

Memorial Day

Remember and Honor



A 2025 Special Publication by the Pampa News

Happy Memorial Day

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May we always cherish the gift of freedom and remember those who have fought for it.



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Missing in America Project

David Sieber Recognized for His Patriotism and Contribution to the Project

PER PAMPA VFW POST 1657/AUXILIARY
Each year, the Missing in America Project identifies and locates the remains of veterans who died without family or means to be claimed, ensuring they receive the respect and dignity they deserve.

To date, the Missing in America Project has identified 7,320 veteran remains, and has interred 7,120 of them in Veteran cemeteries.

MIAP partners with organizations like The Panhandle War Museum in Amarillo and the Patriot Guard riders, alongside other civic and veteran-related groups to get these heroes to their final resting place.

This year on May 1, the escort left Amarillo and headed to Lubbock, and from there to San Antonio for

internment at Fort Sam Houston. The veterans being escorted were:
Mark M. Leclerc-US Army
Jerry L. Williams-US Army
Kirby J. Caylor-US Army
Steven A. Groves-US Army
Harvey Kelsey-US Army
Robert W. Webb-US Air Force
Jon S. Harrison-US Navy
David Sieber has been a part of this humbling escort for two years now, and his unwavering dedication to ensuring that veterans receive the honor and dignity they deserve is truly commendable.

His efforts reflect a deep sense of respect for those who served and sacrificed for their country, and he stands as a beacon of gratitude and compassion within the VFW.

It is through individuals like David that the memory of these heroes is preserved and celebrated, inspiring others to contribute to such noble causes.



Above: David Sieber ready to hit the road before the sun comes up

Bottom Left: The cremated remains of veterans that were escorted to Fort Sam Houston for internment

Bottom Right: VFW Post 1657 Post Commander Rick Dunn presents an award to David for his patriotism and contribution to the project



Thank you to all the Veterans and their families, whose sacrifice has made our freedom possible

HUNTING

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HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR

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Pampa High School Memorial Wall

By GENEVA WILDCAT

Located in the Commons Room of Pampa High School is the Memorial Wall, full of plaques commemorating ‘The Bravest of Pampa High School Who Gave it All.’

With 43 plaques on the wall in total, each one tells a brief military history of the brave soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country, all of them being prior graduates of PHS.

With the help of the VFW Post 1657 and many residents of Pampa who had familial knowledge and resources, the Memorial Wall features biographies of soldiers dating back to World War 1 up until the war in Afghanistan: a humble reminder of what it means to be free.

Pampa High School is the third high school that Clay Jones, Principal of PHS, has worked in, as well as the smallest, and he shared that Pampa is the only school that he has seen that has a Memorial Wall for its fallen graduates.

“Just the time and resources it took into finding information on so many veterans I thought was really amazing,” Jones said.

Jones’ admiration for the Memorial Wall hits a much more personal place in his heart, as his grandfather, who was a Lieutenant in the Air Force navigating on a B-47 during the Cold War, sits among the eternal soldiers.

On April 29, 1960 during a routine training mission in Topeka, Kansas, there was an accident that killed all three people on board, his grandfather included.

“I never got to meet him. That’s the important part of remembering those people and a really big part for our kids to learn is the reason we get a lot of these freedoms that we have is because of the sacrifices that our classmates have made.”

Because the location of the Memorial Wall is heavy with traffic-the hustle and bustle of students switching classes, going to lunch or going home for the day-it’s easy for the Wall to be overlooked and its purpose somewhat



underappreciated at times.

Jones said that the foreign exchange students tend to be the ones who notice it more and when they begin to share their own stories with their classmates about why they’re there and what it’s like in their own country, students take notice and reflect on just how lucky they are.

“I think it’s very easy to become complacent in the freedoms we have, like getting to choose your own lunch or what you’re going to do as a major,” he said. “Sometimes we don’t understand just how the rest of the world lives.”

“When the war in Ukraine started, we had a few European kids here and for us, we’re half a world away from that so we don’t really think about it, but we had a kid from Greece who got a call to say he needed to come back because he had gotten drafted. It gets a little bit more real when our kids are right there when one of their classmates gets a call to come back home for something like that.”

“It’s interesting to see the kids realize that the rest of the world isn’t as comfortable as ours and it’s because of those sacrifices that those people have made for us.”

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★



MEMORIAL
DAY

HONOR OUR HEROES

Let's remember those
who have sacrificed
their lives.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★





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REMEMBERING
OUR BRAVE
HEROES.

THIS
MEMORIAL DAY

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Handling the Flag

There are specific rules to ensure that this important symbol is always treated with respect.

The U.S. flag should always be handled and displayed with the utmost care. Familiarizing yourself with the Flag Code will ensure that you're always following the proper protocols.

HOW TO FOLD IT

Folding the flag into its traditional three-corner shape isn't easy, so take time for some practice. Begin by holding the flag lengthwise and then folding it in half. Next, fold the flag in half lengthwise again, making sure that the blue field remains visible on the outside. You'll create a triangular fold from the opposite end, then repeat this process until the flag is completely folded. The final step is to secure the edge of the flag within the folds so that you're showcasing only the blue field and its white stars.



© ADOBE STOCK

LOWERING THE FLAG

The Flag Code cautions that your flag should never touch the ground. This can be a particular risk when lowering flags at dusk. You'll extend its life by keeping the flag away from dirt and things that may tear at the fabric. Should the flag inadvertently fall to the ground, the Flag Code doesn't require its retirement. Instead, simply hand wash or dry clean

your flag before displaying it again.

Note that presidents or governors can order flags to be flown at half-staff as a symbol of mourning. There are several established dates where flags are traditionally lowered, including Memorial Day on the

last Monday of May, Sept. 11, and National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on Dec. 7.

RETIREMENT PROCEDURE

Flags that are torn or frayed should be properly retired. The Flag Code recommends

that they be ceremonially burned. Begin by folding the flag in the customary manner then prepare a fire that is big enough to completely consume it. Exercise caution during the process, staying mindful of any applicable local or state fire regulations. Salute

as the flag is placed in the fire. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance, then observe a moment of silence. Finally, respectfully bury the ashes. You can reach out to your local American Legion post. Many of them organize retirement ceremonies on Flag Day.

MEMORIAL DAY



We honor the fallen heroes who bravely fought for our freedom



Saluting Our Soldiers

For their courage, service, sacrifice and dedication, we honor the men and women, past and present, of our military. We will always remember that freedom is not free.



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Medal of Honor Recipient, Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell, to be Guest Speaker at Memorial Day Ceremony at Pampa VFW Post 1657



Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell

Please join the Pampa VFW Post 1657, located at 105 S. Cuyler, on Monday, May 26 at 5 PM, for a Memorial Day Ceremony where Medal of Honor Recipient, Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell, will be the honorary guest and speaker. Birdwell was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1983 for ‘conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life and beyond the call of duty’, while serving with C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Calvary, 25th Infantry Division in the Republic of Vietnam on January

31, 1968. The C Troop came under intense enemy fire, with Specialist Five Birdwell immediately moving the tank commander to safety after being wounded. He then mounted the tank and assumed the commander’s position, releasing fire on the enemy until all ammunition was exhausted, his body completely exposed to to heavy enemy fire. After a U.S. helicopter had crashed nearby, Specialist Five Birdwell ran to the helicopter to retrieve two M-60 machine guns and ammu-

nition, giving one to a fellow soldier. He remounted the tank and continued to engage the enemy. Specialist Five Birdwell was wounded in the face, neck, chest, and arms, but refusing to be medically treated, advanced forward with fellow soldiers and set up a defensive position by a large tree, where they engaged the enemy with M-16 fire and grenades. Once the enemy fire lessened, Specialist Five Birdwell gathered ammunition from disabled vehicles and helped wounded soldiers move to safer positions. Specialist Five Birdwell formally received the Medal of Honor on July 4, 2022, presented by President Joe Biden. The event is open to the public and refreshments will be provided by the Meredith Court. The VFW Post 1657 of Pampa has been a tremendous support to the community and has donated to numerous causes around Pampa. Just a few of the activities that the VFW Post 1657 has been locally involved with include:

- Giving out over \$200,000 in scholarships
- Disbursing over \$2 million to help individuals with their water and gas bills as well as help

local organizations with their activities

- Donated to the Pampa Police and Fire Department to help buy needed equipment
- Been an active supporter of the Youth Optimist Club
- Bought thousands of flags for those who could not afford them
- Sponsored the Children’s Christmas Shopping Tour and Angel Tree
- Provided motorcycle escorts for veteran’s

funerals and an Honor Guard at the cemetery

- Sponsored Boy Scout trips to the M.K. Brown Camp
- Are a founding member of the Freedom Museum USA
- Always sponsored the Veterans Day Parade
- Presented the flags at numerous sporting events
- Sponsored two rooms at the Legacy House in Amarillo for families with loved ones in the hospital

The VFW Post 1657 are currently coming up with new ideas to reach out to the community and to potentially attract new members, primarily focusing on the younger veterans who need a support system of like-minded individuals whose camaraderie, brotherhood/sisterhood and love for the community and their country lays at the forefront of everything they stand for.

WE REMEMBER ON MEMORIAL DAY

"LAND OF THE FREE BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE"

HONOR THE COURAGE OUR FALLEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS SHOWED OUR COUNTRY

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Your local Insurica Pampa office supports our veterans. Our current commercial insurance producer, Mike Mitchell is a Desert Storm veteran. We also have several employees who have family members who hold prior military service.

On this day of remembrance, we are honored to show our public appreciation to all those who have served, both past and present!

★★★★★

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REMEMBER & HONOR

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Pampa VFW Post 1657 Recognized for Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony



BART Guthrie and Department Commander Robert Martinez presented VFW Post 1657 Post Commander Rick Dunn the Community Service Award for their program on Pearl Harbor, the first of its kind in the Pampa

On December 7 of last year, the Pampa VFW Post 1657 held a ceremony to honor those lost at Pearl Harbor, the first one of its kind in Pampa.

The ceremony began with a historical video of the events that transpired on that day more than 80 years ago, flashing images of the destruction as President FDR’s famous speech boomed over the speaker.

Attendants of the ceremony listened as the biographies and stories were told of those soldiers who died on that fateful day by members of the community, and for each name that was read aloud, a bell was rung.

The biographies included those military personnel from the Texas Panhandle, Eligah “Popeye” Autry, Jr. from here in Gray County.

The ceremony came to an end with Steve Porter and Pat Maddox leading everyone in ‘God Bless America’, with Larry Ray, retired USMC, finishing with Taps.

Recently, the Pampa VFW was recognized for this special and somber ceremony, with Post Commander Rick Dunn receiving the Community Service Award presented by BART Guthrie and Department Commander Robert Martinez.

We thank the Pampa VFW for always remembering to honor those who put their lives on the line, no matter how much time has passed.



Steve Porter and Pat Maddox leading attendees of the Pearl Harbor Memorial in song



Larry Ray USMC, Auxiliary Patriotic Instructor David Sieber, Keith Black, and VFW Post Commander Rick Dunn with the memorial bell

Memorial Day

REMEMBER AND HONOR

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Freedom Museum USA

By GENEVA WILDCAT

While Memorial Day may only be once a year to commemorate and remember fallen service members who died actively serving their country, The Freedom Museum USA in Pampa sits on the busiest street in Pampa where every day passersby can clearly see the planes, helicopters and tanks, all from different world conflicts, acting as a stark reminder of why we are free.

But what lies on the inside tells the story about the soldiers who went through the hells of war and the sacrifices they made: from the numerous displayed uniforms and patches (both from our own countrymen and from the enemy) to the Hall of Honor that holds multiple framed pictures of Texas Panhandle service members,

many of their stories preserved in time.

The Freedom Museum USA, founded by the VFW Post 1657 of Pampa, remains a crucial element to preserving not only the history of local service members, but to tell their story in a visual way that truly speaks to the heart.

The detailed exhibits and stories show the impressive and intense research and dedication that went into putting the museum together, speaking on the deep reverence and commitment everyone had and still has that was involved with the museum's conception and purpose.

To be able to see the artifacts from different wars, from World War I and World War II to Vietnam, the observer can surely at least begin to understand the importance of preserving the history and why Memorial Day and Veterans

Day are celebrated differently between the general public and veterans.

While many of us will be taking advantage of the Memorial Day sales that popular retailers advertise and enjoying the three-day weekend without the worry of having to come in to work on Monday, for service members, it's a day of mourning for their fallen brethren when they will hold a special ceremony to honor those who lost their lives in action.

The Freedom Museum USA is located at 600 N. Hobart in Pampa and is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon until 4 PM. It's guaranteed that once you step foot through the door and take the time to visit the exhibits, even if it's just one you'll come out with a deeper understanding of what it truly means to be free.



The Strength of Our Grand Nation

This Memorial Day, remember to honor those who fought to preserve our freedom.



1305 S. Hobart
atyardservice@yahoo.com



Home of the Free, Thanks to the Brave

We salute the men and women of our military, both past and present, who sacrifice so much to protect our freedom and way of life.

**Happy Memorial Day,
and God Bless America!**



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Memorial Day Remember and Honor



Caring for Your Flag

Signs of slight wear or dirt don't have to lead to retirement.

Flying your flag outdoors can inevitably lead to grunge or tears. You can extend its life with proper cleaning and mending. The U.S. Flag Code offers some recommended tips for proper care.

WASHING THE FLAG
Allowing dirt and grime to accumulate can lead to irreversible stains, while strong winds can cause tears in the fabric. If your flag becomes dirty, try to promptly address the issue. Don't let your flag touch the ground when lowering it for cleaning, since that's seen as disrespectful. (It may also leave still more unsightly marks.) Always wash by hand. When cleaning your flag, use cold water and a mild detergent. After cleaning, lay the flag out flat to dry. This will help maintain its shape and keep the colors from bleeding together.

REGULAR INSPECTIONS
In addition to monitoring for dirt and other debris, regularly inspect your flag for any signs of holes or fraying. These inspections are particularly important for all-weather flags, which are subject to blistering sunlight, continual wind and severe storms. Remember that even minor tears can quickly develop into large holes in bad weather. Just exercise



© ADOBE STOCK

plenty of caution when sewing. Frequent adjustments may also alter the flag's shape and overall appearance.

TALK TO AN EXPERT
Consistent, careful flag maintenance and repairs will enhance the flag's appearance and extend its longevity.

Reach out to a local dry cleaner if you are uncertain about how to repair minor imperfections, or simply want to ensure that this important symbol receives the highest level of care. Their expertise in handling delicate materials will help extend the lifespan of your flag. Just remember to

carefully follow any care instructions they provide.

FLAG'S LIFESPAN
It is important to note that even well-cared-for flags don't last forever. Experts say the typical lifespan for an average cotton or nylon flag is approximately 90 days. That's under

optimal display conditions, when they're only flown from dawn to dusk without being exposed to inclement weather. Flags that are displayed continuously, day and night, may only last about a quarter of that time before they begin to fray or fade.



Memorial
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MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR

We will always remember those brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.



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THIS MEMORIAL DAY

We Honor the Brave

And the Legacy They Fought to Protect

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