



THE VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUB

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 9, ISSUE 3



THE VBC THANKS ALL WHO ATTENDED OUR 2018 GALA! MORE INSIDE, P. 14-15

FALL SCHEDULE INSIDE!

p. 2-4

TRAVEL WITH THE VBC!

Trips to the Reading Air Show, the New Orleans WWII Museum, and Italy are coming up!

p. 6-7, 10

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Breakfasts begin at 8:30 A.M. \$12 for breakfast at all locations unless otherwise noted. Just to attend is free.

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Our fall schedule looks to be as busy as our summer, when we held 20 events at 15 different locations. We heard veterans and experts debating the pros and cons of "Should We Bring Back the Draft?" at the Heinz History Center. We heard 98-year-old P-51 pilot Pete Edwards recall close calls in WWII and speak movingly of coming back home to Pittsburgh in 1945. We heard Frank Regina tell how he survived the Pearl Harbor attacks aboard the USS *Utah*. We heard Korean War veteran JP Conner talk about his 41 years in the Marine Corps. We heard Rose Gantner remember her two tours of duty in Vietnam with the Red Cross. We heard Yvonne Darragh and other Blue Star Mothers dis-

cuss the worry that accompanies the pride when they send their sons and daughters into armed service. We heard stories of Iraq and Afghanistan, of stateside duty and remote air bases. We heard from bakers and clerks, Army WACs and Air Force nurses, and one former sailor who said he joined the Navy to see the world . . . only to find out that 71% of it is covered with water!

Come to an VBC event this fall. They're all open to the public. You never know what you're going to hear!

Todd DePastino
Executive Director

FIND OUR UPDATED SCHEDULE, PHOTOS, STORIES AND MORE AT VETERANSBREAKFASTCLUB.COM

**Welcome Home: Celebrating Veterans and their Families at
Peters Township Library
Saturday, November 10th
11am-1pm**

616 E McMurray Rd, McMurray, PA 15317
Magician/Balloon art, storytime to honor our vets, crafts,
and a special surprise visit from a PBS character



A NOVEL NOVEMBER

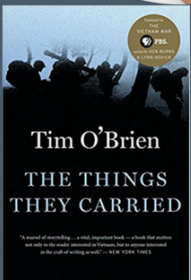


Media Sponsors



An Evening with TIM O'BRIEN

Best-selling author of *The Things They Carried*



Tim O'Brien
THE THINGS
THEY CARRIED

Book sales
at the
event by



Wednesday, Nov. 7 | 7:00 pm

Peters Township High School Auditorium
264 East McMurray Road, McMurray, PA 15317

TICKETS NOW ON SALE @ ptlibrary.org
VIP \$60 | Adults \$20 | Students \$5
Special Veterans Price \$15

Proceeds to benefit the Peters Township Public Library.
ptlibrary.org | 724.941.9430



UPCOMING MONTH

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
8:30-10:30am**

Christ United Methodist Church (44
Highland Rd, Bethel Park, 15102)

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3
8:30-10:30am**

Seven Oaks Country Club (132 Lisbon
Rd, Beaver, PA 15009)

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12
8:30-10:30am**

Comfort Inn Conference Center (699
Rodi Rd, Penn Hills, PA 15235)

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17
8:30-10:30am**

Christ Church at Grove Farm (in the
Event Barn to the right of the church)
(249 Duff Rd, Sewickley, PA 15143)

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23
8:30-10:30am**

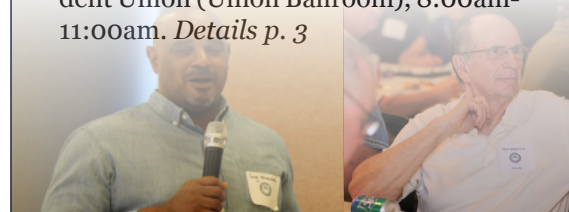
Christ United Methodist Church (44
Highland Rd, Bethel Park, PA 15102)

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 29
8:30-10:30am**

FREE BREAKFAST IN BUTLER Amer-
ican Legion Post 778 (150 Legion Me-
morial Lane, Butler, PA 16001)

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10
8:00-11:00am**

**Duquesne University Veterans
Day Breakfast:** 20th Annual VET-
ERANS DAY BREAKFAST at Duquesne
University. Duquesne University Stu-
dent Union (Union Ballroom), 8:00am-
11:00am. *Details p. 3*



RSVP FOR ALL EVENTS TO LAURENCE



MORNING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14
8:30-10:30am

Christ Church at Grove Farm (in the Event Barn to the right of the church)
(249 Duff Rd, Sewickley, PA 15143)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20
8:30-10:30am

Christ United Methodist Church (44 Highland Rd, Bethel Park, PA 15102)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30
8:30-10:30am

Comfort Inn Conference Center (699 Rodi Rd, Penn Hills, PA 15235)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5
8:30-10:30am

Seven Oaks Country Club (132 Lisbon Rd, Beaver, PA 15009)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12
8:30-10:30am

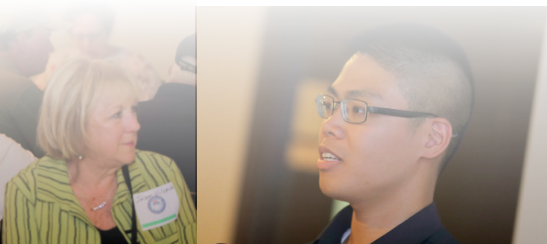
Christ Church at Grove Farm (249 Duff Rd, Sewickley, PA 15143)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15
8:30-10:30am

Christ United Methodist Church (44 Highland Rd, Bethel Park, PA 15102)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19
8:30-10:30am

RMU Yorktown Hall (Former Holiday Inn, 8256 University Blvd, Moon 15108)



DON'T MISS THESE SPECIAL MORNING EVENTS!

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29
8:30-10:30am

FREE BREAKFAST IN BUTLER! American Legion Post 778
(150 Legion Memorial Lane, Butler, PA 16001).

American Legion Post 778 is kindly offering a free breakfast for our October 29 event at their Post in Butler. Join us!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10
8:00-11:00am

Duquesne University Veterans Day Breakfast
20th Annual VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST at Duquesne University. Duquesne University Student Union (Union Ballroom), 8:00am-11:00am.

Once again, the VBC is receiving donated tables from the Veterans Leadership Program, Friends of Danang, & Shepherd's Heart. Those attending with the VBC attend for free. Keynote Speaker will be our very own Todd DePastino on the history and meaning of Veterans Day. Breakfast and keynote address to 9:30am. Veterans' storytelling program from 9:30-11:00am. Free bus transportation from three locations (pick-up at 7:00am for all locations):

- 1) Comfort Inn, 699 Rodi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235
- 2) Crowne Plaza, 164 Fort Couch Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15241
- 3) Mt. Nebo Road Park n' Ride (Exit 68 off I-79)

DUE DATE FOR RSVP IS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5
TO RSVP, email or mail the following to Todd DePastino: 1) Your name 2) your phone 3) your pickup location 4) your cell phone number the morning of the event. Send the above information to todd@veteransbreakfastclub.com or Veterans Breakfast Club, 200 Magnolia Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15228



@VETERANSBREAKFASTCLUB.COM OR 412-623-9029. BREAKFAST IS \$12, JUST TO ATTEND IS FREE!



UPCOMING EVENING EVENTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 **3:00-9:00pm**

Mercer Evening Event (222 Line Road, Mercer, PA 16137) FREE Food, Wine & Beer. *Details on right*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5 **6:30pm**

Spoonwood Brewing (5981 Baptist Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15236) FREE FOOD, CASH BAR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9 **6:00-9:00pm**

Animal Friends (562 Camp Horne Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237). *Details on right*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12 **6:00-9:00pm**

Threadbare Cider House (1291 Spring Garden Ave, Pittsburgh, 15212) Free Food. Cash Bar. Threadbare will donate 10% of all sales to VBC. *Details on right*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 **7:00pm**

Women in the Military: A Panel Discussion, Heinz History Center (1212 Smallman St, Pittsburgh, PA 15222) *Details on right*

DON'T MISS THESE SPECIAL EVENING EVENTS!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 **3:00-9:00pm**

Mercer Evening Event (222 Line Road, Mercer, PA 16137) FREE Food, Premium Wine & Beer. Oven fired Pizzas served from 3:00-5:00, BBQ begins serving at 6:00 and our evening will feature Major General Dennis Laich discussing why we should return to the draft beginning at 7:00pm.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9 **6:00-9:00pm**

Animal Friends, (562 Camp Horne Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237) The oldest book in Western Civilization is about war. But the second oldest is about coming home. To celebrate Veterans Day, Pets for Vets at Animal Friends in partnership with the Veterans Breakfast Club is hosting a special event from 6:00-9:00pm on Friday, November 9: "Welcome Home: Veterans Share Stories of Returning from War." This community conversation will include a diverse group of panelists talking about the joys and trials—the good and the bad—of reintegrating back into civilian life from military service. The event is open to the public, and we invite all veterans' organizations, service providers, members of military families, and, of course, veterans themselves to join us for this fas-

inating and memorable conversation across generations. Todd DePastino will moderate, and Pets for Vets at Animal Friends will share information about their program. Hors d'oeuvres, dessert and refreshments will be served at 6:00pm, and the panel discussion begins at 7:00pm. Please join us for this special event! RSVP to lauren@veteransbreakfastclub.com or 412-623-9029. If you have questions about the event or Pets for Vets at Animal Friends, you may also contact Animal Friends at Veterans@thinkingoutsidethecage.org or 412-847-7030.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12 **6:00-9:00pm**

Threadbare Cider House (1291 Spring Garden Ave, Pittsburgh, 15212) Panel Discussion: Continuing Service After Leaving The Military. Free Food. Cash Bar. Threadbare will donate 10% of all sales to VBC.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 **7:00pm**

Women in the Military: A Panel Discussion, Heinz History Center (1212 Smallman St, Pittsburgh, PA 15222) We'll have women veterans of various eras and ages talk about their experiences serving our country. Open to the public, all are welcome!



RSVP FOR EVENING EVENTS TO LAUREN@VETERANSBREAKFASTCLUB.COM OR 412-623-9029

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR RECENT DONATIONS!

Doug Austin
John Barber
Kelly Barber
John Bello - *In memory of Allan DePastino*
Benson Lincoln
Rebecca Brunotte
Joann Cantrell
Joe & Rosemarie Capone
Kathy Colbert
Gwyn Cready
Donna Daniloff - *In memory of WWII*
veteran Bill Sharkey
Harry & Margaret Deitzer
Jim Enos
Jane Frankel
George Freas
Bob Furst
Rosemary Futrovsky
Robert Gannon
Mike Garritan
Mike & Charlene Gasparetto
GCU Lodge 994
Larry Googins
Chris Grilli
Mary Ann Gross - *In memory of WWII*
veteran Maury Deul
Pierre Haan
Jacob Ferree Chapter, DAR
Chuck Jenkins - *In memory of the 17 Marines of Delta Co. 1st Bn 5th Marines KIA on June 2, 1967 during Oper. Union II. Semper Fi*
Chuck Jenkins - *In memory of the 7 Marines KIA on July 24, 1967 of Delta Co. 1st Bn. 5th Marines. Semper Fi*
Lynne Johnson
Ruby & James Kang
Betty Karleski
Harold Kauffman - *In honor of Will and Marie Cressman's wedding anniversary*
Dave Kirsch
Greg & Lauretta Kobasa
Chet Kozlowski
Frank J. Krandel
Frank & Gail Kwolek
Ouida Long
Bill Luft
Bill & Eileen Moran
Fred & Barbara Morrow
Harry Muncert
Andy & Mary Kay Nigut
Amy Ottaviani
David & Kathy Park
Michael Peuler
Vincent Rattay

Dana Rattenbury
Laurie Mansell Reich
Timothy Ryan - *In loving memory of Donald J. Myers, WWII combat veteran 22nd Marines*
Ken Scott
Joe Slain
Dan Steighner
Bobb Stevens
Wayne Szmyt

Carmen Vacca - *In loving memory of my beloved wife, Rosemary Vacca, and my daughter, Amy Cordes, and in appreciation for all who have served our country in the Armed Forces.*
Chuck Wazenegger
Christine Weber
Harry Whetsell, Jr.
Norm Wien
Women's Overseas Service League
Ron & Carol Worstell

Thank you, Veterans

Happy Birthday
 from all your friends
 At
 Concordia Lutheran
 Ministries

Concordia of Cranberry
 10 Adams Ridge Blvd. Mars;
 724-779-4300

Concordia of Franklin Park
 1600 Georgetowne Rd. Sewickley;
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 125 Brown Rd. Wexford;
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WWII ITALY

OCTOBER

RATE: \$5,995.00 PER PERSON
GROUP AIR OPTION: ADDITIONAL \$1,400

Travel with the VBC on our Historic Tour of Italy and WWII Italian Campaign sites October 1-13, 2019. We'll fly to Rome, tour the landing beaches at Salerno and Anzio, visit Monte Cassino and the Gothic Line in the Po Valley and, along the way, tour Pompeii, the Amalfi Coast, Florence and Venice!

Land Tour Rate: \$5,995

Optional Roundtrip Air: \$1,200-\$1,400

For questions, contact Todd at todd@veteransbreakfastclub.com or 412-623-9029 or the VBC's expert travel planner, Laura Passuello at Dog Tag Tours at 717-417-8721 or info@dogtagtours.com

OCT 1: Depart USA

OCT 2: (L, D) Arrive Rome

Brunch in airport restaurant to allow independent travelers to meet group.
Travel South from FCO to Salerno (3.5 hours).
Mid-afternoon arrival. Overnight in Salerno.

OCT 3: (B, D) Operation Avalanche - September 1943

Visit the landing beaches, view the Gulf of Salerno, where underwater mines tormented the Navy armada.
Stop at the **36th Infantry Division Monument** to learn about the fighting spirit of these hearty Texans.
Lunch in Paestum on your own. Tour **Paestum**, a settlement founded in 600 B.C., includes both a tour of these ancient ruins and the assessment of the WWII battles that raged around them. General Mark Clark set up his Command Post among the ruins, as doubts of his abilities as a field commander began to emerge. Overnight Salerno.

OCT 4: (B, L) Amalfi Coast and Naples

Enjoy the scenic ride along Italy's famed **Amalfi Coast**. Stop for lunch with a panoramic view.
Mid-afternoon tour **Pompeii**, leveled by Mt Vesuvius. In March, 1944, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted, while there were no casualties, the 12th Air Force lost about 75 aircraft, many medium bombers which were covered with hot ash, causing melted or cracked Plexiglass and burned fabric. A number of B-25's were tipped onto their tails from the weight of the ash and tephra. The damage proved insurmountable and reduced the effectiveness of bombing runs over southern Germany.
Continue to Naples... while no monuments or museums solely dedicated to WWII are found here, this city was critical to the movement of supplies from the sea inland to the infantry. Dinner on own to explore Napoli! Overnight Naples.

OCT 5: (B, L) San Pietro Infine, Mignano Pass... Hill 424 - Three Medals of Honor

Leaving Naples, you'll travel north to the Western front of the German defenses known as the **Gustav Line**. Stops at **Monte Lungo** and **San Pietro Infine** are planned on the way to Cassino. Passing near **Hill 424**, on top of a peak, view the valley floor below and the towering Apennines in the distance, hear of the valor of three soldiers, who each earned the Medal of Honor holding their ground.
Find the **36th ID Monument** overlooking a sleepy, lush valley that was a muddy, barren landscape ... the Rapido River Valley.
Lunch at the wonderful dining room in a centuries old stone villa... The Churchill Room. Overnight Cassino.

OCT 6: (B, L)

Visit the **Cassino War Museum** and the **British Commonwealth Cemetery**. Headstones indicate service from men of many "colonies" - New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and more. Stop at the German war cemetery.
Then, the coach climbs the hairpin turns to the **Abbey of Monte Cassino**. Its been destroyed and rebuilt four times. During WWII, the monastery became a refuge for civilians. On February 15, 1944, the monastery was bombed and completely destroyed, killing many civilians and destroying ancient manuscripts and artifacts...an act of war that continues to be debated as there is no concrete evidence that the Germans occupied the Abbey. Nearby, the **Polish War Cemetery** commemorates the courage of over 1,000 Polish soldiers who died while storming the Abbey in May 1944. Overnight Cassino.

N CAMPAIGN TOUR

NOVEMBER 1-13, 2019

PERSON (\$1250.00 SINGLE SUPPLEMENT)

\$200-\$1,400 (WILL BE DETERMINED IN NOVEMBER)

OCT 7: (B, L, D) Cassino Falls – Behind the Lines at Anzio

Depart the mountains. Begin at the **Piana delle Orme Museum** in Latina. Enjoy a bagged lunch at the picnic grounds before exploring this **FANTASTIC** museum with seven buildings of animated life-like Italian Campaign fighting, sights and sounds that transport you to 1943-44. Pay your respects at the **ABMC's Sicily-Rome American Cemetery** and enjoy the smallest of museums.. the Landing Museum in Anzio. Overnight Anzio

OCT 8: (B, D) The Fallen Remembered – Masterpieces Spared

Morning drive to the **Florence American Cemetery** to pay respects to 4,399 of our military dead, killed during the Italian Campaign which lasted from July 1943 with the invasion of Italy to V-E Day in the Spring of 1945.

On to Florence for a half day walking tour of this pedestrian-only city.

Robert Edsel's "Saving Italy" about the "Monuments Men" service during WWII... to preserve art and sculpture, antiquities and architecture... is a "must read" as you head into Florence, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Overnight Florence.

OCT 9: (B, L) Buffalo Soldiers – Remnants of the Gothic Line

An "out and back" explore west of Florence – to view remnants of the Gothic Line still preserved.

Visit the museum in Borgo a Mazzano. Hear the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers.

Return to Florence via Pistoia where Brazilian soldiers fought with the Allies. Evening on your own. Overnight Florence.

OCT 10: (B, L) Riva Ridge – Monte Belvedere

Depart Florence, climb the Appenines where the 10th Mountain took down the last of the Gothic Line.

And "Soldiers on Skis" led the way into the Po Valley beyond.

Visit the **Montese History Museum** and **Monte Belvedere Monument**.

End the day arriving in Bologna in time for dinner. Overnight Bologna.

OCT 11: (B, D) Final push by the Fifth Army & Tenth Mountain Underwater Graves

With the Germans in collapse... the Allies still faced bridges and tunnels, mined to slow the inevitable advance.

Enjoy a sail from port to Salo, on this beautiful Alpine lake, Italy's largest.

Visit the **Museo di Salo** – and study the exhibit on WWII and Mussolini. (audio guides included.)

Return to port by ferry.

(The remains of two dozen US soldiers of the Tenth Mountain Division rest at the bottom of the lake.

They drowned in the spring of 1945 when their DUKW sank. The Division Association still hopes to recover their remains.)

Overnight in lakeside town of Peschiera del Garda.

OCT 12: (B, D) Depart for Venice.

A morning break in Verona, a UNESCO Heritage Site and the setting for "Romeo and Juliet."

Verona was heavily bombed during WWII as it was the gateway to the Brenner Pass.

Head to Venice, enjoy a short orientation of this "floating" city aboard an iconic Venetian Gondola.

Hotel Check in. Afternoon is ON YOUR OWN!

Farewell dinner.

Overnight Venice.

OCT 13: (B) Flight back to USA.

B = BREAKFAST, L = LUNCH, D = DINNER

TOLL FREE: 717-417-USA1

WWW.DOGTAGTOURS.COM

INFO@DOGTAGTOURS.COM

STORIES FROM OUR VETS

Norm Waldman's WWII Odyssey

On August 27, we lost Norm Waldman, one of the wonderful veterans who attended our earliest breakfasts ten years ago, and one with an unforgettable story. Norm was one of those intrepid paratroopers who jumped from an airplane into a black abyss in the predawn hours of D-Day, June 6, 1944. He and his fellow 82nd Airborne Division comrades landed behind enemy lines twenty miles away from his target, which was a bridge his machine gun squad was supposed to keep open for the invasion troops soon to be landing on the beaches of Normandy.

Norm and his squad fought for four days as the surrounding enemy tightened the noose. Late on June 9, a German soldier threw a "potato-masher" hand grenade into his position, killing one of Norm's squad members, blinding another, and wounding Norm. Looking up the barrel of an enemy rifle, Norm held up his hands in a sign of surrender. His odyssey was just beginning.

Jammed into a boxcar, he rode toward Stalag XIII A, a large POW camp in Germany. American fighter planes swept down and strafed the train, killing and wounding several of the men in Norm's car. "Everything was chaos," said Norm at one of the our VBC breakfasts. Unloading at the camp, he saw masses of starving Russian prisoners. They were treated like animals. Americans, at least, got bread and, on Sunday, watery soup. Hungry, Norm and a fellow prisoner escaped one night through the bowels of the camp's latrine. They were caught in a farmer's field the next day, stuffing themselves with raw sugar beets.

Through the Swiss Red Cross, Norm got his hands on a book, *German for British Prisoners*. He studied it thoroughly and used his new knowledge of German to win small perks, including a barrel of beer for Christmas. He volunteered to serve as an interpreter on a project building housing for bombed out German families. The location would soon become the site of one of the most infamous events of the war: Dresden.

On the night of February 13, 1945, U.S. and British bombers began a three-day attack on Dresden that would engulf the city in flames. Norm was just outside Dresden when he saw the first planes arrive and the incendiaries drop. "We saw the city start to burn," he recalls. He and his fellow prisoners huddled in a shelter as the concussions of 500-pound high explosive bombs threw them into the walls and ceiling. "You can't imagine the force of these bombs, even as far away from them as we were. Of all I went through during the war, those bombs were probably the worst."

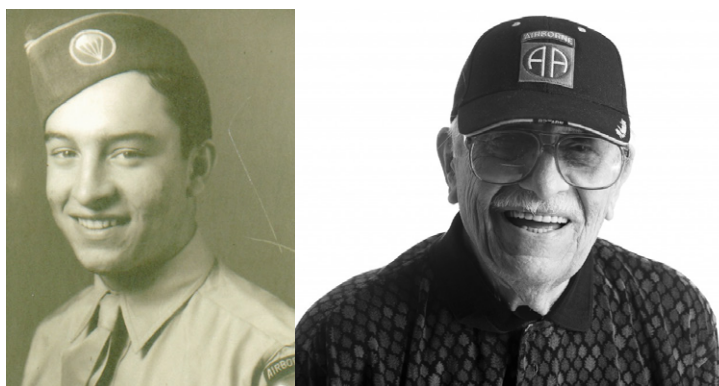
Like novelist Kurt Vonnegut, also a POW in Dresden, Norm emerged from the shelter to a flattened and blackened city, where hardly anything stirred. His job became retrieving the dead. Then, things got bad.

Food was so scarce, the prisoners were given an hour a day to scour the countryside for grass and weeds. They would boil what they collected with blue stock salt and eat it. "Then we would keep the windows of our barracks open and entice sparrows to fly in. We would catch them with our hands, rip the head, feet and feathers off, and then pop them in your mouth. You had to do it quickly because other guys were fighting you for it. You can't imagine what hunger does to you."

As the Allies closed in on Dresden, guards started the prisoners on a march into Czechoslovakia. There, their column ran into Soviet allies, a tank battalion of Marshal Konyev's First Ukrainian Army. The Ukrainians congratulated Norm on his liberation, then handed him a Russian-style fur hat with a red star and a machine gun. "I fought the rest of the war with the Ukrainians. We captured a lot of Germans. It wasn't easy. But at least I was getting fed."

In Prague, Norm got word that American lines were just across the river. One night in late April, he wrapped rags around a horse's hooves and silently slipped away from the Ukrainians.

Norm spent a month in an American field hospital for malnourishment before being sent home on a hospital ship. He finished the war at Fort Benning, where he served as an instructor.



Norm's memory was sharp, even 73 years after the war ended. "Some things, you can never forget," he said. But he told his story with humor and candor. He even confessed to a romance with Olga, a fellow soldier in the Ukrainian Army, where women served in combat alongside men. After telling his story at a breakfast, he returned the following month with an admission and a correction. He hadn't told us the whole truth, he said. Toward the end of the war, Olga told Norm that he would move back to Odessa, and the two of them would live with her parents. "I was really escaping Olga, when I slipped away from the Red Army," he declared.

Rest in Peace, Norm. We will miss you.

ED GREGORICH'S DOG TAG: A BROTHERLY BOND

When Fred Gregorich visited Central Montana in the 1990s, he was expecting to reconnect with his late brother, Ed, a member of the 615th Bomb Squadron, 401st Bomb Group, who had died there in a training flight in World War II. He was not expecting to find his brother's dog tag simply laying on the ground.

When Fred bent over to inspect the shiny piece of metal, he realized it read, "GREGORICH, ED. C." followed by an ID number, person to notify, and his home town: "Moon Run, PA." In a single moment, Fred's trip became more than just a visit to the crash site.

Fred had been only 11 years old when his 20-year-old brother died. To him, Ed was a hero, a bluegrass musician with great artistic talent, and a brave man for shipping off to a mysterious land called Montana to fight for his country. Ed joined the Army Air Corps after becoming deeply interested in airplane mechanics. He began training at the Lewistown Air Base and became a sergeant, a gunner and a flight engineer. Fred admired his older brother and couldn't imagine doing something so brave.

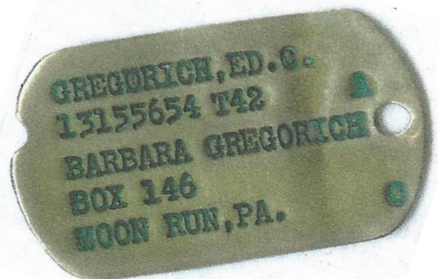
Sadly, the Gregorich family never got to hear about Ed's experiences in the Army Air Corps. On August 24, 1943, his aircraft, B-17F no. 42-6062, came upon a severe storm. The artificial horizon indicator had been removed from the aircraft, and other

instruments were faulty, making it impossible to fly on instruments in a thunderstorm. The "Flying Fortress" came spiraling to the ground. 11 crew members were killed that day. The crash was not unusual for the Army Air Corps: almost 15,000 American airmen were killed in training alone stateside during WWII.

When Fred visited Lewistown, he was first shocked by how large the ditch was where the plane crashed. It was almost like a crater formed by a meteorite. He felt compelled to look around the site, which was when he eventually stumbled upon his brother's dog tag sitting on the ground.

Fred always had a special connection with his late brother. Soon after hearing the news of his death, Fred took up the accordion, paying homage to his musically-gifted brother. It turned into a full-time job, and he went on to become a nationally celebrated polka band leader and is in the polka hall of fame. But now, Fred has more than a brotherly connection through music—he has a piece of his brother with him for all time.

In 2017, Fred Gregorich lost his brother's dogtag in the Monroeville Convention Center. Anyone who might know its whereabouts, please call Fred at 412-443-9789.



Above: Ed Gregorich's dog tag from WWII; B-17 "Flying Fortresses" similar to those Ed flew in the Army Air Corps. **Center:** Ed poses with his mandolin. **Far right:** Ed in his Air Force gear.

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BIBLE CHAPEL OF SOUTH HILLS
DOORS OPEN AT 5PM | SHOW BEGINS AT 6PM

INFORMATION: DONNAGROOM.COM/SHOWS • 412-848-3016
TICKETS: DONNAGROOM.COM/TICKETS

Vocalist and Pianist **Donna Groom**, of the hit group, **The Skyliners**, headlines a concert honoring our country's veterans from The War of Independence to today.

Three years in the making, the show pairs wartime correspondence and popular music of the era, highlighted by a backdrop of photos and historic images for an engaging theatrical concert program.

A portion of the proceeds from this performance benefit these local non-profit organizations:



TICKETS - www.donnagroom.com/tickets

INFO - www.donnagroom.com/shows

*Passport to Pittsburgh and
John F. Slater Funeral Home presents:*

The "ALL ABOARD" TOUR : Fall Foliage WWII Troop Train Adventure

Sunday October 7th, 2018

8 am-5pm

\$135 per person / \$110 for Veterans (\$25 discount)

Tour includes: motorcoach to Dennison, Ohio, admission Historic Dennison Depot and Museum, Troop Train Ride, Lunch, snacks. Depart Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. 40 tickets available.

Questions:

Kim Adley 412-298-0409 or Passport2pgh@gmail.com

Call Chris at Slater F. Funeral Home to make your reservation:
412-881-9022



TRAVEL WITH THE VBC!

OUR 2019 TRIPS AT A GLANCE

WWII WEEKEND AIR SHOW AT THE MID-ATLANTIC AIR MUSEUM AT THE READING AIRPORT! JUNE 7-9, 2019

Cost: \$495 per person (double occupancy)

Please join us on our trip to the "Gathering of Warbirds" in Reading next June-- one of the largest historic air shows in the world. WWII vehicles, aircraft, veterans, and WWII re-enactors gather by the thousands to entertain and educate us for the weekend. The air show features over 80 WWII-era aircraft, plus lots of other pieces of equipment and artifacts. We'll enjoy hangar dinners and dances each night, as well as canteen stage shows with 1940s-era music and acts. Price includes motorcoach, two nights hotel, three dinners, breakfast each morning, as well as admission to all Air Show events and activities for the weekend. At least two convenient pickup locations to be determined for Friday, June 7, 2019, and return will be around 8:00pm on Sunday, June 9. Questions? Contact Lauren at lauren@veteransbreakfastclub.com or 412-623-9029

HISTORIC TOUR OF ITALY/WWII ITALIAN CAMPAIGN: OCTOBER 1-13, 2019 FULL ITINERARY P. 6-7

RATE \$5,995.00 per person (\$1250.00 single supplement)
Group Air Option: additional \$1,200-\$1,400 (will be determined in November)

Travel with the VBC on our Historic Tour of Italy and WWII Italian Campaign sites October 1-13, 2019. We'll fly to Rome, tour the landing beaches at Salerno and Anzio, visit Monte Cassino and the Gothic Line in the Po Valley and, along the way, tour Pompeii, the Amalfi Coast, Florence and Venice! **Full itinerary on pages 6-7.**

Land Tour Rate: \$5,995

Optional Roundtrip Air: \$1,200-\$1,400

For questions, contact Todd at todd@veteransbreakfastclub.com or 412-623-9029 or the VBC's expert travel planner, Laura Passuello at Dog Tag Tours at 717-417-8721 or info@dogtagtours.com

NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM IN NEW ORLEANS (DETAILS SOON!) DECEMBER 2019

Join the VBC in New Orleans in December 2019 (*details to follow this fall*) We're heading to New Orleans in December 2019 for custom tours of the National WWII Museum and much more! Two-day entry to the National WWII Museum — with special events planned; history and tour of the Louisiana Maneuvers; Steamship Natchez for a Mississippi River Cruise; ride a restored Higgins Boat on Lake Ponchartrain, and tour the sites and sounds of historic New Orleans.

VBC VETERANS WHO RECENTLY PASSED. WE SALUTE YOU.

George Cahill,
WWII Army Air Corps

Bob Olsen,
WWII Merchant Marine

Vaughn Gordy,
WWII Army Air Corps

Joe Orient,
Vietnam Army

Tauno Honkala,
WWII Army Air Corps

Michael Petruska,
Korea Army

Virgil "Dutch" Huff,
WWII Navy

David Reese,
WWII Navy

Edward Jadowiec,
WWII Army

Bill Rush,
Cold War Marines

Paul Kehren,
Vietnam Army

Donald Schlosser,
WWII Navy

Tim McCray,
Vietnam Air Force

Howard Schwan,
Korea Army

Harry Lovett,
WWII Army Air Corps

Bob Seethaler,
WWII Navy

Robert McKnight,
WWII Navy

John Ubinger,
Cold War Air Force

Joe Noblick,
WWII Army

Norm Waldman,
WWII Army

Joe Olack,
WWII Navy

Leonard Weitzman,
WWII Army

WWII veteran Vaughn Gordy passed away in June at age 98. He told several stories at our events in years past, including the one captured in this Pittsburgh Press clipping from November 5, 1944. Like so many veterans, Vaughn was grateful for every day of life he was granted. We will miss him.

Pittsburgher Stares Death In Face . . . but Survives

He Returns from War And Is Married

Trapped inside his submerged bomber after it crashed into the Adriatic Sea, Lt. E. Vaughn Gordy Jr., 24, Mt. Lebanon navigator, struggled upwards in the water to get free of the wreckage.

He fought his way up . . . and failed. Again he tried . . . but he couldn't make it. The third time, the lucky number, he pushed himself up . . . and failed.

"For the first time in my life, I saw death staring me in the face. I actually gave up and mentally kicked myself for picking such a helluva way to die," he wrote to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Gordy Sr., of 230 Beverly Rd.

Friend Pulls Him Out

"My wind was exhausted and I was gulping in salt water . . . I made one last effort and my head popped through a hole in the fuselage and into the good old air again.

"I was too weak to pull myself through, but the engineer was there and he pulled me out."

Perhaps Lt. Gordy thought of his narrow escape from death yesterday as he walked down the aisle with his girl, June, and was married in Sacramento as one of his buddies on the bomber stood as best man.

And for being alive, he gives all the credit to the engineer who dragged him out of the wrecked plane, and to his pilot, Edward Allatt, of California, whose "ability as a pilot has meant the difference between life and death for me more than once."

Story of Crash

The story of the bomber's crash into the sea was told to his parents by Lt. Gordy after he had completed his 50 missions with the 15th Air Force in Italy in mid-September.

Their bomber was on the way to a raid in the heart of Germany, he said, when one motor stopped and the pilot was forced to turn back to their Italian base.

"Fifty miles from the Yugoslavian coast all hell broke loose in our plane. Engines No. 1 and 2 quit just as cold as No. 3. The plane became almost uncontrollable and started dropping 2000 feet a minute. The right wing was ablaze when we crashed into the water," his letter said.

The terrific shock when the plane crashed knocked Lt. Gordy out for a few seconds but the in-rush of water revived him. The plane had crumbled like an accordion and was entirely submerged except for the top surface of the wings.

Then came Lt. Gordy's desperate struggle to escape from the plane. Shortly after climbing into the



LT. E. V. GORDY JR.
Nearly drowned in a bomber . . .

bomber's two emergency rubber rafts, the crew was picked up by a boat operated by Yugoslavian Partisans. Fifteen minutes later, a Navy sea plane spotted them, and after landing and putting them aboard, took the crew back to Italy.

One crew member was killed in the crash, another suffered a broken neck, five had severe face lacerations and the others, including Lt. Gordy, had only minor cuts, he said.

"So in spite of a very eventful day, I still ate supper in my own mess hall," he wrote. "My hat comes off to Ed and his able management of the plane."

"I haven't mentioned this before because I didn't want to cause you any worry at home as long as I had missions to fly."

Lt. Gordy's father, a Downtown merchandise broker, said that his son arrived in the United States last week and yesterday married a girl he met during his training in California. Lt. Gordy plans to come home to spend part of his honeymoon before reporting back to duty.

Death Sentence Given

PARIS, Nov. 4—A court at Nancy today passed a death sentence on Col. Lelong, former chief of militia who led 3000 men against the Maquis in Haute Savoie early this year.

Witnesses testified that Lelong's militia collaborated with German troops in fighting the French Patriots.



Virgil "Dutch" Huff



George Cahill

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Charlie Smithers (Navy), Mike Tehan (Marines), and Paul Schaughency (Army) are just a few of the many veterans who have made Baptist Homes or Providence Point their home.

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Thank you to ev
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everyone who attended our 8 GALA!

Thank you to everyone who attended our 10th Anniversary Gala Celebration at Springwood Manor in Verona for contributing to such a memorable and moving event and fundraising success. Thank you especially to the evening's honorees and sponsors:

2018 Veteran Voices of the Year

Julia Parsons, WWII
Bob Harbula, Korean War
Andy Nigut, Vietnam War
Leonard Hammonds II,
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