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# Hometown Heroes

HISTORY OF  
VETERANS DAY

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FIELD OF HONOR

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SECOND  
WORLD WAR

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# History of Veterans Day

World War I – known at the time as “The Great War” – officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.” Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: a celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

was for a day observed with parades, public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.

## 1926

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926, with these words:

Whereas the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed, and whereas it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and

Whereas the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.

## 1938

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the

cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as “Armistice Day.” Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor Veterans of World War I.

## 1954

In 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen in the Nation’s history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the Veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word “Armistice” and inserting in its place the word “Veterans.” With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American Veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first “Veterans Day Proclamation” (PDF) which stated: “In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all Veterans, all Veterans’ organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans’ Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible.”

## 1958

In 1958, the White House advised VA’s General Counsel that the 1954

designation of the VA Administrator as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee applied to all subsequent VA Administrators. Since March of 1989, when VA was elevated to a cabinet level department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has served as the committee’s chairman.

## 1968

The Uniform Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day.

It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational, and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

## 1971

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on Oct. 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on Sept. 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of Nov. 11, beginning in 1978.

This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans service organizations, and the American people.

## Veterans Day Timeline

### 1919

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

The original concept for the celebration




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# Local news editor wrote a thorough account of 'Rockton's General' Elon John Farnsworth's suicidal charge at Gettysburg



Brigadier General Elon Farnsworth is buried in the Rockton Township Cemetery.

COURTESY PHOTOS *Hometown Heroes*



Cushman is pictured on the left with a brother prior to being shot in the face in Virginia during the Civil War

## *Clears up confusion about Farnsworth's last minutes*

By Margaret Downing  
REPORTER

In the library of the Beloit Historical Society, a very interesting document about "Rockton's General" - Brigadier General of Volunteers Elon John Farnsworth - can be found. It was apparently written around 1930 by Beloit Daily News editor Mason H. Dobson and consists of at least one hundred typed pages.

The following transcript written by Dobson, along with rest of the writing, was most likely published in installment form in the Beloit newspaper of the time period in which Dobson wrote his manuscript.

The writing tells of the day, July 3, 1863, when the twenty-five year old Farnsworth, following orders from Brigadier General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick, made what he knew to be a suicidal charge against Confederate forces in the aftermath of "Pickett's Charge" during the Battle of Gettysburg. This is what Dobson wrote of that fatal afternoon. One rather gory description of the death of a horse has been edited out, otherwise the telling is as Dobson wrote it:

### "THE CHARGE"

"An aide summoned Farnsworth's regimental and battalion commanders. When they arrived at the wooded knoll where he was they handed the reins of their mounts to orderlies and reported to their commander. Nearby Elder's battery of regular army artillery was firing at regular intervals at the Alabamans across the valley. Confederate shells slashed the leafy limbs above their heads and the leaves floated lazily down upon them.

"It was hot with the sultry heat of late afternoon of a summer day. Rivulets of sweat streaked the faces of the officers

and they mopped their foreheads. Insects buzzed and flies annoyed the horses. Tunics and shirts were open at the throat and uniforms were awry, for this was no dress parade and there already had been fighting a plenty for one day.

"When they all had come Farnsworth told his officers the work that lay ahead. He explained the Confederate positions and where they must be assailed and the obstacles that lay between. He told how in his judgment these obstacles might best be surmounted. He assigned to each regiment and battalion its duties.

"Among others at that conference were Captain Parsons of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vermont, Major Wells, Captain Cushman, Lieutenant Watson, Major Estes and Colonel Preston. Captain Cushman, a handsome young officer, wore a conspicuous white duck 'fighting jacket,' trimmed with yellow braid. As the officers listened to Farnsworth's instructions, Cushman took from his pocket a silk handkerchief and threw it over his cap so that its folds protected the back of his neck. He pinned the handkerchief to the visor of his cap.

"Captain Parsons made objection to the jacket Cushman wore on the ground that it offered too conspicuous a target for enemy riflemen, but Cushman answered: 'A lady sent this to me, and said it was made with her own hands and no rebel bullet could pierce it. It may be a good day to try magic mail.' (Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. 3, page 396).

"Cushman rode with Farnsworth in the fatal charge and his unusual apparel was the cause of a tragic myth, as will be seen.

"When Farnsworth was assured his officers understood his orders he dismissed them and they rode away to await the signal for the charge.

"When it came the troopers rode out of the woods in column of fours with drawn sabers, Farnsworth riding ahead. As the Vermonters rode through the Union skirmish line the skirmishers cried to

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



## Veterans Day 2024

### Remember... Freedom Is Not Free

Let us remember all the sacrifices made by our military so that we could have a safer life. No amount of appreciation will be sufficient enough to honor them. Let us just pray for them and their families. We salute those who continue to protect our freedom today.

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## VA awards nearly \$16 million in grants to help Veterans, service members participate in adaptive sports

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced the award of \$15.9 million in grants to fund adaptive sports, recreational activities, and equine therapy for Veterans and service members living with disabilities.

VA's Adaptive Sports Grant Program will provide grants to 91 national, regional, and community-based programs for fiscal year 2024 across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The programs will collectively provide life-changing opportunities for more than 15,000 Veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

These grants help advance the Biden-Harris Administration's Unity Agenda for the nation through advancing Veterans' wellbeing and opportunities. Adaptive sports are competitive or recreational sports and activities customized to fit the needs of Veterans with disabilities, including paralympic sports, archery, cycling, skiing, hunting, rock climbing, and sky diving. These activities allow Veterans to rehabilitate through recreation and encourage an active and fit lifestyle.

"These grants give Veterans life-changing opportunities to participate in adaptive sports in the communities where they live all across the country," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We know adaptive sports and recreational activities can be transformational for Veterans living with disabilities, improving their overall physical and mental health, and also giving them important community with fellow heroes who served."

Marine Corps Veteran Jataya Taylor — who competed in wheelchair fencing at the 2024 Paralympics — was unhappy and struggling with mental health issues until she began participating in adaptive sports with an organization supported by the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program. She touts adaptive sports as a gateway to a new community and essential to her mental health.

"Getting involved in adaptive sports was a saving grace for me," Taylor said. "Participating in these programs got me on the bike to start with, then got me climbing, and eventually it became an important part of my mental health to participate. I found my people. I found my new network of friends."

By participating in adaptive sports and equine therapy, Veterans can enhance their physical health, boost mental well-being, gain independence, and foster a strong sense of community. Grant awardees include various organizations, including Veterans Service Organizations, city and regional municipalities, and other community groups.

VA has awarded over \$119 million in grants through the Adaptive Sports Grant Program during the last nine years. This program is one of VA's many initiatives dedicated to improving the lives of those who have served.

Information about the awardees and details of the program are available at [www.va.gov/adaptiveports](http://www.va.gov/adaptiveports) and @Sports4Vets.

# Days as a new army recruit during the Second World War

By Margaret Downing  
REPORTER

Several years ago, the late George Clay, of Beloit, recalled his first days in the Army during World War II.

He explained, "The soldier's combat boots of the Second World War could be considered 'hostile accessories.' The first battle a pair of boots saw was called the 'breaking-in process.' We even questioned whether it was the soldier's feet or his boots that were being broken in.

"The boots actually came well equipped for the initial fight. There was an overwhelming smell of leather and they looked tough and felt rough. The soles were tough, made up of layer after layer of stiff leather and composition.

Bending the sole was like bending a leaf spring from a truck, even if the soldier bent it a little as he stepped, it was sure to spring back, and he would likely find himself back where he started! As a consequence, we would find ourselves walking as if we had boards on our feet — clomp, clomp, OUCH! Still, it was reassuring to know we had only two pairs of these torture boxes to break in.

"There were some secrets in dealing with the boots, but we didn't tell the boots, as they enjoyed being difficult. Secret No. 1: Boots could be softened a little. To accomplish this, a liberal coat of dubbing was applied to the outer surface of the boots, including the tongues and collars. Then we would hold the boots over heat, such as a fire in a metal wastebasket — rotating them in order to heat evenly until the dubbing melted. It was best to have a fire extinguisher handy to ventilate the room and gloves had to be worn or the smell of singed hair and skin would join the odor of burnt dubbing.

"Then quickly, before the boots could spit out the first layer, we would apply a second coat of dubbing, heating this also until the leather was choking and gurgling with dubbing, after which the boots would 'accidentally' absorb some of the softening oils. The oil would sink in so deeply that the leather couldn't reject it.

"Secret No. 2: The inside of the boot could also be softened. When the boots weren't looking, we would apply a liberal dose of 'Neatsfoot' oil to the inside surfaces of the boots. This would be done at night just before lights out and would then help fool the boots and give them time for the oil to be absorbed by morning.

"Secret No. 3: The boots would be frustrated if the soldier wore them with more than one pair of socks.

"The insides of the boots were not padded; in fact, they may have had invisible teeth near each toe and heel. To provide padding and to distance one's feet from the teeth, we would wear two or three pairs of socks. The boots preferred to chew directly on our feet.

"Think how frustrated they would be when the found they were forced to chew through not one but several layers



George Clay ended up in Berlin at the end of the war.

COURTESY PHOTO Hometown Heroes

of socks! One thing the boots would do, they would provide the soldiers with 'church socks' — holey ones.

"The boots came with a collar sewed atop the shoe part and had two straps with buckles in which to hold the collar tight around one's pant leg, which had to project down inside the collar and 'blouse out' over the top of it. Well-trained boots should have easily been able to hold up pants legs securely but did they? The pants would immediately start loosening and soon one pant leg would fall down and it seemed that one side would always come loose. There were a couple of secrets concerning the bloused pant leg dilemma.

"Secret No. 4: The idea was to get pants with legs three or four inches too long. All this extra material was then tucked down inside the boot collar, making it that much more difficult for

the material to loosen. Why, a soldier might have gotten through half a day before his pants legs came loose!

"Secret No. 5: This bit of advice was not bandied about, for it was a surefire way to keep a soldier's pants bloused, and it could have demoralized the boots and killed their spirit if they knew about it.

"The trick was to get two stout rubber bands and work them up between the two buckle straps on the collar. We would then tuck the pant leg up under the rubber band, and there we'd have it — pant legs bloused in precisely the correct location, and they wouldn't pull out. (It was best to carry a spare rubber band if needed.)

"There were times when the boots had to be polished, like at inspection

**FARNSWORTH** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

them to halt, for they could see what lay ahead. But there was no halting. At the left of Farnsworth's column the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia regiment of his brigade was in trouble and was falling back in confusion. The Confederate batteries were furiously at work and men were falling..."But Farnsworth and his men rode briskly forward.

"First of the enemy met by Farnsworth and the battalion with which he rode were the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas skirmishers of General Law's division, thrown out in a long, thin line to protect the Confederate flank from surprise. With a shout and at the gallop Farnsworth's men rode them down and were through, though the enemy fire emptied not a few saddles.

"Skirting the edge of the wood, Farnsworth led his troopers north, then swept in a great circle to the right and in the direction of Round Top, where the left of the Union line rested. West of Round Top and near it was a lower hill and in front of this the Confederate left was marked by the position of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry. When Law saw Farnsworth's purpose was to turn his flank he hastily moved the Alabama regiment out of line to its right and faced it about so that Farnsworth must confront its fire as he advanced.

"Still Farnsworth rode toward Round Top, but when almost even with the Confederate flank he turned sharply to the left and charged the Alabamans. He was riding now toward Devil's Den, an upheaval of rock formation, which was strongly held by the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Georgia regiments. He was now behind the Confederate main line and riding parallel to it. From the pen of Confederate General Law (Century Magazine, Vol. 33, page 304) read the story of Farnsworth's charge as that officer saw it."

--General Law's recollection follows:  
 "That portion of the cavalry'...(note: the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia)...which covered the front of the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas regiment overlapped the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas on its left, and, striking the skirmish line only, rode through it into the open valley in the rear of our main line on the spurs of Round Top. When I first became satisfied through information from the Texas skirmishers that Farnsworth's brigade was massing in their front, the Ninth Georgia regiment was ordered from Kern's house to the support of the batteries...Hearing the firing and knowing its cause, the Ninth Georgia came on the run just as the 1<sup>st</sup> Vermont cavalry rode through our skirmish line led by General Farnsworth

in person.

"Instead of moving directly upon our batteries, the cavalry directed its course up the valley toward Gettysburg, passing between the position of our artillery and our main line. Watching the direction they had taken, I sent Lieutenant Wade of my staff rapidly across the valley in advance of them with orders to detach the first regiment he should come to on the main line, and send them on the run to head them off in that direction. He was also ordered to follow the line to the extreme right and direct Colonel Oats (15<sup>th</sup> Alabama) to strengthen his flanking skirmish line and to close up the gap on the left of the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas where the cavalry had broken in."

--Law continued:

"Farnsworth and his cavalry, in the meantime, were riding in gallant style with drawn sabers and unopposed up the valley. As they approached Snyder's house, and as I stood intently watching them, I saw a ragged Confederate battle flag fluttering among the trees at the foot of the opposite ridge, and the men with it soon appeared, running out into the open ground on the further side of the valley. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama regiment which had been taken from the main line and sent down by Lieutenant Wade. The men opened fire as they ran. The course of the cavalry was abruptly checked and saddles were rapidly emptied. Recoiling from this fire, they turned to their left and rear and directed their course up the hill towards the position occupied by our batteries. Bachman's battery promptly changed front to its left so as to face the approaching cavalry, and, together with its infantry supports, opened a withering fire at close range.

"Turning again to their left, Farnsworth and the few of his men who remained in their saddles directed their course towards the point where they had originally broken in, having completed by this time almost a complete circle. But the gap where they had entered was now closed, and receiving another fire at this point, they again turned to the left and took refuge in the woods near the base of Round Top. When the last turn to the left was made, about a half a dozen of their number separated from the main body and escaped by running the gauntlet to the right of the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas regiment.

"While these movements were in progress I could plainly distinguish General Farnsworth who led the charge and whom I then supposed to be Kilpatrick. He wore a linen haverlock

over his military cap and was evidently wounded at the time he entered the woods. Here, with his little handful of gallant followers, he rode upon the skirmish line of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama regiment, and, pistol in hand, called upon Lieutenant Adrian, who commanded the line, to surrender. The skirmishers fired upon him, killing his horse and wounding Farnsworth in several places. As he fell to the ground, Adrian approached him and demanded his surrender. He curtly refused to surrender, at the same time killing himself with the pistol which he still held in his hand...He certainly bore himself with the most conspicuous gallantry throughout that fatal charge."

--Dobson's writing continues events:

"Fine there you have, at the same time, a true tribute to the gallantry of Farnsworth from an opposing commander, and the mistaken authority for the tragic fiction that rather than accept capture at the hands of the enemy, he ended his own life.

"Such an action would have been a magnificent gesture, perhaps, but it was not Farnsworth's way of meeting what fate had for him.

"He did not end his life. The evidence is plain and unmistakable that he did not.

"Confederate reports dealing with this supposed act of Farnsworth's all declare he shot himself in the head. They all are based upon the same mistake that General Law made in the article that has just been quoted. Law thought the heroic horseman who 'wore a linen havelock over his military cap' was Farnsworth, probably for the reason that all the charging cavalrymen thought that day that that figure was the most conspicuous.

"But the rider with the 'linen havelock' was not Farnsworth. It was Captain Cushman, who had pinned his silk handkerchief to his cap back in the woods at Farnsworth's conference with his officers and who had not removed it when he rode at Farnsworth's side through the enemy lines. It was the handkerchief fluttering behind Cushman's cap that Law mistook for the havelock.

"Cushman rode almost stirrup to stirrup with Farnsworth, was shot down at almost the same moment, was wounded terribly"...and left for dead. Not twenty yards distant Farnsworth fell, shot five times through the body by Confederate riflemen—but not one of his wounds was in the head or face. When the battle was ended and his body recovered, Federal surgeons made definite report upon that.

"Subsequent to the publication of his

article in the Century Magazine General Law learned the mistake he had made and when his words were reprinted in book form they included only the splendid tribute to Farnsworth, and nothing of the fiction as to the manner in which he died."

-- At this point, Dobson quoted former Confederate Captain Bachman:

"From another Confederate source we get a closer view of Farnsworth's heroic death. Writing in the Journal of Military Service Institution for March, 1910, page 343, General W.M. Graham, U.S.A. Retired, says:

"The following is the account of Farnsworth's death as seen by a Confederate officer and by him related to me in the winter of 1876-77 at Columbia, South Carolina. I was introduced to Captain Bachman, who commanded the Ham(p)ton Legion Battery, with which I was engaged at Gettysburg on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Naturally our conversation drifted to the war, and he remarked: 'One of the most gallant incidents of the war witnessed by me was a cavalry charge at the battle of Gettysburg on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, made by General Farnsworth of the Yankee army. He led his brigade, riding well ahead of his men in a charge against my battery and the infantry supports; we were so filled with admiration for his bravery that we were reluctant to kill him, and so called out to him to surrender, as his position was hopeless. He replied by emptying his revolver and then hurling it at us and drawing his saber, when we shot him through the body, killing him. His men were nearly all killed, wounded or captured, very few escaping to their own lines.'"

"That is an eyewitness account of Farnsworth's death. Everything that Farnsworth was, and everything that he did in the uniform of his country, argues that it is the true account. Farnsworth was courageous. He was defiant. Already severely wounded when he charged Bachman's battery, he was defiant to the last. Instead of turning his weapon upon himself in a sacrificial gesture of defeat, he hurled it at his foes, and received their fire, and died—one of the greatest heroes who ever led a hopeless venture in the great war between the states.

"Yet the fiction that General Law gave utterance to, though not from ungenerous or unworthy motives, persists. In the official guide book of the battlefield of Gettysburg it is repeated to this day.

"It should be corrected. For the truth demands that correction be made."

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# VA awards more than \$44.5M in grants to state Veterans cemeteries

In early October, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' National Cemetery Administration awarded \$44,553,338 in grants for the expansion and/or improvement of state Veterans' cemeteries during fiscal year 2024. These grants help deliver timely and accessible burial and memorial services to Veterans.

The cemeteries receiving grants include California, Georgia, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington.

Veterans interred in grant-funded Veterans' cemeteries receive the same burial and memorial benefits provided to Veterans in VA national cemeteries, at no cost. This benefit includes a gravesite, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

"It is our duty to ensure America's Veterans are honored for their service as they are laid to rest," said Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Ronald Walters.

"Partnering with states, tribes, and

territories allows us to better provide burial options closer to where Veterans and their families live," he added.

Since its inception in 1978, the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program has allocated more than 504 grants to 122 state, territorial, and Tribal Veterans' cemeteries, and more than \$1 billion in funding leading to more than 800,000 interments for Veterans. In FY 2024, these cemeteries and VA national cemeteries conducted nearly 185,000 interments combined.

Between these grant-funded cemeteries and VA's national cemeteries, the department is now providing 94% of Veterans who reside in the United States with the option of burial in a VA or VA-funded cemetery within 75 miles of their homes.

Veterans interred in most VA-grant funded cemeteries are also memorialized on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site. This online program provides family, friends, and others the tool to preserve their Veteran's legacy by posting tributes, uploading images, and sharing their Veteran's achievements, biographical information, and historical documents.

# Fiscal year 2024 numbers surpass VA's goal by over 16 percent, largest year since 2019

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced it housed 47,925 Veterans experiencing homelessness in FY 2024, surpassing its goal to house 41,000 Veterans by 16.9% and marking the largest number of Veterans housed in a single year since FY 2019. VA also ensured that 96% of the Veterans housed during this time did not return to homelessness. This follows last month's announcement that VA had surpassed its FY 2024 housing goal a month early.

Ending Veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA and the entire Biden-Harris Administration. Since FY 2022, VA has permanently housed nearly 134,000 homeless Veterans, and the total number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. has fallen by over 4% since early 2020 and by more than 52% since 2010.

"Nearly 48,000 formerly homeless Veterans now have a safe, stable place to call home — and there's nothing more important than that," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

"No Veteran should experience homelessness in this nation they swore to defend. We are making real progress in this fight, and we will not rest until

Veteran homelessness is a thing of the past," McDonough added.

VA has also made progress in combating Veteran homelessness in the Greater Los Angeles area, permanently housing 1,854 homeless Veterans this fiscal year — the most of any city in America (for the third year in a row) and exceeding VA's FY 2024 goals for this region by 15.5%. Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's recent Point-in Time count revealed a 22.9% reduction in Veterans experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles between 2023 and 2024.

VA's efforts to combat Veteran homelessness are grounded in reaching out to homeless Veterans, understanding their unique needs, and addressing them.

These efforts are built on the evidence-based "Housing First" approach, which prioritizes getting a Veteran into housing, then providing or connecting them with the wraparound services and supports they need to stay housed, including health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more. Visit [VA.gov/homeless](http://VA.gov/homeless) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs supporting Veterans experiencing homelessness.

## NEW ARMY RECRUIT • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

and before weekend passes were given out. Dubbing and shiny boots were incompatible, so here we came to Secret No. 6:

"With a large can of 'Kiwi' shoe polish (ox blood color) we would set the polish on fire and let it cook for 30 or 40 seconds (not forgetting to have a fire extinguisher handy and opening the windows).

When the polish was molten and smell of it filled the air, the flames would be

muffled with the can lid. Quickly, a thick layer of the soupy polish was daubed onto the boots. After the boots and polish cooled, we would attack the boots with a shoe brush and whip them into a high shine. If one treatment didn't do it, we'd fire up the polish again. We wouldn't give up, even if our buddies complained of the smog. We wouldn't tell the boots any of this secret information or even mention their name...we simply referred to our boots as 'hostile accessories.'"

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## Field of Honor

The Arthur W. Anderson Peace Park near Loves Park City Hall is worth a visit. The park includes a Korean War Memorial and the Field of Honor, which has five vertical monuments in recognition of those who served in the five wars of the 20th century: World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. There is also the American Gold Star Mothers monument for those who lost a son or daughter through military service.

AW ANDERSON PHOTO *Hometown Heroes*

## Old Stone Church to host annual veterans turkey dinner

The Old Stone Church, 101 E. Union St., Rockton, will host its annual Veteran's Day Turkey Dinner on Saturday Nov. 9 with a sit down dinner served to the first 80 paid reservations at 6 p.m.

This dinner, honoring veterans, has been sponsored by the Old Stone Church continuously since the end of World War II. The meal is served family style and is a valued tradition open to the community.

Seating is limited and is offered by paid reservations only. For reservations, contact the church at 815-624-6212. Cost is \$15 for the sit down dinner and \$13 for a carry out dinner. \$11 carry-out price if five or more dinners are purchased.

Since the end of World War II the church has been serving a dinner to the public in honor of all veterans. It has become a staple for the Old Stone Church over the years and something people stand in line for... literally. The Old Stone Church will make a donation to the Rockton VFW Club shortly after the closing of the dinner.



# Thank you, Veterans.

*"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."*

President John F. Kennedy



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# THANK YOU VETERANS



*We live in the land of the free because of the brave.*

Mayor Greg Jury, Alderman, staff, and people in the City of Loves Park thank all our hometown heroes on Veterans Day - and everyday.



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