

Inside This Issue

Chapter/State News

POW/MIA News

At The Capitol

On The Hill

Veterans Affairs News

*Surviving the Battle of the
Ironclads*

Helping Hands for Our Veterans

The Meaning of Memorial Day



To those who died securing peace and freedom; To those who served in conflict to protect our land, and sacrificed their dreams of the day to preserve the hope of our nation keeping America the land of the free for over two centuries we owe our thanks and our honor. It is important to not only recognize their service but to respect their devotion to duty and to ensure that the purpose for which they fought and died will never be forgotten.

From the soldiers who fought bravely during the American Revolution to the men and women

of today's Armed Forces, America's fighting forces, have responded bravely to this nation's call to duty. Both on the battlefield and in their assurance of readiness, members of the nation's military remain bound to their duty. For more than 240 years, America's Armed Forces have been the surest guarantee that Freedom will continue to ring across this land – From Sea to Shining Sea!

Meetings

Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford. *Masks and social distancing required.*

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, May 27 at 7:00pm. Call the Chapter office for any changes in schedule. Chapter members are welcomed to attend.

Notice

If you have moved or changed your address, PLEASE notify us immediately. Call the Chapter office at (860) 568-9212, mail us at the address on the back of this newsletter or e-mail the Newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In accordance with Title 17 of U. S. C. Section 107, any copyrighted work in this newsletter is distributed under fair use without profit or payment to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for nonprofit research and educational purposes only.

The lives of the men and women who fought in America's battles, and who served their country in support of the military, made significant sacrifice in fighting for the freedom and liberty that we enjoy today. Too often we fail to remember those who gave their life, or those whose life today bears the scars as a lasting memory of that sacrifice and commitment. But there are many who remember vividly as the lives affected were sons, daughters, friends, coworkers and neighbors – and that their unselfish sacrifice was made with the assurance that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness required the ultimate service to their nation.

And remember those 612 Connecticut heroes who fought and died in Vietnam – Never Forgotten Brothers

CHAPTER 120 OFFICE 568-9212**Board of Directors**

Roger Anderson	528-4338
Paul Barry	569-3530
Peter Galgano	828-1999
Leigh Lovering	528-8312
Frank Zizzamia	569-0705

Executive Officers

Bob Burgess, President	646-0205
Phil Morneauult, Vice President	930-2122
Phil Morneauult, Treasurer	930-2122
Peter Lund, Secretary	644-9770

VVA Service Representatives

John Cutler	568-9212
E-Mail: VVA.Service.Rep@att.net	

Gerald Fabry, MD	884-7271
E-Mail : gerfab@comcast.net	

Gary Waterhouse	656-0430
E-Mail : gwaterhouse@cox.net	

Membership

Frank J. Mello, Jr.	604-3879
E-Mail: Fmello336@yahoo.com	

Women Vietnam Veterans

Patricia Dumin	620-4131
----------------	----------

Product Sales

Leigh Lovering	528-8312
lhlovering@gmail.com	

Newsletter/Website

John Cutler	282-7470
E-Mail: ctchapter120@aol.com	

Notary Public

Gary Gazdzicki, Sr.	812-5703
---------------------	----------

Vet Centers

Hartford (Area Code 860)	563-8800
New Haven (Area Code 203)	932-9899
Norwich (Area Code 860)	887-1755
Danbury (Area Code 203)	790-4000

All Telephone Numbers are Area Code 860 unless otherwise noted

Chapter/State News**John F. Panciera - Chapter 120 Life Member**

John "Jack" F. Panciera, 74, of Stafford Springs, passed away on March 30, 2021.

He was born in Stafford Springs, son of the late George and Mary (Driscoll) Panciera. Jack served in the United States Army during Vietnam and Korea as a Communications Intelligence Analyst, and while in the reserves he served as a Senior Instructor. He retired from the State of Connecticut

Department of Motor Vehicle as a Computer Operations Supervisor. In his spare time, he enjoyed refurbishing and selling computers, traveling (especially to Florida), and horse racing.

Jack is survived by his sister, Mary Lou Colozzi and her husband, Ken; niece, Kate Fiano and her husband, Dan; nephews, Jon Colozzi and his wife, Debbie, and Christopher Panciera; three great-nieces, Bella, Leigha, and Lily; and his companion of 32 years, Rachel Fitzgerald, and her children and grandchildren, Krystal Voisine and her husband, Eric (Lauren and Megan), Patrick Fitzgerald and his wife, Sarah (Madison, Emily, and Abbigail), and Kerry Fitzgerald. He was predeceased by his brother, Peter Panciera; and nephew, Michael Panciera.

A calling hours were held on Friday, April 9, 2021, with a funeral service at 2 p.m., at Introvigne Funeral Home, Inc., 51 East Main St., Stafford Springs. Burial with Military Honors followed in St. Edward Cemetery, Stafford Springs.

Memorial donations may be made to Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675.

Charles Barrera - Chapter 120 Life Member

Charles "Chucky" Barrera, 74, the husband of Chickey Balesano Barrera, died on Friday, April 9, 2021, at his home, surrounded by family and friends.

Besides his wife Chickey, whom he met at the Holiday Lanes on October, 1979, he is survived by his daughter Amy (Garth) Angelo; son Matt (Amanda) Barrera; daughter Kari H. (Sam) Barrera; niece and nephew Denise (Dan) Barrera and David (Terri) Barrera; nine grandchildren; and his brother-in-law Jim (Carla) Balesano. He is also survived by several nephews, great-nieces and -nephews; and cousins; his best friend Freddy Newman; and many other friends including Al Gionet, Roy Sanden, Bob Russell, Kathy

Falce, Jill Larment, and Lucia, Mark and Shelly Cooney. Chucky was predeceased by his parents Charles and Ernestine Barrera; his brother David Barrera; his mother-in-law Rosie Balesano; and his sister-in-law Lisa Balesano.

He was a 1965 graduate of Manchester High School and later was employed with the Town of Manchester for 27 years as a technician in the Water & Sewer Dept. A proud U.S. Navy veteran he served in active duty from June 1965 - June 1967 on destroyers as a Quartermaster and later in the USNR as a Utilitiesman 2nd Class. He followed that career by joining USAR 76th Division and served as a Sergeant 1st Class E-7, training recruits and was a member of the 76th Div. Rifle and Pistol team. Chucky was elected as a Constable for the Manchester Tax Department, was a patron member of the NRA where he received a public service award in 1980 and continued as a firearms instructor for many years. He was inducted into the Manchester Sports Hall of Fame in 2009 and belonged to the Friendship Tuscan

Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes go to our members born in May. May you have many more!

John P. Burns
John R. Cutler
William S. Ehlert
Peter Galgano
Frank T. Jodaitis
Kipp O. Miller
James Stevenson
Roland Wolf

Michael J. Coyne
Robert N. DeRosa
Robert Fulco
Normand R. Girardin
James V. Laviana III
Raymond R. Samolis, Jr.
David Taylor

A belated birthday wish goes to Chapter Life member Carl Morin, whose birthday was in April. Sorry we missed you, Carl.

Lodge 145 AF&AM, the Washington Social Club, was a life member of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 120, a life member of VFW Post 2046, Past President and life member of the Manchester Sportsmen's Assoc. and because of his many contributions to the Town of Manchester, March 7, 2021, was recognized as Charles "Chucky" Barrera Day.

A graveside funeral service was held on Wednesday, April 14, at 11 a.m., in East Cemetery, Manchester with full military honors.

Coventry honors Vietnam veterans

Gusty winds that put much of the state on alert Monday calmed just in time for a commemoration ceremony at Veterans Memorial Green to honor Vietnam War veterans during a national day of recognition for their service and sacrifice.



"It was a dignified and humble ceremony today ... as we honored and remembered all the Vietnam War veterans on this designated National Day," event organizer and Vietnam veteran Jamie DePaola said following the event.

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed each year on March 29 and is a way to thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families, DePaola said.

The ceremony was held at Veterans Memorial Green, located across from Patriots Park, and included a prayer and presentation of a wreath to honor fallen Vietnam veterans.

The ceremony was officiated by Coventry Mansfield American Legion Commander Manny Rodrigues, and for the third

consecutive year, state Rep. Timothy Ackert, R-Coventry, who is a U.S. Air Force veteran, attended.

Paul Ryder, a decorated Vietnam veteran, received the veterans' blanket of honor during the ceremony. Coventry Councilman Jon Hand played military taps at the end.

The color guard from Chapter 270 Vietnam War Veterans of Norwich also added to the event.

The commemoration honors U.S. Armed Forces personnel with active duty service between Nov.1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of where they served, which includes about nine million Americans.

"It also honors 6.4 million Americans living today, 2.7 million U.S. service members who served in Vietnam, 58,000 whose names are memorialized on a black granite wall at the nation's capital and 304,000 who were wounded and 1,253 who were missing in action, and 2,500 prisoners of the war," Ackert said quoting a document from the Military Veterans Benefits Guide.

"The commemoration makes no distinction between veterans who served in-county, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years," Ackert said.

He went on to say that many who served were disrespected after the war, and still today face some backlash. Some Vietnam veterans were turned away from joining other veteran organizations, he added.

"So the thanks I want to give is for your perseverance," Ackert said. "Many of our Vietnam veterans have been and still are committed to making sure all veterans are treated with respect and thanked for their service."

Following the ceremony, many gathered at Bidwell Tavern to continue the celebration.

"I was honored and humbled to be part of organizing this event," DePaola said.



Receive "The CONNECTION" by E-Mail and Help Your Chapter Today

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, The Connection, is available by e-mail. Currently, 97 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter nearly \$1,800 in postal fees, printing costs and mailing supplies annually. The newsletter is available in Adobe format (.pdf), attached to your e-mail. If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail in lieu of postal mail, please e-mail the newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com

POW/MIA News



From DPAA

Recovered Remains of Korean War Soldier buried at ANC

A Soldier from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) marches with the POW/MIA flag behind the caisson carrying the remains of Army Sgt. James E. Smith, Jr., who died

during the Korean War, during Smith's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) April 12, 2021. In late 1950, Smith was a member of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 25, 1950, when enemy forces attacked his unit near Kujang-dong, North Korea. Following the war, several returned American prisoners of war reported that Smith had died in January 1951, in the vicinity of Pukchin-Tarigol, a temporary prisoner of war camp. Smith was accounted for from remains recovered during a 2005 Joint Recovery Operation in North Korea and from remains repatriated to the U.S. after the 2018 summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un.



Current Status of Unaccounted-for Americans Lost in the Vietnam War

	Vietnam	Laos	Cambodia	China	Total
Original Missing	1,973	573	90	10	2,646
Repatriated and Identified	728	288	42	3	1,061[1]
Remaining Missing	1,245	285	48	7	1,585

Of the remaining 1,246 Americans still unaccounted for in Vietnam, 470 are in a "non-recoverable" category. This means that as a result of rigorous investigation, we have conclusive evidence the individual perished, but do not believe it possible to recover his remains. On rare occasions, new leads can arise that bring a case back to an active status.

At The Capitol



Hmong Vets Bill passes Senate

SB 914 (File 249, as amended by Senate "A")*AN ACT CONCERNING HMONG LAOTIAN SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNITS WHICH SERVED IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS. This bill extends eligibility for certain veterans' benefits to members of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units that served during the Vietnam War in the U.S. secret war in the Kingdom of Laos. Specifically, the bill extends the following benefits to these individuals:

1. Veterans' license plates, including for vehicles used exclusively for farming (§ 1);
2. Veteran status on a driver's license or identity card (§ 2);
3. \$1,800 toward funeral expenses or cremation for certain indigent veterans (§ 3); and
4. Veterans' service ribbon and medal (i.e., the Connecticut Veterans Wartime Service Medal) (§ 5)

The Senate passed the bill and sent to the House on 4/15/21.

All remaining VA Committee bills that were voted out of Committee are awaiting action by their respective houses.

On The Hill

From Military Times

Troops exposed to Agent Orange outside of Vietnam could be in line for presumptive benefits

Congress in recent years has expanded disability benefits for veterans exposed to toxic chemicals during fighting in Vietnam, but a pair of lawmakers is pushing now to make sure U.S. troops who faced the same poisons while deployed to nearby countries receive similar help.



On Thursday, Pennsylvania Reps. Matt Cartwright (D) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R)

introduced new legislation to expand the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange for disability benefits to veterans who served in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia during the conflict.

"Many of those who have been exposed are living with cancers, heart disease or Parkinson's disease," Cartwright said in a statement. "They deserve relief for the pain and hardship this has caused for them and their families."

Staff could not say exactly how many veterans may be affected by the change. More than 50,000 U.S. troops were deployed to

Thailand alone at the height of operations there, but it is unknown how many of those individuals later deployed to Vietnam and are already eligible for presumptive benefits status.

But veterans' advocates for years have pushed for Congress to close the gap in Agent Orange benefits for individuals exposed to the chemicals in the 1960s and 1970s but never set foot on Vietnamese soil.

Presumptive benefits status is significant for veterans filing for disability benefits because it avoids a host of paperwork and documentation usually required for the payouts.

In most cases, veterans seeking the benefits must prove (typically through medical exams and service records) that their injuries and illnesses are directly connected to their time in the military.

However, in conflicts like Vietnam, where the chemical defoliant Agent Orange was used across the country with little clear documentation of when U.S. troops were exposed, federal officials have made exceptions to those standards of proof.

Individuals who served in the country and later suffered from a list of illnesses connected to chemical exposure — things like prostate cancer, lung cancer, and Parkinson's disease — can qualify for benefits simply by showing they served on the ground during the war there, or in the waters nearby.

Even though Agent Orange was widely used in nearby countries, veterans who spent time in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia are not granted that presumptive status. That means they must prove direct exposure to the chemical during their deployments, proof that advocates say is nearly impossible due to incomplete, aging military records.

Fitzpatrick said the new legislation will "ensure our Vietnam War veterans who served in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia receive the care they deserve now."

The bill would include veterans who served in the following locations:

- Army Bases or Royal Thai Air Force Bases between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975;
- Pranburi Military Reservation in Thailand between Jan. 1, 1964, and April 30, 1964;
- Anywhere in Laos between Dec. 1, 1965, and Sept. 30, 1969;
- Kompon Cham Province in Cambodia in April 1969.

Veterans would be granted presumptive benefits status regardless of the military occupation. Similar legislative efforts to improve the benefits to countries beyond Vietnam have stalled in Congress in recent years, despite expanded benefits for troops who served in the country.

Congressional staff did not have an estimate for what the benefits expansion may cost. Last year, lawmakers added three new illnesses to the list of presumptives for Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam, a move that is expected to help about 34,000 veterans and cost about \$8 billion over the next 10 years.

From Connecting Vets

Bill aims to track veteran exposure to radioactive materials, nerve agents at toxic Alabama base

A more than 100-year-old Army installation in Alabama is considered a site of potential exposure to radioactive compounds and chemical weapons such as nerve agents and mustard gas. Now, a Congressman has introduced legislation aimed at tracking those exposures.

Fort McClellan opened 1918 and members of the U.S. Army Chemical Corp School, Army Combat Development Command Chemical/Biological/Radiological Agency, Army Military Police School and Women's Army Corps and others may have been exposed to significant hazards while serving at the post, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Those exposures could have included:

- Radioactive compounds such as cesium-137 and cobalt-60 used in decontamination training;
- Chemical weapons such as mustard gas and nerve agents used in decontamination testing;
- Airborne polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the Monsanto plant in the neighboring town.

But there is currently no VA registry to track those exposures, and VA does not recognize any presumed conditions as a result of service at the post. Rep. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., reintroduced the Fort McClellan Health Registry Act on April 22 that would establish a registry to track the exposures and long-term health conditions of those veterans.

"The stories I have heard from our veterans who served at Fort McClellan are heartbreakingly painful," Tonko said. "These selfless patriots put their lives on the line to protect us, our families and our nation. We should never have turned a blind eye to the devastating price they are paying for that service. The fact that they are still being denied VA care for these conditions is a travesty and a betrayal of their loyalty and sacrifice. My (bill) would be a breakthrough for them, taking that vital first step of establishing clear links between toxic exposure during their service there and the health issues that have plagued them ever since. It's long past time that we deliver on the promises we made for their service, and let these heroes know they are not, and will not be, forgotten."

Exposures to high levels of the compounds at the post have been shown to cause "a variety of adverse health effects in humans and animals," according to VA. But "there is no evidence exposures of this magnitude have occurred at Fort McClellan.

"There are currently no adverse health conditions associated with service at Fort McClellan," according to VA officials. VA so far does not presume that any health conditions are associated with service at Fort McClellan and does not provide care or benefits for exposures there, despite widespread reports of veterans suffering from a variety of severe health conditions. There is also no environmental health registry associated with service at the post.

“Veterans who are experiencing health issues that they associate with their service while at Fort McClellan should see their primary care provider or local environmental health provider,” according to VA.

Fort McClellan closed in 1999 as part of the Army Base Closure and Realignment Committee (BRAC) program, which also required environment cleanup of the post. Oversight of parts of the post has since been transferred to the Alabama Army National Guard, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, and the Department of the Interior, as well as to the community of Anniston, where the re-development and re-use of the land is overseen by the McClellan Development Authority.

Veterans Affairs News



From Military.com

VA Wants Dramatic Budget Increase, Continuing Trend of Soaring Spending

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough urged Congress on Thursday April 15 to

back a massive funding increase to boost efforts in homelessness assistance and suicide prevention, and address the agency's crumbling and outdated medical infrastructure.

McDonough testified before a House Appropriations Committee subpanel that oversees the VA's funding, highlighting the need to dramatically increase the department's already mammoth budget by \$8.5 billion, or 8.2%, to \$113.1 billion total as part of President Joe Biden's 2022 budget request.

“President Biden defined our country's most sacred obligation as preparing and equipping the troops we send into harm's way and then caring for them and their families when they return,” McDonough told lawmakers. “This budget ensures all veterans, including women veterans, veterans of color and LGBTQ+ veterans, receive the care and benefits they have earned.”

The agency is the second largest part of the federal government in terms of size and budget, which has ballooned over the decades with no signs of slowing down. Lawmakers seldom push back publicly on VA spending, due to the political minefield they would have to navigate to avoid being perceived as curtailing veteran health care. Yet bills to expand or create services are often squashed behind closed doors due to cost.

Between 1970 and 2017, the VA's spending “grew significantly” faster than inflation, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Medical care spending grew from \$27 billion in 2000 to \$69 billion in 2017, an average annual increase of 5.7%. Part of this was due to the VA expanding various programs and investing in community care, on top of veterans from 20th century wars growing older and requiring more expensive care. The post-9/11 wars also significantly increased the veteran population.

In Biden's 2022 budget request, suicide prevention program spending would jump by more than 74%, rising from \$310 million currently to \$540 million.

Between 2005 and 2018, 89,160 veterans died by suicide, according to the most recent data from the VA -- more than the number of Americans killed in each major U.S. conflict except World War II and the Civil War.

Despite Congress' efforts and an ever-rising VA budget, there's no evidence the federal government has put a dent in the veteran suicide crisis, with the VA's data showing little change in the suicide numbers each year.

“Suicide is a complex issue with no single cause,” McDonough told lawmakers. “Maintaining the integrity of VA's mental health care system is vitally important, but it is not enough. We know some veterans may not receive any health care services from VA, which highlights VA alone cannot end veteran suicide; it requires a nationwide effort.”

The administration's budget request also includes a boost to homelessness programs, up 4.4% from current spending to \$2.1 billion.

Under the plan, the VA also aims to become a more welcoming place for women and offer more gender-specific health care. McDonough told lawmakers that more women than ever are choosing the VA for their health care, accounting for more than 30% of new enrollees the past five years, more than triple the number of women enrolled in 2001.

No lawmakers seriously interrogated McDonough on the VA's huge money request. Biden's budget proposal comes alongside his \$2 trillion-plus infrastructure plan still being drafted by Democrats on Capitol Hill, calling for even further boosts to the VA.

Biden's plan asks for \$18 billion to modernize VA hospitals across the country. McDonough didn't overtly advocate for the ambitious infrastructure bill, but stressed to lawmakers that the VA's 1,700 facilities are quickly falling behind the private sector and are in serious need of upgrades.

McDonough told lawmakers that the median age of U.S. private-sector hospitals is roughly 11 years, while VA hospitals are 58 years old on average.

“With aging infrastructure comes operational disruption, risk and cost,” he said. “The architects who designed and constructed many VA facilities in the decades following World War II could not have anticipated the requirements of today's medical technology and the key role infrastructure -- and technological infrastructure -- now plays in delivering safe and high-quality health care. As a result, many of VA's facilities were not designed with these technology and infrastructure requirements, which limits our agility and ability to meet the evolving health care needs of veterans.”

VHA observes 75 years, 1 billion hours of volunteerism

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) celebrates its 75-year milestone anniversary during National Volunteer Week, April 18–24.

In 1946, VA established the Department of Medicine and Surgery (DM&S), the organization that would later become the Veterans Health Administration and provide health care to Veterans as a core mission.

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) was one of the foundational programs created in the newly established DM&S which is marking 1 billion hours volunteers have given of their time in service to Veterans at VA facilities.

“Volunteers are a priceless asset and our Veterans greatly appreciate what they do and have done for three quarters of a century,” said Center for Development and Civic Engagement Director Sabrina Clark. “VA volunteerism is a tradition that has created opportunities for volunteers to serve Veterans, even during a global pandemic.”

At the beginning of VHA's COVID-19 response, VAVS adapted its program to meet the needs of Veterans. Although in-person volunteer engagements were limited, VAVS designed new virtual assignments and galvanized volunteers and organizations to donate items, such as handmade masks, personal protective equipment, smart tablets for Veterans to stay in touch with loved ones, and even meals for frontline workers.

Where many believed volunteer operations to be suspended, VAVS continued its mission to involve the American public in civic engagement activities on behalf of the nation's Veterans. They saw approximately 46,000 volunteers on the rolls during 2020, contributing more than 4.4 million hours of service, and \$108 million in gifts and donations; resulting in a value-added resource of approximately \$227 million to VA, Veterans, families and caregivers.

To learn more about available volunteer opportunities and join the mission to honor the sacrifice and service of America's Veterans, contact VA Voluntary Service at <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/>

From the Putnam Villager (April 23, 2021)

Surviving the Battle of the Ironclads

Appearing in the “Killingly at 300” column, By Margaret Weaver (Killingly Municipal Historian)

(Saturday, Aug. 16, 1930 Norwich Bulletin) A local African-American man, Thomas L. Taylor of Putnam CT, was the last survivor of the clash of iron clads the Monitor and the Merrimac in the Civil War. “At his home on the east side of Oak Hill, Thomas L. Taylor, an elderly colored citizen of the community today (August 15) read with interest the following dispatch which appeared in the afternoon editions of Thursday's papers. ‘Raleigh, N.C. August 14. William Francis Blake said to be the

last surviving veteran of the battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac is dead here today’...

Although the southern veteran may have been the ‘last’ survivor of the famous naval encounter of the ironclads, Mr. Taylor, who is now in his eighties is believed to be the only member of the crew of the Union ‘cheese box on a raft’ now living...Mr. Taylor was aboard when the Monitor steamed out of its base at Hampton Roads and during the thick of the battle which raged for several hours after the Confederate iron covered hulk was encountered. He served as a ‘powder monkey’. His duties consisted of passing up explosives from the ammunition hold to the gunners in the revolving turret.”

Years ago, Fab Cutler, archivist for the Aspinock Historical Society of Putnam (and Editor's mother), had reminded me about Taylor's fame. The following summary is taken from my Feb. 7, 2014, Killingly at 300 column. “According to his story related to William Kimball, who lived near the Grove Street Cemetery, Taylor, a former slave, had been born on a plantation in North Carolina. At the age of 14, when Fort Sumter was fired upon, he decided to make a break for freedom. He appropriated one of his master's best saddle horses and started North, reaching Hampton Roads, Va., without apprehension.

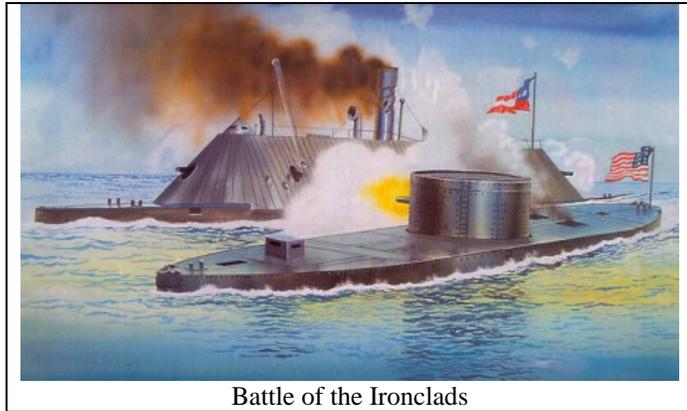
He soon found himself engaged as a messenger boy for one of the officers on the Monitor. With sleeping quarters on the Monitor, Taylor little realized that within a short time he would have a part, however insignificant, in one of the most famous battles in history. He served as a powder monkey on the Monitor during the terrific battle with the Confederate iron-clad Merrimac March 9, 1862, his duties consisting of passing explosives to the gunners in the turret. He saw little of the conflict but he felt and heard much...As a result of his strenuous day's work and wounds, Taylor was confined in a hospital at Fortress (Fort) Monroe for a short time, and then he enlisted in the Navy, serving on another Monitor, modeled after the original.

On July 13, 1865, he was honorably discharged and later became a sailor in the West Indies. He located in Putnam around 1883 and up to the time of his death in 1932 had served as janitor in various school, church and office buildings.” (Killingly Historical Society files-paper perhaps Windham County Transcript 4-26-60. Kimball's account seems to have first appeared in an issue of the New Haven Register.)



“Taylor died on March 7, 1932 at age 84 apparently never really recovering from an attack in Worcester, where he had been living at the time. From his obituary I learned “two men (had) clubbed him over the head, robbed him of his pension money and left him lying unconscious on a back street in that city. The blow on the head that he received

at that time had not only sapped his strength but had also affected his mind” according to Mrs. George U. Miller of Woodstock Avenue at whose home Thomas had been staying. Taylor was buried in Grove Street Cemetery with military honors on March 9, the anniversary of the battle between the ironclads (Windham County Observer March 9, 1932). His gravesite remained unmarked for many years. However, on April 24, 1960 that was rectified as a marker was placed at his grave following the efforts of local veterans’ units. (See Killingly Historical Society files for various articles - not all marked - and an article in The Evening Gazette by Bernard A. Dupont dated March 9, 1981).



Battle of the Ironclads

Helping Hands for Our Fellow Veterans

Won't You Please Give a Helping Hand to a Brother or Sister Veteran?

Several veterans have contacted Chapter 120 asking for help in paying the most basic of needs for themselves and their families. These veterans are those who do not qualify for regular federal, state or local assistance – they fall into that financial category where they make too much to qualify for assistance, but not enough to afford basic needs for their families, like food, fuel for heat, or clothing for their children.

Chapter 120 has decided to ask you – our members – to lend a helping hand to your fellow veterans and their families. Even a small amount of \$5 can make a difference – or more if you can afford to help a fellow veteran and his or her family.

Please send your generous gift, made out to Connecticut Chapter 120, to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Connecticut Chapter 120
Attention: Helping Hands for Veterans
P.O. Box 4136
Hartford, CT 06145

And don't forget, your donations are tax deductible.

Newsletter articles/ stories/photos

Any articles, stories and/or photos submitted for the newsletter must be received by the "cut off" date for any given month. Photos must be accompanied by text which describes the event, names, dates and any other pertinent facts so our readers understand the story behind the photo(s). The newsletter editor will announce the "cut off" dates at each Chapter meeting. The "cut off" date for our June 2021 newsletter is 21 May 2021. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

This newsletter printed by



97B Pierson Lane
Windsor, CT
www.printhubct.com
print@printhubct.com
860-580-7909

Hartford Vet Center



25 Elm Street, Suite A
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Phone: (860)-563-8800
Fax: (860)-563-8805



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Greater Hartford Chapter 120
P.O. Box 4136
Hartford, CT 06145