



SALUTE

to service

Developing bonds that last a lifetime

By Kelly Duncan

Staff Writer

Lieutenant Michael Addison is no stranger to serving. In his 16th year with the Clinton Police Department, Addison is only one of many men and women who have made the decision to protect our country by joining the Armed Forces.

At just 17 years old, a senior in high school, Addison decided to join the Army National Guard.

“We activated in November 2003, deployed to Iraq in February 2004, returned home in February 2005. We activated again in 2011 – went to Fort Hood first, deployed in August of 2011. We were the last out of Iraq, which was December 2011, we had to be out by January 1, stayed in Kuwait until March/April 2012; In 2004, we were in Balad, Iraq and in 2011 we were in Taji, Iraq,” Addison said. “First deployment we worked on helicopters and kept them up and going. In Taji, I was a Maintenance Supervisor for our whole platoon. Our guys were cranking out record work – they were working really hard, a good group of guys.”

But despite being around his fellow soldiers, Addison said being away from family and friends was challenging at times.

“Being away is always tough, but it’s just doing what you’ve gotta do. We did our first

convoy from Kuwait all the way to Balad, got stuck when the roads were shut down, but being away is the main thing. Being with the other soldiers, that makes things a little easier. It wasn’t great times, but you look back now and you have a lot of good times, friendships and bonds you wouldn’t normally have,” he said. “I wouldn’t trade any of those experiences. It taught me a lot about life - worked with a great group of guys. Some things you don’t necessarily want to see or relive, but the relationships you don’t get anywhere else.”

Much like his work with the Clinton Police Department, Addison added that policing and the military go hand in hand.

“Policing is about a family and having that brotherhood and sisterhood. The military is the same. Once you deploy with your guys and work with them like that every day, they are your family. We work 12-14 hour shifts together, you go home and you still live together – just a really tight bond with those guys,” he said.

And for any young man or woman who is considering joining the military or branch of their choosing, he suggested taking the advice his own father gave to him.

“Pick something that you could use in both sides, picking up a job in the military that could also help you out in a profession in the real world you can use. Learn, listen to what life’s giving you and just enjoy it – just be you,” Addison said.



Lieutenant Michael Addison has been with the Clinton Police Department going on 16 years. Prior to joining the department, Addison served in the Army National Guard, a decision he made at the age of 17. In his time serving, Addison said he developed many bonds with his fellow soldiers, solidiers who he still keeps in contact with to this day.

- Courtesy of Michael Addison

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Salute to Military & First Responders.

Laurens First Responders were treated to lunch May 13 - Red Day - by Keller Williams at 124 E. Public Square in Laurens. Red Day is the full-service realty company's giving back to the community day, and the Laurens affiliate decided to observe it with a Chick fil A lunch for Military, Police, Fire and EMT servicemen and women in uniform. Since May, 2009, Keller Williams from the United States and Canada to its family abroad sets aside the second Thursday of every May to renew, energize and donate within the communities that the company serves. Keller Williams served military and first responders in person, and took lunch to others, like dispatchers, who could not leave their posts. More photos on Page 22.

-- Chronicle & Keller Williams Photos



Honoring all who served.



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Brandon Cromer: A life spent serving

By Kelly Duncan

Staff Writer

Brandon Cromer has always grown up in the fire service. He was a regular volunteer with Hickory Tavern's fire department and decided to take his service one step further by joining the military. Cromer served from 2008-14 and completed a year and three months of deployment, most of which was in Iraq. While deployed, he was a PFC, but said he was given his Sergeant as he got out of the military.

Throughout his time serving our country, Cromer was able to travel to various locations.

"The biggest thing I was in was Taji, Iraq. That's where I was at for the most part, but I bounced around in Kuwait and a couple other little cities inside Kuwait, landed in Germany and Ireland for layovers, and Fort Hood, Texas was the other spot I stayed throughout that deployment. We were over there when Osama (Bin Laden) was killed," Cromer said.

Serving also gave Cromer the opportunity to see two out of the five places in the world he's always wanted to see - Ireland and the Roman Coliseum.

"Other than that, most of the people I've met in the military. I still hang out with a lot of the guys I served with. Getting to meet peo-



Cromer

ple and travel is probably the best part of all of it," he said.

And as for downsides, he said being away from family proved to be a challenge at times.

"I've always been family oriented. My family has always been a family that sticks to-



Continuing to serve. Brandon Cromer can most often be found at the Clinton Fire Department, where he has been for the last eight months. He is pictured with his daughter Aubree. - Kelly Duncan photo

gether. Being away from the family was the hardest part and just being in a different mindset the whole time you're over there it's a whole different atmosphere versus what you're used to here. At the same time, even though I was away from the family, it did let me grow up a little more - be more stable and do stuff on my own, but we still kept close even when there wasn't any Internet to talk to anybody," he said.

Cromer added if he could give a piece of advice to any young man or woman who are considering serving it would be to not doubt themselves and make sure it is something they want to do.

"I learned that there's nothing I can't do that I can't put my mind to. The military taught me to adapt and overcome things. Guys used to call me "MacGyver" as a nickname because if I didn't know how to properly fix it, I could figure it out with duct tape and manage to make stuff work. I learned how to do a lot of things and it changed me for the better. I'd do it all over again if I had the option," he said.

While he is no longer in the military, Cromer can often be found at the Clinton Fire Department, where he has been for the last eight months. Cromer also splits his time with the Mauldin and Hickory Tavern Fire Departments.

They supported our freedom. Now we support theirs.

Blessings to our veterans, active duty military and their families who have served our country.

Freddy Harrison, Army Veteran



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A Call of Duty: Duncan Rivers

My journey to join the military was inevitable.

I can't think of a specific event that pushed me in that direction. It's more of a collection of things that fed into a desire that didn't manifest until I was a freshman in college. My dad was in the Air Force for 21 years, and my grandfather was in the Marines.

So you could definitely say it's in my blood.

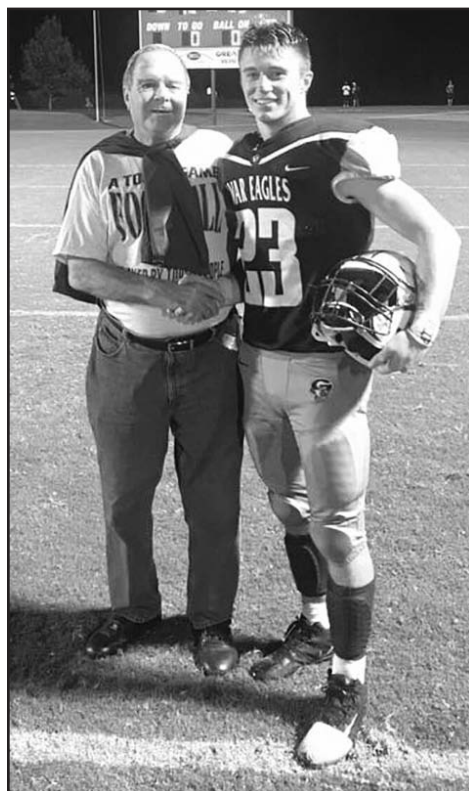
But there was also simply a desire to serve my country. I felt like I had an obligation to pay it forward for all of the opportunities I'd been given in my life. I realized there are a lot of other people — complete strangers to be exact — risking their lives to give me the freedoms I enjoy on a daily basis.

I won't rest until I do my part to give back.

I can't rest.

Maybe some of that passion comes from my time as a military brat.

I remember the anxiety and concern when my dad was away serving his country. It's a heavy, yet necessary, debt paid by countless



Those moments, if anything, just make you feel thankful and appreciative of the time you have.

They help you put everything into perspective.

Those memories are one of the main reasons why I chose this path to walk on.

It was also the college atmosphere and realization that I had to start working towards a career and pick what I wanted to be in life.

I have Presbyterian College to thank for that.

College was really the first time I was living on my own, and even though I was only an hour away from home, my parents encouraged me to stay on campus in my freshman year. They wanted me to have my own experiences and learn what it's like to make my own decisions.

So, me deciding on a career in the military wasn't my dad twisting my arm or anything like that. He served his country while he was gone, and when he came back, he was just a normal dad watching his kid play football.

Who would have thought it would all come back full-circle.

Football was my biggest passion growing up, and I pursued it all the way up to being offered to play at PC. My parents did a great job of providing me with all of the opportunities they could and giving me as many resources I needed to get to where I wanted to be.

But once I was on campus, it was all on me.

Just being there in that atmosphere really made me think about my future beyond school and football. It made me think about the sacrifices my dad and so many others had made.

And then, out of nowhere, that garage campout came to mind. It all helped me put things back into perspective. The path was laid out in front of me.

I just needed to start walking.

Since my freshman year, I've talked to multiple recruiters, gone through my physicals, and worked to get all of my medical documents cleared.

Now, the goal is to finish up school and see if I can join the Army.

It won't be long from now.

I'm just thankful that I'm using the time I have left to just enjoy the journey. I've met so many new friends along the way through my time with the football team. The days in the locker room of just grinding it out with the guys is something I'll keep with me forever.

I never understood real work before I got to college. There were so many challenges along the way, but I accepted every opportunity I had and worked as hard as I could to take advantage of them. It wasn't just about proving it to others. It was more about me wanting to prove to myself that I was willing to sacrifice everything for the team to get the job done.

That's the mentality I plan on taking with me into the military.

In so many ways, my college experiences have served as mental hurdles to help prepare me for that next chapter in my life.

Now, it's my turn to pay it back.

I'm ready to be a stranger helping another stranger. I'm ready to protect the same freedoms I've enjoyed on a daily basis. I'm ready to risk it all so that some other kid out there will have the same opportunities I had growing up. - Courtesy of PC Athletics



families. But I'm also fortunate enough to remember the relief and happiness I felt when he returned from deployment.

One particular year, my mom took my siblings to stay with my grandparents in Rhode Island, and I stayed behind at a friend's house to finish up my sixth-grade football season. My dad was away for his last deployment that year, and we were renting out our house.

When he finally got back, our tenants were still living in the house, and me and my dad spent the rest of the year basically camping out in the unfinished upstairs portion of our garage. It was just two guys hanging out and trying to get through it, you know?

It's one of the best memories that I have.

Some might think those moments of separation would drive a family further apart, but it was the exact opposite for us. It always brought us closer together. My mom was always there when we needed her, and in so many ways, she stepped up and fulfilled both roles as a parent when our dad was away.

And then there were the moments when we were all together again.



National Network for Veterans

By Vic MacDonald

Editor

So I am not writing any more about the “former guy” and, instead, I am ceding my column space this time to actor and activist Gary Sinise. We have seen him many times - one time, unforgettably, jumping off the rail of Forest Gump’s shrimp trawler.

In his “other life,” Sinise is a tireless worker on behalf of the nation’s veterans. So, it is with this in mind, Globe Newswire reported out of Los Angeles that the Sinise foundation announces the launch of a cognitive health and mental wellness network providing transformative care to veterans and first responders experiencing post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse.

This is the Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network. According to Globe Newswire, it is built on the work of the Marcus Institute for Brain Health and the Boulder Crest Foundation’s Warrior PATHH program - it will establish 20 treatment sites nationwide to serve thousands of veterans, first responders, and their families.

The actor says, “When I formed the Gary Sinise Foundation in 2011, it was rooted in a personal mission to provide support, raise spirits and improve the mental wellness of our nation’s heroes and their families, ... (the new project will) further expand our services to veterans and first responders experiencing post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse to help heal the invisible wounds afflicting too many of our veterans and first responders, transforming struggle into strength, and lifelong post-traumatic growth.”

Sinise joins together with the Co-founders of The Home Depot and renowned philanthropists Bernie Marcus and Arthur M. Blank, who each invested \$20 million from their personal foundations to lay the groundwork for the Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network, Globe Newswire reports.

“We’ve lost more veterans to suicide than we have on the battlefields of the Global War on Terror. Our veterans and their families put

their lives on the line for us and they deserve the highest level of care available. The Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network is ready to serve our veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war,” said Bernie Marcus.

The news article continues, “Addressing an Epidemic of Invisible Wounds

The national network’s name stems from Arthurian legend: Avalon was the sanctuary where King Arthur was taken to heal physically and spiritually after being wounded in battle. In that spirit, the (network) is designed to address and help heal the epidemic of ‘invisible wounds’ that afflict too many of our nation’s veterans and first responders. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and post-traumatic stress (PTS) affect nearly 1 out of every 3 military personnel deployed to war zones since 2001. An estimated 30% of our nation’s first responders also experience symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress. Though dubbed ‘invisible wounds,’ the changes in psychological health that accompany these conditions have very visible manifestations, such as depression, anxiety, suicide, and substance abuse, impacting not just the veterans and first responders themselves, but their families as well. Unlike physical wounds, invisible wounds can be passed from one generation to the next. Tragically, these invisible wounds too often can lead to suicide.”

Partners included in the Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network include, for post-traumatic stress care: GratitudeAmerica, Camp Southern Ground, The Travis Mills Foundation, The Big Red Barn Retreat, the Permission To Start Dreaming Foundation, and Sheep Dog Impact Assistance. The current partners for traumatic brain injury care include: the Tulane University Center for Brain Health, the SHARE Military Initiative at Shepherd Center, Jefferson Veterans’ Brain Health and Wellness Initiative, and the University of Florida Health Brain Wellness Program.

(Vic MacDonald is editor of The Clinton Chronicle. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of The Chronicle. MacDonald can be reached at 833-1900.)





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- John Chris Ward, E3 Lance Corporal, Marines
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- Stephen Brown, E-2 Private, Navy
- Mayor Bob McLean, Captain, Army Reserve
- Council Member Ronnie Rother, Captain, Army NG
- Brandon Cromer, National Guard - Army, PFC, Sergeant



SC Chamber and SC DVA launch Veterans' Professional Advancement Program

COLUMBIA – The South Carolina Chamber of Commerce (SC Chamber) has launched a new initiative in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs (SC DVA) aimed at providing a place within the business community for veterans to connect with resources, events, and tools to grow their careers and businesses.

The new initiative, called the Veterans' Professional Advancement Series, will feature quarterly webinars and meetings, an annual event, and the opportunity for veterans to connect with SC Chamber members and leaders.

The first webinars were held on April 15th and April 22nd with the Small Business Administration and Bank of America respectively and focused on creating a business plan and securing funding for a business. Future webinars will include topics such as educational opportunities for veterans, workforce issues, marketing a

veteran-owned business, and more.

"South Carolina, at its core, is pro-business and pro-military," said SC Chamber of Commerce CEO, Bob Morgan. "We hope this initiative will create a bridge between South Carolina's veterans' community and business community. I believe this crucial connection will continue to make South Carolina the best place in the nation to live, work, and do business for all."

"We are excited to work with the SC Chamber on this initiative to support Veterans' success," said General William Grimsley, Secretary of the SC DVA. "Just like the training and education they received while in uniform, opportunities like this provide the basis to advance their post-military careers and continue leading by personal examples."

To learn more about this new initiative, please contact Sarah Cohen at sarah.cohen@scchamber.net or 706-339-8304.

The Clinton Chronicle salutes all veterans. Thank you for all that you do.

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STATE SENATE DISTRICT 9
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The Highlander Battalion commissions its officers; speaker says they are “the very best of our nation”

By Vic MacDonald

Editor

Fathers, grandfathers and uncles, as well as Army personnel, came to the Edmunds Hall stage May 14 to snap a salute and receive a Silver Dollar.

It is part of the military tradition of commissioning Second Lieutenants in the United States Army; and the Highlander Battalion, composed of members from Presbyterian College, Newberry College and Lander University, keeps the tradition alive. The Salute's history says it may date from Colonial America, and explains:

“Authorized by Congress on April 2, 1792, the silver dollar traditionally is the only coin given in exchange for the first salute. The coin represents more than a dollar in currency. To every new officer, it has a special significance. It represents the symbolic receipt of respect due a newly earned rank and position. It also signifies a deep sense of gratitude for the knowledge enlisted personnel, especially NCOs, have passed on to them during training. It is acknowledgment from one professional to another saying, ‘Welcome to our service and to the profession of arms.’”

The Salute is part of the Highlander Battalion's Army ROTC Commissioning and Hall of Fame Ceremony, held in conjunction with PC's Commencement Weekend.

Participants in this year's ceremony were: Dr. Jeri Parris Perkins, '81, Invocation and Benediction; MAJ Adrian M. Chen, Welcoming Remarks; BG John Gentry, Hall of Fame Induction; LTC John R. Shipe III, Awards Presentation and Closing Remarks; MG Maria Gervais, Commissioning Remarks and Commissioning Oath; and Audience, “The Army Song.”

Officers were commissioned for Military Police, Engineering, Ordnance, Field Artillery, Military Intelligence, Air Defense Artillery, Educational Delay-Medical School, Chemical, and Florida Army National Guard. This was the 102nd commissioning ceremony.

Gayla McSwain, attorney, and Col. John Dowdle were inducted into the Presbyterian College ROTC Hall of Fame.

The Commissioning Speaker, Major General Maria Gervais, is Director of the Synthetic Training Environment Cross-Functional Team, in Orlando, Florida. She was commissioned in 1987, and her educational degrees include a bachelor of science in biology from Lander College. Her awards include four Legions of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal.

Gervais said, “It's good to be here at Presbyterian College, the very ROTC program

that provided me a solid foundation for my Army career. Everybody looks all tense but we shouldn't be because this is an incredible day, not only for the soon to be commissioned officers but for this institution, and for the family and friends who have supported these officers to whom we are about to give the oath of commissioning into our Army. I'm excited because I know this is the start of your military career, and I know all of the hard work you had to put in, all of the challenges you had to overcome to be here today. ... I'm excited because I know how much this means to our Army and our Nation.”

She challenged the new officers by saying they will be a leader in your chosen field, in your Army, and in your community, without a doubt.

Gervais thanked PC President Dr. Matt vandenBerg for the college's unwavering support of ROTC since 1919. She said the Highlander Battalion is recognized as one of the very best ROTC programs in the Army.

To families, loved ones and friends, she said, “This event would not have the same significance to them if you weren't in this audience and they would not be here if they did not have your unwavering support.”

“These young men and women represent the very best of our nation. They have decided to serve the people of the United States and defend our Constitution, and that speaks volumes about the strength of their character -- a strength of character that I know was instilled in them by you.”

Among the commissioning officers are an athlete who not only completed the requirements to be commissioned but also the requirements for a double major, a musician who composes music in his spare time, the first-ever Green to Gold graduate of Newberry College, and leaders in community as one cadet spearheaded the effort to coordinate the Special Olympics, and another cadet was founder of the first microscopy association in South Carolina. “All of these cadets have performed superbly,” Major General Gervais said.

“All of you have not only braved the storm but you have put in the work to excel as students, cadets, and leaders. You should all be very proud of your accomplishments. I want to congratulate you not only for what you have done, but what you will do for your nation.”

She said service will give the officers more than a chance just to see the world, as they will be given more responsibility and more trust. She saluted the officers on their willingness to serve especially today when service may and will send them to some of the world's most dangerous areas.

Battalion, Page 17



South Carolina Public Radio seeking veterans who want to tell their stories

COLUMBIA – South Carolina ETV (SCETV) and Public Radio (SC Public Radio) has announced plans to participate in StoryCorps' Military Voices Initiative.

Made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the initiative serves as an opportunity to capture the experiences of our veterans, service members and military families, as well as help civilians better understand the complex realities of veterans' service and sacrifice. It was achieved through a virtual interview process, taking place the weeks of April 12 and April 19.

A national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving and sharing the stories of people from all backgrounds and beliefs, StoryCorps has recorded conversations with nearly half a million people throughout its 18-year history. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered.

In a StoryCorps interview, two people are able to record a meaningful conversation with one another about who they are, what they've learned in life and how they want to be remembered. Recording an interview with StoryCorps couldn't be easier: An individual invites a loved one, or any-

one else they choose, to join them for a conversation. In the recording space, the participants are met by a trained facilitator who explains the interview process. Once recording begins, the conversation typically lasts approximately 40 minutes. At the end of the session, participants will receive a copy of their interviews, and digital files will be submitted to the Library of Congress, where they will be preserved for generations to come. Select recordings will also air on SC Public Radio as part of a special series in 2022.

In response to the ongoing pandemic, StoryCorps' interview process is being maintained virtually, using a video conference technology platform that allows both participants to see and hear one another during their conversation, and to be joined by a facilitator remotely. Military service members and veterans who wish to participate and share their stories should reserve an appointment.

For those that would like more information before reserving a recording appointment, a virtual listening party was held April 6 from 7 – 8 p.m. This event will provide an overview of the initiative, describe the recording process and answer any outstanding questions from participants.



Thank You Veterans!

Thank you and your families for your service and sacrifice. Your selfless service has continued to provide the freedom this nation so graciously enjoys.

Your love for our country is second to none. The sacrifices that our Soldiers and families make are the reason we live in the greatest nation in the world. Freedom does not come free. You have paid that price with your selfless service, loyalty and love for this country. As a combat veteran, I am very thankful to all who have served.

I firmly believe the quote "To maintain peace, we must prepare for War." Our veterans maintain peace!

Our military families serve alongside our Soldiers and each family has made tremendous sacrifices for our nations freedom. Thanks to the families of our Veterans!

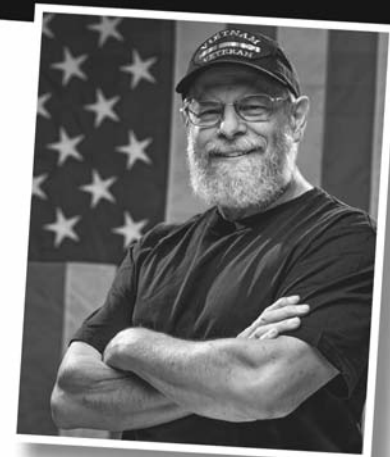
CSM (R) Doug Gilliam

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Wreaths Across America and Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. enter partnership

COLUMBIA FALLS, ME – National nonprofit Wreaths Across America (WAA) announces the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., (GSW) in an effort to build a stronger awareness for each group’s common missions, while supporting educational events throughout the nation that will help teach lessons of character and patriotism to the next generation.

Founded in 2007, and headquartered in Columbia Falls, Maine, WAA is best known for its annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, and now more than 2,500 additional locations nationwide, and the yearlong efforts to support its mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

GSW is a Congressionally Chartered nonprofit service organization established 1945. Its mission is to exist to preserve and enhance benefits to surviving United States Military spouses and children; to help its members and their children face the future with courage and determination; and to honor the memory of their military spouses who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The signed MOU between the two groups outlines nine key agreements, such as establishment of a steering committee with a representative from each organization, and collaborative volunteer efforts to provide opportunities for joint event and community service activities that bring awareness to both groups’ missions.

“Since WAA was founded, Gold Star Wives have been involved in the mission and its members play an important part in the sharing the stories of character and service we hope to teach to the country,” said Karen Worcester, executive director of WAA. “This official partnership is long overdue, and I’m eager to start our work together. Our combined efforts will no doubt help to shape and inform the next generation of patriots.”

The current National President of GSW, Nancy Menagh, has devoted her life to service, not only as a military spouse supporting her husband, Captain Philip S. Menagh, United States Marine Corps, but continuing on long after his passing and teaching her children the importance of sacrifice and character – both served in the United States Air Force. She said, “Our membership is made up of the men and women left behind. While our loved one made the supreme sacrifice, we are the ones left to live that sacrifice every day. We are an organization that serves...our spouses served and we serve!”

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will take place on Saturday, December 18, 2021, at over 2,500 participating locations nationwide. “The experience of placing a wreath at the final resting place of one of our nation’s veterans and understanding the healing that this simple gesture has for so many families and the opportunity it provides to share the stories of these heroes, makes this an important partnership,” Nancy concluded.



Battalion

From 14

“What will you do as a citizen, a leader, and an officer in the United States Army? ... You take your place in an ancient and honorable calling.”

Gervais said the new officers should be committed to the soldiers “beside you, before you, and those that will follow you.”

“The future of the Army and our Nation will soon be in your hands.”

She encouraged the officers to lead selflessly and without ego, be disciplined and strive to do your very best even on your worst day. Great officers learn to listen, she said.

“You will lead the best soldiers in the world, and they will be hungry for your leadership.”

Soldiers will follow because they trust and have confidence in the officer’s ability to lead. Her dad’s advice included the fact that it is a privilege not a right to be an officer. He said that people will love you just because you wear the uniform, but you need to know it wasn’t always like that, especially for those who came before you. Do not take that respect for granted and, most impor-

tantly, don’t you ever lose it, MG Gervais’ dad - a veteran of two tours in Korea and three tours in Vietnam - told his daughter as she left for her first training.

It is natural for commissioning officers to wonder, “Am I ready?” MG Gervais said the new officers should be confident that they are ready, that their institutions and their training has made them ready to be leaders.

“I want to thank you for taking this responsibility, to lead America’s treasure, our sons and daughters. And as I look into your eyes I know, very peacefully, this nation is in very capable hands,” Gervais said.

She then administered the Commissioning Oath.

The ROTC graduates are: Jordan Bryson, PC; Adam Cain, Newberry; Christopher Capers, Newberry; Michael Edwards, Newberry; Yhsaac Faldas, Newberry; Dominic Jones, PC; Joshua Martin, Newberry; Brianna Meador, Newberry; Nycholas Millington, Newberry; Brian Murphy, Lander; D’zhanya Richards, Newberry; Caleb Simpson, PC; Zachary Valentine, Newberry; and Omari Wilson, Newberry.

Photos continued on Page 18



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for your courage and sacrifice.
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The Poppy Story

After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed the growth to soils in France and Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the rubble left by the war. From the dirt and mud grew a beautiful red poppy. The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front lines.

On September 27, 1920, the poppy became the official flower of The American Legion family to memorialize the soldiers who fought and died during the war. In 1924, the distribution of poppies became a national program of The American Legion.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of The American Legion Family distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Poppy Day is celebrated in countries around the world. The American Legion brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

On May 31, wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.

Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran does not have that problem."

-Ronald Reagan



Honoring All Who Serve

Thank you for serving our country and protecting our freedoms!



Mark N. Willis

House Representative District 16



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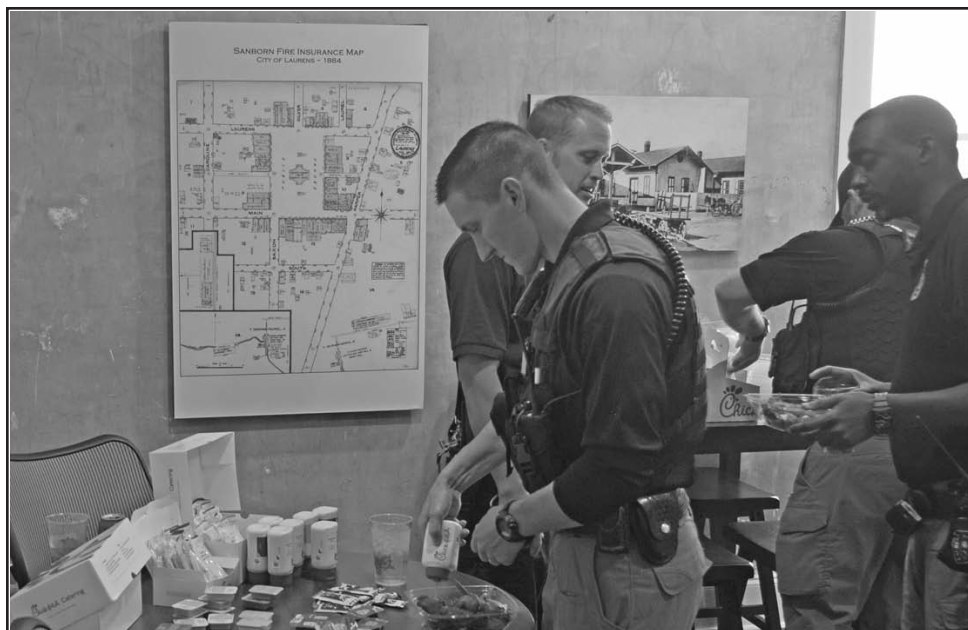
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Salute to military & first responders (Continued from Page 3)



Dear publishers/editors:

ONE LAST HILL TO TAKE! They're just a bunch of old tired men, warrior heroes, every one of them. Averaging 89 years of age, most have physical disabilities. They have earned their right to a quiet relaxing retirement. But, they have "ONE MORE HILL TO TAKE." No one ordered them to do this, they eagerly volunteered to do it, just as most of them volunteered to go to a place many had never heard of to fight a war to keep people free. They didn't "hate those that were in front of them, they LOVED those that were behind them."

America had 37,000+ KIA in Korea, 7,000+ POW's (about 35% died while in prison) and more than 103,000 wounded. This war was waged under the most horrible conditions imaginable. Losing fingers, toes and even limbs due to frost-bite was rampant. This war was known as "THE FORGOTTEN WAR."

In October 2016, President Obama

signed legislation permitting a WALL OF REMEMBRANCE to be erected at the site of the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D. C. However, they provided no funding for it. The Republic of Korea is paying for much of it. The Korea War Veterans must raise the money to engrave the names of those who died in the war or were POW's

When this was made known, the old warriors of Foothills Chapter #301 of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA) once more stepped up to the plate. They volunteered to raise the money for the 576 SC residents who were KIA or POW's in the war, to have their names engraved on the WALL OF REMEMBRANCE. The goal established for SC was/is \$200,000. Some scoffed saying; "That's impossible." But these old warriors responded, "Yes we can. This is just "ONE LAST HILL WE MUST TAKE BEFORE THE END OF OUR DAY."

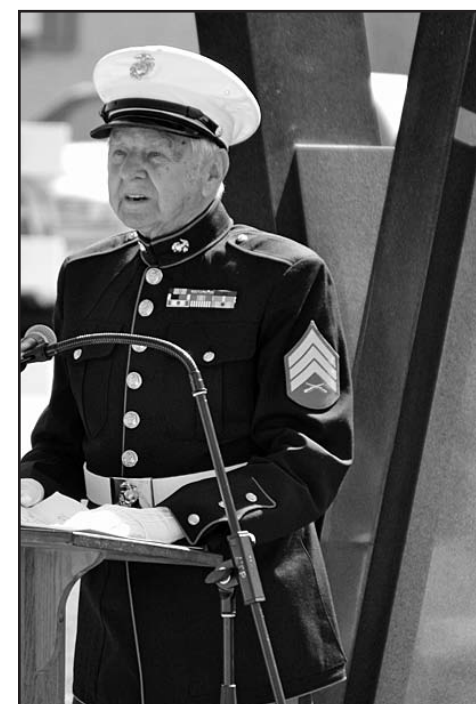
They have raised \$160,000 to date. Covid has really restricted their movements severely, limiting their fund-raising capabilities. That's where we need your help. The families of these men will forever be grateful for your kindness and generosity.

A tax deductible donation of any amount would be appreciated. Would you please help them "TAKE THIS ONE LAST HILL." These men MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN, as was the war.

Please help these old warrior heroes "TAKE THIS ONE LAST HILL." This will ensure the legacy of, not only those who paid the supreme price in the war, but also those who participated in it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Lewis Vaughn, SC Sen., Ret., Chairman
KWVA Fund-raising Committee.



Congressional Medal of Honor Society to host & honor 2021 Citizen Honors Service Award honorees for acts of selfless service

Charleston – The Congressional Medal of Honor Society, headquartered on the USS Yorktown in Charleston, announces they will host the 2021 Congressional Medal of Honor Society Citizen Honors Award Honorees for Service July 12-14. Several days of activities are planned, culminating in the awards dinner at the Belmond Hotel on July 14, to recognize the selfless service of these three individuals and one organization.

The Citizen Honors Award Honorees will receive their awards from a group of Americans whose actions have defined the words courage and selfless service – Medal of Honor Recipients. The Honorees are ordinary Americans who have gone above and beyond to perform extraordinary acts of service.

The 2021 Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Citizen Honors Award Honorees for Service are:

Service Act:

AIDAN REILLY & JAMES KANOFF from Pacific Palisades, CA, were chosen for their selfless service as they responded to a nationwide crisis during (and because of) a global pandemic to create a grassroots initiative -- FarmLink Project – connecting farmers with surplus product to communities in need.

Youth Service Award:

CHARLES (Charlie) AUSTIN, from Brunswick, ME, was chosen for his selfless

service for donating time and money to help fund and develop The Warrior Program, a virtual training program for Special Olympics Maine (SOME). As Charlie grappled with living with cardiac limitations, he was determined to stay in the world of sports and immersed himself in helping athletes of Special Olympics Maine (SOME).

Community Service Hero Award:

THE GARY SINISE FOUNDATION (GSF) was selected for their outstanding service to our military, their families and first responders. Now in its 10th year of operation, GSF honors our defenders, veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need through creation and support of unique programs designed to entertain, educate, inspire, strengthen, and build communities.

Due to the cancelation of last year’s recognition activities due to Covid-19, the 2020 Citizen Honors Award for Service Honorees will also be recognized at this year’s dinner. They are:

Service Act:

Michael Jernigan of North Richland Hills, TX, for his lifetime of selfless service to improve the lives of blind and impaired veterans. Michael co-founded “Paws for Patriots” at South Eastern Guide Dogs, which provides guide dogs and service animals to veterans.

Youth Service Award:

Zachary Brooks of Summit, NJ for his ad-

vocacy of those affected by autism. Zachary founded “Artfully Able”, an art event showcasing the abilities of those with developmental disabilities.

Community Service Hero Award:

Women Veteran Social Justice Network, Women Veteran Social Justice Network, in Atlanta, GA, for their work to identify, connect and empower Women Veterans through professional and personal connections.

“Our honorees epitomize the values my fellow Medal of Honor Recipients hold dear,” said Society President Drew Dix, “While selfless service must start at home, these honorees have set a standard for others in communities nationwide to emulate.”

In addition to the Awards Dinner, the Society will also host Veterans Outreach and Character Development programs with local Veterans organizations and the educational community.

The Veterans Outreach Program is on the frontline providing support to public and private sector organizations who are positively impacting those who have served or are still serving our country. Medal of Honor Recipients are committed to serving their fellow service members and personally engage with organizations’ veteran programs through motivation, inspiration, and providing positive examples.

The Medal of Honor Character Develop-

ment Program is a free resource for educators that teaches courage, commitment, integrity, sacrifice, citizenship, and patriotism to students through educationally grounded lessons developed by teachers for teachers. These six values are embodied in the Medal of Honor and exemplified in the actions for which it has been awarded.

Each year, the Society conducts a nationwide search to select individuals in four categories and one organization to receive their Citizen Honors Awards. Honorees exemplify the values embodied in the Medal of Honor: courage, sacrifice, commitment, integrity, citizenship, and patriotism.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society was chartered by Congress in 1958 to create a brotherhood among the living Medal of Honor recipients; to protect and uphold the dignity and honor of the Medal; to promote patriotism and love of country; and to inspire our youth to become worthy and dedicated citizens of our nation. Its membership consists exclusively of those individuals who have received the Medal of Honor. Today, there are 68 living recipients of the Medal of Honor.

More information on the Honorees and the Citizen Honors awards are available by contacting John Falkenbury at Jfalkenbury@cmohs.org or by visiting Medal of Honor Citizen Honors Overview | CMOHS



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