



The California Zephyr

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

It's been Fifty years since the last American troops left Vietnam, March 30th 1973. This was the end of Americas involvement in the Vietnam war. On a personal note, I left Vietnam fifty years ago on February 19th 1973. I was able to leave a month early due to the end of the war. The war would go on for two more years.

Between the time this message is written, and the time it is published Vietnam Veterans of America's 16th national convention would have come and gone. I have attended thirteen prior conventions. I had to cancel my plans for this convention due to health issues related to agent orange exposure. I like to reflect back on how the conventions have changed over the past years. Of course, we as Vietnam Veterans also changed. I remember sessions going late in the evening, at the Chicago convention in 1989 Jim Doyle running for region 9 director time slot at the candidate's forum was one in the morning. The politics was dirty in the early days. I remember one convention where a group of delegates wasn't to make the pow-Mia issue the main priory for VVA.

We had a state council meeting in San Diego 1990, were we had a guest, Tony Cordero who wanted to start an organization for the children of Vietnam soldiers killed in action. We gave Tony our blessings and support. Tony went on to form Sons and Daughters in Touch, SDIT.org. In the past thirty years this organization has brought together the children of our brother and sisters killed in Vietnam.

I have had the privilege of attending a couple Father's Day events at the wall with son's and daughters in touch. I also had the trip of a lifetime in being one of the veterans escorting the sons and daughters on a trip to Vietnam. There was about seventy of us on the trip, Fifty sons and daughters and 20 veterans and support people. At one point in the trip we separated into groups, and went to the spots where the fathers were killed. We held a ceremony at the spot. It was a wonderful and very healing trip.

I just finished ready a new book written by a daughter whose father was a medic. She writes about the love between her father and mother. She also researched and wrote about the battle where her father was killed tending to a wounded marine. The book is Kiss Lori for me, written by Lori Gross-Reaves. The book was so good that I read it in one sitting, something I never do.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE'S VVA-CSC

July 19, 2023

By Dana Nichol

Reeb Government Relations, LLC

2023 Legislative Year, key dates

The California State Legislature is nearing the end of the 2023 legislative year. When legislators return from the month-long legislative recess on August 14, they will work to process surviving legislation through the fiscal committees, then to the respective Floors of the Senate and Assembly before the adjournment of the 2023 legislative year on September 14. The legislators return home to their local districts until the Legislature reconvenes on January 3, 2024. Meanwhile, the Governor has until October 14 to sign or veto the bills sent to him by the legislature.

- June 15 – Legislature must pass budget bill
- July 14 to August 14 – Legislature's Summer Recess (a great time to meet with your legislators in the district)
- September 5 to 14 – Committees are done hearing bills and all bills that still survive will be heard on the Floors this week.
- September 14 – Last day for legislature to pass bills and send to the Governor.
- October 14 – Last day for Governor to sign or veto bills.
- January 3, 2024 – Legislature reconvenes for second year of the 2023-24 legislative session.

CalVet Secretary

Dr. Vito Imbasciani retired as CalVet Secretary earlier this year after the Governor named him to be the Board Chair of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Governor Newsom nominated Lindsey Sin to be the new CalVet Secretary. Secretary Sin has served in several roles at CalVet since 2011, including Deputy Secretary of Communications and Deputy Secretary of Women Veterans Affairs. She is a Navy veteran. Her nomination must still be confirmed by the State Senate. The VVA-CSC is supporting her confirmation.

California Vietnam Veterans Memorial repairs

Last year, Veterans Committee Chairs Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera) and Assemblyman James Ramos (D-San Bernardino) helped secure funding of \$110,000 for the repair of vandalism and basic upkeep of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park from the State Budget. In 2023 and 2024, we will be monitoring the progress of that work and working closely with VVA Chapter 500 and the legislature on this issue.

MEET THE NEWEST VETERAN ELECTED TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE: SENATOR CAROLINE MENJIVAR

Tom: Please insert pic of Senator Menjivar from this link:

https://sd20.senate.ca.gov/sites/sd20.senate.ca.gov/files/website/sd20_headshot.jpg

Senator Caroline Menjivar (D-Van Nuys)

Member, Senate Committee on Military and Veteran Affairs

U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

Senator Caroline Menjivar was elected in 2022 to represent the cities of Burbank and San Fernando and the communities of Arleta, Canoga Park, Lake Balboa, Lakeview Ter-

race, Mission Hills, North Hills, North Hollywood, Northridge, Pacoima, Panorama City, Reseda, Sun Valley, Sunland-Tujunga, Sylmar, Van Nuys, Winnetka.

During high school, she enrolled in the Police Academy Magnet and the LA Fire Department Cadet Program. After high school, she began pursuing a degree in Fire Technology and her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) license while working full-time. Due to a hiring freeze at the fire department, she searching for a new way to serve. She enlisted in the Marine Corps and served from 2009 – 2016.

After the Marine Corps, she returned to work as an EMT and attended school to study sociology, earning her Bachelor's degree, then she completed a Master's Degree at UCLA. She then served in the Los Angeles Mayor's office in various capacities.

Senator Menjivar is a member of the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs.

VVA-CSC Legislative Update (as of July 19, 2023)

To find bill text, status, committee analyses, votes and other legislative information on the bills listed below, go to: <https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

AB 46

(Ramos D) Personal income taxes: exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act.

Status: 7/13/2023-Measure version as amended on July 12 corrected.

Location: 7/11/2023-S. APPR.

Position

Support

AB 293

(Alanis R) Lifetime hunting and sport fishing licenses: Gold Star Family members.

Status: 5/19/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(5). (Last location was APPR. SUSPENSE FILE on 3/29/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)

Location: 5/19/2023-A. 2 YEAR

AB 298

(Mathis R) Honoring Our Blind Veterans Act.

Status: 6/27/2023-Read second time. Ordered to third reading.

Location: 6/27/2023-S. THIRD READING

AB 308

(Alanis R) State parks: free day use pass: Gold Star Family members.

Status: 5/19/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(5). (Last location was APPR. SUSPENSE FILE on 4/19/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)

AB 322

(Mathis R) Veteran and California National Guard Supplemental Orientation Act of 2023.

Status: 7/11/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 5. Noes 0.) (July 10). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

AB 531

(Irwin D) The Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2023.

Status: 7/13/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 6. Noes 2.) (July 12). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

Location: 7/13/2023-S. APPR.

AB 569

(Garcia D) California State University: Cybersecurity Regional Alliances and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships Pilot Program.

Status: 7/13/2023-Read third time. Passed. Ordered to the Assembly. (Ayes 37. Noes 0.). In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Location: 7/13/2023-A. ENROLLMENT

AB 684

(Ta R) County veterans service officers: additional resources.

Status: 5/19/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(5). (Last location was APPR. SUSPENSE FILE on 5/3/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)

AB 718

(Ta R) Veterans: mental health.

Status: 7/11/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR with recommendation: To Consent Calendar. (Ayes 4. Noes 0.) (July 10). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

AB 883

(Mathis R) Business licenses: United States Department of Defense SkillBridge program.

AB 988

(Mathis R) Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act: veteran and military data reporting.

Status: 7/3/2023-In Senate. Held at Desk.

Location: 6/29/2023-S. DESK

AB 1328

(Gipson D) Cosmetology Licensure Compact.

Status: 7/14/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(10). (Last location was B., P. & E. D. on 5/31/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)

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Location: 7/14/2023-S. 2 YEAR
AB 1350
(Soria D) Veterans: memorials.
AB 1361
(Hoover R) Property taxation: veteran’s exemption: preliminary application.
Status: 7/12/2023-Read second time. Ordered to Consent Calendar.
Location: 7/11/2023-S. CONSENT CALENDAR
AB 1386
(Gabriel D) Veterans housing: tenant referrals.
No Position
AB 1452
(Mathis R) State Capitol: Iraq Afghanistan Kuwait Veterans Memorial monument.
AB 1462
(Patterson, Jim R) Veteran overdose deaths.
AB 1474
(Reyes D) California Statewide Housing Plan.
Status: 6/29/2023-From Consent Calendar. Ordered to third reading.

Location: 6/29/2023-S. THIRD READING
AB 1605
(Gallagher R) High schools: military services: United States Space Force.
AB 1745
(Soria D) Public postsecondary education: veterans: waiver of mandatory system wide tuition and fees.
Status: 7/11/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 4. Noes 0.) (July 10). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
SB 73
(Seyarto R) Employment policy: voluntary veterans’ preference.
Status: 7/14/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(10). (Last location was JUD. on 6/21/2023) (May be acted upon Jan 2024)
Location: 7/14/2023-A. 2 YEAR

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of VVA, the State Council or its members.

Who Are The Vietnam Veterans Of America?
Founded in 1978, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA is organized as a not-for-profit corporation and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

VVA’S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE
“Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another.”

PURPOSE
The purpose of Vietnam Veterans of America’s national organization, the state councils, and chapters is:

To help foster, encourage, and promote the improvement of the condition of the Vietnam veteran.

To promote physical and cultural improvement, growth and development, self-respect, self-confidence, and usefulness of Vietnam-era veterans and others.

To eliminate discrimination suffered by Vietnam veterans and to develop channels of communications which will assist Vietnam veterans to maximize self-realization and enrichment of their lives and enhance life-fulfillment.

To study, on a non-partisan basis, proposed legislation, rules, or regulations introduced in any federal, state, or local legislative or administrative body which may affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others; and to develop public-policy proposals designed to improve the quality of life of the Vietnam-era veteran and others especially in the areas of employment, education, training, and health.

To conduct and publish research, on a non-partisan basis, pertaining to the relationship between Vietnam-era veterans and the American society, the Vietnam War experience, the role of the United States in securing peaceful co-existence for the world community, and other matters which affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others.

To assist disabled and needy war veterans including, but not limited to, Vietnam veterans and their dependents, and the widows and orphans of deceased veterans.

FUNDING
Vietnam Veterans of America relies totally on private contributions for its revenue. VVA does not receive any funding from federal, state, or local governments.



SB 82
(Seyarto R) Property taxation: disabled veterans’ exemption: eligibility letters.
Status: 7/11/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR.
(Ayes 10. Noes 0.) (July 10). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
Location: 7/11/2023-A. APPR.
SB 228
(Roth D) Civilian youth opportunities program.
Status: 6/21/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR.
with recommendation: To consent calendar. (Ayes 9. Noes 0.) (June 20). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
Location: 6/21/2023-A. APPR.
SB 289
(Menjivar D) Identification cards.
Status: 4/28/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(2). (Last location was TRANS. on 3/22/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)
Location: 4/28/2023-S. 2 YEAR
SB 492
(Eggman D) Pretrial diversion for veterans.
Status: 5/19/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(5). (Last location was APPR. SUSPENSE FILE on 4/10/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)
Location: 5/19/2023-S. 2 YEAR
SB 726
(Archuleta D) Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners.
Status: 7/10/2023-July 10 set for first hearing canceled at the request of author.
Location: 6/21/2023-A. REV. & TAX
SB 811
(Jones R) Teacher credentialing: Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact.
Status: 7/14/2023-Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(a)(10). (Last location was ED. on 6/15/2023)(May be acted upon Jan 2024)
SB 871
(Archuleta D) Property taxation: homeowners’, veterans’, and disabled veterans’ exemptions.
Status: 5/8/2023-May 15 hearing postponed by committee.
Location: 5/3/2023-S. APPR.
SB 873
(Bradford D) Prescription drugs: cost sharing.
Status: 7/12/2023-From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR.
(Ayes 13. Noes 1.) (July 11). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
SCA 6
(Archuleta D) Property taxation: veterans’ exemption.
Status: 5/9/2023-From committee: Be adopted and re-refer to Com. on APPR
with recommendation: To consent calendar. (Ayes 7. Noes 0.) (May 8). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
Location: 5/8/2023-S. APPR.
Support

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Joseph Montoya
23 June 2023
THE VIETNAM WAR

AND
THE FLYING TIGERS OF WORLD WAR II

It has been reported most American adults 49 years or younger have a limited knowledge of World War II when compared to adults 50 years and older. Some of these younger Americans only know World War II began with the 7 December 1941 Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and ended 4-years later with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on 6 and 9 August 1945, respectively – if at that! They have little – if any – knowledge regarding the “... who, what, when, where and why ...” of World War II. Hence, in all probability, they also know little – if anything at all – of The Flying Tigers!

My first knowledge of the men – and women – associated with The American Volunteer Group [AVG] occurred in the mid – 1960’s while watching the 1942 black and white movie titled “The Flying Tigers” starring John Wayne, Anna Lee and John Carroll on the Los Angeles television Channel 9 “Movie Of The Week” when the television station showed the same movie every weekday evening – and then twice on the weekend!



1942

I can still to this day recall a few scenes which made an impression on my then young soul:

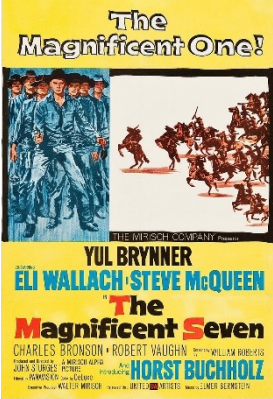
1. When the burning transport airplane lands, the pilot explains he maneuvered the airplane to come to a stop so that the emergency exit faced the prevailing wind, thereby blowing the flames away from the exiting passengers and crew;
2. When I saw for the first time the menacing teeth of a tiger painted on the nose of the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighter airplane;
3. When one of the pilots takes a test to check his nighttime depth perception by bending up-side-down and then using strings to align two parallel sticks painted white in a black painted box – which he fails; and

4. When the same pilot sets aside his visual limitations and joins an aerial attack mission against the Japanese – only to die when his limited vision causes him to be shot down.

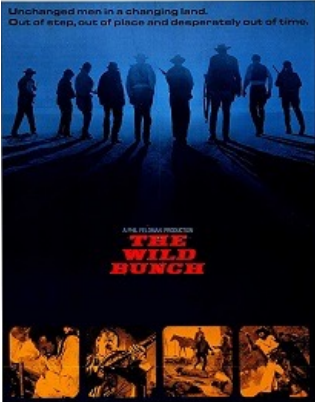
Since the beginning of time, most if not all clans, groups or countries have made use of hired guns at some point in their history. Examples can be found in the sacrificial battlefields of the Mayan world [when tribes would hire neighboring tribes to fight a select enemy]; past the grass fields of medieval Europe strewn with suits of armor and human remains [from one King’s army hired out to fight for another King]; to the German "Hessians" hired by the British to fight American troops during the Revolutionary War [which resulted in Hessians deserting into the plentiful countryside of the newly established United States]. The exploits of the 19th and early 20th century mercenary soldier have been portrayed in celluloid masterpieces such as director Akira Kurosawa’s [23 March 1910 – 6 September 1998] 1954 black and white movie “The Seven Samurai” starring Takashi Shimura and Toshiro Mifune; director John Sturges [3 January 1910 – 18 August 1992] 1960 color movie “The Magnificent Seven” starring Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen; and director Sam Peckinpah’s [21 February 1925 – 28 December 1984] 1969 color movie “The Wild Bunch” starring William Holden and Ernest Borgnine.



1954



1960



1969

Years later, new generations of hired guns helped governments maintain control of their territories and to expand and conquer new lands. From the Indian scouts of the U.S. Army’s Indian Wars; or the escapades of The French Foreign Legion and The Spanish Foreign Legion in Indochina and Africa respectively; and the experiences of the pro-communist Abraham Lincoln Battalion during the Spanish Civil War [17 July 1936 – 1 April 1939] aligned with Republicans loyal to the Spanish Republic fighting Nationalists rebels led by General Francisco Franco [4 December 1892 – 20 November 1975].

With such facts, it can be said the world would not be what it is today without the use of mercenaries. It wasn’t until the late 1970’s [when I began my specific readings on military history] when I learned more about this group of mercenaries which America – and now the world – holds in such high esteem. Today’s world governments have evolved to such a point where there are laws which govern warfare [an oxymoron if there ever was one], articles of The Geneva Convention which outline how belligerents may and may not fight one another and mandates from the United Nations and individual countries which prohibit the use of employing mercenary soldiers.

However, no matter how entertaining and action-packed movie mercenaries may be, nothing compares to the exploits of real life mercenaries such as **The Flying Tigers**.

Before the United States entered World War II, the world was already burning with German forces invading neighboring countries in Europe and Japanese forces invading neighboring countries in the Far East. Specifically, with Japan having invaded Indochina and parts of China, the Chinese government of Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek [31 October 1887 – 5 April 1975] hired Claire Lee "Old Leather-face" Chennault [6 September 1893 – 27 July 1958] – a retired U.S. Army Air Corps officer who had served as a military aviation advisor to the Chinese government since August 1937 during the Sino-Japanese War – to obtain American combat aircraft and pilots to help the free Chinese engage and defeat invading Japanese forces within the China mainland and to protect the Burma Road leading into China from Japanese aerial bombardment.

At the time, although President Franklin Delano Roosevelt [6 September 1893 – 12 April 1945] desired for the United States to not enter the war in Europe and the Far East, he knowingly did not interfere with Chennault purchasing for the Chinese government over 100 Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighter airplanes and to hire 100 military pilots and 180 command, ground and administrative personnel away from their military and civilian jobs so as to form the basis for what would become known as the 1st American Volunteer Group [AVG], mercenary pilots and ground / support staff hired by the government of China to assist in their fight against the invading Japanese Imperial Army forces. These volunteers traveled to China under disguise as employees of the Central Aircraft

Manufacturing Company (CAMCO). Active between 1 April 1941 and 4 July 1942, this primarily American mercenary force – made up of 280 souls [278 men and 2 women] – became known as “The Flying Tigers” because of the tiger mouth with glaring teeth painted on the front end of their airplanes.



American Flying Tiger P-40 Warhawks guarded by Chinese nationalist

In order to make full use of the aviation skills of the American pilots against the more combat experienced Japanese pilots, Chennault organized the Flying Tigers into three (s) separate flight squadrons as follows:



1st Squadron: “The Adams and Eves”



2nd Squadron: “The Panda Bears”



3rd Squadron: “Hell’s Angels”

Thereafter, on 20 December 1941 – 12 days after the 7 December 1941 Japanese Imperial Navy surprise attack on the American naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – the Flying Tigers flew their first combat mission against Japanese forces near Kunming, China. They drew blood in that first fight, and they continued to do so while flying under the flag of Nationalist China and wearing the "Flying Tiger" insignia created by The Walt Disney Company.



The Flying Tiger logo designed by The Walt Disney Company

For over eight (8) months, the Flying Tigers took the fight to the Japanese and greatly contributed to the defense of China, as well as to the failure of the Japanese to overtake China, its peoples and natural resources. Thereafter, as the United States officially entered World War II, the U.S. military decided to terminate the use of this American mercenary force. Effective 4 July 1942, the Flying Tigers ceased to exist and their associated

pilots, command staff and support crews, airplanes and logistical stock were merged into the U.S. Army Air Force. While their exploits have been left to the ages, the fate of the Flying Tigers during – and for some – after their contracted service period included the following notations:



THE FLYING TIGERS – WORLD WAR II

Pilots Killed in Combat	17	[6.4%]		
Pilots Killed in Non-Combat	22	[7.5%]		
Sub-Total Pilots Killed	39	[13.9%]		
Sub-Total Pilots Survived	72	[25.7%]		
Total Pilots	111	[39.6%]	111	[39.6%]
and				
Commander Survived	1	[.1%]		
Command / Support Staff Survived	167	[60.2%]		
Command / Support Staff Killed	1	[.1%]		
Total Command and Support Staff	169	[60.4%]	+169	[60.4%]
Total	---	---	280	[100.0%]

The pilots of the Flying Tigers wore the above famous “blood chits” on the back of their flying jackets which reads:



“...This foreign person has come to China to help in the war effort. Soldiers and civilians, one and all, should rescue and protect him! ...”.

The detailed stories of these men and women are worth studying by others on another day. However, some facts deserve being noted here, especially the connection between the Flying Tiger pilots of 1941 – 1942 and the history of the Vietnam War twenty years later between 1965 – 1975. Accordingly, the following is a summary of some of these pilots and their exploits in Southeast Asia before, during and after the Vietnam War:

A. While Serving With the Flying Tigers:

1. Albert “Ajax” Baumler was initially refused a passport by the US. Customs Department to travel to China and join the Flying Tigers because he had earlier flown as a mercenary pilot in the Spanish Civil War [17 July 1936 – 1 April 1939] but later cleared customs and joined the group. Baumler served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII.



Baumler

2. On 8 September 1941, John Dean “Armie” Armstrong, was on a practice dog-fight when he collided in mid-air with John Gilpin “Gil” Bright and was accidentally killed, thereby becoming the first Flying Tiger fatality. Armstrong is buried in the Airmen’s Cemetery of St. Luke’s Anglican Church in Toungoo, Burma, in Grave #2 next to Maax C. Hammer, Jr., who was accidentally killed two weeks later on 22 September 1941. [Photo Not Available].

3. On 22 September 1941, Maax C. Hammer, Jr. was airborne on a training flight in a Curtiss-Wright P-40B Tomahawk in a heavy rainstorm when the airplane entered an inverted spin and then crashed and died in the jungle several miles from Kyedaw Airfield. Hammer was buried in the Airmen’s Cemetery of St. Luke’s Anglican Church in Toungoo, Burma [now Myanmar], in Grave #2 next to John Dean “Armie” Armstrong, the 1st Flying Tiger accidentally killed two weeks earlier.



Hammer

4. On 23 December 1941, **Henry G. Gilbert, Jr.** – the youngest Flying Tiger at the age of 22 – was one of 12 Flying Tigers attacking Japanese bombers on a nighttime raid on Rangoon. After shooting down two bombers, Gilbert's airplane was hit by Japanese cannon fire and crashed into the jungle below. Gilbert is also listed as the first Flying Tiger to be killed in combat.



Gilbert

5. On 8 January 1942, **Charles D. "Charlie" Mott**, while leading an attack on the Japanese airfield at Mesoht, Thailand, was shot down by enemy ground fire. Seriously wounded, Mott was then taken prisoner by the Japanese, becoming the first allied pilot to be captured by the Japanese in Southeast Asia. After recuperating from his wounds, in July 1942 Mott was made part of the slave laborer unit along with British troops captured during the 15 February 1942 fall of Singapore and other allied prisoners who were forced to construct the Thailand-Burma Railroad [also named the "Death Railway" because of the over 10,000 allied prisoners who died during its construction], a 250-mile long railway from Thailand to Burma [now Myanmar]. The bridge was portrayed in the 1957 movie "The Bridge On The River Kwai". After three years as a POW, World War II ended and Mott was repatriated. Mott was one of 4 Flying Tiger pilots who were shot down and became prisoners of war. Mott died on 29 July 2004 of a stroke at his home in Vienna, Virginia, at the age of 89.



Mott

6. On 24 March 1942, **William D. "Black Mac" McGarry** was piloting his airplane when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed in Thailand. McGarry was then captured by the Japanese. Three years later, in 1945, he escaped from a POW camp. Upon his return to American control, McGarry transferred to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII and died circa 1994 at the age of 74.



McGarry

7. On 24 March 1942, **John Van Kuren "Scarsdale Jack" Newkirk** was strafing a target on the ground over Thailand when he accidentally collided with a tree and was killed.



Newkirk

8. On 12 May 1942, **John Tyler Donovan, Jr.**, along with 5 other Flying Tigers, were on a strafing raid of the Japanese held Gia Lam Airfield in Hanoi, French Indochina, when he was shot down and killed. Initially, Donovan was buried next to the edge of the runway. In 1949, Donovan's remains were recovered and returned to the United States for burial in his hometown of Montgomery, Alabama.



Donovan

9. On 17 May 1942, Lewis Sherman "Lew" "Bing" Bishop, as Vice Squadron Leader during a bombing run over Lao Kai, French Indochina, had one of his mounted bombs prematurely explode, disabling his airplane and forcing him to bail out. Upon landing, Bishop was captured by Vichy French government soldiers who turned him over to the Japanese. On 10 May 1945, while on a POW train with being transferred north to Manchuria, Bishop – along with 4 U.S. Marines POW's – escaped from the train. Over the next 40 days – and with the assistance of Chinese civilians – the group of American POW's made their way over 2,000 miles arriving on 30 June 1945 at an Office Of Strategic Services [OSS] airfield located behind enemy lines in Kunming, China. Bishop later returned and completed his tour with the Flying Tigers. Bishop then transferred to the Army Air Corps and survived WWII.



Bishop

B. DURING WORLD WAR II:

10. **Gregory "Pappy" Boyington** completed a partial tour with the Flying Tigers and later transferred to the Marine Corps Air Wing. On 3 January 1944, Boyington was shot down and became a prisoner of war of the Japanese. He was later released and survived WWII. On 5 October 1945, Boyington was awarded the Medal of Honor at the White House by President Harry S. Truman.



Boyington

11. **James "Jim" H. Howard** Howard served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. For his service in the European Theater, Howard was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Howard

C. POST-WORLD WAR II:

12. On 19 December 1944, **William "Bill" Norman Reed**, 27, having served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, had returned to China to fly with the Chinese-American Composite Wing and the 3rd Fighter Group. On the subject day, Reed was returning from a combat mission when he was forced to bail out of his Curtiss P-40N airplane. As he ejected, Reed struck his head on the rear of his airplane and his parachute failed to open. Reed was accidentally killed. Years later, a street at Kadena Royal Thai Air Base in Kadena, Thailand, was renamed "Reed Street" in honor of Reed.



Reed

13. **Carl Kice Brown** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Brown is listed as the last surviving pilot of the Flying Tigers – dying on 8 September 2017. [Photo Not Available].

14. **Robert "Bob" William Prescott** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Prescott then flew for Trans World Airlines [TWA] and China National Aviation Corporation. In 1945, Prescott –

desiring to open his own cargo airline – raised \$80,000 from his following Flying Tigers veterans:

1. William “Bill” Bartling;
2. Clifford “Cliff” G. Groh;
3. Thomas “Tommy” C. Haywood, Jr.;
4. Robert P. “Duke” Hedman;
5. Chauncey C. H. “Link” Laughlin;
6. Ernest William “Bus” “Buster” “Buzz” Loane;
7. Robert James “Catfish” Raine;
8. Camile Joseph “Joe” Rosbert; and
9. John Richard “Dick” Rossi.

With another \$80,000 raised from private investors, Prescott purchased 14 Budd Conestoga cargo airplanes for \$140,000. After selling 6 of the Conestoga airplanes at a profit, Prescott began flying cargo nationally and internationally with the remaining 8 cargo airplanes as National Freight Service and National Skyways Freight Corporation at Bendix Airport in Teterboro, New Jersey. In 1947, Prescott renamed his cargo airline “Flying Tiger Line”, thus became the first officially recognized scheduled cargo airline company in the United States and later in the world.



Prescott



Logo

The airline flew for 44 years until 7 August 1989 when it was merged into Federal Express, founded by Frederick “Fred” Wallace Smith, a Marine Corps Captain serving as a Vietnam War forward air controller (FAC) in a OV-10 Bronco observation airplane during two tours of duty in South Vietnam.



Smith – South Vietnam



Merger Poster



Smith – FedEx Chairman

15. **Camile Joseph “Joe” Rosbert** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Rosbert then flew for China National Aviation Corporation, Civil Air Transport and Flying Tiger Line in Asia.



Rosbert

16. **Eriksen Erik Shilling** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Shilling flew for China National Aviation Corporation and Civil Air Transport during the Chinese Civil War, Korean War and the French War in Indochina. During the Vietnam War, Shilling flew unarmed bush airplanes for Air America in Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam.



Shilling

17. **Robert Tharp “Bob” “R.T.” “Tadpole” Smith** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. During the late 1960’s, Smith joined the Flying Tiger Line and flew in Southeast Asia.



Smith

18. **Rolland L. “Rich” Richardson** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Richardson later transferred to the Air Force and flew the Air Force Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport airplane on missions world-wide – including Okinawa and South Vietnam – until he retired as a Colonel in September 1971. It is reported Richardson was the last Flying Tiger to retire from active military service.



Richardson

19. **Francis R. Doran** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. After completing Officer Candidate School, Doran transferred to the Air Force. During the Korean War, Doran flew aerial refueling aircraft and then served at the Pentagon. During the Vietnam War, Doran served as the Executive Officer to the Base Commander at Don Muong Royal Thai Air Force Base, Bangkok, Thailand. Doran retired from the Air Force in September 1968, at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and later died on 12 July 2003. [Photo Not Available].

20. **John Richard “Dick” Rossi** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Rossi then became co-founder and pilot for Flying Tiger Line. In 1962, Rossi became part-owner and opened a chain of 41 sea-food theme restaurants in Southern California named “The Hungry Tiger” which were known to display Flying Tiger memorabilia. The anchor restaurant was located on Ventura Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles neighborhood of Sherman Oaks.



Rossi



Menu

D. DURING THE VIETNAM WAR:

21. **Charles “Charlie” R. Bond, Jr.** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers, transferred to the Army Air Corps and survived WWII. He is credited with being the first Flying Tiger to paint a shark's mouth on the nose of his airplane. Bond later transferred to the Air Force and was assigned to the School of Applied Tactics to train new fighter pilots. Bond later became the Chief of the Air Division, U.S. Mission to the USSR and served as an aide to Ambassador William Averill Harriman [15 November 1891 – 26 July 1986]. Bond later served on the Air Staff in the Pentagon; in the Headquarters of Continental Air Command; as Deputy Commander of the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force; and as Vice-Commander of the 9th Air Force. During the Vietnam War, Bond served as Deputy Commander of the 7th and 13th Air Forces. Bond was later promoted to Major General and retired on 31 July 1968 as Commander of the 12th Air Force.



Bond

22. **Thomas “Tommy” C. Haywood, Jr.** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Haywood later went to fly for Flying Tiger Line. [Photo Not Available].

23. **Chauncey C. H. “Link” Laughlin** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Laughlin later went to fly for Flying Tiger Line. [Photo Not Available].

24. **Ernest William “Bus” “Buster” “Buzz” Loane** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Loane later became a pilot for Civil Air Transport and continued flying in China until the communist takeover. After returning to the States, Loane was hired by Flying Tiger Line.



Loane

25. **Robert H. Power** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Laughlin later went to fly for Flying Tiger Line. [Photo Not Available].

E. POST-VIETNAM WAR:

26. **Charles “Chuck” H. Older** served a full tour with the Flying Tigers and, after transferring to the Army Air Corps, survived WWII. Older later flew in the Korean War. Thereafter, Older became an attorney and was later appointed a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge. Older presided over a multitude of civil and criminal cases including serving as the presiding judge of the Charles Manson murder trial.



Older

The exploits of the Flying Tigers and of their commander Claire Lee Chennault were deemed by the United States Postal Service to be of such historical value to American society that a 40 cent postage stamp [Scott Stamp No. 2187] was issued in their honor on 6 September 1990 in a first day issue ceremony in Monroe, Louisiana [Chennault’s home town] as part of the Great Americans stamp series.



United States Postal Service Stamp – 1990

Prior to their 50th reunion in 1992, all of the American Volunteer Group members were retroactively recognized by the Department of Defense as having been members of the U.S. military services for the seven month period the group was in combat against the Japanese. The members – alive and dead – were then retroactively awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for "... professionalism, dedication to duty, and extraordinary heroism ...". Four years later, in 1996, the U.S. Air Force proceeded to retroactively awarded all of the pilots the Distinguished Flying Cross and all of the ground crew members the Bronze Star Medal.



Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon



Distinguished Flying Cross Medal



Bronze Star Medal

The now famous nose art – unique to the original Flying Tigers P-40’s – has been carried forward through the years on American aircraft in the skies during the Vietnam War and later in the Persian Gulf War, Desert Storm, the Iraq War and the War in Afghanistan.



Curtiss P-40 Warhawk Fighter Airplanes – 1941



Bell UH-1M Huey Gunship – 1966



Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II – 2023

Some 50 years after the end of World War II, museums in tribute to the Flying Tigers have opened throughout China. One museum was established in 1991 in the former World War II residence of U.S. General Joseph Warren Stilwell [19 March 1883 – 12 October 1946] in Chongqing, which was remodeled into a Flying Tigers Museum. Another, more comprehensive, tribute is part of the Flying Tiger Heritage Park Museum in Guilin, which opened to the public in 2010.



Chongqing Museum



Guilin Museum

The use of mercenary forces was also seen during the Vietnam War as CIA and U.S. Army Special Forces hired and trained native tribesmen from throughout Southeast Asia [i.e., South Vietnam, China, Laos and Cambodia] to fight against communist forces.

An example of this was the CIA-sponsored private Hmong army [based in the Plain of Jars in central Laos] and led by General Vang Pao [8 December 1929 – 6 January 2011] who fought a secret war against the communist Pathet Lao, Viet Minh and the North Vietnamese Army along with their Russian advisors and Chinese supplies.

After the 30 April 1975 fall of Saigon, the world continued to see mercenaries on the battlefields of Africa and South America. Today – in 2023 – private soldiers from The Wagner Group are employed by the Russian government, bringing further death and destruction to civilians as Russia pursues an illegal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine.

Notwithstanding the role of mercenary forces in world history, the success and personal profiles of The Flying Tigers in China prior to the start of World War II – and their continued service during the Vietnam War era and afterwards – still to this day [some 80 plus years after they first took to the skies with their snarling teeth] continues to inspire American aviators and the public alike, and it is anticipated they shall continue to do so in the future. And so, to the memory of The Flying Tigers, I extend a most grateful and appreciative:

“... Thank You! ...”.

Associate Member Liaison 1990 – 2024

Vietnam Veterans Of America / Chapter 526 – West Los Angeles

The original version of this article first appeared in the VVA Chapter 526 meeting agenda of 4 May 2023.

CHAPTER 933

Chapter 933 Member Paul Kaser at a Fresno State basketball game (Bulldogs versus Air Force Academy Falcons) honoring local veterans. He is greeted by an unnamed Stormtrooper and veteran Marine/Student President of the CSUF Veterans Education Program, one of several veterans educational programs supported by the Chapter. (By the way, Falcons won.)



Summer 2023



Chapter 933 President Alex Fabros demonstrates game strategy for Paul Kaser in his entry in the 2nd annual Central Valley Veterans Gamefest at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District venue. The event, attended by gamers from around California, raises money for Chapter 933's veterans education programs.

CHAPTER 355

VVA355 “The Lost Patrol” was featured in the Santa Clarita 4th of July Parade and won TWO Trophies: The Sweepstakes Trophy, the highest awarded, and 2nd Place in “Club or Fraternal Float”.



Trophy photo: Santa Clarita Councilwoman Laurene Weste, VVA355 1st. Vice President RJ Kelly, and Secretary Jerry Rhodes.

CHAPTER 775



Josh Allen is a freshman at Esperanza High School, and is currently enrolled in the United States Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program. His aerospace science class is at zero period, and each morning he used his bicycle to get to school. Unfortunately, Josh's bike was stolen last week, which left him no choice but to walk the three-miles to school each day in order to arrive by 6:50 a.m.

A call was made to Greg Young and Jim Van Ry. Both are long-time Yorba Linda residents, and members of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 785. They got the word

out on the Yorba Linda Buzz Facebook group, and Todd Johnson, another Yorba Linda resident, quickly stepped up with the donation of a new mountain bike. After getting a quick tune-up at a local bike shop and adding a lock, Greg and Jim came to Esperanza on Tuesday morning to present the bike to a very appreciative Josh Allen.

Our community is healthy and strong, and a great place to raise a family. Likewise, our schools deliver excellence every day. It's the generous support of people like Todd Johnson, Greg Young and Jim Van Ry that make this possible!

Pictured (L-R): Greg Young, Josh Allen and Jim Van Ry

CHAPTER 582

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 582 (Chico) gave a \$500 Scholarship to Ryan Olenyn for his Video about Suicide Prevention. Ryan just graduated from Pleasant Valley High School and starts at San Diego State University next month. Check was presented on July 12, 2023.

Left to right VVA Chapter 582 Treasurer Dennis Fetter, Secretary Butch Frederickson, student Ryan Olenyn, mom Kelli Saam, Chapter President Warren Roll & Chapter member Benny Gutierrez



CHAPTER 47

Some photos from VVA Chapter 47's 4th of July parade in Ontario, CA. What a crowd, so much applause. Chapter 47 was joined by Chapter 1024 and their Huey, which was a big hit with the crowd.



A HOLIDAY PRESENT FOR ALL OF US... NO MORE CONFEDERATE NAMES OF MILITARY BASES

MILITARY LAW

THE COMMISSION VOTED UNANIMOUSLY ON EACH OF THE NAMES IT RECOMMENDED FOR RENAMING.

Eileen C. Moore, Member Chapter 785, Associate Justice, California Courts of Appeal

In a former life, Justice Eileen Moore served as a combat nurse in Vietnam in the Army Nurse Corps. She was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Cross of Gallantry with Palm. She is a member of Vietnam Veterans of America. Since 2008, she has chaired the Judicial Council' Veterans and Military Families Subcommittee. She is a member of the Council on Criminal Justice,the Veterans Justice Commission, an advisor to the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Armed Forces Law, an advisor to the California Lawyers Association's Military and Veterans Committee and the Orange County Veterans & Military Committee as well as a founding member of US Vets' Women's Advisory Committee. She is the author of two award-winning books, Race Results and Gender Results.

On Oct. 7, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin ordered implementation of the findings of the Naming Commission, established by Congress last year. Austin's order will be held up by a 90-day waiting period,and the renaming process should be in place by 2024 at the latest.

The Commission took inventory of all the military's contemporary references to the Confederacy. It found nine Army bases and several buildings commemorating rebel officers, in addition to a monument honoringConfederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

Using the word "haphazard," the Commission reported that the naming of these Department of Defenseassets had to do with faulty memories about the Civil War in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,rather than with any historical acts actually committed by their namesakes. The report says that White Southerners advocated for names they had been raised to revere, such as Benning, Bragg, Gordon, Hill,Hood, Lee, Pickett, Polk and Rucker. According to its findings, in preparing for World War I and World War II,while hastily naming bases, the Army often deferred to local sensitivities and regional connections of a namesake.

In the case of the nine bases, the Commission voted unanimously on each of the names it recommended for renaming.

FORT BENNING WILL BE RENAMED FORT MOORE

Fort Benning is named after Henry Lewis Benning, a former Confederate General. Prior to his military service, he served as a justice on the Georgia Supreme Court, where he authored

Padelford v. Savannah (1854) 14 Ga. 438. In that opinion, he stated: "The Supreme Court of Georgia is co-equal and co-ordinate with the Supreme Court of the U.S. and therefore the latter cannot give the former an order, or make for it a precedent." In 1860, Benning led a walkout of the Georgia delegation to the Democratic National Convention when the national party refused to put a plank supporting slavery into its platform.

If you watched the film We Were Soldiers Once. . .And Young, based on a book by Hal Moore and war correspondent Joe Galloway, you already know why Fort Benning, in Georgia, will be renamed Fort Moore. Moore's troops, who were sent to Vietnam from Fort Benning, greatly respected him. He was like a father to them.

Lieutenant General Hal Moore commanded the forces in the first major battle in Vietnam, the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, that took place in November 1965. An American battalion was ambushed and was in such close quarters with the enemy that the U.S. was unable to use air and artillery support. The Americans suffered an over-50 percent casualty rate. Galloway would later write it was the battle that convinced Ho Chi Minh he could win.

The renaming includes not only General Moore, but his wife Julia Moore. At the time of the

Ia Drang Campaign, the Army had not yet set up an adequate system of notifying the next of kin of battle field fatalities. Telegrams were given to taxicab drivers for delivery. Julia Moore took it upon herself to accompany the cab drivers who delivered the telegrams and assisted in the death notifications, grieving with the widows and families of men killed in battle. She attended the funerals of those who fell under her husband's command. She was instrumental in prompting the Army to immediately set up notification teams consisting of a uniformed officer and a chaplain.

Fort A.P. Hill will be renamed Fort Walker

Fort A.P. Hill is named after Ambrose Powell Hill, who served as a Confederate general during the Civil War. His father and uncle were slave owners.

Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia will be renamed Fort Walker after Dr. Mary Edwards Walker. Dr. Walker received the Medal of Honor in 1865, during the Civil War for her efforts in treating the wounded in battle and across enemy lines.

She attempted to join the Union Army at the outbreak of the war but was denied admission. Later, she was hired as the first female surgeon in the U.S. Army. Walker worked on the battlefield in tent hospitals in Virginia and Tennessee. She was captured by Confederate forces as a spy when she crossed the enemy line to treat wounded civilians, just after assisting a Confederate doctor perform a surgery. Walker was held in Castle Thunder Prison in Richmond, Virginia.

During and after the war, Walker was criticized for refusing to wear clothes more becoming of her sex. She is said to have tartly explained: "I have the right to dress as I please in free America on whose tented fields I have served for four years in the cause of human freedom."

Walker is the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor. Of course, they later rescinded the award after Congress tweaked the criteria in 1916 to include only those who had actual combat with the enemy. But she defiantly wore the Medal every day until her death in 1919. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter restored Walker's award posthumously.

FORT HOOD WILL BE RENAMED FORT CAVAZOS

Fort Hood is named after Confederate General John Bell Hood. In a letter Hood wrote to General Sherman on Sept. 12, 1864, Hood described his conviction that Negroes were an inferior race. In that same letter,Hood wrote: "I believe, for all the true men, aye, and women and children, in my country, we will fight you to the death. Better die a thousand deaths than submit to live under you or your Government and your Negro allies." Within a year, Hood surrendered.

Fort Hood is in Texas, where General Richard E. Cavazos was born. It will be renamed Fort Cavazos after General Cavazos, the Army's first Hispanic four-star general.

For his service in Korea, Cavazos was presented with the Distinguished Service

Cross by President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1953, Cavazos led his men in a raid on the entrenched enemy upon whom heavy casualties were inflicted. When a crippling barrage was laid on the position by the enemy, then-Lieutenant Cavazos regrouped his men. Three times he led his company through the heavy assaults onto the enemy position,each time destroying vital enemy equipment and personnel. When ordered to withdraw, Lieutenant Cavazos remained alone to search the area for missing men. He located five men who were wounded in action and evacuated them, one at a time. Not until all his men were off the hill did Lieutenant Cavazos allow treatment of his own wounds.

For his service in Vietnam, then-Lieutenant Colonel Cavazos received a second Distinguished Service Cross for his heroic leadership in a 1967 battle. When the fighting reached such close quarters that supporting fire could no longer be used, Cavazos completely disregarded his own safety and personally led a determined assault on the enemy positions. The assault was carried out with such force and aggressiveness that the Viet Cong were overrun and fled their trenches. His brilliant leadership in the face of grave danger resulted in maximum enemy casualties and the capture of many hostile weapons.

FORT POLK WILL BE RENAMED FORT JOHNSON

Fort Polk is named after Leonidas Polk, a prominent Episcopal bishop who was a corps commander in the Confederate Army. Polk was the founder of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, which separated from the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. He was a slave holding planter in Maury County, Tennessee before moving to Louisiana.

Fort Polk in Louisiana will be renamed Fort Johnson after Sergeant William Henry Johnson. Sergeant Johnson was in the first African American unit of the United States Army to engage in combat in World War I. On watch in the Argonne Forest on May 14, 1918, he fought off a German raid in hand-to-hand combat,killing multiple German soldiers and rescuing a fellow soldier from being taken prisoner while experiencing 21 wounds himself.

On June 2, 2015, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama in a posthumous ceremony at the White House. Additionally, Johnson was one of the first Americans to be awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme, France's highest award of valor.

Fort Gordon will be renamed Fort Eisenhower

Fort Gordon is named after Confederate General John Brown Gordon. His father owned slaves and Gordon owned one slave, a 14-year-old girl. Gordon was a lawyer.

Fort Gordon in Georgia will be renamed Fort Eisenhower after General of the Army and 34th President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

During World War II, Eisenhower served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, and achieved the five-star rank of General of the Army. He planned and supervised the invasion of North Africa in Operation Torch in 1942-1943 and the invasion of Normandy (D-Day) from the Western Front in 1944-1945. In his farewell address to the nation, President Eisenhower expressed his concerns about the dangers of massive military spending, particularly deficit spending and government contracts to private military manufacturers, which he dubbed "the military-industrial complex." Historical evaluations of his presidency place him among the upper tier of American presidents.

FORT LEE WILL BE RENAMED FORT GREGG-ADAMS

Fort Lee is named after the Confederate States General in Chief, Robert E. Lee. He was a slave owner and considered himself a paternalistic master. While there are no historical records of eyewitnesses, there are various accounts of Lee personally whipping a slave.

Fort Lee in Virginia is to be renamed Fort Gregg-Adams after Lieutenant General Arthur J. Gregg and Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams.

Arthur J. Gregg enlisted in the Army in 1946 and retired as Deputy Chief of Staff. When a young Lieutenant,Gregg, who is African American, arrived at Fort Lee in 1950. It was a racially segregated Army post at the time. General Gregg served in two wars, Korea and Vietnam. In his final assignment as Deputy Chief of Staff, he was responsible for logistical support of the entire United States Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams was the first African American woman to be an officer in the Women's Auxiliary Corps. At the end of 1944, Adams was chosen to be the commanding officer of the first unit of WAC African Americans to go overseas. Her unit was the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. Their mission,in Birmingham, England, was to organize and direct mail to U.S. servicemen which had gone undelivered. The battalion was faced with air hangers full of undelivered post, which needed to be sorted and redirected. The women worked around the clock in three shifts, for eight hours per shift, seven days a week. They were tasked with clearing all the backlogged mail in six months, but they were able to accomplish their goal in three months. Last March, President Joseph Biden signed into law legislation to award the 6888th the Congressional Gold Medal.

FORT PICKETT WILL BE RENAMED FORT BARFOOT

Fort Pickett is named after Confederate General George E. Pickett. While he was raised on a plantation in Virginia, he is said to have personally disliked slavery. For a time, Pickett served as a law clerk for his uncle. He was accused of war crimes committed during the Civil War for executing 22 Union prisoners in 1864.

Fort Pickett in Virginia will be renamed Fort Barfoot after Van Thomas Barfoot, a Choctaw Indian who was awarded the Medal of Honor.

When he was a technical sergeant on May 23, 1944, Barfoot crawled off alone and made a direct hit into an enemy machine gun nest. He continued along the German defense line, and with his tommy gun killed two and captured three soldiers. By the time he was through, he had 17 prisoners. Later the same day, after he had reorganized his men on the newly captured ground, the enemy launched a counterattack. Using a bazooka, Barfoot stood in front of a German tank, and with his first shot, destroyed it. He then assisted two severely wounded men to safety.

FORT RUCKER WILL BE RENAMED FORT NOVOSEL

Fort Rucker is named after Confederate General Edmund W. Rucker. The title "General" was merely honorary for Rucker, who entered the Civil War as a Private. He rose in rank to become an acting Brigadier General, but his commission was never confirmed by the Confederate Congress. One of his duties was to force into service men who did not want to join the Confederacy.

Fort Rucker in Alabama will be renamed Fort Novosel after Michael J. Novosel, Sr. Novosel was the son of Croatian immigrants. He joined the Army ten months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

During World War II, Novosel flew B-29 bombers in the war against Japan. He returned to active duty in the Air Force in 1953 during the Korean War. By then he had achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After flying as a civilian pilot, he decided to return to the military, but the Air Force did not need more officers. So, Novosel gave up his rank and served in the Army as a Warrant Officer with the special forces, beginning in 1963. He flew 2,543 missions during his two tours in Vietnam, extracting 5,589 wounded personnel, among them his own son.

On the morning of Oct. 2, 1969, Novosel set out to evacuate a group of South Vietnamese soldiers who were surrounded by several thousand North Vietnamese light infantry near the Cambodian border. Radio communication was lost and the soldiers had expended their ammunition. Without air cover or fire support, Novosel flew at low altitude under continuous enemy fire. He skimmed the ground with his helicopter while his medic and crew chief pulled the wounded men on board. He completed 15 hazardous extractions, was wounded in a barrage of enemy fire, and momentarily lost control of his helicopter, but when it was over, he had rescued 29 men.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon awarded Novosel the Medal of Honor.

FORT BRAGG WILL BE RENAMED FORT LIBERTY

Fort Bragg is named after Confederate General Braxton Bragg. He was a slave owner prior to the Civil War. Fort Bragg in North Carolina will be renamed Fort Liberty to commemorate the American value of liberty.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the Naming Commission was to inspire soldiers and local communities with names or values that have meaning, and that underpin the core responsibility of the military to defend the Constitution of the United States. The new names are for heroes of the United States, and they reflect America's populace. Four of the forts will be given the names of Medal of Honor recipients. The Commission met its goal.

BLACK & BLUE THE COURT MARTIAL OF BLACK SAILORS FOR MUTINY BY THE NAVY.

Eileen C. Moore

She is the author of two award-winning books, *Race Results* and *Gender Results*.

February is Black History Month, a fitting time to look at a slice of military history involving Black sailors.

The United States Naval Magazine at Port Chicago in Contra Costa County, California, about 35 miles northeast of San Francisco, near the city of Martinez, was formally established by an order of the Secretary of the Navy on June 27, 1942. It was designed to receive munitions by rail and load them from the railway cars directly onto seagoing vessels and barges.

THE RACIAL ATMOSPHERE AND ATTITUDE IN THE NAVY AND AT PORT CHICAGO

Throughout World War II, the races served in segregated units. Blacks were excluded from all naval assignments except the messman's service in 1941 when Frank Knox was Secretary of the Navy. Knox argued that to allow Black sailors to do other tasks would "provoke discord and demoralization." The policy for Black seamen was known as "chambermaids for the braid." According to author Charles Wollenberg in a 1979 article in *California History*: "When Dorie Miller, a black messman, manned a machine gun and shot down at least four Japanese planes during the Pearl Harbor attack, Navy brass initially played down the incident, apparently to prevent attention to the fact that Black men could perform well in combat. But under pressure from civil rights groups and President Franklin Roosevelt, Knox finally announced on April 7, 1942, that black enlistees henceforth would be accepted for 'general service.' The 'messman only' era was at an end." However, the Navy's new policy was not one of integration. In his book, *The Port Chicago Mutiny*, author Robert L. Allen described the racial conditions at Port Chicago. Blacks were required to wait for Whites to finish eating before entering the mess hall.

THE EXPLOSIONS

When Black enlisted men, trained for combat, received orders to report to a seaport, they must have assumed they would have sea duty. In fact, the Navy's policy at the time, even after Blacks were accepted for "general service," was that it didn't allow African American sailors of an ordnance battalion preparing 5-inch shells for packing, Port Chicago Naval Magazine in 1943 *Daily Journal* <https://www.dailyjournal.com/articles/370897-black-blue-2-of-7-2/8/2023>, 1:53 PM Blacks in combat. The reality was that the Navy's commanding officers were all White, and all of the enlisted men assigned to load munitions onto ships at Port Chicago were African American. The men had received no training in munitions handling.

It was common for the White commanders to have wagers to see whose divisions could load the most ammunition in the shortest period of time. Those who didn't win for their superiors had liberties reduced and leaves canceled. The officers had promised the men that none of the bombs were fused and therefore could not explode. The atmosphere was speed over safety. It was an accident waiting to happen.

There was a gigantic blast at the port on July 17, 1944, causing the deaths of 320 sailors and civilians and injuring approximately 400 others. The cargo ship E.A. Bryan had been loaded with over 4000 tons of munitions, 2000 of which were high explosives. After the blast, nothing was left of the E.A. Bryan. Another nearby cargo ship was also destroyed. Over 300 buildings were demolished or damaged. A column of fire and smoke rose over two miles high. It was the worst home front disaster of World War II.

Mutiny charged Most of the enlisted men who were killed and maimed were African American. When the survivors were ordered to return to work a month after the explosion, some of the sailors refused to perform their duties due to unsafe and unfair working conditions. Over 250 Black men were arrested and incarcerated. After being threatened, 200 returned to work, but 50 refused to continue loading munitions under the prevailing unsafe conditions. Because the work refusals occurred within the military, the men, many still teenagers, were charged with mutiny. Had it been in civilian life, it would have been deemed a labor strike or work stoppage.

The officers in charge were cleared of any responsibility; their wagering was explained as healthy competition. In his book, Allen says it was the "Black troublemakers" who would bear the brunt of the terrible situation and get the officers off the hook. "Someone had to pay." What ensued was the longest and largest mutiny trial in naval

history.

The trial The mutiny trial in the form of a general court martial began on Sept. 14, 1944 at *Daily Journal* <https://www.dailyjournal.com/articles/370897-black-blue-3-of-7-2/8/2023>, 1:53 PM Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco Bay.

Does the name James Frank Coakley sound familiar? He was the elected District Attorney of Alameda County when Huey Newton and other Black Panthers were tried for murder and other crimes in 1968.

But in 1944, he was Lieutenant Commander Coakley, the prosecutor for the Navy in the case of the 50 Black men charged with mutiny. He vehemently argued the seamen were cowards, guilty of treason and that fear was no excuse.

The presiding officer sided with Coakley on major rulings. For example, the defense argued that a mutiny required a deliberate attempt to usurp, subvert or override the authority of a superior officer. But Coakley countered that simultaneous disobedience of a lawful order by two or more persons amounted to a mutiny.

Coakley's argument prevailed. The prosecution also successfully introduced statements supposedly made by the accused, even though there were no witnesses who could identify who made the statements. One such unattributed statement was: "Don't go to work for those white m ____ f ____ s." Defense hearsay objections were overruled.

But the defense did score a few points. On cross-examination, prosecution witnesses admitted the defendants had been polite and respectful and had obeyed all orders except those to load ammunition. A psychiatrist testified the shock of the explosion could produce such great trauma that the men might reasonably refuse to load ammunition out of a sense of self-protection, pointing out the men received no psychiatric treatment after the disaster.

All 50 men testified they acted out of fear. They had no intention of challenging military authority. They said they only requested a change of duty.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, then chief counsel for the NAACP, took up the cause for the sailors. He filed a brief on their behalf. The Black press created such nationwide media coverage of the trial that the new Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, permitted Marshall to sit in and observe the trial.

Marshall said he was disappointed by what was obvious racist railroading by the Navy and a seemingly toothless defense. According to author Allen, Marshall told reporters: "This is the Navy on trial for its whole vicious policy toward Negroes.

Negroes are not afraid of anything anymore than anyone else. Negroes in the Navy *Daily Journal* <https://www.dailyjournal.com/articles/370897-black-blue-4-of-7-2/8/2023>, 1:53 PM don't mind loading ammunition. They just want to know why they are the only ones doing the loading! They want to know why they are segregated; why they don't get promoted." On Oct. 24, 1944, the Navy trial board deliberated about 80 minutes, during which time they also managed to eat their lunch, before declaring the Port Chicago men guilty of mutiny. Marshall disgustingly told reporters that it averaged out to a minute and a half per defendant. Sentences ranged from eight to 15 years in prison. The sailors were busted to seaman apprentice and were to be dishonorably discharged from the Navy.

Afterward Marshall argued the men's cause to the highest governmental officials to no avail.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt futilely urged leniency to Forrestal.

The sailors were shackled, handcuffed and sent by train – under Marine guards with machine guns – to the Terminal Island Disciplinary Barracks in San Pedro, California, where they remained for 16 months. Thereafter, they were then ordered to sea on various ships. A year later, the convicted sailors were quietly released from captivity and discharged "under honorable conditions" – a step above dishonorable discharge, but one that nevertheless negated veteran benefits.

The case was widely publicized. Protests and public pressure resulted in Forrestal's December 1944 order that "in the administration of naval personnel, no differentiation shall be made because of color." He further ordered that henceforth ammunition loading would be performed by a cross section of sailors. He also appointed a "special representative" to study race relations in the Navy. His appointee was a Black graduate of Forrestal's alma mater, Dartmouth, named Lester Granger.

Granger was presented with the President's Medal of Merit for his work in 1947.

Wollenberg wrote that Forrestal's action was undoubtedly influenced by growing evidence of racial tension and conflict throughout the Navy. A full-scale riot broke out between Black Seabees and White Marines on Guam. At Port Hueneme, California, Black sailors staged a hunger strike to protest discrimination.

In 1992, Congress ordered the Navy to review what happened to those Port Chicago sailors. Navy Secretary John H. Dalton, pointing out that the men's actions were clearly insubordinate, upheld the convictions.

Also in 1992, the National Park Service unveiled a monument to those killed at Port Chicago *Daily Journal* <https://www.dailyjournal.com/articles/370897-black-blue-5-of-7-2/8/2023>, 1:53 PM Chicago. It is known as the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial. The names of the dead are etched on granite slabs. There is also a small museum with photographs and clippings. It has no mention of the mutiny trial.

On Dec. 24, 1999, one of the sailors, 80-year-old Freddie Meeks, was pardoned by President Bill Clinton. When told of his pardon, Meeks said to reporters: "We stood up to get the same rights the Whites had. We all should have been treated the same, because we were all in the Navy and were going to fight for the same purpose. But they thought we should do the dirty work." Conclusion The actions of the Black sailors played a huge role in the Navy's initiating equal treatment of the races in the Navy shortly after the mutiny trial in 1944. Author Allen stated in his book that "This work stoppage created conditions where the liberals and conservatives in the military thought segregation was bankrupt as a policy." The actions of the Port Chicago sailors reverberated in the civilian world as well. An NAACP pamphlet titled "Remember Port Chicago? ...The real story of how the Navy branded 50 fear-shocked sailors as mutineers" was written in 1945. Its message was that young Black men who were in shock from an immense explosion were unfairly court-martialed and railroaded to prison by the Navy. The pamphlet included a coupon for contributions.

The Port Chicago incident must have played a large part in launching the post-World War II Civil Rights Movement. The fear that drove the men to refuse to load ammunition under unsafe working conditions resulted in the Navy's 1944 decision that "in the administration of naval personnel, no differentiation shall be made because of color." That decision was four years before President Harry Truman's Executive Order 9981 that began the process of desegregation of America's armed forces.



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