Pacific compared to 10 for the Japanese. After Japan's devastating destruction of the Russian fleet at the Tsushima Straits in 1905, Japan had continued to build its fleet and was the 3rd largest in the World, a formidable foe for the U.S. to face in recapturing the Pacific.

The planners of the raid decided to use a new carrier, the Hornet, being completed at Newport News to carry Army Air Corps twin-engine B-25 bombers to the proximity of Tokyo and to launch them for a raid against Tokyo, and then continue to the coast of China. They picked famed stunt and racing pilot Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle to lead the mission.

Weeks of training and preparation for the mission finally led to the Hornet docking at the Naval Air Station in Alameda on San Francisco Bay where sixteen B-25 bombers were

civilian, cont'd...

loaded at the rear of the flight deck, leaving only a short amount of flight deck for their takeoff. Final preparations were made here, the flight crews boarded, and the carrier departed with its escort of cruisers and destroyers and rendezvoused with the carrier Enterprise with its escorts off Hawaii. Air cover for the task force would be flown from Enterprise because there was no room on the Hornet's deck for the Navy fighters.

The task force was 800-miles from Tokyo when it encountered Japanese picket boats. Knowing that they would have reported the American task force, they decided to launch the bombers 10 hours early and two hundred miles further from Tokyo than planned. The original plan was that the bombers would arrive over Tokyo after dark and Doolittle would drop incendiary bombs that would provide a beacon for the following aircraft. Now it would be a daylight raid and each pilot would have to find his own targets, then they would be almost out of fuel by the time they reached the China coast.

Doolittle arrived over Tokyo first, and there was a string of the other bombers stretching back over 100 miles, each independently seeking and bombing its target. Surprise was complete and often people on the ground would wave to the bombers before they dropped their bombs. When they arrived in China, the airfields where they were to land were not prepared and every bomber, but one, had to ditch. That bomber had a fuel problem and the pilot decided to

head for Vladivostok in Russia, and was the only one to land safely. But Russia had a friendship treaty with Japan and had no choice but to intern the pilots for the duration of the war.

Once in China, the crews had to avoid the Japanese who were looking for them. The Chinese, along with missionaries, smuggled most of them back to free China, carrying some of the injured for many miles and providing many substories told by Scott. The Japanese managed to capture eight men from two crews, and their saga of torture and execution is another grim substory.

The consequences of the raid were more serious than the physical damage actually rendered to Japan. First, it triggered a propaganda war with Japan claiming no damage except for the unwarranted killing of civilians and children. Second, it resulted in Japan's initiation of a plan to capture Midway which would put them close enough to Hawaii to bomb it and threaten invasion, which led to a severe defeat for them and loss of three of their aircraft carriers. Third it triggered an immense Japanese retaliation against the Chinese who helped the bomber crews, resulting in about a quarter million killed. But it was a huge morale booster for Americans.

Scott continues the story through the rest of the war, quoting from diaries of the aircrews, and continues to their last reunion, when three of the last four survivors of the aircrews drank the bottle of 100-year-old cognac that Doolittle had set aside and was a feature of their regular reunions.

James Scott is an incredible storyteller and features all of the men who participated in the raid, quoting from their diaries, and broadens the story to include many peripheral characters, the President, and senior military officers.

Target Tokyo receives high praise from myriad sources and was runner up for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize. James Scott is a master storyteller. His extensive research brings out details that are unexpected and he weaves the story and characters in such a way that they read like a novel rather than a history. A dry history this is not!

CPOW
Civilian Ex-Prisoners
of War
www.cpow.org
Sally Meadows, Commander

Soldiers, community honor Chaplain Kapaun as he is laid to rest

By Devon Suits, Army News Service



Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun is welcomed home with honors and remembered during several public and private ceremonies throughout Wichita and Pilsen Kan., Sept. 25-29, 2021. In March, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency identified Kapaun's remains, who previously served with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during the Korean War. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013 for his actions overseas.

Among the many heirlooms and relics on display at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School here rests one small piece of worn olive-green colored material with a white cross painted on the front.

Previously attached to Chaplain (Capt.) Emil. J. Kapaun's helmet liner during the Korean War, the cross served as a beacon of hope to incarcerated Americans at Camp #5 in Pyoktong, North Korea, said Robert Knapp, the school's president.

"When a Soldier died in the prison camp, many times their possessions were thrown away or burned by the camp guards," Knapp explained. "Kapaun's uniform and possessions were no different."

Months prior to Kapaun's internment, close to 200 Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division escaped death or captivity, while more than 400 others were either killed or captured during the Battle of Unsan in 1950, said Lt. Col. Nicholas Sinclair, the battalion's current commander.

Instead of fleeing to save his own life, Kapaun willingly stayed behind to care for the wounded or injured. He would go on to help others resist Chinese propaganda until his death on May 23, 1951.

News about Kapaun's death spread through the camp after his helmet and other personal items were discovered on a pile to be burned, Knapp said. Stricken by their loss, service members would stop and pray at the dumpsite where Kapaun's helmet rested until they were beaten and removed.

Later on, Felix J. McCool, a former Marine Corps warrant officer, and several other prisoners put their lives at risk by sneaking out of their hut to rip the cross off the chaplain's former helmet. Prisoners kept the ripped liner hidden until their release and returned it to his family years after.

"This was the only memory of Father Kapaun that they had [at that time]," Knapp said. "This was the memory that they were going to hold on to for the rest of the war."

For the past seven decades, friends and followers in Father Kapaun's hometown of Pilsen, Kansas, along with supporters living in and around the Wichita area, never gave up hope that his body would be found. This also includes former and current students and staff of Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School, Knapp said.

Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the war in 2013. Eight years later, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting announced that Kapaun's remains had been positively identified

Kapaun, cont'd...

after being previously interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii, in a grave marked as unknown.

"When we talk about the spirit of Father Kapaun, I think about it in terms of history -- it is 'his' story," Knapp said.

Kapaun is finally home and laid to rest, as thousands of followers celebrated his life and contributions to the Army and church through a series of public and private events this week.



"The good people of Pilsen live his story," Knapp said. "And [while] I revere the POWs for bringing his story home from the battlefields and prison camps of Korea, I also revere the people of Pilsen who have carried those stories on to make sure that the rest of the world knows about this great and holy man."

Humble beginnings

Kapaun grew up in a humble farm town community, where he was reputed to follow a life of priesthood starting at a young age, Knapp said.

"It is my understanding that he used to practice being an altar server for the Holy Mass with milk crates and bedsheets in front of his house," he said. "He served for Mass as often as he could." The lead priest of St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church in Pilsen quickly recognized the

young boy's calling and motivated him to attend the seminary. Once ordained, Kapaun returned to Kansas as an associate pastor at his home parish.

Betty Stroba, formerly known as Betty Holub, was 10 years old when Father Kapaun started working at the church, she said. "When he served Mass, I guess he would pedal his bike in from the country," Stroba said. "It amazed me that a priest could play baseball. He was just a wonderful person. He was so gentle, genuine and down to earth."

Kapaun also dedicated his efforts to preach to Soldiers at Herington Army Air Field, Kansas. The connection he established with the Army led him to ask his bishop's permission to join the Army Chaplain Corps in 1944 during World War II. He went on to serve in parts of Burma and India.

"When he was a chaplain at some point, we all got a little memento -- a little plastic case with the prayer book [inside]," Stroba said. "I still have it, and it is still legible. It means so much to me. I guarded it for more than 70 years."

After the war, Kapaun returned to his home parish as the lead priest, but Knapp said the call to serve in the Army remained. He received permission once again to re-enter the chaplain corps in 1949, just months before the launch of the Korean War.

3-8 Cavalry

As a valued member of 3rd Bn., 8th Cav. Rgt., Kapaun spent most of his time ministering to Soldiers on the frontlines as the division

fought its way through North Korea, Sinclair said.

"Every time there was downtime with the Soldiers, he would meet with them and leave them better off than he found them," Sinclair said. "He was the unit chaplain and he really had no positional power over the Soldiers, and yet they all respected him."

By November, Soldiers felt the war was almost over as they progressed toward the Yalu River and the Chinese border. Unknown to them, close to 125,000 Chinese fighters were already in the country and encircling their location.

The enemy attacked multiple battalions over many fronts. An enemy infiltration overran 3-8 Cavalry's command post. As command and control broke down across the battlefield, Kapaun helped rescue more than 30 wounded Soldiers and ministered to countless others.

In a final effort to leave the area and avoid capture, the battalion attempted to break through the enemy's perimeter, resulting in many Soldiers being left behind, Sinclair said.

"Chaplain Kapaun volunteered to stay behind even though he was able bodied," Sinclair added. "When the Chinese stormed the command post, Chaplain Kapaun inserted himself between the Chinese and wounded Soldiers." During one instance, Kapaun pushed an enemy combatant over to save a wounded Soldier hiding among the dead, Sinclair said. The Chinese were stunned by this act, but Kapaun recovered the Soldier and kept him alive.

Kapaun, cont'd...



For the next seven months in captivity, Kapaun dedicated himself to the betterment of his fellow Soldiers, regardless of their race, color, or religious beliefs, Knapp said. He would steal food and medicine from the guards and give up most of his meager ration for the sake of others.

Through it all, Kapaun provided spiritual comfort to the force and quickly became a target, Sinclair said. To neutralize his positive spiritual impact, the enemy held him in solitary confinement or outside in the bitter cold with minimal clothing. He continued to fight on until the day he died.

"Kapaun realized what was at stake ... as he had a larger view than the common Soldier," Sinclair said. "He was aware of the propaganda efforts that the Chinese would use against Americans, and the nation and the Army at large.

"There were over 800 Soldiers that he visited every single day," he added. "He made his best effort to visit each one. I think he understood that to have an impact on a greater organization, you have to have an impact on the individual level."

A chaplain's role

During the Korean War, Kapaun could be found jumping from foxhole to foxhole to comfort Soldiers with prayer, Knapp said. He carried a tiny gold ciborium, or a small round gold flask used to distribute communion to Soldiers on the frontlines.

The ciborium, which is on display at the Catholic school, was seized by the prison commandant, but returned in excellent condition as American forces were set free years later.

During combat, a chaplain's role is to nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the fallen, said Chaplain (Col.) Rajmund Kopec, U.S. Army Forces Command chaplain.

"I think Father Kapaun, in my opinion, is a great example of a chaplain who had a great identity [and] who was really connected to his Catholic tradition and extremely spiritually fit," Kopec said.

Kapaun cared for the soul of the Army through his faith and his willingness to conduct and complete small or seemingly unimportant tasks, Kopec said.

"He did it with great care and with great love," Kopec said. "I would say that Father Kapaun exemplifies what Mother Teresa said, '[We] cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.' And that is where I see Father Kapaun's huge impact on the chaplaincy." Of all the Medals of Honor presented throughout U.S. history, seven have been awarded to Army chaplains.

"If you read the stories of all those chaplains who received a Medal of Honor, notice their actions have nothing to do with killing an enemy. Their actions are from compassion and caring for people [by] risking their own life," Kopec said.

As a senior priest under the Army chief of chaplains, Kopec accompanied Kapaun's remains from Hawaii to Kansas to honor his dedication to service.

"Going through this experience ... God is saying, 'Ray, you need to make some improvements,'" Kopec said. "But that also led to another very important question: 'why now?'"

"I understand that God does things in his own way, own time,

Kapaun, cont'd...

and for his own purpose," he added. "I strongly believe that there is a reason why Father Kapaun's earthly remains are brought home now at this point of history. I'm still searching for answers, but I would encourage each of us to ask the same question."



Christ in Barbed Wire

The centerpiece of the collection at Kapaun high school is a lasting memorial to Father Kapaun entitled "Christ in Barbed Wire," Knapp said. The 47x28 inch wooden crucifix made from material found in the POW camp was carved months after his death.

The slats of the cross originated from a desk found in one of the POW camp offices. The body of Christ was crafted by Marine Corps Maj. Gerald Fink, a Jewish man without any recollection of who Jesus was, Knapp said. Fink's tools remain on display at the school.

"They carved this to keep Kapaun's spirit alive, to keep him in their memory, and to give them the boldness to pray, have hope, and to continue to defy the indoctrination going on in the prison camps," Knapp said.



Knapp added that the crucifix's design allows it to be dismantled into three separate pieces to avoid enemy detection. Prisoners would often roll the pieces into their bedroll to conceal the crucifix's location or to pass it throughout the camp.

"Over this past summer, I had an elderly man who came to visit the school," Knapp said. "And while he was here, he just stopped at the crucifix and sobbed for several minutes."

Once the man collected his emotions, Knapp learned that his older brother was a former POW interned at the same camp with Father Kapaun.

"His older brother was an enlisted man," Knapp said. "After Father Kapaun died, this crucifix started making its rounds. His brother hid the crucifix in his own bedroll for two weeks."

When his older brother returned home after years of enemy confinement, he shared with his family how he wanted to give up and die, but the crucifix kept him alive and gave him hope.

"The younger brother recognized at that point that if it were not for this crucifix, he might have never known his brother, whom he loved and got to spend years with after the war," Knapp said.

A final salute

On September 29th, a large crowd of family and followers of Kapaun gathered to say goodbye to a hometown hero during a Rite of Christian Burial ceremony just outside of Wichita.

While the community finally has some closure, many people are waiting for the Congregation for Saints in Rome to decide on Kapaun's canonization toward sainthood.

"Whenever the official beatification will happen, there'll be yet another opportunity for us to refresh our familiarity [with Father Kapaun] as we look again at his example," Kopec said.

After the rite for burial ceremony, Kapaun's remains were escorted by horse-drawn caisson from Veterans Memorial Park to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in the city for a final Army salute.

"To have his remains here [in Wichita] is such a great reward. It allows us to connect his earthly remains with the spirit that has been with us since his death," Knapp said.



(Photo Credits: Master Sgt. Miriam Espinoza, Devon L. Suits)

news & information

Presumptive Period Extends for Veterans

VA has extended the presumptive period for qualifying chronic disabilities, such as fibromyalgia, in Gulf War Veterans rated 10% or more resulting from undiagnosed illnesses to December 31, 2026.

Your VA Benefits Annual Increase

As the cost of living goes up, VA ensures your benefit rates do too. As of December 1, all compensation benefits rates increased by 6% to match adjustments made to Social Security benefits.

New Presumptives

Over the course of the last six months, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to environmental exposures during military service. We request your help in making more Veterans aware of these newly added presumptive conditions to help them file a claim and obtain any earned benefits.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the Wil-

liam M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later VA added asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file a supplemental claim. Use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim when filing. The claim form should include the name of the condition and specify that the condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service.

Be sure to stay plugged in to www.va.gov for the most recent developments around environmental exposures during military service, as VA is constantly conducting research and surveillance as well as reviewing scientific literature for conditions that may be related to exposure during military service.

For more information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim, Veterans and

survivors can visit VA's website at www.va.gov or call toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act Passed

Children and spouses of veterans who die from service-connected injuries will be guaranteed in-state tuition rates under new legislation approved by Congress just before Thanksgiving. The measure — the Colonel John M. McHugh Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act — passed without objection in the House. Lawmakers had approved the legislation back in June. The change is expected to affect about 150,000 surviving dependents, potentially saving them tens of thousands in higher education expenses each year. It concerns beneficiaries using Veterans Affairs' Dependents' Educational Assistance Program. Through that benefit, spouses and children of 100-percent disabled veterans receive about \$1,200 a month to help cover the costs of tuition, housing expenses and book stipends. If a veteran dies from a service-connected disability (or died while on active duty prior to Sept. 11, 2001), beneficiaries can continue to receive that support. But unlike other education benefits for military survivors, DEA recipients aren't ensured in-state tuition rates when looking at colleges. The difference between the in-state and out-of-state costs can be significant, and erase much of the financial support from the program. Lawmakers said the

news, cont'd...

change is needed to bring the benefit in line with similar veteran support programs for survivors. "Members of our military and their families sacrifice so much in service to our country," said Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL), a sponsor of the bill. "As a grateful nation, we have accepted the responsibility to ensure that the educational needs of the survivors and dependents of our fallen heroes are provided for."

National Medal of Honor Museum Releases Public Service Announcement

Former presidents ask their fellow Americans to support the mission to build a national Museum, Monument recognizing highest award for bravery in combat

The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation premiered a new public service announcement, entitled *Join the Mission*, featuring former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. The former commanders in chief offer their support for, and ask all Americans to join, the national campaign to build a Museum in America's heartland in Arlington, TX, and Monument in Washington, DC, in recognition of the service and sacrifice of America's

Medal of Honor recipients. The PSA first aired on FOX Sports during the NFL's Salute to Service game at the Dallas Cowboys' AT&T Stadium, near the site of the future Museum.

All three former presidents are Honorary Directors on the NMOHMF's Board of Directors. The PSA ran throughout November during the NFL's month-long Salute to Service series, as well as on several other traditional and social media platforms encouraging all Americans to join the NMOHMF's 'Mission to Inspire America.

Aid and Attendance

Did you know that VA's Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits can boost your monthly payments? If you need help with daily activities, or if you are housebound, you may qualify for an increased VA pension to help pay for in-home care, assisted living, or a nursing home. Contact a service officer in your area for more details.

VA statement on GPO printing and mailing delay

Due to supply chain and staffing shortages, the vendor contracted by the Government Publishing Office to provide printing services for the Department of Veterans Affairs is experiencing delays in printing and mailing notification letters to Veterans and claimants. The disruption may impact the ability of some claimants to

meet required deadlines via written correspondence with VA.

In response to the mailing delays and to protect the best interest of claimants, the Veterans Benefits Administration is extending their response period by 90-calendar days for claimants with letters dated between July 13, 2021 and Dec. 31, 2021.

If a claimant does not reply to a time-limited notification, such as, making an election of benefits or services, or reporting for a scheduled compensation and pension examination, VBA will not take adverse action to deny, reduce or terminate benefits and services unless: 1) the claimant is contacted and there is documentation of their right to respond; 2) the requested information has been received; or 3) the response period has lapsed.

VA and GPO are proactively working to quickly address the mailing delays.

For questions on this matter, Veterans and claimants can contact VA at 800-827-1000.

Veterans who filed an appeal with the Board of Veterans' Appeals can click [here](#) for information specific to Board correspondence, scheduled hearings at the Board and receiving your Board decision.

As more information becomes available, updates will be provided. If you have any questions or believe you were impacted by the delays, call 1-800-827-1000, as stated above.

A recognition long overdue



During the Silver Anniversary Military Gala & Banquet on 9 November 2021, in addition to noting the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown, and the Tomb Guards, the P.O.W. Network was able to honor a Missouri family and pay a "debt" long owed.

Three years before American combat troops were sent to Vietnam, dozens of people lost their lives when a charter flight operated by Flying Tiger Line contracted by the Military Air Transport Service was lost in the Pacific Ocean while enroute to Saigon, Vietnam, on a secret mission.

To this day, their mission was so top secret, the military has revealed nothing about what the men were to do. Their families only received a telegram saying their relative was presumed dead.

The 93 American Army Rangers are not honored by having their names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall. In fact family requests to have the names added have been repeatedly denied. They had not received any honors (until 2021) in their states or even their hometowns. Many families say they paid for the gravestones themselves – marking empty graves.

Maria McCawley, who lives just outside Branson, was 10 months old when her father was lost, with an older sister and brother. Ten years later, close to that same fateful day, she lost her mother.

Maria represented the family earlier in the week as the guest speaker at the POW/MIA Service of Remembrance.

At the Gala, Network Chairman, Mary Schantag, presented 3 Gold Stars, representing a history dating back to WWI. The authorized symbol is for eligible Survivors of service members who lost their lives while on active duty during a combat-related incident with the design actually being authorized by Congress in 1947.

AXPOW National Commander, Robert Certain (Vietnam POW) was the Chaplain at the event.

Schantag noted her application for the pins included the statement; "This will remain a heartbreak for all involved until answers are found and national recognition, long overdue, given for each of the families."

She continued while the Master of Ceremonies, Lt Mac McAllister, and President of the Mess, Air Force veteran Sandra McDowell made the presentation, saying "With long overdue thanks and the gratitude of a grateful nation, we are presenting the three authorized and registered Gold Star Lapel Pins to Maria Williams McCawley for the Williams family."

The Gold Star pins were accompanied by US flags that was flown over the Capitol on POW/MIA Recognition Day in September in honor of their father Albert Francis Williams, a native Missourian.

On July 29, 2021, the Senate passed S.Res. 328: A resolution designating August 1, 2021, as "Gold Star Children's Day". Another recognition, long overdue.

new members



National Headquarters
PO Box 3445
Arlington, TX 76007-3445
(817)-649-2979
axpow76010@yahoo.com

Welcome!

Joseph Paul Dewoody
Ft Worth TX
Descendant of Revolutionary
War POWs, William & Maryan
McGuire

Daniel Hoffmann
Scottsdale AZ
Son of Edward Hoffmann,
Pacific

Ken Virgil
Tucson AZ
Descendant of Revolutionary
War POW Abijah Virgi

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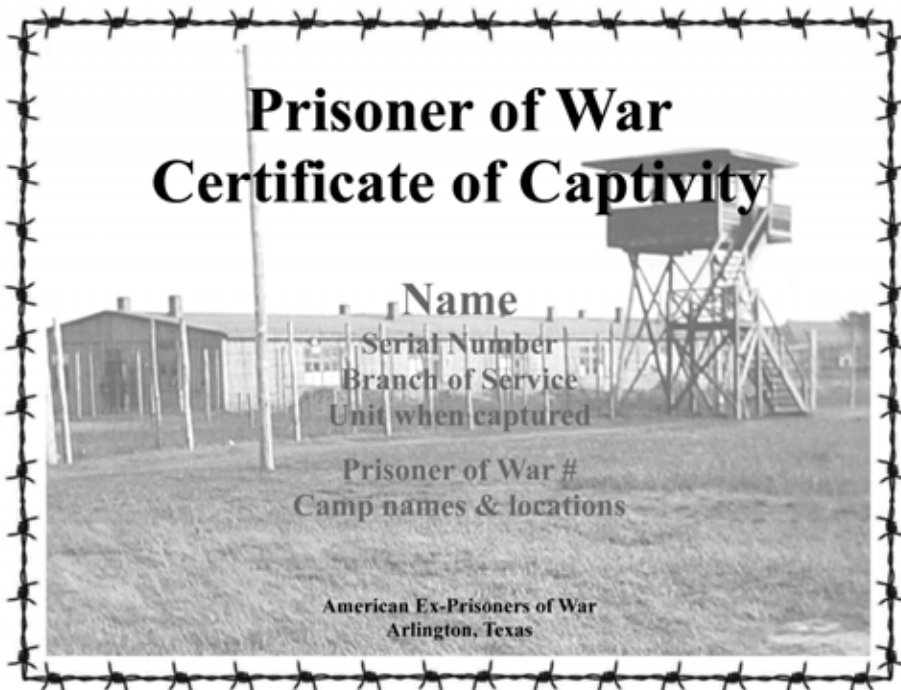
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In memory of my husband, Howard E Brooks, by
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Willoughby, by Shirley Willoughby
In memory of Scott Morris, by Central Oklahoma
Chapter

VOLUNTARY FUNDING

Millie Droggt, Houghton Lake MI

The Meaningful Gift

A number of years ago, one of our members made the decision to establish a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He felt strongly that he truly cared about our future and wanted to leave a legacy to us. He and his wife are now gone, but their generous gift enabled them to demonstrate in a very meaningful way their commitment to AXPOW. More recently others have done the same. Support for our programs became the beneficiary of their generosity.

You, too can take action today to help ensure that the American Ex-Prisoners of War remains through your will or living trust. This gift can be funded with cash or securities, mutual funds or other investments that are not serving your current needs. This special gift will benefit future generations as well as we continue our transition to a true legacy organization.

It's very simple to make a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. Simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner and they can add the following to your will or living trust:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the American Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445, the sum of \$_____ or _____(named investment) or ____percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate."

Your generous support of our programs over the years has made a tremendous difference to ex-POWs and their families. Please take a few minutes of your time to help ensure our future. And feel free to contact CFO Marsha Coke at axpow76010@yahoo.com, or CEO Cheryl Cerbone at axpowceo@comcast.net. Phone #817-649-2979.

Thank You!



taps



Please submit taps notices to:
Cheryl Cerbone, 23 Cove View Drive, South Yarmouth, MA 02664

BONIFIELD, IVA CLAUDINE 93, died Oct. 10, 2020, in Arkansas City, KS. She was the widow of Ex-POW Jack. They had four children. Survivors include: 1 son, 2 daughters, numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and their families Claudine was a woman of the Lord and loved her family more than anything.

DUNHAM, LOUISE A., 97, of Peoria, AZ passed away August 14, 2021. Louise was the widow of EX-POW Kenneth A. Dunham (deceased 2007). She was a member of the POW-WOW Chapter of Phoenix, AZ and the Agua Fria Chapter of Sun City, AZ and actively served as Chapter Service Officer. Louise is served by two sons, 9 grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren and 20 great-great grandchildren.

HICKS, CRAWFORD E., passed away Oct. 2, 2021, at the age of 100. He was preceded in death by his first wife of 46 years, Rene; he leaves his second wife, Edna and their two dogs, Ande and Demelza, as well as three sons, six grandchildren, and thirteen great grandchildren. He served with the 8th AF, 351st BG during WWII, flying missions out of Polebrook, England. His plane was shot down, he was captured and imprisoned at

Stalag Luft 3 near Zagan, Poland, where he spent eleven months as a POW. After a grueling forced march through Germany, he was liberated on April 29, 1945, by General Patton.

KOZLOSKY, JOHN 'SARGE', 101, of Ford City, PA passed away Oct. 20, 2021. A WWII U.S. Army veteran, he served in Company K, 112th Inf. Infantry, 28th Div. He was wounded, captured and held in Stalag XI-B in Fallingbostel, Germany. John also served during the Korean War, 5th Army. Survivors include 3 sons, 6 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, 1 brother and numerous nieces and nephews.

MORRIS, SCOTT SCHROEDER, 79, died Sept. 7, 2021. He was born in Manilla, Philippines, on Nov. 19, 1941. After Scott's birth, he, his sister, and his mother were taken prisoner by the Japanese and placed in the Santo Tomas prison camp in Manila until liberation in 1945. His father was held prisoner at Corregidor. He met his father for the first time when he was 4 years old after they all returned to the United States after the war. He fell in love with and married Janice Sue Lippard in 1964. Scott was a member of the AXPOW Chapter of Central Oklahoma for 4

decades and served as Commander of the chapter for 10 years. It was an honor for him to serve what he considered the unsung heroes of our country. He is survived by one daughter, three grandchildren, one sister, and their families.

RODGERS, LAMAR FRANKLIN, 99, of Bentonla, MS passed away Nov. 24, 2021. Early in 1942, he enlisted in the AAC, serving with the 301st BG, 380th BS. His B-25 was shot down over the Mediterranean Sea; he was captured and held in Stalag 17B. In April, the camp was evacuated ahead of the Russian Army and he and other POWs were marched 288 miles before being left in the woods. He was finally liberated in May 1945. He met the great love of his life Robbie Belle Bishop soon after and they spent 48 years together. He leaves 2 daughters, 1 son and their families.

SULSER, JACK A., of Rock Island, Ill. passed away Aug. 15, 2021 in Alexandria, VA. He was 95. After graduating from high school, he joined the U.S. Army - 106th Infantry Division, 423rd Regiment, F Company. He was captured in Germany during the Battle of the Bulge and held in Stalag 9B, then 9A until he was liberated. His

experience led him to the State Department. On his final retirement from duty, he was honored in the Oval Office by President Obama for 70 years of service to the United States government (1943 - 2013). Jack lost his loving wife of 54 years Helen in 2006. He is survived by his son and daughter, six grandchildren, and his wife Sally Ann.

TRZASKOS, JOHN J., formerly of Amsterdam, NY, passed away October 3, 2021 just shy of his 97th birthday. He was drafted into the Army during World War II and then trained in Georgia and southern England. John landed on D-Day at Omaha Beach as part of the second wave with the 29th Div., 115th Reg., Company E. He was

captured on June 10, 1944 and was a POW in Stalag 13b until the end of the war. John is survived by his wife of 73 years, Florence, 1 daughter, 1 brother, and several nieces and nephews and their families.

WEATHERMAN, CARL, of North Augusta, SC died Sept. 6, 2021 at the age of 89. He was captured while serving with "b" Battery, 38th FA, 2nd Inf. Div. during the Korean War. He was captured on Nov. 30, 1950 and held until his release Aug. 28, 1953. Remaining in the service, he also served in Vietnam. Carl is predeceased by his wife of 55 years, Betty. He leaves 2 daughters, 3 sons, 9 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren and their families.

Chaplain



Keith Lewis
2205 Overbrook Drive
Jasper, AL 35504
(205)275-9035
zpadre@icloud.com

Just when I thought we were about to establish a new normal we got hit the Omicron variant.

It turned everything upside down again. The whole world is trying hard to resolve this virus problem.

I was reading the Second Epistle John this morning. A portion of verse 5 - "...I ask that we love one another." Love one another, take care of one another, calling to check in, just like we have been doing for years. Caring, helping, being concerned, writing, and yes even praying for each other.

We have shown the strength and courage from our past. We beat the odds over and over again. We will overcome. These can help us continue to be productive citizens for our friends, communities, and nation.

A new normal is just around the corner. You are very valuable and have a unique perspective to make things happen. Take a proactive position to become better in all things.

G. B. U.
Keith

Ch, Col, Keith H. Lewis,
USAF, (ret)





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AXPOW Website Biography www.axpow.org

If you are not a current member of AXPOW, you must submit documentation of your POW status.

If you are requesting a biography for a family member, please include your contact information.

Contact person_____

Email/Phone_____

Name_____

Nickname_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

Telephone_____

Email_____

Conflict and Theater of Operation_____

Branch of Service Unit_____

Where were you captured? Date captured_____

POW camps you were held in_____

How long were you a POW? Date liberated_____

Medals received_____

Job in the military_____

After the war_____

Submit 1 or 2 photographs (color or black and white).

Biography: please type or print.

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If you have any questions, please contact John Skelly, Webmaster,
jj5kels@hotmail.com

AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR VOLUNTARY FUNDING PROGRAM

The AXPOW Voluntary Giving Program parallels that of other VSOs, whereby the entire membership, including life members, is given the opportunity to contribute to the operation of our organization, based on ability and willingness to contribute. All contributions are to be sent directly to National Headquarters to be used for the operation of the organization. A complete accounting of contributors will appear in the Bulletin each issue.

I am enclosing my contribution to support the operation of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

\$20.00 \$30.00 \$40.00 \$50.00 \$100.00 Other

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JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM
 JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM

N is for Never Forget is a child -friendly book that takes readers on a compelling journey through wartime history. Poignant illustrations and stories capture key people, concepts, and memorials to help readers understand and honor the sacrifices endured by men and women prisoners of war and missing in action on behalf of freedom .

Proceeds from books purchased through JBPM, Inc. (501c3) go directly to restoring \ renovating the former 1896 Officers Quarters Building into the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum. \$21.95 including S/H. Contact Paul Dillon at rpdcw@sbcglobal.net; 314-609-9037.

Veterans Day 2021 Washington, DC





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All orders for products sold by AXPOW, including dues/subscriptions should be mailed to: American Ex-Prisoners of War, National Headquarters, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445; axpow76010@yahoo.com

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