



POST 90 GAZETTE

Edited by Amy Ostler

A Field of Flags

In Remembrance and Honor

June 13th, 14th and 15th

Opening ceremony June 14th at Historic Town Square

Dedicate a flag with your donation in honor of a friend or family member who proudly served in the Armed Forces or served as a first responder.

Historic Town Square 50 South Main St George, UT



Rain couldn't dampen Memorial Day services

A command decision to move the Lester Keate Post 90 Memorial Day service from the rain and cold at St. George City cemetery to Spilsbury Mortuary saved the day.

Ski Ingram, former Commander of Post 90 introduced the keynote speaker David Cordero. David is the Marketing and Communications Director for the City of St. George. Recently awarded the Excellence in Community Service by the Daughters of the American Revolution for his many hours of service and nine trips with Utah Honor Flight.



David's comments had most of the packed house in tears, speaking about three American soldiers who lost their lives defending our freedoms and the friendships that have endured.

Tammy Houchen performed several moving numbers including "I will Stand" and the Color Country Chorus sang all of the service songs for each branch of service to massive applause for each service member standing.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jun 13 -15** - Field of Flags - Historic Town Square - 50 So. Main St.
- Jun 16** - Father's Day
- Jun 19 - 22** - St. George Summer Classic - Legion Baseball
- Jun 21 - 23** - 2019 Utah State Convention



Commanders Message

Marti Bigbie

We are needing Volunteers for helping and manning events during the month of June. Starting with the Field of Flags (12-15) call Bodie -- American Legion Baseball Games (19-22) and Department of Utah Convention (21-23) **call Marti as soon as you can.**

Starting 7-1-19 your American Legion membership dues are due you can go on line at mylegion.org to make the payment of \$40.00 or mail to American Legion Post 90, PO Box 910931, St George, Utah 84791. Renewal notices will be coming from National about mid-July. Please include the notice with your payment when you receive the renewal notice. Thanks for a great year for 2018-2019.



To the Ritual Team members thanks for your dedication to our departed Veterans and all the volunteers who helped with the American Legion events this past year.

District 7 Report

Marti Bigbie

Thanks for all the support to the Posts of District 7 in their efforts to reach 100% membership for 2019. Please try to attend the Department of Utah Convention in St George on June 21-23. If you are an American Legion Rider there is a special ride on June 20. If you need information on these two events listed please let me know so I can get it to you.

Your new District 7 Commander Thomas McGinn of Milford will be at the Convention as he will be sworn in on June 23 to assume his new duty as Commander on 7-1-19.

2019 Department of Utah Convention

Dates of Convention:
21-22-23 June 2019

Location: Desert Garden Inn
1450 So. Hilton Drive, St. George

Vice Commander Department of Utah

Marti Bigbie

My THANKS to Commander Hayes Stromness for giving 100% of his time and effort along with the Commanders/Adjutants and Department Staff - UTAH was able to reach 100% membership by May 8th target date. Because of this he gets to wear PINK shoes at the National Convention in August.

WE are not finished yet as there are Legion members of Posts who have not renewed. WE do not want them left behind. So, continue to contact them to see if they want to continue to be a member of OUR American Legion Family.

Veteran Spotlight

Walter William Bauer

Born 6-17-1925. Enlisted in the Marine Corp in June 1943. Saw action against Japanese on Saipan, Tinlen Okinawa and Asiatic Pacific. One of first Americans on Japanese land. Was part of 2nd Marine Infantry with Battalion, Redistribution Regt (Prov) Camp Joseph H Pendleton NT & PC. SD Served during WWII from 12-22-1943 thru 12-27-1945. Has Photographic Memory which was an asset while he was in the Military and Civil Service work.

Great Grandfather Nepromuck Bauer came from Germany and fought in Civil War as a volunteer North against South then went to fight in WWI. Right after WWI Father Walter Bauer joined the Navy. Two Uncles served with 90 1st Infantry (Argon Forest) and 2nd Army division during WWII. Son William Marshall Bauer was an Army Master Sergeant working on helicopters (recently killed in ATV accident after leaving service).

Walter was a Charter member of American Legion in Moorpark, California and recently transferred to Post 90, St George.

Welcome Aboard!

Burial at Sea

by Lt. Col. George Goodson, USMC (Ret)

In my 76th year, the events of my life appear to me, from time to time, as a series of vignettes. Some were significant; most were trivial.

War is the seminal event in the life of everyone that has endured it. Though I fought in Korea and the Dominican Republic and was wounded there, Vietnam was my war.

Now 42 years have passed and, thankfully, I rarely think of those days in Cambodia , Laos , and the panhandle of North Vietnam where small teams of Americans and Montangards fought much larger elements of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead I see vignettes: some exotic, some mundane:

- *The smell of Nuc Mam.
- *The heat, dust, and humidity.
- *The blue exhaust of cycles clogging the streets.
- *Elephants moving silently through the tall grass.
- *Hard eyes behind the servile smiles of the villagers.
- *Standing on a mountain in Laos and hearing a tiger roar.
- *A young girl squeezing my hand as my medic delivered her baby.
- *The flowing Ao Dais of the young women biking down Tran Hung Dao.
- *My two years as Casualty Notification Officer in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland .



It was late 1967. I had just returned after 18 months in Vietnam. Casualties were increasing. I moved my family from Indianapolis to Norfolk, rented a house, enrolled my children in their fifth or sixth new school, and bought a second car.

A week later, I put on my uniform and drove 10 miles to Little Creek, Virginia. I hesitated before entering my new office. Appearance is important to career Marines. I was no longer, if ever, a poster Marine. I had returned from my third tour in Vietnam only 30 days before. At 5'9", I now weighed 128 pounds - 37 pounds below my normal weight. My uniforms fit ludicrously, my skin was yellow from malaria medication, and I think I had a twitch or two.

I straightened my shoulders, walked into the office, looked at the nameplate on a Staff Sergeant's desk and said, "Sergeant Jolly, I'm Lieutenant Colonel Goodson. Here are my orders and my Qualification Jacket."

Sergeant Jolly stood, looked carefully at me, took my orders, stuck out his hand; we shook and he asked, "How long were you there, Colonel?" I replied "18 months this time." Jolly breathed, "You must be a slow learner, Colonel." I smiled.

Jolly said, "Colonel, I'll show you to your office and bring in the Sergeant Major. I said, "No, let's just go straight to his office." Jolly nodded, hesitated, and lowered his voice, "Colonel, the Sergeant Major. He's been in this job two years. He's packed pretty tight. I'm worried about him." I nodded.

Jolly escorted me into the Sergeant Major's office. "Sergeant Major, this is Colonel Goodson, the new Commanding Officer." The Sergeant Major stood, extended his hand and said, "Good to see you again, Colonel." I responded, "Hello Walt, how are you?" Jolly looked at me, raised an eyebrow, walked out, and closed the door.

I sat down with the Sergeant Major. We had the obligatory cup of coffee and talked about mutual acquaintances. Walt's stress was palpable. Finally, I said, "Walt, what the hell's wrong?" He turned his chair, looked out the window and said, "George, you're going to wish you were back in Nam before you leave here. I've been in the Marine Corps since 1939. I was in the Pacific 36 months, Korea for 14 months, and Vietnam for 12 months. Now I come here to bury these kids. I'm putting my letter in. I can't take it anymore." I said, "OK Walt. If that's what you want, I'll endorse your request for retirement and do what I can to push it through Headquarters Marine Corps."

Sergeant Major Walt Xxxxx retired 12 weeks later. He had been a good Marine for 28 years, but he had seen too much death and too much suffering. He was used up.

Over the next 16 months, I made 28 death notifications, conducted 28 military funerals, and made 30 notifications to the families of Marines that were severely wounded or missing in action. Most of the details of those casualty notifications have now, thankfully, faded from memory. Four, however, remain.

MY FIRST NOTIFICATION My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed:

*Name, rank, and serial number.

*Name, address, and phone number of next of kin.

*Date of and limited details about the Marine's death.

*Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station.

*A strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed.

The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away. I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store/service station/Post Office. I went in to ask directions.

Three people were in the store. A man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The store owner walked up and addressed them by name, "Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper."

I was stunned. My casualty's next-of-kin's name was John Cooper!

I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, "I beg your pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Cooper of (address)?"

The father looked at me - I was in uniform - and then, shaking, bent at the waist, he vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor.

The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The store owner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving.

I returned the store owner to his business. He thanked me and said, "Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars." I shook his hand and said; "Neither would I."

I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk. Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone.

My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

THE FUNERALS Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys and how to fold the flag.

When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, "All Marines share in your grief." I had been instructed to say, "On behalf of a grateful nation...." I didn't think the nation was grateful, so I didn't say that.

Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn't speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, "I'm so sorry you have this terrible job." My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother's house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff car. I parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO!"

I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house. Eight or nine neighbors

followed. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving.

The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me. The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION One morning, as I walked in the office, the phone was ringing. Sergeant Jolly held the phone up and said, "You've got another one, Colonel." I nodded, walked into my office, picked up the phone, took notes, thanked the officer making the call, I have no idea why, and hung up. Jolly, who had listened, came in with a special Telephone Directory that translates telephone numbers into the person's address and place of employment.

The father of this casualty was a Longshoreman. He lived a mile from my office. I called the Longshoreman's Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father's schedule.

The Business Manager asked, "Is it his son?" I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, "Tom is at home today." I said, "Don't call him. I'll take care of that." The Business Manager said, "Aye, Aye Sir," and then explained, "Tom and I were Marines in WWII."

I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, "Is Mr. Smith home?" She smiled pleasantly and responded, "Yes, but he's eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?" I said, "I'm sorry. It's important. I need to see him now."

She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, "Tom, it's for you."

A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, "Jesus Christ man, he's only been there three weeks!"

Months passed. More notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth..... I never could do that..... and held an imaginary phone to his ear.

Another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, "Got it." and hung up. I had stopped saying "Thank You" long ago.

Jolly, "Where?"

Me, "Eastern Shore of Maryland. The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam"

Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, "This time of day, it'll take three hours to get there and back. I'll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter. And I'll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief's home."

He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father's door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, "Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?"

I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime.

He called me that evening about 2300 (11:00PM). "I've gone through my boy's papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?" I said, "Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will."

My wife who had been listening said, "Can you do that?" I told her, "I have no idea. But I'm going to break my ass trying."

I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, "General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?" General Bowser said, "George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you."

I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, "How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel." I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?" The Chief of Staff responded with a name.

The Admiral called the ship, "Captain, you're going to do a burial at sea. You'll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed..."

He hung up, looked at me, and said, "The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don't have to sic Al Bowser on my ass." I responded, "Aye Aye, Sir" and got the hell out of his office.

I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship's crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, "These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?"

All the high priced help including me sat there looking dumb. Then the Senior Chief stood and said, "Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War II hang out."

They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worse for wear, and said, "It's simple; we cut four 12" holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat."

The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth.

The sun was hot. The ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplain spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea.

The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever....

The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, "General, get me out of here. I can't take this anymore." I was transferred two weeks later.

I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up.

Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said, "Well Done, Colonel. Well Done."

I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!

'A veteran is someone who, at one point, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America ' for an amount of 'up to and including their life.'

That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.'

Memorial Day Service Photos



Tammy Houchen



Color Country Chorus



POW/MIA Table



David Cordero, Key-note Speaker

Items of Interest

The VA MISSION Act empowers Veterans and enhances their healthcare options.

We make it our mission to:

- Improve the process for access to care in the community
- Expand care where and when Veterans need it to include more options for telehealth
- Establish access to community urgent care walk-in
- Expand eligibility for caregiver services to all eras of Veterans.
- Strengthens VA's workforce and infrastructure

Veterans are eligible for care in the community when any of the following criteria are met:

1. VA does not provide the service needed.
2. Veteran was receiving care under the Choice Program distance criteria. Veteran may continue to be eligible until June 6th of 2020.
3. Veteran is more than a 30-minute drive from primary and mental health care and more than a 60-minute drive from specialty care.
4. Veteran must wait more than 20 days for a primary care appointment and more than 28 days for specialty care from the day they ask for the appointment.
5. Veteran and provider agree that it is in the Veteran's best interest to be seen in the community.

Why should Veterans Choose VA?

VA wants to be your lifetime healthcare partner through careful care coordination and specialized treatment programs unique to Veterans' needs.

- VA Offers dedicated Veteran providers and facilities
- Your VA family includes your fellow Veterans
- We maintain your entire medical history with VA's electronic medical record
- Veterans trust in our healthcare system is extremely high: VA is seeing more patients than ever before, more quickly than ever before, and Veterans are more satisfied with their care.
- Transparent by comparing wait time data with the private sector for informed decisions.

For more information visit www.missionact.va.gov

To speak to someone in person Contact:



Choose VA

Frequently Asked Questions (Veterans)

- Q1. I'm currently receiving community care through the Veterans Choice Program. Will I still be eligible under the new eligibility criteria and proposed access standards?** Based on eligibility criteria defined in the law (e.g. the VA MISSION Act) and the proposed access standards, the new criteria are designed to ensure that Veterans currently eligible for community care, especially those who are wait-time or driving-time eligible, have access to the care they need. However, a final determination on your eligibility for community care will continue to depend on the specific type of need, your circumstances, whether or not the care is available through a VA medical facility, and other factors.
- Q2. I am receiving community care right now, and I like the clinician who is taking care of me. With these proposed changes, will I still be able to see my clinician?** You may be able to continue to see your clinician so long as (1) you remain eligible for community care for that particular care, (2) VA continues to authorize community care for you, (3) your community provider continues to be part of VA's community care network of providers, and (4) your community provider provides high-quality care.
- Q3. Will VA still have to officially authorize the care I receive through a community provider?** Yes, usually. Regardless of which eligibility standard you meet, **community care must be formally authorized in advance by VA** before you can make an appointment and receive care from a community provider. This means that your community provider must have an official authorization from VA before they can provide you with care. The authorization is important because it allows VA to pay for the care. Without the authorization, by law, VA cannot pay the charges and fees for the care. Some exceptions to this requirement include the new urgent care benefit and emergency medical care.
- Q4. Will I have to pay a copayment for community care?** Copays work the same way with community care as they do if you receive care at a VA medical facility. Usually, this means you will be charged a copayment for nonservice-connected conditions. Copayment charges and payments are made through VA, not through your community provider.
- Q5. With the new eligibility criteria and access standards, will VA still pay beneficiary travel expenses if I am referred to a community provider?** If you are eligible for beneficiary travel, that eligibility does not change with the implementation of the new community care program. Beneficiary travel is paid the same whether the care is provided at the VA or in the community.
- Q6. What rate does VA pay when a Veteran is referred to a community provider for care?** Generally, VA pays Medicare rates.
- Q7. How does the 40-mile legacy grandfather provision work?** If a Veteran was receiving care through the Choice Act under the 40-mile rule at the time that MISSION was passed and remains eligible under that same distance standard he or she can be referred to community care using this criterion.
- Q8. How does the new urgent (walk-in) care benefit work?** The urgent care benefit provides Veterans with access to urgent, non-emergency care through VA's network of community providers. The urgent care benefit is considered open access, which means Veterans can go to an urgent care provider in the VA network and receive care without prior authorization from VA.
- There are copayments associated with the urgent care benefit depending on the Veteran's assigned priority group. Veterans must be enrolled in VA healthcare and have received care within the last 24 months. There is no limit to the amount of urgent care visits.
- Co-payment information:**
- Priority Groups 1-5: First three visits (per calendar year) = \$0
 - Subsequent Visits: (per calendar year) \$30
 - Priority Group 6: If related to combat experience, special authority or exposure: First three visits: \$0
Subsequent Visits: (per calendar year) \$30
 - Priority 7 & 8: \$30 Co-pay
- Q9. How is the Caregiver Support Program expanding?** It will now include eligible Veterans from all eras of service. Post-9/11 Veterans have benefited greatly from the caregiver program. The expansion will occur in two phases, starting with those who were injured on or before May 7, 1975. Further expansion will occur two years later. The expansion timeline is still under development.