



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO USE YOUR CARES BENEFIT

A key provision of the CARES Act allows you to deduct up to \$300 (\$600 if filing jointly) from your income taxes even if you don't itemize deductions in 2020. A year-end gift to the Virginia War Memorial Foundation is a great way to activate this one-time benefit. Make your gift before December 31, 2020, and help us share and preserve the stories of our brave veterans.



Going to the Sun Road – Montana, by Frank Lee Ruggles

New at the Virginia War Memorial — Veterans' Photography

Sacred Scenes: American Parks and Battlefields

The Photography of Amanda Ransom

Amanda Ransom is a US Army veteran, wife, and mother. She served in the Army from 2010 until 2013, when her tour was cut short because of illness. She uses photography as a therapeutic outlet and hopes to share this method of stress relief with fellow veterans and others who are struggling. She has used the camera as a tool to overcome stress and social anxiety and as an important means of self-expression. In her photographs, Ransom strives to bring awareness to America's beauty and history. A self-taught photographer, she specializes in macrophotography and enjoys capturing beauty in the smallest details.



Codori Farm, by Amanda Ransom

The Photography of Frank Lee Ruggles

Frank Lee Ruggles — who describes himself as the "Warrior-Artist" — drew on his creative eye and his physical endurance (acquired during paratrooper training) to document the oft-threatened natural beauty of our country during a 5,000-day, 100,000-mile journey that took him through 315 National Parks and Forests. His critically acclaimed photography documents the often-threatened natural beauty of this country. His 79 Years Project is a pictorial survey of environmental changes in our National Parks, comparing modern photographs he took with those taken in the exact same locations 79 years earlier by Ansel Adams. Ruggles currently serves as the official photographer of the US Army Historical Foundation.



Visit the Veterans' Art Gallery now through May 2021 to see the photography of Amanda Ransom and Frank Lee Ruggles.



ALSO NEW — In the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion

During the most recent expansion of the Virginia War Memorial — the construction of the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion — the archives and **USS Birmingham Research Library** were moved to allow for more efficient space for cataloguing, processing, and researching.

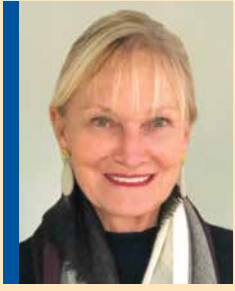
Within our research library are titles focused on the military service of Virginians, along with works that deal with the history of military conflicts that Virginians have participated in. Our bound volumes include rare and out-of-print books as well as unit histories, yearbooks, and rosters; in addition, our collection includes manuscript letters, photographs, and military documents. Due to space limitations, the library policy is to focus on materials that may not be readily available elsewhere. The library is a noncirculating collection and is available to anyone by appointment. You can search the library holdings online at vawarmemorial.org/learn/collections-and-library.

Rear Adm. John Marocchi (1920–2014), a longtime Virginia War Memorial board member and supporter, and his fellow members of the USS *Birmingham* (CL-62) Association, raised the necessary funds to establish our research library. The *Birmingham's* outstanding tours of service were highly decorated and are well documented in World War II naval history. Possibly her most courageous maneuver was attempting to aid the stricken aircraft carrier USS *Princeton* (CVL-23) in 1944. During that effort 239 men died, 408 were wounded, and the bodies of four were never recovered. John Marocchi was among the seriously wounded.

We always welcome items for consideration in the archives. Are you a Veteran? Is your family member? We are looking for materials that tell the diverse story of Virginians who have served. Please reach out if you would like to speak about donating your materials — physically or digitally — to the archives. Contact Archivist Heidi Sheldon by email at heidi.sheldon@dvs.virginia.gov.



We Can Do This, but Only with Your Help



Thank you for your outpouring of support, your many words of encouragement, and your gestures of friendship as we have weathered the storm of this pandemic. It was only a few days after the grand opening of the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion

that the Virginia War Memorial was forced to close because of COVID-19. Compared to the many deaths from the virus, the wrenching economic upheaval of Virginia's small and large businesses, and the near devastating strain on our health care delivery systems, the inconveniences the Virginia War Memorial has endured seem minor.

Our education staff did not skip a beat before creating a new digital model for programs. In fact technology has kept us connected in many ways. Most of us have developed a hybrid model of teleworking and working from the office. We have switched up our office procedures, learned how to use GoToMeeting and Zoom, and adapted to more FaceTime than we ever dreamed possible.

As we navigated the challenges of distance learning, we learned how to manage our Mighty Pen Project writing class online. Thanks to David Robbins and his dedicated assistants, our sessions continued — online but in real-time. The digital archive of our veteran essays, memoirs, poems, and stories continues to grow, now numbering more than 200 entries and accessible to all.

Our TGA (They Gave All) 5K was postponed from its popular Memorial Day place on the calendar to Veterans Day weekend and then changed to a virtual run. Even so, our marquis sponsor, Loyalty Automotive, led the way in support. With sincere thanks to Dave Perno and his staff in Chester, we recruited nearly 200 runners. Our friends at VFW Post 6364 stepped up to be our bib sponsor so that we could offer all a chance to honor a veteran as they charted their individual courses. Nelsen Funeral Home and Woody Funeral Home joined the effort and helped keep the TGA 5K on track to be one of our most important public programs.

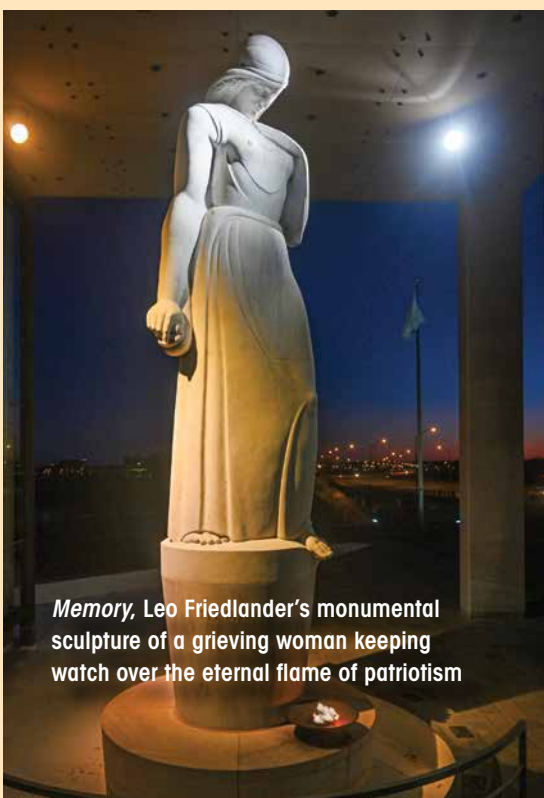
These 5K supporters, together with the thousands who support us in other ways, make everything we do possible, even in times like these.

If you are able to make a gift to our cause, please know that there has never been a better time to support our mission of honoring veterans and inspiring patriotism through education and preservation.

As we move deeper into the holiday season, the staff and board of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation wish you a happy and healthy season. We will get through this.

Pam

Pamela R. Seay
PRESIDENT
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



Memory, Leo Friedlander's monumental sculpture of a grieving woman keeping watch over the eternal flame of patriotism



Write About an American Who Served

This past Veterans Day, the Virginia War Memorial Foundation recognized the winners of our Veterans Day Essay Contest. The prompt for this year's contest was *Write about an American who served during World War II who inspires you.*

My Grandpa, Michael Troyanoski (1923–2013), Continues to Inspire Me

The winning high school essay was written by Matthew Miscikowski, an 11th-grader at Deep Run High School in Henrico County. His teacher, Andrew Heare, was present for the ceremony.

When I was younger, I would sit on the floor at my grandparents' house next to a kindly older gentleman who would tell me stories about flying in airplanes. I was very young and only knew him as some old guy I was related to but it wasn't until later that I realized I had the honor of knowing someone from the Greatest Generation. That someone was my grandfather, Michael Troyanoski.

Michael Troyanoski was a Sergeant in the United States Army Air Corp during WWII. He was a navigator, engineer, radio operator and gunner on B-17s and B-24s and flew in 37 bombing raids over Europe, destroying targets that were critical to the Nazi war machine. Later, he was stationed in South America as part of search and rescue operations in the Pacific. I had no idea that the man holding my Thomas the Tank Engine toy was a war hero who fought for the freedom of future generations. I would listen to his tales but unfortunately I could not appreciate them as I had no understanding what a PB-Y was or where was Germany. Now that I am sixteen and more knowledgeable about the history and events that led up to WWII, I understand the great sacrifice of not only my grandfather but all the men and women who defended our country against the Axis Powers.

The true tragedy is that his stories would never touch my ears again as Michael Troyanoski passed away when I was 9. Regrettably, there are no recordings or handwritten notes of these stories. He had many old black and white photos of planes and places that we keep meticulously safe and treasured. Pictures of a young man in a uniform and a much too big overcoat with a duffle bag standing in line with other young men boarding the train to basic training or a B-17 limping back to home base, smoke pouring out of its engine and the gunner bubble blown to smithereens. Some of these pictures show the stark reality of war while others show young men just being happy to have survived another day.

As a young man, my grandfather had big hopes and dreams but all that changed on December 7th, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Michael Troyanoski was just one of the millions of American men and women who took up arms against injustice. Some volunteered, some were drafted but all went to battle not knowing when they would come home or if they would come home. My grandfather was one of the lucky ones and made it back to the small



Matthew Miscikowski reads his essay on Veterans Day.

coal-mining town in Pennsylvania where he grew up. He came home, married, started a family and took over the family business. When he talked about his time in WWII he talked about the friends he made, places he saw and most of all the planes. He loved those airplanes. He never talked about the missions and the loss of life he experienced until one day my mom was helping him preserve the treasured photos and found pictures she had never seen before. Pictures of planes destroyed in battle, smoke coming from enemy ships sinking into the sea, and scarred and charred earth seen from the planes as they flew over the land they had just targeted. When asked what these were pictures of he told his other stories. The stories he did not like to share because they dredged up sadness and questions of why did he survive when so many others didn't. But that is what the Greatest Generation did. They came home and carried on with their lives and shut away all the horror they had been through. We call them the Greatest Generation but they were a modest group of men and women. Never recognizing themselves as the heroes that they were but just as individuals doing what they had to do for God and their country.

To this day, the image of my grandfather still shines as a bright beacon, which inspires me to be the best person that I can be. And one day I hope to be half the man that my grandfather was. We call them the greatest generation because of their humility, commitment, bravery and love of their country and there will never be another group like them. I close by saying that from their stories and pictures they will continue to inspire future generations to unite, to commit and defend the honor of this country. ■

"As a young man, my grandfather had big hopes and dreams but all that changed on December 7th, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed."

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During World War II Who Inspires You

Why Luta Mae McGrath, “The First Lady of Ordnance,” Inspires Me

Our middle school essay contest winner was Niamh Moreno, a seventh-grader at the Basilica School of St. Mary in Alexandria. Her teacher is Jacklin McKee.

When I think about service to my country, a veteran who inspires me is Luta Mae Cornelius McGrath who was known as “The First Lady of Ordnance.” Luta Mae McGrath joined the United States Army in 1943 to fight in World War II and she served for 17 years until she retired as a lieutenant colonel (LTC). When she died at her home in Virginia in 2016, she was 108 years old and one of the oldest female survivors of World War II and the Cold War. LTC McGrath was honored by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2015, and to me her story is the perfect example of public service and courage and what women can accomplish.

LTC McGrath was born in Beattyville, Kentucky on November 21, 1907. Her father died when she was five years old, leaving her mother poor and raising three children. LTC McGrath lived in Beattyville for most of her childhood. She was a young woman when World War II began, and she enlisted in the Woman’s Army Auxiliary Corps in 1943.

In the Army, LTC McGrath was assigned to the Ordnance Corps, which is the department that supports the development of weapons. She was first stationed in Texas, and in interviews stated that while she was usually treated with respect by the male soldiers some of them resented women taking their jobs. She worked in Texas for four years where she helped the Army produce the weapons that were used to fight in World War II.

In 1947, LTC McGrath was sent to Germany. She helped to coordinate the Berlin Airlift, which was a plan to help the section of Berlin that American troops occupied and that the Soviet Union blockaded. The Berlin Airlift was a complicated mission between the United States Army and United Kingdom Air Force to bring food, medicine, and other supplies to the troops and people in West Berlin. It allowed the Allied troops to remain in West Berlin even though they were outnumbered by Communist forces.

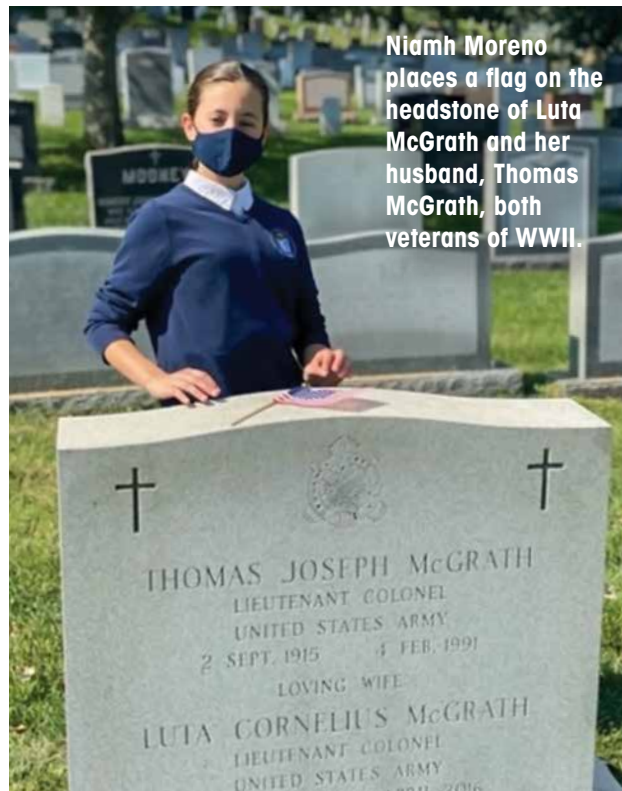
In Berlin, LTC McGrath met her husband, Thomas McGrath, who was also a United States Army officer. They were married in 1950 at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

LTC McGrath had many other assignments in the Ordnance Corps and retired after 17 years as a lieutenant colonel which was the highest rank ever achieved by a woman at that time. She and her husband retired to Annandale, Virginia where they lived the rest of their lives. The two never had children, but LTC McGrath was very active in her community and in supporting the military.

She worked for the Women in Community Service group and the Army Ordnance community gave her the nickname “The First Lady of Ordnance.” LTC McGrath was also very religious and attended mass every day at Queen of Apostles Church in Alexandria.

I cannot imagine how frightening it must have been for LTC McGrath to join the Army at a time when the entire world was at war and very few women were able to join the military. Her service in Texas helped to develop the tanks and missiles that helped the United States win the war. Her service in Germany helped to fight the Soviet Union and prevent another war. She stayed in the Army for many years and proved her commitment to her country and fellow Americans.

Both my parents served in the United States Army in Iraq, and my mother together with veterans like LTC McGrath helped make it possible for women today to serve. LTC McGrath showed leadership and bravery, and her long life is one to be very proud of.



Niamh Moreno places a flag on the headstone of Luta Mae McGrath and her husband, Thomas McGrath, both veterans of WWII.

I wish I could have interviewed LTC McGrath for this essay to learn more about her experience in the Army, but I visited her at Arlington National Cemetery, and left a flag at her grave to show my great respect for her life. ■

Matthew’s and Niamh’s essays can also be found on our website along with the sources quoted in their works.

Soldiering On



As we near the end of the year 2020, it would be easy to look back on the year and see only disappointment. This was supposed to be a year of tremendous growth and activity here at the Virginia War Memorial. Instead, we have endured

closures, cancellations, and strict limitations associated with the pandemic. I sincerely hoped that fall would bring a return to normalcy, but it appears that 2020 will end much on the same note that has been played for the past 10 months.

Nevertheless, I am increasingly optimistic about what lies ahead for the War Memorial. We are ‘Soldiering On’ through this climate of caution and restriction and surging in our education and preservation efforts. I am tremendously proud of the livestream programs our education team has provided, and continue to provide, as well as our new Oral History Project that has burst out of the gate over the last quarter to preserve 26 different veteran stories. These programs have no limitations, no restrictions, and we plan to proceed full steam ahead with them as we finish the year.

There is a reason for excitement. Our new Sacred Scenes Exhibit in the Veterans’ Art Gallery is magnificent. I urge each of you to come see it and support these tremendous veteran photographers by purchasing a print. A new exhibit is being designed for the Exhibit Hall and will arrive in a few short months. We have new film ideas brewing, new education programs on the way, and we are not going to allow the stale pandemic to stifle our creativity or optimism.

Like those whom we honor every day here at the Virginia War Memorial, we will Soldier On. And we will be ready when the students, visitors, and tour groups return. In the meantime, we remain thankful for all the great work of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation to provide reason for optimism and hope in great days ahead.

Dr. Clay Mountcastle
DIRECTOR
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL



Congratulations!

Join us in congratulating James Triesler, director of education for the Virginia War Memorial. Jim has been named the National Battle of the Bulge Association historian. A frequent guest lecturer and popular military historian, he has served the Virginia War Memorial for five years.



The Walkway of Honor

Mary Ann Wilson, an enthusiastic supporter of the Virginia War Memorial, joined friends and Foundation staff to install three bricks to honor her late husband, Lou, and son, Scotty — both USN Chiefs. Mary Ann recently shared her 9/11 story with our online audience in a livestream account of her experiences that day.

On special assignment as HUD’s regional director for New York and New Jersey in 2001, Mary Ann witnessed the 9/11 attacks just outside her 35th-floor office window of the Federal Building in Lower Manhattan. Her account is available on our website: VaWarMemorial.org.



OUR MISSION

To honor veterans, preserve history, educate youth, and inspire patriotism in all.

OUR VISION

Advancing knowledge of history and cultural awareness throughout the Commonwealth and beyond by sharing and preserving veterans’ personal stories and America’s military past.



Now available for your special event

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation rents its beautifully appointed indoor and outdoor spaces for private events, within the parameters defined by the Governor's most recent executive order concerning COVID-19 safety precautions. Call Kerrie Arcand at (804) 786-2176 or send an email to karcand@vawarmemorial.org.



Virginia War Memorial
621 South Belvidere Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220
OPEN — Monday – Saturday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday: noon – 4 p.m.
Shrine of Memory: open 5 a.m. to midnight daily
CLOSED — New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day
VaWarMemorial.org

PHOTOGRAPHY: Mark Mitchell Photography,
Virginia War Memorial
NEWSLETTER DESIGN: Communication Design Inc.

STRUGGLING WITH GIFT IDEAS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

Consider selections from our Weinberg Memorial Store. Visit on-site or online at VaWarMemorial.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Read our eblasts, check our website, and follow us on Facebook for the latest event details.

VaWarMemorial.org



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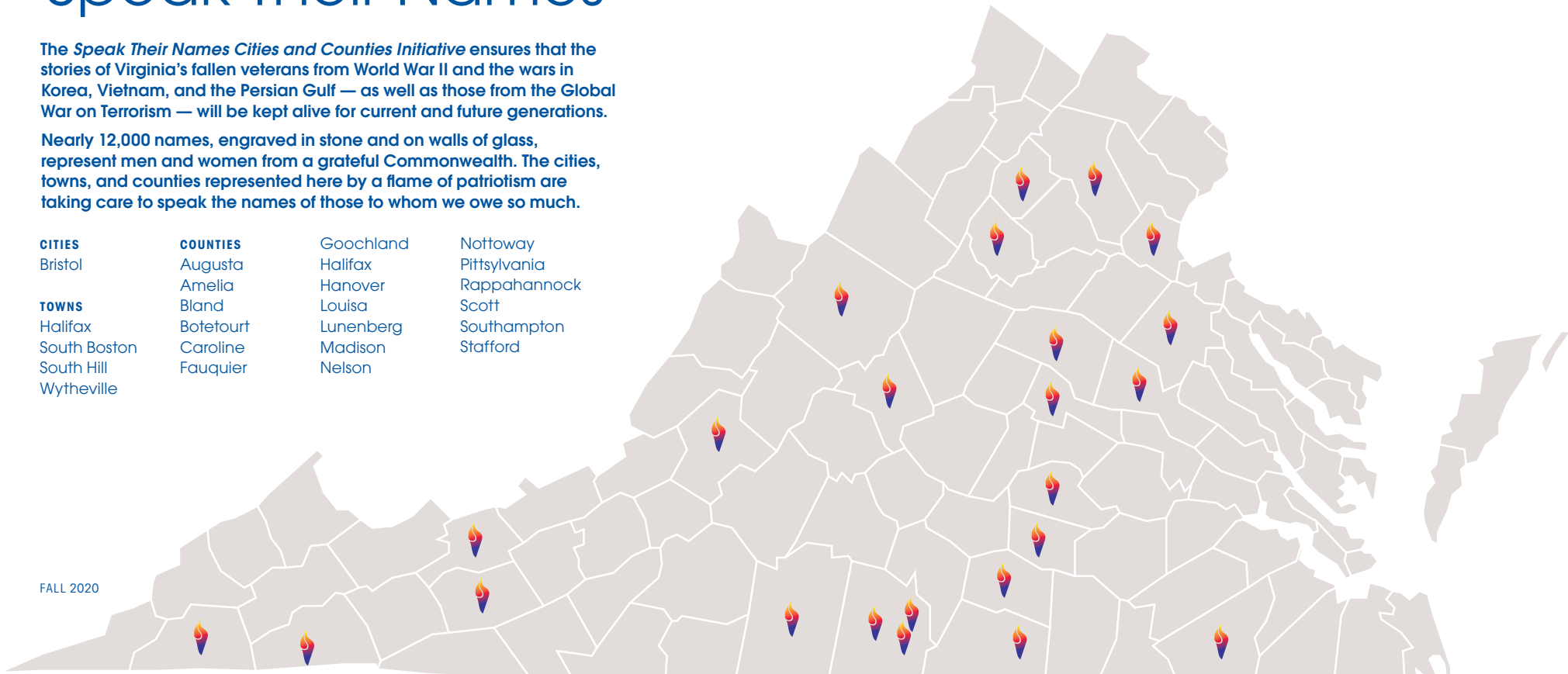
Speak Their Names

The *Speak Their Names Cities and Counties Initiative* ensures that the stories of Virginia's fallen veterans from World War II and the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf — as well as those from the Global War on Terrorism — will be kept alive for current and future generations.

Nearly 12,000 names, engraved in stone and on walls of glass, represent men and women from a grateful Commonwealth. The cities, towns, and counties represented here by a flame of patriotism are taking care to speak the names of those to whom we owe so much.

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|---------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| CITIES | COUNTIES | Goochland | Nottoway |
| Bristol | Augusta | Halifax | Pittsylvania |
| | Amelia | Hanover | Rappahannock |
| TOWNS | Bland | Louisa | Scott |
| Halifax | Botetourt | Lunenburg | Southampton |
| South Boston | Caroline | Madison | Stafford |
| South Hill | Fauquier | Nelson | |
| Wytheville | | | |

FALL 2020



If your city or county would like to support our *Speak Their Names Initiative*, please contact us at mmwachur@vawarmemorial.org or 301-580-1488. Or visit VaWarMemorial.org/SpeakTheirNames.