



Veterans Day

Tribute

Honoring the veterans in our county and around the country.

*A supplement to the
Chatsworth Times*



‘We few, we happy few ...’

By Jimmy Espy
EDITOR

Despite having seen it twice before, I recently watched again the masterful HBO series “Band of Brothers.”

I like to think that every American has seen the 10 fantastic episodes in this retelling of historian Stephen Ambrose’s fine book. But if you are one of the few, one of the unlucky few, not to have seen it let me fill you in. The series details, with brutal realism, the World War II exploits of Easy Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. The story begins at basic training at Camp Toccoa in the mountains of Northeast Georgia and ends in the Bavarian Alps with the surrender of Nazi Germany. In between are incredible moments -- the Normandy landings, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of the wretched Kaufering 4 works camp.



Jimmy
Espy

There is a lot to like about “Band of Brothers.” The cast -- mostly little known actors -- is outstanding. My favorite is probably Damian Lewis, who is terrific as Dick Winters, Easy Company’s first rate battlefield commander. Lewis is restrained as Winters, but his face shows the inner

turmoil suffered by men making life and death decisions on a daily basis.

I jokingly refer to Donnie Wahlberg as “the good Wahlberg” and in the role of NCO Carwood Lipton, Wahlberg is really, really good.

A performance that has grown on me is that of Shane Taylor. He plays the medic, “Doc” Roe and shines most brightly in the Bastogne episode.

Everything about this mini series is first rate. It looks terrific, in part because the money was there to

build amazing sets and provide the necessary special effects. “Band of Brothers” looks great and it sounds great. You hear the MG 42 bullets zipping through he air and the Whomp Whomp Whomp of German mortars will have you diving for cover.

There are a lot of great individual moments. One of my favorites is when Major Winters is informed by an officer that German Panzers had cut off a key highway and the 101st was about to be surrounded.

Winters looks at the driver and reassures him, “We’re paratroopers, lieutenant. We’re supposed to be surrounded.”

Another great moment is the assault on Foy, a small French village garrisoned by tough German infantry. The attack stalls -- and men die -- when the officer leading the assault cracks under pressure. Winters order Lt. Ronald Speirs to take charge of the attack. Speirs then exhibits the kind of kind

of calculated, brave small unit leadership that marks a great fighting force.

We see through the eyes of Sgt. Lipton as Speirs storms past shocked German soldiers, makes contact with a detached American unit and then returns again -- unscathed -- past the astonished Germans. It is a bravura piece of film making.

I am not foolish enough to think that any TV show, movie or book truly captures the horrors of warfare. But my appreciation of “Band of Brothers” is its sincere effort to give us all a whiff of the battlefield and a peek at the horror.

In the coda to the series, Dick Winters, voice choking, tells of a soldier who wrote him long after the war.

“One day my grandson said to me, grandpa were you a hero in the war? And I said to him no I’m not a hero, but I have served in a company full of them.”

We should all be thankful.



Veterans Memorial Park VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION STARTS SATURDAY AT 9 A.M.

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Dedication of a monument to Ben Moore

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Bryson leads national Berlin veterans association

By Mark Millican
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

When a Russian pilot crashed his MIG fighter jet into a deep lake in the British sector of divided Berlin in the mid-1960s, the Cold War between East and West post-World War II powers came to a head.

“The Soviets had an air base on their side and the MIG was coming in for a landing, and I think it flamed out (lost combustion),” said Jerry Bryson, a Spring Place native who was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army along the infamous Berlin Wall. “The pilot was killed.”

So began a stalemate that caused consternation among the world powers involved. After World War II, defeated Germany was divided into Soviet, American, British and French zones of occupation, he explained.

The city of Berlin, though technically part of the Soviet zone, was also split, with the Soviets taking the eastern part of the city.

“The Russians were immediately on the spot, but the British commander said we’ll retrieve your plane from the lake. It’s going to take a little while and we will get the body out and return it to you,” said Bryson, a 1965 graduate of Murray County High School. “What they wanted to do was inspect the electronics and everything else they could, because you’re always trying to find out what the other guy’s doing.”

“They got the pilot out quickly and transferred him to the Russians, but the Russian commander was absolutely livid that they couldn’t come in and (retrieve the MIG). But you don’t do the Brits that way. (They said) ‘Back off, we’ll take care of it,’ and

they did. We had a lot of anxiety on the American side, because anything that happens there is going to impact us. So everybody’s on alert, wondering what’s going to happen next?”

Fortunately, the crisis de-escalated for infantry units and Bryson as a member of the U.S. Army’s Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 18th Infantry of the Berlin Brigade. Now, he is the president of the Berlin United States Military Veterans Association, and talked recently about his experiences.

“My grades were not good enough to get into North Georgia College (a military school), so I went with a friend to the Army recruiter in Dalton with the idea of visiting the Navy recruiting office,” he began. “However, the Navy recruiter was not in. I was a recruiter



Jerry Bryson

SEE BRYSON, PAGE 4

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BRYSON: Served during unique time

FROM PAGE 3

for four years, so I understand the dynamics of it. If somebody walks in your office regardless of what they say – if they're upright and mobile – I'm going to try and put them in (the Army). So that's what he did."

Bryson's grandfather, Harris Etheridge, had been in World War I in France. When Bryson told him he was thinking of joining the Army, he advised, "Keep your a-- down and your head down!" An uncle, Jim Etheridge, had served in the Navy in Korea.

NO MORE 'GOOD OLE DAYS'

Bryson and his high school buddy went into the Army's delayed-entry program.

"Then while we were sitting at Fort Jackson, S.C., waiting for boot camp orientation I said, 'What have we got ourselves into?'" he recalled.

One of his recruiting "guarantees" was serving in Europe or Hawaii, so he chose Europe because Hawaii was a gateway to Vietnam. After advanced infantry training (AIT) at Fort Polk, La., and a transfer to Fort Dix, N.J., Bryson was one of 1,500 soldiers chosen to serve in Berlin. He was told, "You got a good assignment."

The train into the city occupied in halves by Allied and Russian troops had to change from a coal-burning engine to diesel by actually going into Soviet-held East Berlin.

"Sometime in the early morning hours, I woke up because I felt the train jerk as it stopped," recalled Bryson. "We were over on a siding in East Berlin in East Germany, and I looked out the window and it was like a scene from a James Bond novel. There were all these Russians, and I recognized the Kalashnikov rifles they were carrying. I told a guy, 'We're obviously in a place we don't want to stay too long.' We'd been cautioned by the MPs (military police), 'Do not engage in any exchanges of conversation or anything else with the people that were on the platforms out here.'"

It was October 1965, just four

months after his high-school graduation.

"I was still thinking about the good ole days back in Murray County, and here I was in the middle of Communist East Germany," Bryson said.

When asked what it was like being at the epicenter of the division between communism and capitalism, Bryson replied, "It was on display every day." He noted that a photo of Murray County native Raymond Beam – who was later killed in Vietnam and is profiled in the book, "Some Gave All" – was taken in front of an access gate to the U.S. Army compound in Berlin; he recognized the background.

Bryson said the dividing wall between East and West Berlin was around 24 miles long, but there were sections without a barrier with only barbed wire and "a lot of guard posts."

"There were actually two walls – one on your side and another one (on their side), with no-man's land in between with mines in some places and (guard) dogs in some places," he detailed.

Because he had taken typing class in high school, Bryson became a supply clerk for his battalion during his three years in Berlin. He re-enlisted for six years, but before his rotation back stateside the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. His orders were changed to "standby."

"(They implied) we may be going someplace, or we may have to defend what we have right here," he said of the delay. "When the Warsaw Pact did that, it got everyone's attention."

Bryson was sent to Fort Hood, Texas, then got a 30-day leave to go home to Spring Place for Christmas – his first time in three years. He met his wife, Janet, in Colleen where Fort Hood is located, and they were married in late 1969. After remarking how easy the life of a recruiter seemed to be – much like that of a supply clerk – a brigade career counselor challenged him to try if it he thought it was so easy. After training at Fort

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At the border

Private First Class Jerry Bryson stands by the American sector boundary sign. He would eventually attain the rank of staff sergeant.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy Veterans Day

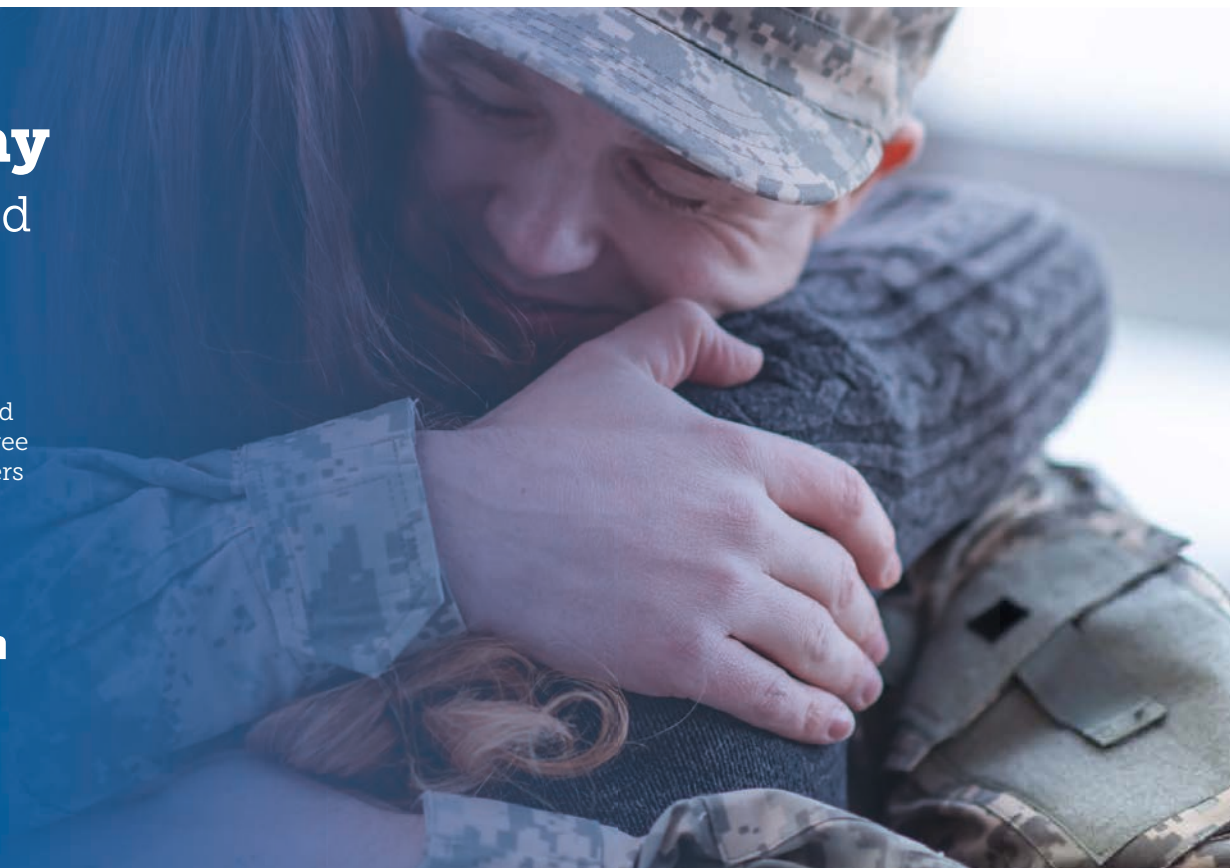
Honoring All Who Served

Bojangles of Chatsworth

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7 to 10 am

In honor of those who have served in the armed forces, AdventHealth and Bojangles will host a free breakfast for veterans and Patriot Guard members (dining room only).



BRYSON: Military career included tense times during in Cold War Berlin

FROM PAGE 4

Benjamin Harrison in Indiana, he and Janet moved to a recruiting outpost in rural South Carolina.

ENLISTING HOPELESS TEENS

“It was in Sumter, in a dirt-poor county with hardly any industry,” said Bryson. “I remember picking up a potential recruit, a young female, from a ‘shotgun house’ out in the middle of a cotton field that looked like a scene out of a cheap movie. She said, ‘Sergeant Bryson, I’ve got to get out of here. This place is just going to kill me before it’s over with. There’s nothing around here.’”

Bryson and two other recruiters met their quotas for recruits, then he reopened a recruiting office in Greenwood on the western side of Columbia. Janet was teaching at an elementary school, and Lander College gave Bryson an opportunity to finish a degree he’d been “nibbling” at while in Germany. It was time to move on from the Army.

“I went to Fort Jackson for my (discharge) processing (in 1974)... and a girl sitting behind a counter said ‘Sgt. Bryson, what are you doing here?’” he remembered. “I said, ‘Well, I’m here to process my discharge.’ I had put her in two years before, so I said, ‘Good to see you again – I’m glad you found a place that hopefully you like.’ She said, ‘Yes, this is the greatest thing I ever did!’”

With his studies in business and computers, Bryson landed a job with a Palmetto State radio station.

Later, back in Georgia, Bryson got involved with new station WQMT in Chatsworth. He also helped get the financials straightened out at Cohutta Lodge atop Fort Mountain, and one day met eventually-convicted televangelist Jim Bakker, a potential buyer of the facility.

A LEADER AMONG BERLIN VETS

Bryson learned of the BUSMVA organization in 1996 from one of his former supply sergeants who was also stationed in Berlin.

“I joined and went to a reunion in 2003,” he said. “I wasn’t really impressed with it at the time, but a couple of years later I decided to get involved



Berlin Wall remnant

A piece of the Berlin Wall hangs on Jerry Bryson’s office wall in Spring Place. It was recovered from the Glienicke Bridge area depicted in the Tom Hanks movie, “Bridge of Spies,” so named because the span was used several times for the exchange of captured spies.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

and took over the membership department.”

During a reunion at Fort Benning in 2019, Bryson was recognized for his membership efforts and also elected BUSMVA president. The organization now has 3,000 members, primarily Army veterans but it also includes Air Force vets too and even a couple of Navy retirees who were stationed there. He’s been back to visit Berlin three times.

When asked what it meant to serve in the Cold War right next to the Berlin Wall, Bryson replied it was “the most interesting three years of my now 75th year.”

“Those many thousands of men and women who in serving in the armed forces of the United States, ‘stood guard and stood their ground, protecting and giving hope to the citizens of West Berlin’ accomplished the mission in the reunification of Berlin and Germany,” he said. “Their names may soon be forgotten, but their success never will.”

The BUSMVA continues to seek other veterans who served there until the Berlin Brigade was deactivated in 1994. The website is berlinveterans.com, and they also have a Facebook page.

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Challenge of military service inspired Corse

By Erik Green
SPORTS EDITOR

The massive blast was just feet away from where Logan Corse sat manning a rifle near the back of a Humvee.

In all his years of Army service and training, including time in the fabled Rangers, Corse had never experienced combat. After 9/11 he reenlisted with the Georgia National Guard and was eventually deployed to Iraq. That's what led him to the desert far from home where the improvised explosive device (IED) waited to kill him. It sent shock waves through the area and the Humvee jostled sideways. Fire and chaos enveloped them. Four of the six soldiers aboard were burned or received shrapnel injuries, but, thankfully, no one died. Corse took shrapnel up his right leg, into his nearby backpack, and into his head.

"I had a piece in my ear," said Corse, owner of Cohutta Pines and the Cohutta Sportsman Center in Cisco.

The worst injury was to his left leg, which had been trapped during the explosion and essentially crushed under a spare tire. He recovered from his injuries, but the scars remain and a limp as well. As a result of his injuries, Corse received the Purple Heart.

In those early days of the Iraq War, the roadside bombs, as they came to be known, were less sophisticated but the Humvees were poorly armored and vulnerable – underneath especially. Corse and his fellow soldiers had discovered some metal tailgates in the desert in the days before the blast and jerry-rigged them to the sides of the vehicle. It may have saved their lives, he said.

"It practically blew off the front end of the truck," said Corse. "When the truck righted itself it just rolled on until we reached the objective which was an Iraqi air base on the other side of the overpass. I remember reaching the entry checkpoint and the truck just gave up the ghost right there."

A 2006 Congressional report found that half of all combat deaths (to that point) in Iraq and roughly 30 percent



Logan Corse

of those in Afghanistan were related to IEDs. When the Iranians began providing more advanced IEDs to the insurgency in later years, things got worse.

"My unit went back two years later and lost a handful of guys," Corse said. "Massive explosive IED directly under their armored vehicles. I believe it happened to them twice. There's now a memorial and plaques for all lost at National Guard HQ, Clay National Guard Center in Marietta."

A SOLDIER IS BORN

Corse's father was in the Air Force and he spent some of his childhood in Germany. Corse was around guns and military men and always had an interest in serving in the armed forces in some way. Corse, now 56, spent his teen years in Washington D.C. and kept up with world military undertakings of the 80s in Granada and the Falklands War. He subscribed

to Soldier of Fortune Magazine and his interest only grew.

"I started reading about these small conflicts and thought that was really interesting," he said. "That was my interest and I ended up doing exactly that in my military career. The small unit, not big Army stuff. With the Rangers and the reconnaissance six man teams. Later on with the Georgia National Guard, I got to experience that."

Corse found the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LURPS) and Long Range Surveillance (LRS) teams of the Vietnam era particularly interesting.

"I liked that challenge," he said.

Corse enlisted in the Army out of high school. He spent his first tour in the Korean Demilitarized Zone where he worked as an infantry scout.

"I was a radio operator," he said. "Maybe because I was scared to death

of talking. I wanted to challenge myself. Then I had a choice assignment and went to the 1st Rangers (based at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah)."

Ranger Indoc, or Ranger Assessment and Selection Program, is among the most grueling selection courses in the entire military. Watch a YouTube video on The Darby Queen obstacle course and you'll see a small part of why.

"It was pretty scary," Corse said. "I remember us sweating so profusely that sweat was raining out of the ceiling. Honestly, I have never been a good runner. What I was good at was ruck-sacking. And I was a scrawny little guy. Man, you could put 85 pounds on my back and I was moving. I never had a problem."

Once in the Rangers, Corse was an anti-tank gunner. He carried a

SEE CORSE, PAGE 9

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Better times

Pictured are (left to right) granddaughter Zoey Corse, Logan Corse, Chandler Corse, Kat Corse, Hayden Corse, and Hunter Corse.

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CORSE: Veteran fortunate to survive explosion of Iraqi IED in 2003

recoilless rifle from the Korean War era on his back. A recoilless rifle, in layman's terms, is similar to a rocket launcher only it fires 90mm shells. The barrel is rifled, hence the name, creating a point-first spin on the projectile as it flies through the air. Explosive gas fires from the back of the weapon, creating forward thrust and helping to negate recoil. Standing behind it is not a good idea.

"They don't even make them anymore," Corse said. "They basically disappeared."

Corse finished his enlistment and left the military in one piece. During this time, he went through a divorce and remarried. Corse spent 10 years as a civilian but in 2000 decided to join the National Guard.

"Man, we're going to drink beer and have barbecues, right," he said. "Hell no. I joined the Georgia Special Operations Unit which was long range surveillance (LRS). We were drilling twice a month. I quit smoking, had to learn to run. I was like 'what have I done?'"

Then 9/11 happened.

A GRIZZLED VET

When the Iraq invasion began in 2003, Corse's

unit was called up. His unit was used as a security force for weapon search teams.

"They were looking for all these violations," he said. "We found Chinese missiles, upgraded Russian tanks, all these different things that were in violation of the 1991 agreement."

One day they found a missile that had gone down an elevator shaft without exploding. That kind of luck rarely happens twice. Later that day came the life changing event with the IED.

"It was the opening day of school in Iraq and there were people everywhere," Corse said. "That sucker blew."

He spent four months in the hospital and, like many, has dealt with PTSD. He would go on to live through multiple IED explosions during his time in Iraq with the worst injuries being concussions. Corse spent a total of eight years fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, first with the National Guard and later in diplomatic security as a sniper.

Corse is now a father to grown children and a grandfather. His son Hunter is full time in the National Guard and is a Bronze Star recipient from his time in the Middle East. The elder Corse is constantly at work on his property at Cohutta

Pines. He wants the location to become a family destination for area residents, complete with skeet shooting, camping, an event center, and a number of other projects. Looking back on his time in the military, Corse admits that it was at times a nightmarish ordeal and he lost friends along the way. However, he is grateful for life and an opportunity to enjoy a mountain view and the colors changing in the trees.

"I've thought about it and believe I was 'lucky' it (the IED blast) wasn't later in the war when they became more trained, more powerful and had Iranian technology," Corse said.

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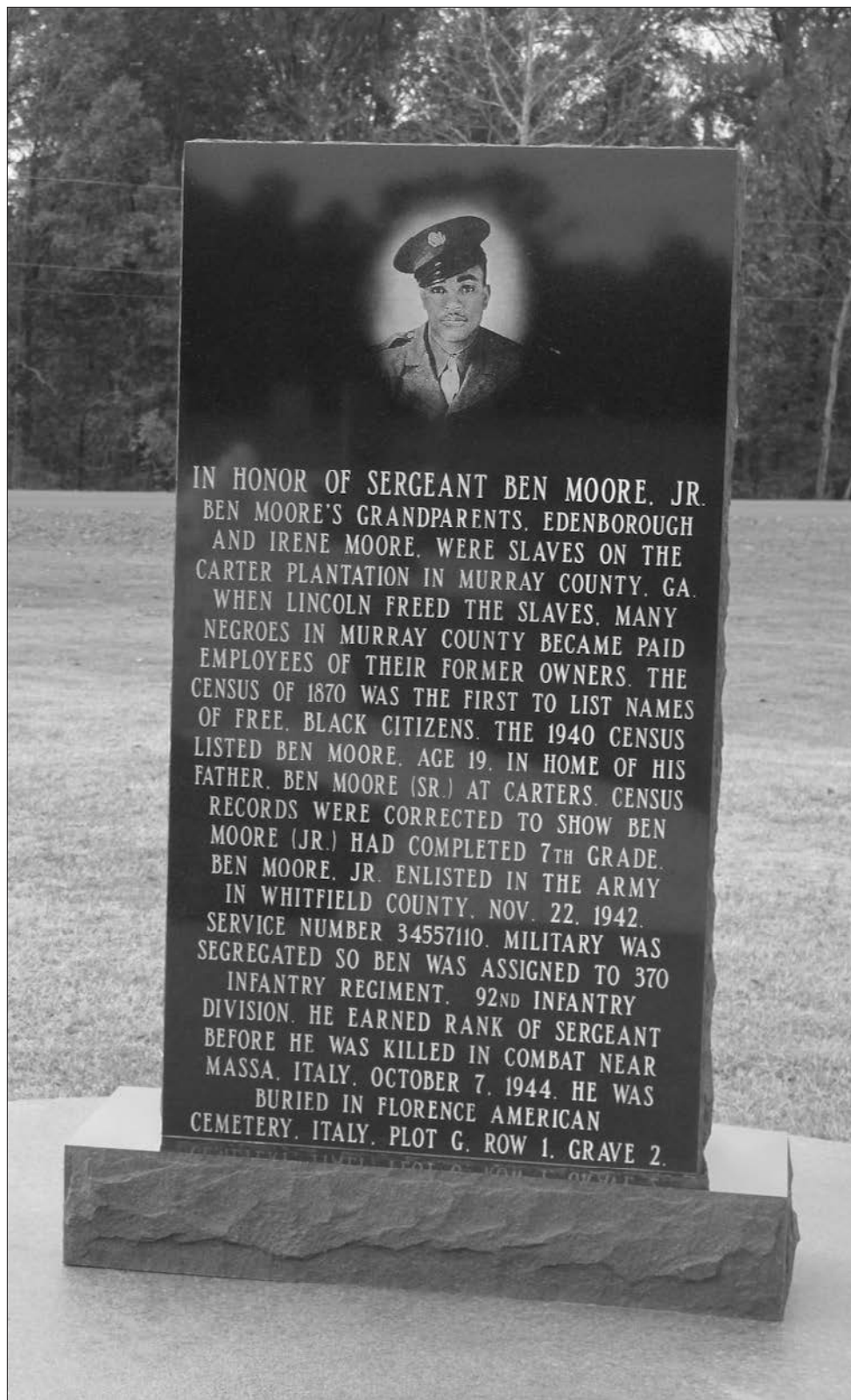


PHOTO BY JIMMY ESPY

Moore monument

The new monument to slain serviceman Ben Moore will be a centerpiece of Veterans Day celebration on Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park (on Hyden Tyler Road) beginning at 9 a.m.

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Gunther, Havlat, Knauss and Veterans Day

By Joseph Reagan

DIRECTOR OF MILITARY AND VETERANS OUTREACH FOR
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COLUMBIA FALLS, ME. — — The 11th hour has become synonymous with Veterans Day, originally called Armistice day, in recognition of the document signed at the 11th hour, or the 11th day, of the 11th month. In reality, the Armistice ending the war to end all wars was signed around 5 am on November 11. Over the course of the next six hours, nearly 3,000 men would lose their lives in the final hours of a war that had already claimed the lives of 20 million military personnel. The final death of World War I came at 10:59 am one minute before the guns of war would fall silent.

THE FINAL ONES

Private Henry Gunther was a German-American drafted in the fall of 1917; most accounts state that his final actions were motivated by Gunther's need to demonstrate that he was "courageous and all-American." A chaplain from Gunther's unit recounted, "As 11 a.m. approached, Gunther suddenly rose with his rifle and ran through thick fog. His men shouted for him to stop. So did the Germans. But Gunther kept running and firing. One machine gun blast later, he was dead. His death was recorded at 10:59 a.m.

In every conflict, inevitably a final service member pays the ultimate sacrifice. In World War II, Private Charlie Havlat, the son of Czech immigrants, in the closing days of the war, found himself liberating his parents' former homeland – word of the cease-fire reached his position minutes after he was killed. Officially, the U.S. has never declared a final casualty in the Korean War; since the armistice was signed, nearly 100 U.S. soldiers have been killed in combat on the Korean peninsula. On April 29, 1975, Charles McMahon and Darwin Judge were two of a small number of Marines tasked with safeguarding the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. They had been deployed for only 11 days



when they were killed by a rocket attack. The U.S. would complete the process of withdrawing from Saigon the following day. Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss was the last of the 2,461 Service Members who died in Afghanistan; he along with 12 of his comrades was killed in a suicide attack during the withdrawal from Kabul.

In every war, there is always one that must fill the dignified but dubious role in history as being the last to give the full measure of devotion. Each year on the 11th day of the 11th month as a nation we pause, not only to honor those that have given their lives but for all those who believed so deeply in American exceptionalism that they were willing to give their lives to defend it.

For most Americans talking about war is conceptual, something learned through history books, news reports, and movies – those that have served do not have that luxury. Not only should we remember that the democratic principles we hold so dear have been defended by generations of Americans whom we honor on Veterans Day, but more importantly we should take inspiration from that sacrifice. Our country, despite all our self-imposed differences, needs to look to our veterans and see that there are no divisions in a foxhole – there are only those who stand in defense of democracy and those who

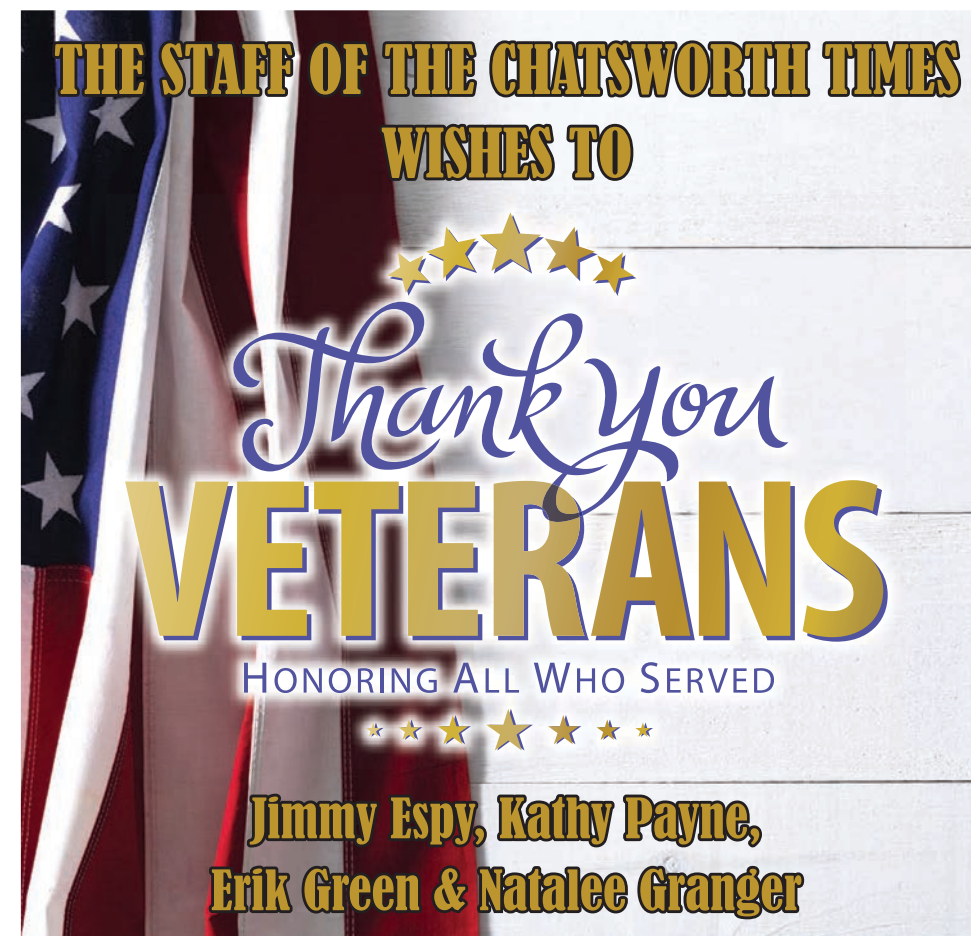
stand against it.

While we may only celebrate Veterans Day with a few moments of silence each year, we have an opportunity to use those moments to find our own way to serve as part of our commitment to living up to the legacy of our veterans. When the Armistice was signed in 1918 when the Japanese surrendered, and when the last flights departed Kabul and Saigon – these were not simply endings – they were new beginnings. We honor those who serve by recommitting ourselves to making the sacrifices necessary to preserve our way of life.

As Adlai Stevenson once stated, "Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime." Let this Veterans Day be a new beginning. Go forth and find a way to serve, our nation, our communities, and

each other – we owe it to our veterans.

Joseph Reagan is the Director of Military and Veterans Outreach for Wreaths Across America. He has over 10 years' experience working with leaders within Government, non-profit, and Fortune 500 companies to develop sustainable strategies supporting National Security, and Veterans Health. He served 8 years on active duty as an officer in the U.S. Army including two tours to Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division. He is a graduate of Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the country.





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Today and always, may we honor the brave men and women who have protected our families, our country, and our freedom.



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