

PRESIDENT
Gordon Larson
215-672-3137

VICE PRESIDENT
Mary Hurly
215-420-7472

SECRETARY
Bob McQue
215-394-8401

TREASURER
Rose Torgerson
215-672-1416

PAST PRESIDENT
Rudy Stroh
215-443-5782

CB1 DIRECTOR & COLOR GUARD LEADER
Jack Robbins
215-444-0140

CB1 DIRECTOR
Jerry Wright
215-674-2328

CB2 DIRECTOR
Josie Larson
215-675-5290

James Morgan
215-682-0187

CB3 DIRECTORS
Keith Lawrence
215-444-0116

Don Leypoldt
215-441-5160

SGT AT ARMS
Frank Gorman
215-674-1418

SERVICE OFFICER
Herb Craft
215-672-2960

CHAPLAIN
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 attend Veterans Group Programs and Events-
(Meetings are open to ALL residents)*

NEXT MEETING:

**September 18, 2018
at 7:30 pm, Ann's Choice PAC**

The September meeting of Ann's Choice Veterans Group will again feature Mike Jesberger, local historic reenactor. He will present a program on "Sleepy Hollow during the Revolutionary War". Come and hear the real story of Sleepy Hollow and learn how the legend started.



As always, this program is open to all residents of Ann's Choice. There is no charge for the program.

Veterans Group Members are encouraged to wear their Veterans Group shirts.

New Members

- A big welcome to several new members who joined over the summer:
- Fred Burlein (US Army and Army Reserve, 1950 -1965, Berlin Airlift, Cuban Missile Crisis);
 - Stephen Capin (US Army, 1957 - 1959, Germany);
 - Kenneth Kastle (US Army, 1964 - 1970, South Korea, USA, Germany);
 - Tony Lettieri (US Navy, 1943 - 1946, Pacific); and
 - Fischel Myers (USMC, 1946 - 1948, USA).

**Military Officers Assn. of America – Willow Grove Chapter
Breakfast at Ann's Choice**

The September breakfast will be in the Liberty Catering room at 0930 hours on Saturday, September 22. The speaker will be Charlie Elison, a program manager with the Travis Manion Foundation, which empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations. The price is \$20.00. Send reservations with a check payable to MOAA-WG can be sent to Frank Gorman, HV-118.

Save the Date - October Meeting

The October meeting will be on Tuesday, October 16 at 7:30 in the PAC. Ann's Choice resident Richard Hartman will present a program on "Forgotten Heroes of the American Revolution". Learn the history of forgotten heroes who made possible victory in the long and uncertain war of the American Revolution, and why they are not in US History textbooks.

Stop Veteran Charity Scams

Many charities do a great job supporting our nation's veterans, but a few do not. More information about how to donate wisely and avoid scams can be found at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-donate-wisely-and-avoid-charity-scams> .

When you decide to support a cause you care about, you want your donation to count. Research and planning can help ensure your donations get where they'll do good. **Some** quick tips include:

- To be safe, donate by check or credit card; never donate by cash, gift card or wiring money.
- Respond to mail and email solicitations only from charities you are familiar with. Some scammers use names that sound a lot like the names of real charities.
- Never let anyone rush you into making a donation.
- If you are not sure, ask someone for help, or seek a different charity.

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.

A Grave Task: The Wartime Job Nobody Wanted Part 3

Fifty-five boxes of remains of US soldiers were recently transferred to US custody by North Korea. Only one set of dog tags was included in the transfer, which means that the task of identification may take several years. The dedication of the men and women in Graves Registration Service has been seen since the first unit was established.

New regulations adopted in 1913 affirmed the Army's now strong commitment toward positive identification and proper burial of the dead. New techniques had made their way into procedure, particularly in regards to identification. Detailed maps and sketches showing exact locations of all temporary grave sites were to be filed at the time of initial burial. This would ease the process of disinterment at a later date.

While readying the American Expeditionary Force for its trip to Europe during World War I, General Pershing requested the establishment of a Graves Registration Service assigned to the Western Front. Major Pierce, who had headed up the Office of Identification in Manila two decades earlier, and since retired, was recalled to active service on behalf of the Quartermaster Corps. He began training GRREG troops and units at the Philadelphia QM Depot in the summer of 1917. By October his headquarters 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.

While the headquarters staff of the Graves Registration Service tended to the consolidation and preservation of mortuary records, and the maintenance of semi-permanent cemeteries at the rear of the battlefield, the GRREG companies themselves offered close support to the line. The dedication and esprit of member personnel was often noteworthy to the point of extremes. No risk appeared too dangerous or effort too great if it promised identification of a "buddy's" remains. General Pershing wrote of one particular unit's activities in the spring of 1918:

(They) began their work under heavy shell of fire and gas, and, although troops were in dugouts, these men immediately went to the cemetery and in order to preserve records and

locations, repaired and erected new crosses as fast as old ones were blown down. They also completed the extension to the cemetery, this work occupying a period of one and a half hours, during which time shells were falling continuously and they were subjected to mustard gas. They gathered many bodies which had been first in the hands of the Germans, and were later retaken by American counterattacks. Identification was especially difficult, all papers and tags having been removed, and most of the bodies being in a terrible condition and beyond recognition."

During the Great War, as it was called, relatives



A burial detail from the US 42nd division during World War I, July 30, 1918 (Public Domain)

of soldiers opted to have their kin remain in the country where they had

fallen. Teddy Roosevelt added impetus to this movement by requesting that his own son, Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, be buried near the ground where he was killed. His expression – "Where the tree falls, let it lie" – echoed the sentiments of many. In all, eight permanent cemeteries were established in Europe by war's end (six in France, and one each in Belgium and England) wherein approximately 30,000 veterans were laid to rest. Another 47,000 bodies were returned to the United States. During World War I, the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service reduced the percentage of unknowns to less than three bodies for every hundred recovered. While organizational and operational refinements helped reduce the time span between original burial and final disposition of remains, a new and more scientific approach aided immeasurably in the process of identification. World War I saw the coming of age of Army graves registration.

During World War II the task of graves registration proved far greater.

More than 250,000 Americans died and were buried in temporary cemeteries around the world. On the European continent alone, fighting had scattered dead U.S. forces over a million and a half square miles of territory, making the recovery

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process more difficult. Further, new weapons (including aerial bombardment and massive use of artillery) often rendered those killed in action unrecognizable. The standard Graves Registration Company in World War II consisted of 260 men and five officers. It was intended to support three divisions, one platoon per division. Each platoon was divided into two sections – a collecting squad and an evacuation squad. GRREG companies collected, evacuated, identified, and supervised the burial of the dead. These field units also collected and disposed of personal effects and, subject to the approval of higher headquarters, selected sites for temporary cemeteries. As in World War I, work often had to be done under extremely hazardous conditions. The famed war correspondent, Ernie Pyle, reported on GRREG personnel seeking refuge in the freshly-dug graves during the heaviest fighting at Anzio.

Another example of heroic service can be found in the record of a Quartermaster Graves Registration

Company which scrambled ashore on D-Day with the First Army. There they gathered bodies from the beaches, in the water, and inland, actually cutting

many from wrecked landing craft submerged in the shallow water. By the end of D-Plus-2, one platoon alone had buried 457 American dead; by working day and night, the three platoons had been able to clear the beaches of all remains.

Since graves registration units have been traditionally governed by regulations that denote them as a wartime service, most were quickly disbanded in the months following V-J (Victory over Japan) Day. Within a few years the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service overseas was virtually eliminated. This created an enormous problem when suddenly and unexpectedly, the United States Army found itself locked in conflict on the Korean peninsula in June of 1950. At that time only one small organization - the 108th QM Graves Registration Platoon, comprised of 30 men, stationed in Yokohama, Japan – was available for rapid deployment during the



Eight members of an airborne unit, covered by parachutes, lie beside their wrecked glider. (National Archives)

emergency buildup. To compound the difficulty only a handful of these men had combat experience. (The only other active GRREG unit in the entire Army establishment was the 565th QM Graves Registration Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.) Five men from the 108th Platoon were attached to each of the three divisions initially chosen for combat – the 24th, 25th, and 1st Cavalry – and with these 15 men went the few graves registration supplies that could be rounded up. The fluid tactical situation, particularly during the first six months of fighting, aggravated by manpower and supply shortages, rendered GRREG support extremely difficult.

Because circumstances prevented establishing a large, centrally located Army cemetery, division-level cemeteries had to be used instead. Eleven separate cemeteries were opened in the Eighth Army area during the first two months of fighting. In the wake of the renewed communist offensive in the fall of 1950, Allied units were forced to quickly close down these cemeteries and concentrate on evacuating the dead – to the relative security of rear areas, then to Japan for processing and eventual shipment to CONUS. By the end of January 1951, nearly 5,000 bodies had been removed from temporary cemeteries in Korea to the newly formed central identification unit (CIU) in Kokura, Japan. This was the first time in U.S. history that a mass evacuation of combat dead took place while hostilities were still in progress.

By the time battlelines stabilized in mid-1951, and additional GRREG units arrived in Korea, operating procedures had standardized. A 72-acre United Nations Military Cemetery was opened at Tanggok, as well as the Eighth Army's Central Identification Laboratory. During the final two years of the war, refrigerated railroad cars were used to ship remains from forward collecting points to Tanggok. A full scale search and recovery effort was instituted to reduce the number of personnel listed as missing in action. As armistice talks got underway, a pattern evolved wherein the dead were recovered and shipped back to the U.S. within a period of 30 days. It is estimated that more than 97% of the recovered American dead were identified.

The Vietnam War, America's longest and most recent large-scale conflict abroad, saw more improvements in the Army's ability to care for its

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dead. The nature of that war, especially the use of high-mobility, small unit tactics lessened the numbers of unaccounted for dead. More important, better methods of communications and transportation from the battlefield (particularly the use of helicopters) allowed for the speedy recovery of remains from the battlefield, often within minutes. Combat units themselves were responsible for initial, on-the-spot recovery in most instances. From that point, remains were brought to two fixed and well-equipped mortuaries in-country, located at Da Nang in the far north, and in Tan Son Nhut, just outside of Saigon. There

positive identification was made. New laboratory procedures supplemented traditional identification methodology such as dental, and fingerprint comparison.



The remains of four U.S. servicemen killed in the Vietnam War prepare to make the final journey home from the U.S. Army mortuary at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. (Courtesy of US Army Quartermaster Museum)

Ultimately, the remains of 96% of those who had fallen were recovered, as compared to a 78% recovery rate for both World War II and Korea. The four percent not accounted for translates to about 2,300 soldiers. Still, on average, only seven days elapsed from the time of death to receipt of remains by the next of kin. At the end of the war, only 28 of the bodies of American soldiers recovered remained unidentified. In time all but one have been identified. On Memorial Day 1984, that one soldier was interred in the Tomb of Unknowns, in Arlington National Cemetery.

The role of Mortuary Affairs, as it is now called, is not diminished during peacetime.

At 0515 on the morning of 12 December 1985, a chartered DC-8 crashed shortly after takeoff from an airport just outside Gander, Newfoundland. On board were 248 soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division returning home from a peace-keeping mission in the Sinai; none survived the crash. The plane's wreckage, along with the badly

burned and dismembered bodies of its passengers and crew were strewn over a three-quarter mile area of frozen forest.

In less than 24 hours a special Graves Registration (GRREG) Search and Recovery Team from the Quartermaster (QM) Center at Fort Lee, Virginia, landed in Newfoundland and stood ready to assist Canadian officials already on the site. Joined by other military and civilian personnel during the weeks that followed, the GRREG team combed and sifted every square foot of the crash site searching for the victims' remains and personal effects. All recovered items were noted, sorted, categorized and reconciled to one another as appropriate. In the end, despite the severe damage incurred by the overwhelming violence of the plane crash and fire, all of the deceased were positively identified and accorded a decent burial - with all due honors.

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

"You Could Have Heard a Pin Drop"

First, this submission:

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire building by George Bush.

He answered by saying, "Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return."

And this submission"

JFK's Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was in France in the early 1960's when Charles de Gaulle decided to pull out of NATO. De Gaulle said he wanted all US military out of France as soon as possible.

Rusk responded, "Does that include those who are buried here?"

De Gaulle did not reply.

These were found on several websites including <http://www.cnet.com> and <http://www.reddit.com> ; idea submitted by Rudy Stroh.

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 September Veterans Group meeting.