

The background of the entire page features a stylized American flag with white stars on a blue field and red and white stripes. Overlaid on this are the dark silhouettes of three soldiers in uniform, each performing a salute. The largest silhouette is on the right, with two smaller ones in the lower left. The word "Salute" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the center, with the year "2022" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font to its left.

2022

Salute

Honoring those who proudly
served the United States

Special Publication of
PALATKA DAILY NEWS

SALUTE

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Explore the history of Veterans Day

Service members make numerous sacrifices in defense of their countries. While the debts to service members may never be the kind that can be repaid in full, paying tribute to veterans, on Veterans Day and throughout the year, can be a great way to show them just how much their efforts are appreciated.

Veterans Day begins with Armistice Day

Veterans Day is a byproduct of the end of World War I, when Germany and the Allied Nations signed the Treaty of Versailles, formally ceasing fighting and establishing terms of peace. On Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the signing of the treaty, the first Armistice Day events were held. Armistice Day was initially a legal holiday to honor the end of World War I only, states History.com. The United States Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and Nov. 11 became a national holiday starting in 1938. However, in 1954, after the country had been embroiled in both World War II and the Korean War, Congress amended the Act of 1938 by renaming the commemoration “Veterans Day” to honor veterans of all wars.

Veterans Day in October?

According to Military.com, for a short time, thanks to the Uniform Holiday Bill, which in 1968 established three-day weekends for federal employees by celebrating national holidays on Mondays, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday of October — the first being Oct. 25, 1971. However, many people did not agree with this decision, continuing to honor the holiday on the original date. In 1975, President

Gerald Ford signed a new law that returned Veterans Day to Nov. 11 beginning in 1978. Since then, parades, memorial events, volunteer efforts, and other celebrations revolving around veterans have been held on Nov. 11.

Veterans around the world

Many countries, including the United States, celebrate veterans on or near Nov. 11. America’s closest neighbor to the north, Canada, commemorates veterans on Remembrance Day (also Nov. 11), as does the United Kingdom. Britain also has Remembrance Sunday, which is the second Sunday of November. Remembrance Day also is called Poppy Day, when people of the Commonwealth member states wear a red poppy flower in honor of military members who have died in the line of duty.

Paying tribute

Veterans Day and its sister holidays mark the honoring of veterans of all wars, with a particular focus on living veterans. It is a day to celebrate the dedication and selflessness of hardworking military men and women.

*Article and photo courtesy of
Metro Creative Graphics*

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Remember their sacrifice!



Anna Rose

GORNTO BISHOP CHRISTENSEN

DOING HER DUTY

Airman Anna Rose Gornto Bishop Christensen serves in the U.S. Air Force as a radio operator in the early 1950s at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. Photo courtesy of Meri Rees

By Sarah Cavacini
Palatka Daily News

It's been 72 years since one Florahome woman enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on the heels of a federal act that permanently gave women a place in the military.

Veteran Anna Rose Gornto Bishop Christensen, 90, was born in Grandin and grew up in Palatka. She graduated from Palatka High School in 1949 and enlisted in the Air Force one year later.

"All of my family – men – had been military people," Christensen said. "And I always wanted to be one, too."

MAKING HER OWN PATH

While she said the rest of her family before her had been Navy men, she chose a different branch of service.

Christensen enlisted shortly after President Harry Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 during the Korean War.

"Before the Korean War, women serving in the U.S. armed forces did vital wartime work, but then went back to domestic life in peacetime," according to the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

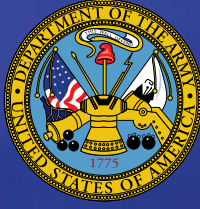
"Based on the value of women's World War II contributions, the Army asked in 1946 that women be made a permanent part of the military."

Initially, women were allowed to comprise only 2% of the total Air Force, the museum states.

Christensen became one of just a few women to serve in a key position for the branch, said her daughter, Meri Rees.

See ANNA ROSE page 8

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO COURAGEOUSLY SERVE YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW



Marlyn Albritton - Army

Melanie Bland
Mother - Army
Husband - Marines

Brenda Bridges
Father - Navy
Father-in-law - Navy

Tammy Chaney
Father-in-law - Army
Brother-in-law - Army

Robert Cooper
Father - Coast Guard
National Guard
Nephew - Marines

Tammy Crabtree
Husband - Coast Guard

Lisa Fells
Sons - Army
Nephews - Navy

Trish Foster
Father - Army
Nephew - Air Force

James Gardner
Navy - National Guard
Father - Army

Mechelle Head
Grandfather - Navy

Lori Heard
Grandfather - Army

Eunice Hendley
Son - Marines
Son - Army

Barbara Hinkle
Son - Air Force

Eva Hottinger
Grandson - Army
Grandson - Marines

Linda Myers
Father - Air Force
Sister - Air Force

Kim Preu
Brother - Air Force
Father-in-law - Navy

Darrin Rembert - Army
Grandfather - Army
Father - Air Force

Elio Rodriquez
Uncle - Army

Rose Wilkinson
Son - Marines

Richard Vinson - Army
Grandfather - Army
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Photo courtesy of Meri Rees

Putnam County woman Meri Rees (left) stands with her mother and Air Force Veteran Senior Airman Anna Rose Gornto Bishop Christensen in June at the Northeast Women Veterans Recognition Gala.

“At that time it was the Korean War, and I just felt like I needed to contribute because the rest of my family had and I wanted to also,” Christensen said.

The Air Force veteran worked as a radio operator with Morse Code and radiotelephone. Christensen said she graduated with honors from Kessler Air Force Base in Mississippi and was later stationed at Pope Army Airfield, or the Pope Air Force base in North Carolina.

She said the Pope colonel requested an honors student from the Kessler base and, at about 19 years old, Christensen got the spot.

When asked if she was intimidated to be one of a few women serving at the Pope base, she said, “no.”

“Nothing intimidated me,” Christensen added with a laugh.

See ANNA ROSE page 10

with

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ANNA ROSE continued from page 8

She enjoyed working as a radio operator, specifically working in radio security because Christensen said she sent and received messages at the Pope base.

"I really wasn't aware of what a lot of the messages were because it was all top secret, but I felt like I was doing my part," she said.

The veteran was discharged from the Air Force after becoming pregnant with Rees, who was born in 1953. Christensen said at that time women who were pregnant could not serve in the military.

Still, she stayed connected to the military because her first husband, Rees' father, served, as did her second husband, son and stepson.

A CHILDHOOD OF HISTORY

Rees grew up in Germany for part of her childhood, because her father was stationed there, but bounced around to multiple bases and schools. She said she attended three different schools just in the first grade.

Rees called all the traveling "an adventure." Even though she did not make the childhood friends that other children made because her family moved so often, she had a different experience.

Christensen's daughter remembers living in Germany and seeing the history that other children only read about in books. Rees recalled her parents making friends with an older German couple and the man was a German soldier when he was younger.

"I remember them talking about his experiences and he's (saying), you know, 'We had to do what we were ordered to do' (with) tears streaming down his face," Rees

said as she started to get choked up. "These were just people caught up in a war, right?"

Rees also saw German residents with numbers tattooed on their wrists, permanent reminders of the Holocaust.

"It leaves an impression on you and to think that our country liberated them ... I guess, to me, it was just (a) sense of pride that I was an American," Rees said.



Photo courtesy of Meri Rees
Airman Anna Rose Gornto (pictured here) served in the U.S. Air Force in the early 1950s.

EVERLASTING PRIDE

Germany was still rebuilding, she said, when her family lived there. American pride was strong on the base, Rees added. Every day at 5 p.m. the whole base stopped as people lowered the American flag. People in uniform saluted, cars came to a stop and children stopped playing to honor the flag.

Even when Rees went to see a movie on the base, the national anthem played before each movie and moviegoers stood for the song.

Rees said she's proud to come from a family who served in the U.S. military. It gives her a sense of patriotism and pride for being an American.

Rees, who also lives in Putnam County, is the regent for the William Bartram Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the director of the Putnam County Genealogical Society.

Not only is she a proud American citizen, but Rees also feels proud to live in Putnam because of how veterans are honored in the community.

"I think it makes me feel good that our county recognizes the gift that (veterans) have sacrificed, given for us," Rees said.



To our country's past, present, and future veterans,

Thank You!

"There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty, that makes human nature rise above itself, in acts of bravery and heroism."

-Alexander Hamilton

Happy Veterans Day!



Boyd PAQUIN



Veteran shares stories of World War II

Daniel Egitto/Palatka Daily News

Boyd Paquin stands beside a collage of photos and news clips commemorating his service in World War II.

By Daniel Egitto
Palatka Daily News

More than 80 years later, Boyd Paquin still remembers one of his toughest missions during World War II.

The former lead bombardier's squadron had flown several hours to an oil field in Czechoslovakia only to discover that enemy forces had set up their best anti-aircraft gunners there. Paquin said the gunners inflicted serious damage on his plane, but it could have been worse.

"Over a couple hundred holes, and nobody got hurt," he

recalled. "You like an airplane that's built to take damage."

Paquin, a Pomona Park man who recently celebrated his 100th birthday, is full of both light and dark memories of the three years that he served in the second World War.

Drafted into the Army three days after his birthday in 1942, Paquin said he never intended on becoming a lead bombardier responsible for dropping the first bomb on a target during his squadron's missions.

"I was interested in becoming an officer," he said. "That's all I intended to be."

See BOYD page 14



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Photos courtesy of the Paquin family

Boyd Paquin, of Pomona Park, recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He was drafted in to the Army at 20 years old in 1942, eventually becoming lead bombardier for a squadron of 12 aircraft.

Paquin said he passed a test to become an aviation cadet after being drafted and trained at bases in several states.

Even in the United States, Paquin said service always had its hazards. He recalled one instance where another pilot mistook a sheep pen for a target and accidentally killed an entire flock of the animals.

“We had to eat mutton for a month,” the bombardier recalled.

Paquin said he went to a base in England after several

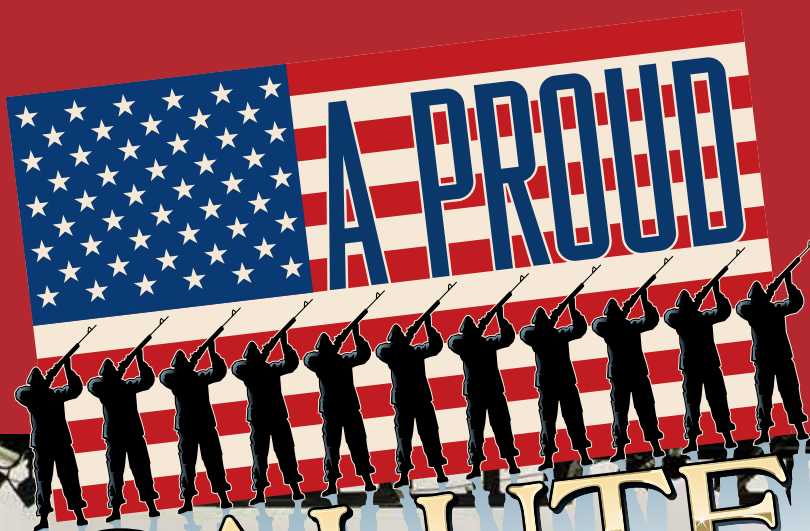
months of training. There, he was promoted to become the lead bombardier for a squadron of 12 aircraft holding over 100 troops in total.

He said some of the most “harrowing” moments were when his pilot had to fly through fog, which made it impossible to see out of the plane’s windows.

“They would fly solely on instruments,” Paquin said.

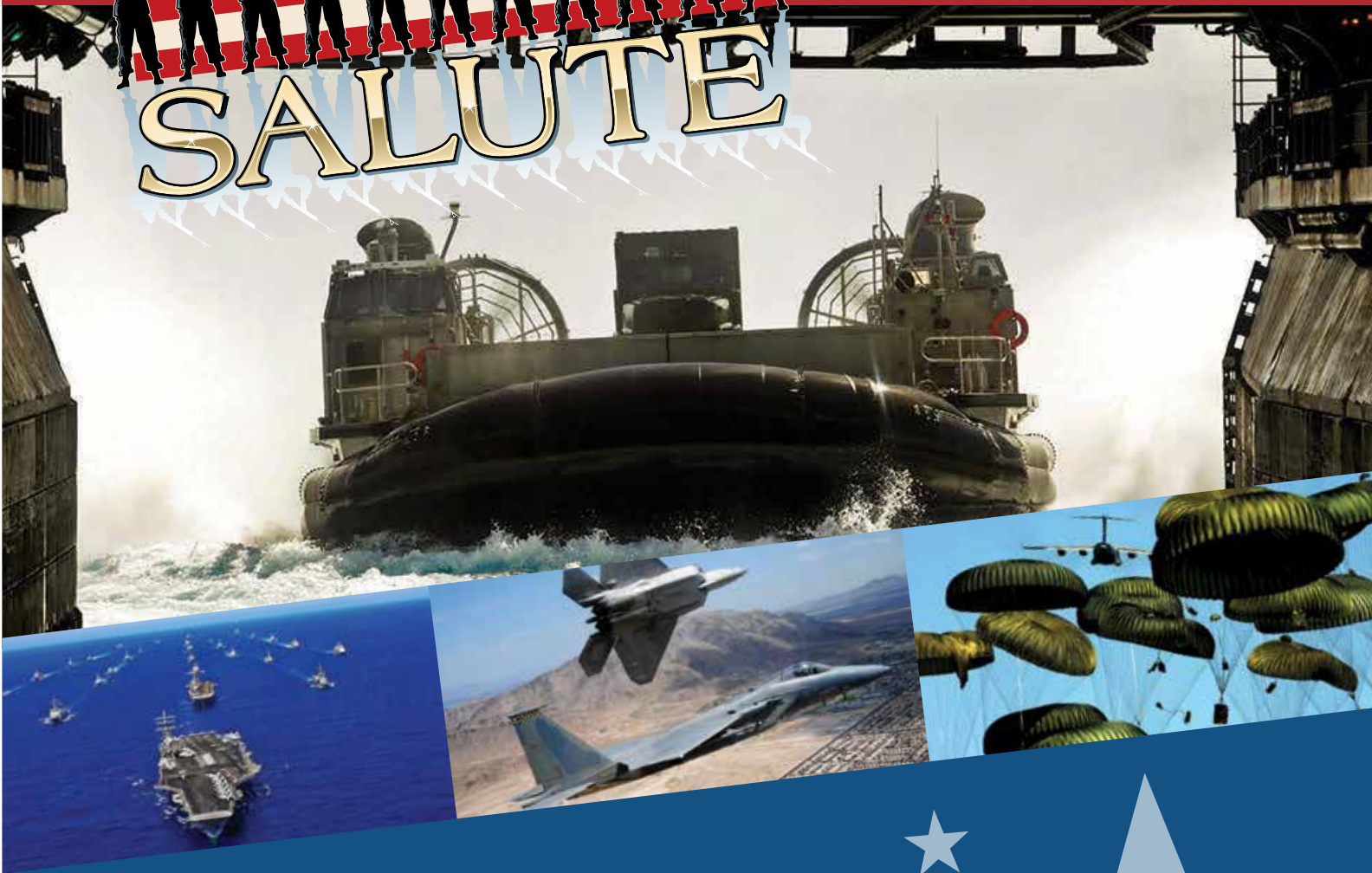
Another time, Paquin said he almost lost his life when his plane’s autopilot malfunctioned while flying over the ocean.

See BOYD page 16

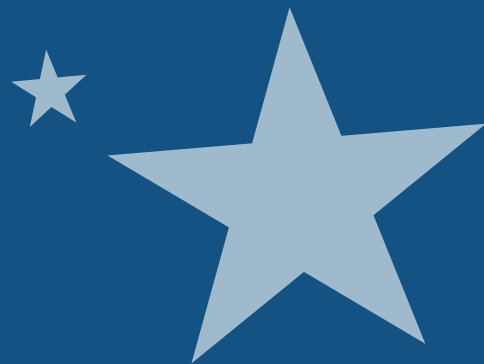


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Boyd Paquin: Students still meet with teacher yearly in Florida

By Mike Januaya
mjanuaya@floridapost.com
graduated from
Pomona High School

POMONA PARK, FLA. — Even though they graduated from high school more than 60 years ago and are now all in their late 70s, former Stockbridge Valley Central School teacher and guidance counselor Boyd Paquin still sees members of the class of 1957 regularly. And he still calls them all as his "kids."

"I like being able to get together with them," Paquin said of his former SVCS students. "They are a great bunch of kids and they treat me very well."

"I love when they all get together — it's no critic," added Paquin's daughter Penny Rustake, who provided much of the information for this story after visiting her dad recently in Florida.

Paquin's life changed — ultimately leading to the opportunity to teach out to the demands more like those across the state — just after he had settled down with his newlywed wife Edith in Fort Mills, N.Y. They married on July 11, 1949, and shortly afterwards he received his draft notice to join the armed services during World War II in the September of 1942.

"I did not like that at all — I was only married for two months when it came," he remembered of that order to leave his wife. His draft notice also arrived right after his brother, Francis, was killed.



Boyd Paquin: WWII veteran's life story recorded for future generations

By Charles Pritchard
cpritchard@floridapost.com

SAVANNAH, N.C. — As a World War II bombardier, Boyd Paquin has a lot of stories to tell.

At the Charlotte Public Library, Madison County Historian Matthew Orr sat down with Paquin on Tuesday as part of an effort to record the lives and times of local soldiers.

Paquin was born in the town of Fort Mills, N.Y., a little

over on the Black River between Canby and Watertown. Paquin recalled standing and playing on logs floating down the Black River as a kid.

Graduating from the first room, Edith Mills schoolhouse in 1939 at the age of 16, Paquin started working with his father as a painter and paper hanger, while working on their farm.

Orr asked Paquin if he enlisted himself or if he was drafted when America entered the war.



BOYD PAQUIN - MADISON COUNTY HISTORIAN
Boyd Paquin, left, talks with Madison County Historian Matthew Orr on Tuesday, May 22, 2018.



Photos courtesy of the Paquin family

Clockwise from top right: Boyd Paquin stands in uniform during World War II; Paquin and his late wife, Edith, smile for the camera; newspaper clippings are seen within a collage of Paquin's family made for his 100th birthday.

"You were going along and all of the sudden the airplane would go into a dive," he said.

The airman said his plane would have crashed if the pilot hadn't been wearing a seatbelt, which prevented him from being thrown into the air.

Paquin also said he flew out three times on D-Day, but was unable to drop any bombs because smoke from the fighting made it impossible to tell friend from foe.

Paquin spoke most fondly of the other troops in his squadron. He laughed as he remembered one particularly

daring friend getting into a scuffle with another man over a woman.

"He got beat up so bad, they had to (carry) him home," he recalled. "He laughed the whole time."

Paquin's son, Boyd Paquin Jr., takes care of the veteran now at their South Putnam home. He said he met several members of his father's squadron when they used to meet every year to reminisce.

"They all stayed in touch because they went through hell together," Boyd Paquin Jr. said.

HONORING VETERANS...



Quincy Masters, owner of the Masters Funeral Homes and son of WWII veterans, and Ted Rodda, Jr., manager of Palatka Memorial Gardens and past commander and current Judge Advocate of American Legion Post #45 in Palatka, stand beside the plaque the Masters family erected in the Palatka Memorial Gardens to honor veterans.

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How Memorial Day and Veterans Day differ from each other.



Memorial Day and Veterans Day each honor the military, though the two holidays are not the same. Memorial Day, which is celebrated annually on the last Monday in May, honors the brave men and women who lost their lives while serving in the American military. Many communities host memorial ceremonies honoring their fallen soldiers on Memorial Day, ensuring such soldiers' bravery and sacrifices are never forgotten. While many people now view Memorial Day weekend as the unofficial start of summer, the weekend should not be celebrated without also pausing to reflect on and recognize the military personnel who lost their lives in defense of freedom and the American way of life.

Veterans Day is celebrated

annually on Nov. 11 and recognizes all men and women who have served in the military. Veterans Day coincides with Remembrance Day, which is celebrated by the Commonwealth of Nations, an association of 53 member states with connections to the British Empire. Though Veterans Day and Remembrance Day are each celebrated on Nov. 11, the latter recognizes armed forces members who died in the line of duty, making it more similar to Memorial Day than Veterans Day. It's not uncommon for people to recognize fallen soldiers on Veterans Day, but many use the holiday to express their appreciation to existing veterans.

*Article and photo courtesy of
Metro Creative Graphics*

Service members and their families make many sacrifices to protect the lives and freedoms of their fellow citizens. The following are three unique ways to give back to these selfless men and women, who often benefit greatly from even the simplest of gestures.

1. Serve as a driver for veterans.

Unfortunately, many service members return from overseas missions with disabilities, some of which prevent them from driving. Adults who want to help service members can serve as drivers for veterans who can't drive themselves.

2. Donate your airline miles.

By donating airline miles to military families, ordinary adults can ensure injured servicemen and -women can still see their families during difficult times in their lives.

3. Sponsor a service dog.

A significant percentage of veterans return home with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. PTSD has been linked to a host of conditions, including depression and anxiety. However, programs such as Companions for Heroes, an organization that places service dogs with veterans, has helped many veterans successfully cope with PTSD.



Lest we forget

celebrate • honor • remember

On Veterans Day, we pay tribute to those who fought and made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Their courage and service will never be forgotten, and we owe them and their loved ones a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. Let us always remember their dedication, heroism and legacy.



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Edward HOUCK



Photo submitted by Edward Houck

Army 1st Sgt. Edward Houck stands in front of where his battalion set up camp in Iraq during the Gulf War.

Devoting his life to the military Army soldier earned Bronze Star for Gulf War service

By Brandon D. Oliver
Palatka Daily News

In 1971, Palatka resident Edward Houck was living the life he wanted. He'd recently gotten engaged. He'd dropped out of college and begun working in construction to fund his life with his soon-to-be bride. Everything was great, he thought.

Then, with the Vietnam War in full swing, he received a letter informing him he'd been drafted into the Army.

Houck, who would eventually spend 21 years in the

service and even more time working in the private sector at a military base, originally had no intention of joining the military at all.

Prematurely leaving college, however, put him on the military's radar. At the time, Houck said, colleges were required to report to the federal government the names of men who dropped out. After he received his draft letter, he managed to enlist via the Delayed Enlistment Program.

See EDWARD page 24



George A. Young



Catherine Harris



*Robert "Bobby"
W. Pickens III*

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"I had no desire (to join)," Houck said. "I hadn't even thought about it. ... (The Delayed Enlistment Program) gave me three or four months to get my affairs in order before I reported (for duty)."

So, toward the end of 1971, Houck left his Kirby Street apartment for basic training in Fort Knox, Kentucky, where he excelled.

Houck said his father demanded order, discipline and accountability, which gave him a leg up when drill sergeants barked orders and demanded his best. As for the physical aspect of boot camp, his prior profession was a great learning tool.

"To me, basic training was no big deal," he said. "I was working construction work before I was drafted, so basic training was no big deal."

After basic training, he went to Advanced Individual Training at Fort Eustis in Newport News, Virginia, to train to become a helicopter mechanic. Throughout basic and individual training, Houck said, the threat of being deployed loomed over everyone's heads.

At one point, his concerns almost became a reality. Houck and the other class commander at his individual training were called to their superior's office and told they would soon be shipping out to Vietnam. Houck's wife was beside herself, he said, but he was going to bravely face his future.

But to the delight of Houck's class — and his family and friends — their orders were changed some days later.

"(My superior) said, 'Everyone in your class is going to Germany,'" Houck said. "He told the other class commander his group was going to Hawaii and stateside. (My classmates) were very happy. They were like me. I could not wait to call my wife and tell her."

Houck avoided getting shipped to Vietnam, but he found himself in the throes of the Cold War. He was

stationed at Bayreuth Airfield in Western Germany, about a 45-minute flight from the northeast border with Eastern Germany.

Despite his proximity to communist Germany, Houck said, he enjoyed his time in Europe. He and his wife traveled often when he wasn't working. When he was working, which involved flying along the border to look out for suspicious activities, there was rarely any cause for alarm.

However, Bayreuth was put on high alert after five soldiers conducting an on-foot reconnaissance patrol along the border accidentally found themselves in Eastern Germany.

"The soldier in charge got lost," Houck said. "He was having trouble reading

a map, and he crossed into Communist Germany."

Because Houck's Apache helicopter had no stars or other markings on it, he was ordered to fly across the border to retrieve the lost soldiers. Houck carried out the mission without incident, he said, and he never felt he was in danger during his time at the base.

But Houck didn't avoid conflict during his military career. From 1989 until he retired from the Army in



Photo submitted by Edward Houck

Army 1st Sgt. Edward Houck, who was in the military from 1971 to 1992, stands in his army uniform.



Thank You!

We take this moment to honor those who served our nation and are now serving with us to protect our community, as well as all of our residents who answered the call to protect our freedoms both home and abroad.

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1991, Houck was part of the 4th Battalion 299th Flying Tigers Regiment. The regiment was deployed to Kuwait for about a month before crossing into Iraq during the Gulf War.

"We knew the possibilities," he said. "We were an Apache battalion. We knew it was coming, but we didn't know if we'd be a part of that. It's just part of being in the military."

For four months, Houck and his battalion advanced about 100 miles into Iraq conducting road security. By this time, he had advanced to the rank of 1st sergeant and was responsible for making sure his subordinates carried out their duties efficiently and making sure his superiors had everything they needed to get their jobs done.

His time there was not without danger, and his heroics and cool head under pressure earned him a Bronze Star.

When on patrol in Iraq, the battalion spotted a white Toyota pickup truck circling them. Most people might not find that particular vehicle to be out of the ordinary, but U.S. soldiers in Iraq knew the enemy put explosives in those trucks to ram into American vehicles.

"We had a couple instances when those Toyota pickup trucks would circle us," Houck said. "He got a little too close, and we shot at him. I had no idea whatsoever that I was going to receive a Bronze Star. I didn't feel like I did anything to deserve that. I really didn't."

After his tour in Iraq was finished, Houck went back to Germany. And in 1991 – when his older daughter was graduating from high school and looking for colleges and his younger daughter got engaged – Houck decided it was time to say goodbye to active service.

Twenty-one years had been a long time to move his

family across the world, Houck confessed. It was time to put down roots, watch his family flourish and consider the career options available to him in the private sector.

"I think it was time to get out, and I can't be in the Army my whole life," Houck said. "The older I am, the less attractive I am to the civilian workforce."

After being honorably discharged, Houck spent four years working at US Helicopter flight school in Ozark, Alabama. He then returned to Fort Rucker to work as a civilian at the flight school, which trains not only American soldiers, but also soldiers from Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands and numerous South American countries, among others.

It was a job he loved, and he continued working there until his retirement on June 30 of this year. He still lives in Fort Rucker today.

Houck, 72, looks back fondly on his time in the military, crediting it with providing a life for him and his family, which has expanded to include five granddaughters, one great-granddaughter and a great-grandson.

The Army also gave him a chance to see the world and form a camaraderie with the Flying Tigers that remains just as strong today. He recently attended a reunion with the group in The Villages, and earlier this year, some of them went on a fishing trip in Canada.

While getting drafted into the military was not ideal, Houck said, he is fortunate for it and the blessings he has received because of it.

"I would have been a lot less financial working in construction," Houck said. "I think I was very lucky to be drafted and get into the military doing something I really enjoyed doing."



File photo
The Bronze Star Medal, seen here, is a United States Armed Forces decoration awarded to members for either heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service in a combat zone.



DID YOU KNOW?

Veterans Day in the United States and Remembrance Day in Canada are celebrated annually in November to honor the many individuals who have served in each country's military. That figure is a sizable one in the United States, as data from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicates there were around 19 million U.S. military veterans in 2021.

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Putnam County Clerk of Circuit Court & Comptroller

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National Guard struggles as troops leave at faster pace



Patrick Semansky/Associated Press
National Guard members take a staircase toward the U.S. Capitol building before a rehearsal for President-elect Joe Biden's Presidential Inauguration in Washington, Jan. 18, 2021.

By Lolita C. Baldor
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Soldiers are leaving the Army National Guard at a faster rate than they are enlisting, fueling concerns that in the coming years units around the country may not meet military requirements for overseas and other deployments.

For individual states, which rely on their Guard members for a wide range of missions, it means some are falling short of their troop totals this year, while others may fare better. But the losses comes as many are facing an active hurricane season, fires in the West and continued demand for units overseas, including combat tours in Syria and training missions in Europe for nations worried about threats from Russia.

According to officials, the number of soldiers retiring or leaving the Guard each month in the past year has exceeded those coming in, for a total annual loss of about 7,500 service members. The problem is a combination of recruiting shortfalls and an increase in the number of soldiers who are opting not to reenlist when their tour is up.

The losses reflect a broader personnel predicament

across the U.S. military, as all the armed services struggled this year to meet recruiting goals. And they underscore the need for sweeping reforms in how the military recruits and retains citizen soldiers and airmen who must juggle their regular full-time jobs with their military duties.

Maj. Gen. Rich Baldwin, chief of staff of the Army National Guard, said the current staffing challenges are the worst he's seen in the last 20 years, but so far the impact on Guard readiness is "minimal and manageable."

"However, if we don't solve the recruiting and retention challenges we're currently facing, we will see readiness issues related to strength begin to emerge within our units within the next year or two," he said.

According to Gen. Daniel Hokanson, head of the National Guard Bureau, both the Army and Air Guards failed to meet their goals for the total number of service members in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. The Army Guard's authorized total is 336,000, and the Air Guard is 108,300.

See NATIONAL GUARD page 30

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Hagan Ace Hardware celebrates Putnam County veterans, including Ricky Bybee (left), no stranger to East Palatka manager Paul Mack and the rest of the Hagan Ace family.



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Baldwin said the Army Guard started the year with a bit more than its target total, but ends the fiscal year about 2% below the goal. Fueling that decline was a 10% shortfall in the number of current soldiers who opted to reenlist. Hokanson said the Air Guard missed its total goal by nearly 3%.

The reasons are many. But Guard officials suggest that young people may not be hearing the strong call to service that they did when the U.S. was at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Baldwin said that as operations in Iraq and Afghanistan began to decline several years ago, states started to see higher than expected losses in personnel. In exit interviews, he said, troops cited a number of reasons why they weren't reenlisting. "But, unexpectedly, they found that one reason common to many of their soldiers was based on the perception that the war was over," said Baldwin, adding that they had joined to serve their country, not make the Army Guard their career.

The same may be true now, he said. In 2020 and 2021, Guard members were heavily involved in a range of domestic emergencies, from natural disasters and civil unrest to the pandemic, including medical care, COVID-19 testing and vaccines.

"Today, we have a much lower overseas deployment tempo than we've been used to and almost all of the COVID support missions have been ramped down," Baldwin said. "We join to make a difference by serving others and by being part of something bigger than ourselves. ... There may be a perception among both our soldiers and the civilians we are trying to recruit that we are on the backside of all of that and it's time to take advantage of the hot job market we have right now."

While the shortfalls for 2022 may be small percentages, the Guard is facing increasing losses over the next year

due to the U.S. military's requirement that all troops get the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently about 9,000 Guard members are refusing to get the shot, and another 5,000 have sought religious, medical or administrative exemptions.

So far, no Guard members have been discharged for refusing the vaccine order. The National Guard is awaiting final instructions from the Army on how

to proceed. Officials have said it's not clear when they will get that guidance.

With more losses likely on the horizon, Guard leaders are looking for ways to entice service members to join or reenlist. Hokanson said a critical change would be to provide Guard members with healthcare coverage. Currently, he said, about 60,000 Guardsmen don't have health insurance. And those who have insurance through their civilian employer have to go through a difficult process to move to the military's TRICARE program when they are on active-duty status.

The cost of providing health care coverage to those who don't have it would be about \$719 million a year, he said.

Other changes that could help, he said, would include expanding educational benefits and giving Guard members a financial bonus when they bring in new recruits. Such bonuses were used during the peak of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, but there were some problems that Hokanson and others said could be avoided now.

"We need to make adjustments based on the current environment because for the long term, our nation needs a National Guard the size that we are, or maybe even larger to meet all the requirements that we have," said Hokanson. "It's up to us to make sure that we fill our formations so that they're ready when our nation needs us."



Matt Slocum/Associated Press file
A National Guard soldier walks past a barricade as security is ramped ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration ceremony Jan. 18, 2021, in Washington.

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Francis Scott Key

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Queen's death is reminder of disappearing WWII generation



British Chelsea Pensioners who are veterans of the World War II Battle of Normandy, codenamed Operation Overlord, and D-Day pose for a group photograph during a D-Day 75th anniversary photocall at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London, Monday, May 13, 2019. Pictured are from left: Roy Cadman, James George, Bill Fitzgerald, Ernie Boyden, Frank Mouque, George Skipper, Arthur Ellis. D-Day saw some 156,000 U.S., British and Canadian forces landing on five beaches along a 50 mile stretch of France's coast, supported by thousands of ships, landing vessels, planes and gliders, and with inland help from French resistance fighters.

Matt Dunham/Associated Press

By Danica Kirka
Associated Press

LONDON — The long goodbye for Queen Elizabeth II is a reminder of a broader truth playing out with little fanfare across Britain: The nation is bidding farewell to the men and women who fought the country's battles during World War II.


The queen, who served as a mechanic and truck driver in the last months of the war, was a tangible link to the sailors, soldiers, airmen, marines and others who signed up to do their bit in a war that

killed 384,000 service personnel and 70,000 British civilians.

But like the queen, even the youngest veterans of the war are now nearing their 100th birthdays, and a steady stream of obituaries tells the story of a disappearing generation.

"It's extraordinary how that sense of the passing of time is felt very keenly at the moment, said Charles Byrne, director general of the Royal British Legion, the nation's largest armed services charity.

See QUEEN page 34



We would like to express gratitude to all Veterans who have served and are currently serving our nation.

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Our duty as citizens is to protect the honor of those heroes who sacrifice for our freedom and safekeeping during their service, after their service, and in their passing, so that they may continue to live in dignity here and in our memory.

On behalf of my office, I would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe Veteran's Day.

Sincerely,
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Putnam County Property Appraiser



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“The queen was a personification of that generation ... and with her passing, it just drives home the sense that time is moving relentlessly, as it does.”

That loss is, perhaps, felt more widely in the United Kingdom than a country like the United States, because the U.K.'s very existence was threatened during the war. Bombs fell on cities from London to Belfast, women were conscripted into war work and wartime rationing didn't end until 1954.

Elizabeth, who famously saved ration coupons to make her wedding dress in 1947, led a ceremony of remembrance for all the nation's fallen service personnel each year on the anniversary of the end of World War I.

“She is the epitome of that sense of service and stoic contribution, Byrne said. “And that is treasured more than ever.”

British authorities don't know exactly how many World War II veterans are left because the nation's census takers didn't track military service until last year. Those figures are due to be released next month.

The Royal Air Force says it knows of only one surviving Battle of Britain pilot, the man Winston Churchill immortalized as “the few” who helped turn the tide of the war. Group Captain John Hemingway celebrated his 103rd birthday in July.

But the number of survivors is dwindling.

Among those who died this year were Henriette Hanotte, who ferried downed Allied pilots across the French border as they made their way home. And Harry Billinge, who was just 18 when he joined the

first wave of troops to land on Gold Beach in Normandy on D-Day, as well as Douglas Newham, who survived 60 bombing raids as a Royal Air Force navigator, but was haunted by those who didn't return.

It was a time of shared sacrifice. Then-Princess Elizabeth, like many teenagers, had to persuade her father to let her join the army in 1945.

When Elizabeth turned 18, King George VI exempted her from mandatory military service because he said her training as the heir to the throne took precedence over the wartime need for manpower.

But the princess, who began her war work at 14 with a broadcast to displaced children and later tended a vegetable garden as part of the government's “Dig for Victory” program, got her way.

She enlisted in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in February 1945 and trained to become a military truck driver and mechanic. The ATS was the largest of the auxiliary services deploying women to non-combat rolls such as clerks, drivers and dispatch riders to free up men for front line duties.



Associated Press
Britain's Princess Elizabeth, a Junior Commander in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, receives a clock presented to her by her old associates at the camp where she received her early training, during a ceremony at the No. 1 M.T. Training Center, in Camberley, England, Aug. 3, 1945.



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Princess Elizabeth of England talks to Private Rupert John Worth during a visit to Bedford, England on Feb. 14, 1946.

Associated Press

The first female member of the royal family to serve in the armed forces, Elizabeth was promoted to honorary junior commander, the equivalent of an army captain, after completing five months of training. But the war ended before she could be assigned to active duty.

On May 8, 1945, Princess Elizabeth appeared in uniform on the balcony of Buckingham Palace as the royal family greeted the crowds celebrating Germany's surrender. That night, she and her sister, Princess Margaret, slipped out of the palace to take part in the festivities.

"We cheered the king and queen on the balcony and then walked miles through the streets," she later recalled. "I remember lines of unknown people linking arms and walking down Whitehall, all of us just swept along on a tide of happiness and relief."

Many of those who took part in that joy are now gone.

Among them is Frank Baugh, a Royal Marine who helped guide a landing craft to Sword Beach during the June 6, 1944, D-Day landings. He later campaigned for a memorial to be built to commemorate the 22,442 men and women who died under British command during the Battle of Normandy.

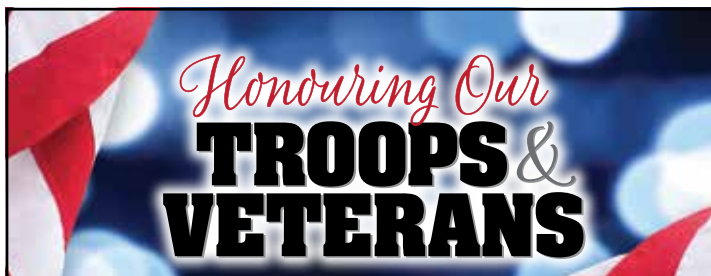
A few months before his death in June at 98, Baugh toured the British Normandy Memorial, which overlooks the beach where he fought.

"I would like to see children coming all of the time," he said. "Because they're the people we need to tell what's happened, and those lads that didn't get back - to remember them."

Veterans Day is a great time for anyone to learn more about the various branches of the U.S. military.



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