

Virginia's Annual Memorial Day Ceremony



Monday, May 31, 11 AM - noon
Heilman Amphitheater

Join us in person or online.
Please visit [VaWarMemorial.org](https://www.vawar memorial.org)
for details and updates related
to weather and COVID restrictions.



Coming to the Virginia War Memorial

Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing Exhibition Opening Veterans Day 2021

The Memorial's walls are engraved with the names of nearly 12,000 military veterans from Virginia who perished in combat during World War II; the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf; and, more recently, those who have lost their lives in the Global War on Terrorism.

A new exhibition opening later this year will shed light on who these veterans were and what they were doing before military service interrupted and cut short their lives. Our overarching mission is to honor veterans. We do that most effectively through the preservation of their stories (a sampling of which are below). Our vision is that a global audience will recognize the valor and sacrifice of Virginia's military veterans in the pursuit of liberty, democracy, justice, and peace for all.

If you have donation items that help tell the story of any name engraved on our walls, please contact Jesse Smith, Virginia War Memorial Curator, at jesse.smith@dvs.virginia.gov.

- ★ **ALFRED GREGORY**
- ★ **LESLIE GREGORY**
- ★ **HERBERT HOOVER LOGAN**

On June 27, 1950, first cousins Alfred Gregory and Leslie Gregory, and their best friend Herbert Hoover Logan, volunteered for the U.S. Army. The three grew up together in Buckingham County, attended school together and were members of the same church. They attended basic training together, and were assigned to the, still mostly segregated, African American 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division in Korea. On April 12, 1951, Logan was killed in action. On May 23, 1951, both Alfred and Leslie Gregory were also killed. Still together, Herbert, Alfred, and Leslie are buried at the Baptist Union Baptist Church cemetery in Buckingham.

- ★ **GORDON PRESTON YOUNG**

Gordon Preston Young was born in Albemarle County on March 15, 1944, and grew up in Drakes Branch (Charlotte County). A Boy Scout, paperboy, and baseball enthusiast, Gordon enjoyed spending time outdoors. He attended Randolph-Henry High School, and while he didn't like academics, he loved playing the drums in the school band and being a member of the junior varsity football team. Gordon dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Army on January 25, 1963. He planned to make a career in the Army. By August 1964, he was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). As part of the 1st Cavalry Division, Gordon was among the first full Army division deployed to Vietnam. Stationed in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, the 1st Cavalry Division was surrounded by challenging landscape and very few roads. Helicopters were the easiest and fastest way to move soldiers. On November 17, 1965, during the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, Gordon was killed during an enemy ambush. His family learned of his death when a taxi driver brought a telegram to their door.

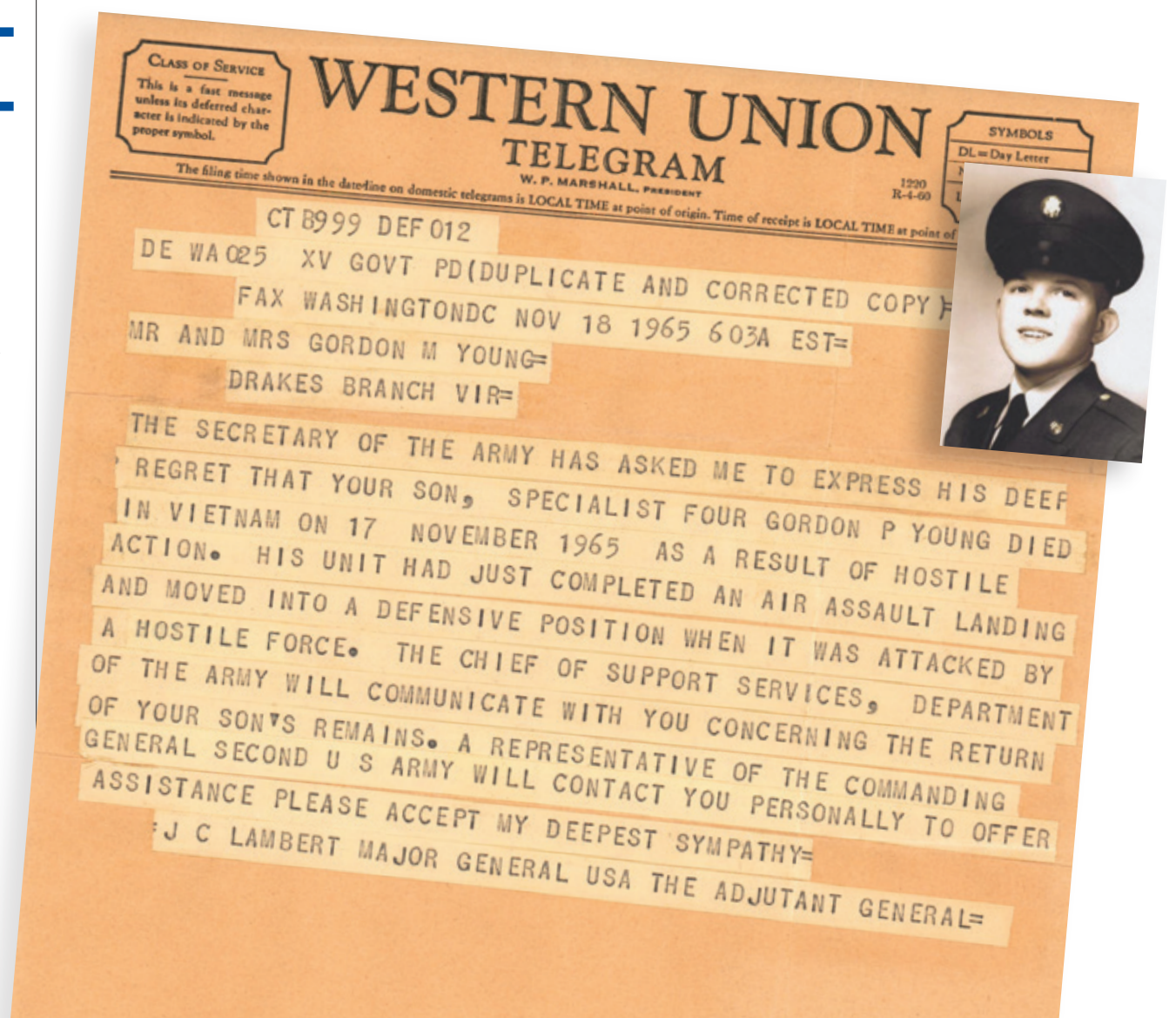
- ★ **LESLIE DENISE JACKSON**

Leslie Denise Jackson was born on October 28, 1985, in Richmond. Leslie graduated from George Wythe High School, where she rose to the rank of Battalion Commander in the school's JROTC program. She then joined the U.S. Army. On March 28, 2004, Leslie deployed first to Kuwait and then to Iraq. That same year, on May 20, Leslie's vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. She died later that day. At the age of 18, this fearless young woman was one of the youngest casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



- ★ **PAUL PISKLA, JR.**

Paul Piskla, Jr., was born on July 26, 1923, to immigrant parents: Paul Piskla, Sr., from Hungary and Christiania Piskla from Austria. After graduating from high school in Hopewell, Paul Jr. was employed at the Naval Air Station in Norfolk, before joining the Army on November 6, 1943. After basic training he was assigned to the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion of the 7th Armored Division. In August 1944, he arrived in Normandy and fought across France. On September 11, 1944, near Dornot, France, Private Paul Piskla, Jr., was killed in action. He was initially listed as Missing in Action. It took more than a year for his remains to be recovered and identified. They are still interred at the Lorraine American Military Cemetery in St. Avold, France.



Lives Worth Knowing: Why Oral Histories Matter



How many of us have lamented, too late, that we didn't ask more questions when we had the chance? The staff of the Virginia War Memorial has been diligently collecting veterans' oral histories. Our goal is simple: to


speak to as many of Virginia's veterans as possible and to preserve their stories in their own words. That means speaking with men and women from all over the Commonwealth who served during different periods, both in peacetime and wartime.

The dedicated staff who carry out this mission are led by Heidi Sheldon, Archivist for the Virginia War Memorial. Many of our interviewees have become advocates and ambassadors for the initiative, and several have participated in other Memorial programming. John Ketwig, a Vietnam-era veteran, was part of the Tet Offensive Livestream. Kelli Petersen, a former Army JAG Corps officer, was featured in our Salute to Service Livestream on March 30. Marine veteran Kyle Cottrell was part of the "Grit and Grace" discussion on March 16.

Currently, all of our interviews are being done virtually. A positive aspect of virtual interviews is that we are able to speak to folks who might not have been able to drive to Richmond if we were conducting these interviews in person, and we can fit interviews into their schedules.

Creating a robust oral history archive is a featured funding objective for the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. It is not enough to record these stories. We must provide context so that current and future generations understand the national and international significance of every Virginia veteran story. If oral histories are to be useful to researchers, genealogists, teachers, and students, they must be accessible and keyword searchable. We also need to begin the process now of collecting the 21st-century stories from the War on Terrorism.

Your financial contributions to the Foundation support this and other statewide efforts to honor veterans and inspire patriotism through education and preservation.


Pamela R. Seay
PRESIDENT
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



The team from Bishop Stone and Metal Arts recently engraved the name of U.S. Staff Sergeant (SSG) Ben H. Maxwell on the Shrine of Memory—Global War on Terrorism and Beyond and the name of U.S. Army Private First Class (PFC) Richard H. Harris on the Shrine of Memory—20th Century.



Foundation Board Welcomes MG Robert M. Dyess, Jr., USA (Ret.), and the Honorable William J. Howell

General Robert M. Dyess, Jr., brings 36 years of military leadership and experience to his new role on the Board of Directors. A native of Appomattox, Virginia, he is a graduate of the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, holds a master's from Virginia Tech, and a master's from the United States Air University at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.



Dyess

In his distinguished military career, Dyess held command positions all over the world, including combat service during Operation Urgent Freedom in Grenada and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He retired from the military in 2018, and he is currently the Vice President, Customer Relations for the Army and Missile Defense for Northrop Grumman, and resides in Northern Virginia.

The Honorable William J. Howell grew up in Alexandria and earned his undergraduate degree in business administration from the University of Richmond and his JD from the University of Virginia School of Law. He represented Virginia's 28th District in the



Howell

Commonwealth's House of Delegates for almost 30 years, from 1992 until 2018. During that tenure, he served 15 years as Speaker of the House — the second-longest-serving speaker in state history.

Of his many legislative achievements, one of his most notable was HB 2313 in 2013, a major transportation initiative passed with bipartisan support. Howell brings his passion for Virginia history, education, and preservation to his new role as a Director on the Foundation's Board. ■



What a Team — Two in a Million

Kerrie and Chad Arcand Retire

As part of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, Kerrie and Chad Arcand delivered Valentines and notes to patients at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center and Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center.

LTC Chad R. Arcand, USA (Ret.), served this country for 26 years on peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia and combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He retired from the Army's Command and General Staff College, where he taught field grade officers tactics and strategy. The Virginia War Memorial was beyond fortunate to secure Chad as its first Operations Director in 2018, and he immediately made the organization better.

Kerrie, a proud military spouse, joined the Virginia War Memorial Foundation in 2019 as the Events Manager. After years of construction limiting



The Arcands are pictured at right with Kristy René Coie-Day, Director for Development and Civic Engagement for the U.S. Veterans Administration.

our ability to host events, she realized the value of our new spaces. In short order, she rebuilt our rental and retail business and garnered praise from clients, donors, vendors, and colleagues on staff for her team spirit, remarkable work ethic, and positive attitude. The Arcands' tireless work; attention to detail; and love for veterans, the War Memorial, and its mission will be irreplaceable and sorely missed. ■



Walkway of Honor

Purchasing a brick to be placed on the Walkway of Honor is a meaningful and permanent way to commemorate an event, honor a friend or family member, or remember a loved one.

Bricks can take 6–8 weeks to be created and placed on the walkway, particularly leading up to patriotic holidays. Make sure you order with ample time for delivery and placement. Contact Brenna Magette at bmagette@vawarmemorial.org or (804) 786-2069. ■

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No Service, or Sacrifice, Is Too Small



Visitors to the Virginia War Memorial are introduced to elements of American military history dating back to the beginning of the nation. Exhibits, films, and artifacts help provide context for the nearly 12,000 names listed in

the Shrine of Memory. This visitor experience is what makes the Virginia War Memorial the best state memorial in the country.

It is not surprising that some conflicts and the veterans that served in them loom larger in our collective consciousness than others. For example, World War II — “The Good War” — still casts a long shadow. The recent 75th anniversary of that war’s end remains fresh in our minds, and the few remaining members of the Greatest Generation still fascinate us with their stories.

In a similar fashion, the Vietnam War is always present, on our minds and in our discussions, but for different reasons. The what, how, and why of the conflict still seem unsettled — and perhaps always will be. We have been tremendously fortunate to have built a strong relationship with our Vietnam veterans, many of whom serve as volunteers and docents here at the War Memorial and have contributed greatly to our education programs.

But what about the other wars and contingency operations? What about Korea, Grenada, Panama, or the Persian Gulf? What about veterans from those and the most recent conflicts? And what about the veterans who served during peacetime? Here at the Virginia War Memorial we work hard to make it a priority to honor all veterans and provide information and programming on every aspect of our military history. Be it with our livestream programs, documentary films, exhibits, or oral histories, we strive to be as inclusive as we can in depicting and honoring the veteran experience from across the American military experience.

Every story of service and sacrifice is worth telling. Every veteran experience is critical for a better understanding of who we are as a nation. There can be little doubt that the large conflicts such as World War II, Vietnam, and the Global War on Terrorism will remain popular subjects with visitors and others, and they should be. Here at the Virginia War Memorial, however, any veteran and any story of service or sacrifice is preserved, appreciated, and honored.

John C Mountcastle

Dr. Clay Mountcastle
DIRECTOR
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL



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.



From the Archives: Dear Mom

Friday, May 7, 4 PM

Virginia War Memorial Archivist Heidi Sheldon will share letters written home to moms. “Some of the letters are short and to the point,” explains Heidi. “Things like ‘I’m well, I hope you’re well,’ and don’t include too much else because of censorship concerns. Many letters, though, include specific requests for care packages, inside jokes, or are more descriptive.”

The Virginia War Memorial Archives are home to approximately 600 accessions, or files, representing almost 500 Virginia service men and women. Each month, Heidi invites the public to take a closer look at some of the materials that are housed and preserved in the USS *Birmingham* Research Library. Past livestreams have focused on events, such as D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, and on themes, such as women in service and Thanksgiving menus.

We would be honored to preserve your materials. Please reach out to Heidi if you are interested in donating your materials to the Memorial’s collection: heidi.sheldon@dvs.virginia.gov. ■



A Mother’s Day V-Mail sent to Rachel Rudd, from her son Robert Rudd, who served with the 76th Engineer Light Pontoon Company during World War II. He was likely in Burma when he mailed this home to Chesterfield County.



The Mighty Pen Project

Zoom-ing into its Eighth Season



This signature program of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation provides tuition-free creative writing instruction to veterans. Register for the next class at VaWarMemorial.org/mpp. ■



Copies of the Mighty Pen Project Anthologies from previous years are available to Foundation donors by contacting the Virginia War Memorial office at (804) 786-2060.

Through Our Eyes: Military Children Poetry Showcase

April is the Month of the Military Child. April is also National Poetry Month. To mark these designations, we are proud to announce “Through Our Eyes” a virtual poetry showcase open to K–12 students in Virginia whose parent or parents are serving or have served in the military. Submissions will be highlighted on our website, where you can also find the submission details: VaWarMemorial.org/learn/poetry.

The poetry showcase is our newest extracurricular initiative to provide creative outlets for student expression. Our Spring Art Contest and Fall Essay Contest have attracted entries from all over the Commonwealth. Our other work with, and for, students includes Scout Days, ROTC recognitions, field trips, livestreams, teacher institutes, and custom seminars. ■

We have been asked ...

What do the highway markers declaring Virginia a Purple Heart State mean?

Many states, cities, counties, roads, and trails carry a Purple Heart designation. Five years ago, thanks to Senate Joint Resolution 101, Virginia was declared a Purple Heart State. The Purple Heart is the oldest American military decoration in continuous use and the first American service award made available to the common soldier. It is awarded currently to any member of the United States Armed Forces wounded or killed in combat with a declared enemy of the United States.

It is especially fitting that Virginia is a Purple Heart State since a citizen of the Commonwealth, George Washington, created the decoration, originally called the Badge of Military Merit, during the Revolutionary War. ■



VWM Nomination

The Virginia War Memorial has been nominated for a National Medal for Museum and Library Service awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. These national awards recognize outstanding American museums and libraries that have made extraordinary contributions to their communities. It is an honor to be nominated. Thank you, Senator Mark Warner. ■



Sacred Scenes: American Parks and Battlefields

*On View Now,
No Reservations Required*

**The Photography of
Amanda Ransom and
Frank Lee Ruggles**

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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

VaWarMemorial.org



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C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion, Virginia War Memorial Expansion, Honored with Golden Hammer Nomination

The Virginia War Memorial's 2019 expansion was nominated for a 2020 Golden Hammer Award in the annual program hosted by Historic Richmond and Storefront for Community Design. The nomination description reads as follows:

"The design of the Virginia War Memorial's expansion conveys significant monumentality, quietness, reverence, and timelessness in its architecture. To connect old and new, the new structure is two stories, aligning with the floor levels, roof, and parapet of the existing building. The expansion is clad in stone and glass, in keeping with the material context of the site. Along the southern portion, sits a new Shrine of Memory for the Global War on Terror that achieves architectural parity with the original memorial pavilion. Its height, width, and column bay spacing match and its materials extend the monumental and austere nature of the memorial context. The building provides the Richmond community, and beyond, with space for thoughtful contemplation, honors the fallen in the Global War on Terror, provides a new state-of-the-art programming space, and sits as a modern architectural icon to the City of Richmond and its residents. With this project, the Virginia War Memorial has evolved from a passive space for remembrance and contemplation into a true museum and educational center, making it possible to tell the stories that provide context for the shrine, helping future generations understand the sacrifices made by their military forebears."

PROJECT TEAM: VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION; SMBW; SILMAN (STRUCTURAL); ENGINEERS PLUS (MEP); KBS, INC.

