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Chuck Donnelly
215-675-3307

SHIRTS / MEMBERSHIP
Don Lawrence
215-572-5654

PROGRAM
Bob Swan
215-674-1935

VALET SERVICES
Russ Neiger
610-930-3077

ANN'S CHOICE RESIDENTS AND GUESTS ARE INVITED TO THIS FREE PROGRAM -
(Club membership is not required)

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE:

**Wednesday, May 30, 2018
at 11:00 am, Ann's Choice Chapel**

The Memorial Day Service will be held on Wednesday, May 30 at 11:00 am in the Ann's Choice Chapel. The Ann's Choice Chorus will participate in the service. The speaker will be Col. (ret) Philip DeHennis. Col. DeHennis retired in 2006 after 30 years of service in the US Army. He and his wife Laura reside in Warminster.

Members are encouraged to wear their Ann's Choice Veterans Group shirts to the Memorial Day service.

Volunteer and Service Opportunities

There is a continuing need for help with the program to drive veterans to the Horsham VA Center (call Judy Wright at 215-674-2328). Volunteers are also needed to help with the Deployable Flags Program. For more information or to volunteer call Jerry Wright at 215-674-2328.

Bucks County Tour of Honor

On Monday, October 1, 2018 there will be a Bucks County Tour of Honor to Washington, DC, for World War II and Korean War veterans. Sign up early to be sure of a seat on one of the buses. Bob Swan will have applications at the April Veterans Group meeting.



Movie Night in May

On Tuesday May 22 at 7:00 in the PAC, the Veterans Group will present *Island in the Sky* starring John Wayne. Run-time for this movie is 110 mins. A suggested donation of \$3 will help support projects such as lining the campus drives with flags for patriotic holidays.

Save the Date - June Meeting

The June meeting will be on Tuesday evening, June 19 at 7:30 in the PAC. Carl LaVO, former editor of *Bucks County Courier Times*, will present "Things You May Not Know About Bucks County."

Also, election of officers will be held at the June meeting. More information will be in the June newsletter.

New Members

A big welcome to Jacob Abrams (US Army, 1946 – 1947, in Japan) and Richard Buckwalter (US Navy, 1957 – 1960, at Camp Lejeune, NC and Naval Supply Depot, Philadelphia) who recently joined the Ann's Choice Veterans Group.

Vietnam Veterans

Commemorative Lapel Pin

This info is from State Representative Tom Murt, whose office is in Hatboro. If you would like to apply for the pin, contact his office at 215-674-3755.

"The Vietnam War will always be remembered as a time of division, but also of great sacrifice," Murt said. "The pin is part of the national commemoration



authorized by Congress to recognize those sacrifices, and to thank Vietnam veterans and their families for their service."

Veterans who served on active duty between Nov. 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive a commemorative lapel pin acknowledging their sacrifice.

The commemoration provides the Vietnam veteran lapel pins to their commemorative partners, who present the pins during public presentations to living U.S. military veterans who served during the Vietnam War period as a lasting memento of our nation's gratitude.

Contact Rep. Murt's office to apply.

A Grave Task: The Wartime Job Nobody Wanted Part 1

The new soldiers arriving at Building 341 at Fort Warren, Wyoming, in November 1943 were blissfully unaware of what the future held. Told they were a "GR outfit," they speculated on what that meant. Maybe guerilla raiders, one suggested. They liked the sound of that. The next day, their commanding officer, Captain Thomas A. Rowntree, snapped them to attention and informed the men that they were now the 612th Graves Registration [aka GRREG] Company.

"You could hear the sucking in of breaths and the gasps of disbelief and feel a sudden numbness," recalled Private Thomas J. Dowling. "It was a job that had to be done in war; it was certainly no disgrace, but it was something you always thought about being done by someone else."

As the shocked men staggered back to their barracks to process the news, their disbelief turned to outrage. "This is what I was drafted for?" one soldier griped. "I ain't going. I came to fight, not bury," another vowed. "If there's any burying to be done," yet another said, "let somebody else do it." A sergeant tried to mollify them, telling them they would be only supervising the burials, but that was no comfort. It was a restless, sleepless night in the barracks.

The men's displeasure meant nothing to the army – the job was essential and someone had to do it.

The need for the US military to bury its dead was recognized as far back as the early 1800's. US Army Quartermaster officers who were assigned to frontier outposts constructed cemetery plots, buried the dead in marked graves, and kept fairly uniform records of burial. Though commendable, these efforts hardly afforded the practical experience needed to handle combat fatalities resulting from a large scale conflict. No formal policy addressed that possibility either.

Beginning with the Mexican War of 1846-47 and continuing through the Civil War, the processes for identifying and burying dead soldiers was inconsistent at best and usually inadequate. Roughly 58% of all those who died during the Civil War were positively identified. The military hierarchy of the day apparently failed to realize not only the importance of some type of permanent identification for combat soldiers, but

also the obvious need for specially trained units and personnel who could properly care for the war dead. Only on one occasion in the summer of 1864 did a group resembling a modern day Graves Registration unit come into existence.

Conspicuous advances in the theory and practice of Army graves registration were not to take place until the turn of the century, during the Spanish-American War. As a result of experiences in Cuba, it was learned that successful identification of remains depended more than anything on shortening the time span between death, original burial, and registration of graves. Later, Chaplain Charles C. Pierce, who established the QM Office of Identification in the Philippines, outlined some of the principles and techniques needed to place care of war dead on a more scientific basis. He recommended inclusion of an "identity disc" in the combat field kit, and the establishment of central collection points or agencies where all pertinent mortuary records could be gathered, filed, checked, traced, and corrected. Positive identification, he reasoned, should admit little doubt and no discrepancies.

New regulations adopted in 1913 affirmed the Army's now strong commitment toward positive identification and proper burial of the dead.

While readying the American Expeditionary Force for its trip to Europe, General Pershing requested the establishment of a Graves Registration Service assigned to the Western Front. GRREG troops and units began training at the Philadelphia QM Depot in the summer of 1917. By October they had moved to Tours, France. From this location, 19 Quartermaster GRREG companies were dispatched to every section of the combat zone during the next year and a half.

Regarding the similar assignment of Pvt. Dowling in November 1943, he wrote "When we looked at the lines of markers in one cemetery after another," Private Dowling wrote, "We knew that if we were not doing this job we would be letting down every soul back home." It was a point of pride, the men felt—"the last great service a combat unit could perform for its fallen comrades." They had given it their best. "We did not have to like it, but it had to be done, so we made up our minds to do it right. And we did."

[To be continued in the June issue.]

Compiled from articles found on <https://www.qmfound.com/> and on <http://www.historynet.com/>