SERVING AMERICA,
HONORING OKLAHOMA
Message from Folds of Honor Foundation

As a former F-16 pilot and Air Force veteran, it is my honor to help present this special section on *Serving America, Honoring Oklahoma*. Taking time to understand the role and responsibility of the United States military is very important because as a result of their sacrifices, you live each day without fear that your safety will be compromised. I can tell you from experience that this is a privilege we can not take for granted. Every member of each branch of the military, every Medal of Honor recipient, and every person who was wounded or killed while serving our great nation has risked much and sacrificed greatly to ensure that our America stays free. Every fold of the flag honors and remembers those who live and those who died to protect it.

Whether you’re passionate about one day going to defend our country, have a friend or family member who is in the line of fire or are simply proud to be an American, these pages are for you. Spend time reading them and soaking in what it means to live in the United States. As you learn about all of the different people involved in protecting your God-given freedom, hold your head high and be proud of this country and its citizens.

I hope that by reading this, you will gain a better understanding of what it takes to protect freedom. I hope you’re inspired with a greater sense of patriotism and look for ways to honor and help those who have served and sacrificed.

Everyone has their own way of giving back and thanking our military service men and women for all they’ve done and continue to do. For many, it’s sending cards or packages. For others, it’s a handshake or a hug. I chose to honor their sacrifice by educating their legacy by raising money for educational scholarships, knowing that education brightens futures and is the key to achieving dreams.

My hope is that you find your own way to say “thank you.” It might even mean taking advantage of your own educational opportunities and every other benefit that comes from living in a free country. Embrace that. Embrace your freedom. Embrace America!

Godspeed

MAJ Dan “Noonan” Rooney
The organizational structure of the United States Armed Forces is different today than the military you would have seen prior to World War II. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act which realigned and reorganized the U.S. Armed Forces. Through this act the United States Air Force was created and after a 1949 amendment what was once the War Department became the Department of Defense. The military is made up of five individual branches; however, the Department of Defense is only comprised of four of the five branches. The Coast Guard falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Defense but is considered a military service because in times of war or conflict the President can transfer any or all assets of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy. The Department of Defense is headed by a civilian; the Secretary of Defense, who is appointed by the President of the United States. Under the Secretary of Defense, there are three military departments: The Department of the Air Force, the Department of the Army, and the Department of the Navy. Each of these military departments is led by civilians appointed by the President known as service secretaries; the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Secretary of the Navy.

The Air Force, Army and Marines are all individually led by a four-star general known respectively as the Air Force Chief of Staff, Army Chief of Staff and Marine Corp Commandant; the Navy and Coast Guard are each led by a four-star admiral known as the Chief of Naval Operations and Coast Guard Commandant. For most matters, the Air Force Chief of Staff reports to the Secretary of the Air Force, Army Chief of Staff reports to the Secretary of the Army and both the Chief of Naval Operations and Marine Corps Commandant report to the Secretary of the Navy.

Together these four leaders make up part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS); the Chairman and Vice Chairman make up the remainder. All key positions within the JCS are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. In times of war or conflict the JCS reports directly to the Secretary of Defense and the President. During times of peace, all five military branches report to their individual service secretaries who are the Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Navy and the Coast Guard Commandant.
**U.S. Army**

**Mission:** The primary mission of the Army is to protect and defend the U.S. and its interests by way of ground troops, armor (tanks), artillery, attack helicopters and tactical nuclear weapons.

**Supported by:** The active duty Army is supported by the Army Reserves and the Army National Guard.

**Size:** There are an estimated 76,000 officers and 401,000 enlisted members.

**Additional Information:** Established by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1775, the Army is the oldest and largest of the military branches.

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**Marine Corps**

**Mission:** The primary mission of the Marines is to assault, capture, and control “beach heads” which then provide a route to attack the enemy from almost any direction. Often referred to as the "Infantry of the Navy", Marines specialize in amphibious operations. While amphibious operations are their primary specialty, the Marines have also expanded to ground-combat operations. The Marines are generally a "lighter" force when compared to the Army and can generally be deployed fast.

**Supported by:** There is no Marine Corps National Guard, but Marines are supported in times of need by the Marine Corps Reserves.

**Size/Enlistment:** There are approximately 18,000 officers and 153,000 enlisted personnel on active duty in the Marines.

**Additional Information:** The Marines were officially established by the Continental Congress in 1775 to act as a landing force for the Navy; however, Congress established the Marine Corps as a separate service in 1798. For combat operations, the Marines like to be self-sufficient, so they have their own air power, consisting primarily of fighter/bomber aircraft and attack helicopters. Still, the Marines use the Navy for much of their logistical and administrative support. For example, there are no doctors, nurses, or enlisted medics in the Marine Corps and even medics that accompany the Marines into combat are specially-trained Navy medics. With the exception of the Coast Guard, the Marines are also the smallest service.

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**Navy**

**Mission:** The primary mission of the Navy is to maintain freedom of the seas, making it possible for the U.S. to use all bodies of water when and where necessary; as well as carrying Marines to areas of conflict. Carrying an average of 80 aircraft, Navy aircraft carriers are able to deploy to areas where fixed runways are not possible. Navy submarines allow for stealth attacks on our enemies from right off their shore while Navy ships can attack targets from great distances.

**Supported by:** The Navy is supported in times of need by the Naval Reserves; however, there is no Naval National Guard.

**Size:** There are an estimated 54,000 officers and 324,000 enlisted members.

**Additional Information:** Like the Army, the Navy was officially established by the Continental Congress in 1775. In times of conflict, the Navy also helps supplement Air Force power in the skies.
Two Reserve Forces which can be tapped for trained personnel and equipment during times of need are the Reserves and the National Guard. The primary difference between the two is that the Reserves are "owned" and managed by the federal government and each state "owns" its own National Guard. However, the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense can "activate" state National Guard members into Federal military service during times of need.

**U.S. AIR FORCE**

**Mission:** The primary mission of the Air Force is to defend the U.S. and its interests through the exploitation of air and space. To accomplish this mission the Air Force operates fighter aircraft, tanker aircraft, light and heavy bomber aircraft, transport aircraft, and helicopters; the latter of which are used mainly for rescue of downed aircrew and special operations missions. The Air Force is also responsible for all military satellites and the control of our all strategic nuclear ballistic missiles.

**Supported by:** The active duty Air Force is supported by the Air Force Reserves and the Air National Guard.

**Size:** There are an estimated 69,000 commissioned officers and 288,000 enlisted members.

**Additional Information:** As mentioned, the Air Force was created under the National Security Act of 1947, making it the youngest military branch. Prior to 1947, the Air Force was a separate Corps of the Army; the primary mission of which was to support Army ground forces. However, it became clear after World War II that air power had more potential than ground-troop support so the Air Force was established as a separate military branch.

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**COAST GUARD**

**Mission:** In peacetime, the Coast Guard is primarily concerned with law enforcement, boating safety, sea rescue, and illegal immigration control. However, the President of the United States can transfer part or all of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy in times of conflict. The Coast Guard consists of ships, boats, aircraft and shore stations that conduct a variety of missions.

**Supported by:** The Coast Guard is supported by the Coast Guard Reserves and a volunteer "Coast Guard Auxiliary" in times of need.

**Size/Enlistment:** There are approximately 7,000 officers and 29,000 enlisted on active duty.

**Additional Information:** The U.S. Coast Guard was originally established as the Revenue Cutter Service in 1790. In 1915, it was reformed as the United States Coast Guard under the Treasury Department. In 1967, the Coast Guard was transferred to the Department of Transportation where it remained until 2002 when the Coast Guard was transferred to the Department of Homeland Security. The Coast Guard is the smallest military service.
To an American, there is no greater symbol of freedom and sacrifice than the flag of the United States of America, nicknamed “Old Glory”. Since the founding of our country, over one million men and women have died defending the freedom that our flag symbolizes. Many flags have flown over the geographical area that is the U.S. since explorers and settlers began making their way here in the 1500’s. You can see the many versions of the American flag above.

**Folds of Honor**

Every evening at a time specified by the Commanding Officer, military bases throughout the world conduct a solemn ceremony called retreat. During this ceremony, the American flag is lowered for the evening. It is folded into a triangle shape and kept under watch throughout the night to honor those who have died. When the flag is lowered, it is folded 13 times, from the stripes forward. Although there is not an official law declaring the meaning of each fold, the following has been adopted as a tradition by many veterans and family members of veterans to give meaning and hope to those family members who have lost a loved one fighting for freedom.

1. **The 1st fold** is symbolic of life.

2. **The 2nd fold** is symbolic of our trust and belief in eternal life.

3. **The 3rd fold** is made in remembrance and honor of the departed veterans who gave a portion of their lives in defense of our country. They have not died in vain and shall not be forgotten.

4. **The 4th fold** represents our weaker nature. As Americans, we trust in God and turn to Him for divine guidance in times of peace and war.

5. **The 5th fold** is made in tribute to our country. In the immortal words of Stephen Decatur, “Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is our country - right or wrong.”

6. **The 6th fold** brings to mind where our hearts lie. It is with our hearts that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

7. **The 7th fold** is in tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is they who protect our country and flag against all enemies, whether they are found within or out of the borders of our Republic.

8. **The 8th fold** is a tribute to those who have entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

9. **The 9th fold** is a tribute to motherhood. It is through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the characters of our great leaders have been molded.

10. **The 10th fold** is made in honor of our fathers. They too, have given their sons and daughters for the defense of our country.

11. **The 11th fold** represents, in the eye of a Hebrew citizen, the lower portion of the Seals of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eye, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

12. **The 12th fold** represents, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

13. **The 13th and final fold** is made in honor of the 13 American Colonies whose fighting force gave us liberty.

When folded, the flag’s stars will be uppermost and reminds us of our national motto, “In God we Trust” and will take on the appearance of the “cocked hat” worn during the American Revolution. It reminds us of the soldiers of the past who preserved the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.
SERVICE FLAGS

In 1917, as tens of thousands of American soldiers, sailors and Marines headed to Europe to fight “The Great War,” mothers began a new tradition. They sewed small, square, red, white and blue banners and hung them in their front windows to show that they had a child in the military. Initially called “mother’s flags,” they were eventually renamed “service banners” and authorized for other family members – spouses, fathers, siblings or children of service members.

Service flags are an official military symbol that indicates that a member of the household is serving in a U.S. Armed Service – the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard – during wartime. It has been authorized for use only five times; during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and for the current conflicts with Iraq and Afghanistan. The flags can often be seen displayed in the front windows of private homes or in front of businesses that have one or more employees in the military. The white flags rimmed in red feature one or more stars in the center – one for each serving member of the family. The star comes in three variations; gold, silver and blue.

Congress officially recognized the flags in 1942, when their form and use was formalized for the blue and gold stars, but the silver star was left out. In 1967 the Department of Defense implemented further formalization of the service flags, setting rules for the use and manufacture of the flags.

**Blue Star Flag**

Blue stars indicate the family has an active duty service member during a time of conflict. There are several official organizations related to the banner including Blue Star Mothers of America and Blue Star Families of America.

**Gold Star Flag**

According to tradition, if the service member is killed, the blue star is covered with an embroidered gold star. Gold star flags are not restricted to service members killed in action or while deployed, but are for any service member who dies during active service. There are two official organizations for gold star recipients; American Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives of America. Among the most honored gold star banners is that of the Sullivan family, which features five gold stars. The Sullivan brothers all died in action when their ship was torpedoed and sunk during WWII. Today, the guided missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG-68), named in honor of the brothers, flies a five-star gold star flag in memory of her namesakes.

**Silver Star Flag**

By tradition, when a service member is severely wounded and returned to the U.S. for treatment and rehabilitation, a silver star replaces the blue. Despite the official recognition of the silver star, parents of severely wounded servicemen and women still covered their blue star with silver thread. An unofficial flag, created by the Silver Star Families of America, was designed to resemble the blue and gold star flags without infringing on the Pentagon’s design. That flag features a silver star on a blue field, with a red and white border. Silver Star Families was recognized by Congress in April 2010, authorizing the silver star flag for the first time since 1942, but Pentagon officials have not yet approved a final design for the banner.

**Veteran’s Star Flag**

Because of the politicization of the Vietnam War, the service flag did not see common use among the families of servicemen during the era. To honor those veterans, a veteran’s service flag was created for those who served but were not recognized at that time. The veteran’s banner is similar in form to the service flag with a blue field and red border and a white star for veterans and a gold star for veterans who died after their service was complete. While the veteran’s star is not officially recognized by the Pentagon, it was approved as an unofficial symbol of past service.

**POW/MIA**

Aside from the Stars and Stripes, only one flag representing the U.S. has ever flown over the White House and is the only flag displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. It is the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flag, which honors the plight of Americans who have sacrificed their own freedom to preserve liberty for all. It reminds us that while we enjoy the privileges of freedom, somewhere in the world there are soldiers who have not been accounted for or may be being held against their will by our enemies. Since World War I, more than 200,000 Americans have been listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action with less than half being returned home.
I’ve heard the question asked more than once, “What is the military’s place in the fabric of Oklahoma?” Okay, a common metaphor. Let’s presume that the fabric was made into a shirt. The military’s place would be directly over the heart. Oklahomans have a long and proud tradition of serving in our nation’s military even before statehood. Commensurate to the state’s population Oklahoma has always provided more than her share to the national defense.

Across NE 36th street from the 45th Infantry Division Museum, in Oklahoma City, is a much over looked little piece of history. It is called the Union Soldiers Cemetery. The two land runs saw the participation of a lot of veterans of the Civil War. To accommodate these veterans as they aged an Old Soldiers’ Home was established just south of what is now the intersection of NE 36th Street and Martin Luther King Blvd.

That hill is now occupied by the silent graves of veterans from that distant conflict, as well as from the Spanish American War, WWI, WWII, The Korean War and the Vietnam War. Here rest every rank from Private to Lieutenant General. This is just one small resting place but it is illustrative of the service to the nation we Oklahomans have willingly provided.

A great many Oklahomans have volunteered their service in our armed force through Oklahoma’s 45th Infantry Division. This proud outfit was organized in 1923 and saw the worst of the fighting in WWII during its 511 combat days and participation in eight Campaigns. Then only five years later the Thunderbirds were called on again for the Korean War where they fought through 429 combat days in four Campaigns. Truly they have secured their place in history.

A man of some considerable notoriety, a man who himself was a well versed student of history said these words to the battle worn men of the 45th Infantry Division, “Born at sea, baptized in blood your fame will never die. The 45th Infantry Division is one of the best, if not the best Division
in the history of American arms.” That man was General George Patton.

The old 45th Division was deactivated in 1968, but the Oklahoma Army National Guard still carries the Division’s proud traditions and lineage. Today “Thunderbirds” are in the thick of operations in the Global War on Terror. The 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is once again deployed, preparing for operations in Afghanistan as we speak. These young men and women are all volunteers whose service allows us, in the words of Winston Churchill to “… sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.”

Oklahoma’s sons and daughters have flocked to the ranks of the regular services as well, the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The Oklahoma National Guard has seen repeated deployments since 9/11. These Oklahomans offer their very lives for our safety. It is to these young men and women that we, the protected, owe so much.

Left: A tank from the 191st Tank Battalion (attached to the 45th) rides through the ruins of Nuremberg, Germany during WWII. Photo taken by the 45th Infantry in April of 1945.

Right: CPT Odel T. Shaw, 45th Div, from Oklahoma City, OK at the RR yard at KZ Dachau where 40 box cars of dead were discovered.
The Medal of Honor is the nation’s highest medal for valor in combat that can be awarded to members of the armed forces. It sometimes is referred to as the "Congressional Medal of Honor" because the president awards it on behalf of the Congress.

The medal was first authorized in 1861 for Sailors and Marines and the following year for Soldiers as well. Since being fully authorized in 1862, only 3,452 heroes have received this honor; half of which were awarded to Civil War soldiers. Since the beginning of World War II, only 854 Medals of Honor have been awarded. Of those 854, only 329 were awarded to those still living. Due to the nature of the Medal of Honor, it is most often awarded posthumously, meaning that the person receiving the Medal died during their act of bravery. To date, only one woman has received this distinguished award.

To receive a Medal of Honor, a person must risk their life to go above and beyond the call of duty while engaging in action against an enemy of the U.S., engaging in a military operation against an opposing force, or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in a armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the U.S. is not the party directly engaged in the conflict.

If we thought about it, we could all create a list of our personal heroes or role models that we aspire to be like. For most of us, our list would contain athletes, musicians, actors and actresses or political figures. What is it about the people on our list that we admire most? For some, it is the hope to one day be like that person or have the same station in life. However, what are the chances that someone who is 5’3 will become an NBA star or that someone will become a movie star because they had a lead role in the school play? Now, think about Medal of Honor recipients for a moment. Medal of Honor recipients are ordinary people, just like you and me. They are brothers, fathers, teachers, coaches, and sons. In a moment of terror, they found within themselves the character and courage to do the unimaginable, they risked their lives for their fellow soldiers and for the freedoms that each one of us has today. They are true American heroes.

Of the 854 Medal of Honor recipients since 1941, only 85 are living.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War</th>
<th>Total Recipients</th>
<th>Posthumous</th>
<th>Surviving Recipients</th>
<th>Died Since</th>
<th>Living Today</th>
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<tr>
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<td>266</td>
<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global War on Terror</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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Of 854 Recipients since December 7, 1941:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Living Medal of Honor by War:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Living: 85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Died Since: 244</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posthumous: 525</td>
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<tr>
<td>World War II: 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea: 14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam: 64%</td>
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</table>

*There is one living recipient of the Medal of Honor from the Global War on Terrorism (1%)

**OKLAHOMA RECIPIENTS**

There are currently 20 Medals of Honor accredited to Oklahoma. Here are a few of their stories as told by C. Douglas Sterner.

**TONY K. BURRIS**

Born: May 30, 1929 in Blanchard, OK
Entered the U.S. Army from Blanchard, OK

Earned the Medal of Honor during the Korean War for heroism on October 8 & 9, 1951 in Mundung-ni, Korea

Died: October 9, 1951 at the age of 22 (Killed in Action)

Sergeant First Class Burris

When his company encountered intense fire from an entrenched hostile force, Sergeant First Class Burris charged forward alone, throwing grenades into their position and destroying approximately fifteen of the enemy soldiers. The next day, spearheading a renewed assault on enemy positions on the next ridge, he was wounded by machine gun fire but continued the assault, reaching the crest of the ridge ahead of his unit and sustaining a second wound. Calling for a recoiless rifle team, he deliberately exposed himself to draw hostile fire and reveal the enemy position. The enemy machine gun emplacement was destroyed and the company moved forward and prepared to assault other positions on the ridge line. SFC Burris refused evacuation and joined the unit in its renewed attack, but enemy fire halted the advance. SFC Burris rose to his feet, charged forward and destroyed the first emplacement with its machine gun and crew of six men. Moving to the next emplacement, and throwing his last grenade to destroy this position, he fell mortally wounded by enemy fire.
**HAROLD G. KINER**

*Born: April 14, 1924 in Aline, OK/Entered the U.S. Army from Enid, OK*

*Earned the Medal of Honor during World War II for heroism on October 2, 1944 in Palenberg, Germany*

*Died: October 02, 1944 at the age of 20 (Killed in Action)*

With four other men, Private Kiner was leading a frontal assault on a Siegfried Line pillbox near Palenberg, Germany. Machine gun fire from the strongly defended enemy position, twenty-five yards away, pinned down the attackers. The Germans threw hand grenades, one of which dropped between Private Kiner and two other men. With no hesitation, Private Kiner hurled himself upon the grenade, smothering the explosion and sacrificing his life.

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**DONALD JOSEPH GOTT**

*Born: June 03, 1923 in Arnett, OK/Entered the U.S. Army Air Corps from Arnett, OK*

*Earned the Medal of Honor during World War II for heroism on November 9, 1944 at Saarbrucken, Germany*

*Died: November 9, 1944 at the age of 21 (Killed in Action)*

First Lieutenant Gott was pilot of a B-17 aircraft damaged to the point of imminent explosion over Saarbrucken, Germany on November 9, 1944. Three engines were on fire, the engineer was wounded and the radio operator’s arm severed. After releasing their bombs on target, Lieutenant Gott and his copilot decided to fly the flaming bomber to friendly territory and crash land. When friendly land was reached, all crew members except for the unconscious radio operator were ordered to bail out. The copilot chose to remain with Lieutenant Gott to help in the crash landing. With only one engine functioning and in intense flames, the aircraft banked toward a field but exploded in mid-air, crashed and disintegrated, killing all onboard. Lieutenant Gott’s copilot was Second Lieutenant William Metzger, who also received the Medal of Honor for this action.

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**JOSEPH L. EPPS**

*Born: May 16, 1870 at Jamestown, MO/Entered the U.S. Army from Oklahoma Indian Territory, OK*

*Earned the Medal of Honor during the Philippine Insurrection for heroism December 4, 1899 in Vigan, Luzon, Philippine Islands*

*Died: June 20, 1952 at the age of 82*

From the spring of 1898, until early the following year, most battles in the Philippine Islands were sporadic ambushes of small American patrols in the jungles, as the U.S. Army sought to root out the rebel forces of Emilio Aguinaldo. In action at Vigan, Luzon, Philippine Islands, on December 4, 1899, Private Joseph Epps discovered a group of insurgent rebels behind a wall. Fearlessly, he climbed the wall and covered the enemy force with his gun, ordering them to stack their arms and surrender. For his single-handed capture of this enemy force, Private Epps was awarded the Medal of Honor. Private Epps was one of four soldiers who earned the Medal of Honor at Vigan.

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**RILEY LEROY PITTS**

*Born: October 15, 1937 in Fallis, OK/Entered the U.S. Army from Wichita, KS*

*Earned the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War for heroism October 31, 1967 in Ap Dong, Vietnam*

*Died: October 31, 1967 at the age of 30 (Killed in Action)*

After his company landed in an airmobile assault, several Viet Cong opened fire with automatic weapons. Captain Pitts led an assault which overran the enemy positions and was then ordered to move north to reinforce another company engaged against a strong enemy force. As his company moved forward, intense fire was received from three directions, including four bunkers, two of which were within fifteen meters of his position. His rifle fire, proving ineffective, against the enemy due to the dense foliage, Captain Pitts picked up an M-79 grenade launcher and began pinpointing the targets. Seizing a grenade taken from a captured Viet Cong’s web gear, he lobbed it at a bunker to his front but it hit the foliage and rebounded. Without hesitation Captain Pitts threw himself on top of the grenade which, fortunately, failed to explode. He then directed the repositioning of the company to permit friendly artillery to be fired. Upon completion of the fire mission, he again led his men toward the enemy positions, personally killing at least one more Viet Cong. Displaying complete disregard for his personal safety, he maintained continuous fire, pinpointing the enemy’s fortified positions, while at the same time directing and urging his men forward, until he was mortally wounded.
The Price of Freedom

Soldier’s Sacrifice: Physical and Mental Health

Today, over 40,000 members of the US military have been physically wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Physical Health

Retired Major Edward Pulido, a reserve infantry officer, lay bleeding on a lonely stretch of highway between Baqubah and Balad Ruz in Iraq. Despite the sounds of spewing gas from the blown-up SUV he had been driving, and the shouts of his fellow soldiers keeping onlookers at bay, his mind drifted away from the road and the confusion. The events of his life flooded his memory as did thoughts of his daughter, his wife and the many times he had helped his community. He felt immense gratitude.

Pulido had been driving an SUV when an improvised explosive device went off beneath the vehicle. The hand guards of his M-16 were blown off the weapon and deformed by the force of the blast. Almost every window in the vehicle exploded with much of the pulverized glass blowing in on him. In spite of all his injuries and despite being heavily smashed in the face by the deploying air bag, Pulido was able to maintain control of the vehicle and gradually bring it to a complete stop. By doing so, he saved lives. But Pulido’s left leg had been shattered. The injury led to amputation of Pulido’s leg just above the knee in 2004.

Now, Pulido is dedicated to helping other wounded and slain soldiers by raising college tuition for soldiers with debilitating injuries or children and spouses of soldiers who have been killed in action through the Folds of Honor Foundation.
Mental Health: PTSD

Studies estimate that more than 320,000 soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan will suffer the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD develops when a person is so overwhelmed by an event that they lose their ability to cope with that experience. Most often, PTSD is caused by a combination of both physical and psychological human trauma. Although it is not exclusively a military issue, based upon the nature of the job, the rates of PTSD are extremely high for those in the military.

**SOME TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA THAT MIGHT CAUSE PTSD ARE:**

- experiencing or witnessing an event perceived as life-threatening
- experiencing or witnessing terrorist attacks or other disasters
- kidnapping, torture or being held hostage
- employment in an occupation that is exposed to war
- becoming a prisoner of war

**SOMEONE WHO HAS PTSD CAN RE-EXPERIENCE THE EVENT OR EXPERIENCE THROUGH:**

- flashbacks and nightmares
- by avoiding the stimuli associated with the trauma

To be formally diagnosed with PTSD, the symptoms must last more than one month and cause significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of life. In the 1600’s, Swiss doctors described PTSD as “nostalgia”, during the Civil War it was referred to as “soldier’s heart” or “the effort syndrome”. It was “shell shock” during WWI and “combat fatigue” during WWII. PTSD as we know it today was not clinically identified until after the Vietnam War. No matter the name, the effects of PTSD, as a result of combat, can alter the life of both military men and women and their families and is just another sacrifice made to “self” in the fight for freedom.

FAMILIAL SACRIFICE

There are nearly 200,000 military personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and thousands more that are geographically separated from their families during assignments when it is not feasible for the family to accompany them. When a loved one is deployed, the whole family goes to war and as the duration and frequency of military deployments increase, service members and their families are increasingly faced with the challenges associated with deployment and combat. For example, in a two parent home one parent becomes a single parent, children are left wondering if their deployed parent is safe or when they might return home and the amount of stress on the children and family increases.
There are numerous organizations dedicated to supporting veterans and their families. Some organizations provide services to one specific member of the family such as the veteran, the spouse, or the children and some provide support to entire communities. You can find organizations dedicated to building homes for military families or making homes accessible once a physically wounded veteran returns home, organizations dedicated to providing emotional support for spouses, financial support for the family or social groups for children.

The Folds of Honor salutes the sacrifice of fallen and disabled service members by ensuring their families are not left behind. They seek to brighten their futures and help them achieve their dreams. Through scholarships and other assistance, they provide healing and hope to these families and seek to rally the nation in support of those who have served and sacrificed for our country. They will leave no family behind in the field of battle.
By learning about the organizations currently dedicated to our military personnel and their families, you will gain a better understanding of just what you can do to help. Take some time to learn about these organizations and the great work they are doing in your communities.

- General Tommy Franks Leadership Institute and Museum
- Mental Health Association of Central Oklahoma
- Pros 4 Vets
- Real Warriors
- Warriors for Freedom
- Wounded Warriors
You know Love’s from our stores, but do you know Love’s as a company?
Tom and Judy Love founded what is now Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores in 1964. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, today Love’s is still 100 percent family owned and operated. With a national footprint of more than 265 locations and 90 tire care centers in 39 states, Love’s current growth rate is approximately 20 stores per year. We are currently ranked No. 18 on the Forbes annual list of America’s largest private companies. But, we’re not a stereotypical nameless, faceless corporation. The Love family and the company is very active in the Oklahoma City community, donating more than 2 percent of the company’s net profits each year to non-profits here in our home city and across the nation where we operate stores. And, Love family members personally visit each and every store across the country several times a year. From the first filling station in Watonga, Okla., the Love’s commitment has remained the same: “Clean Places, Friendly Faces.” So next time you stop at Love’s, you’ll know more about the Love’s difference.

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