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# GENERAL 'LY SPEAKING

November 2020

Dispatches From  
The Eisenhower Memorial Commission



**Dear Friends,**

The Eisenhower Memorial Commission is delighted to share with you a special Veterans Day newsletter issue from our partners and friends at the [Trust for the National Mall](#).

With 36 million annual visits, the National Mall is one of the most visited parks in the world. The Trust for the National Mall is the leading nonprofit partner of the National Park Service (NPS) dedicated to restoring and improving the National Mall. The Trust achieves its goals by advancing restoration and sustainability, public awareness and education, and volunteer and community engagement.

Of particular interest to our community is the Trust's [Volunteers in Parks](#) (VIP Program). The Volunteers-in-Parks program is a National Park Service-wide program with thousands of volunteers across the country, including several hundred on the National Mall.

At the Eisenhower Memorial, the Trust has grown the program to more than 40 volunteers in just two months, and is dedicated to empowering the volunteer community to bring the newest addition to the National Mall to life.

As a way to honor the veterans who have served our country, the Trust dedicated its November newsletter to spotlighting veterans with a special connection to its work, including some as volunteers at the National Mall's memorials. We hope you will enjoy reading the highlights of their stories, excerpted below and continued in full on the Trust's website.

We are proud that one of the veterans featured in this special issue is one of the core volunteers at Ike's Memorial and shares his connection to General Eisenhower and the memorial.

Do you or the veterans in your life have a special memory from a visit to one of the memorials on the National Mall? Please share it with #MyNationalMallStory [here](#) to keep the conversation going.

Please consider [subscribing](#) to this newsletter and sharing it with others, too!

With gratitude on Veterans Day and every day,

**The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission**

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***"...let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom."***

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Proclamation 3071, Veterans Day, 1954

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TRUST FOR THE  
**NATIONAL MALL**

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On Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, U.S. Army Colonel Teyhen conducted a swearing-in for Army Specialist Geiszler who re-enlisted. The swearing-in was conducted at the newly-opened Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial right in front of Ike. Photo: Volunteer Tom Haser.

Dear Friend,

I feel honored to bring you this special edition of the Trust for the National Mall's newsletter, dedicated to honoring veterans by sharing their stories and their lifetimes of service.

It is a privilege to kick things off by sharing my story and bringing you the stories of four extraordinary veterans whose lives of service are an inspiration to us all.

The idea of serving one's country, in any capacity, is important to me and helped lead me to found the Trust for the National Mall. The process began 18 years ago in conversations with the National Park Service and became official in 2007. Still, the way the Trust continues to innovate and evolve inspires me. It works to restore and preserve our iconic monuments and to enrich the Mall, looking ahead to ensure future generations feel welcomed and inspired – and

to provide unique volunteer opportunities to serve our nation on America's Front Yard.

The memorials to our veterans and to our nation's heroes keep history alive and help generations of young people forge their own connections to the ideals and meaning of America. As the nation pauses to honor our veterans, I think spotlighting their stories and the messages they want the next generation to understand is fitting – and a great way to honor their lifetimes of service.

**Special thanks to the veterans who spoke with us, and to all who have served our country. We honor you today and every day.**

Thanks to Trust for the National Mall team members Stephen Saunders, Vice President of Philanthropy; Eduard Krakhmalnikov, Director of Public Engagement Programs, Carolyn Perricelli, Marketing and Philanthropy Assistant, and Marisa Nightingale, Senior Advisor, for conducting and editing this series of conversations.

Please pause today and read our veterans' stories, and share your own [#MyNationalMallStory](#) with us.

With gratitude,



John "Chip" Akridge, III  
Founder and Chairman, Trust for the National Mall

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**Why We Must March On: Voices of Veterans and Volunteers**

We asked a select group of veterans to share stories about their service to the nation and how their acts and views of service have evolved over time. They share a range of experiences and their personal perspectives on what the memorials on the National Mall mean to them, what they hope others will find when they visit these special, iconic places, and what they want to share with those who can't be here in person. By bringing their stories to our readers, we hope you will be inspired to learn more about their lives and to learn more about the veterans in your own lives

Highlights of our conversations are below. Please read their full stories on our web site [HERE](#).



Trust for the National Mall Founder and Chairman Chip Arkidge (right) and his wife Sally, Founder and Co-Chair of the Women's Leadership Committee (left) pictured with U.S. Army Staff Sergeant James Pierce (Ret.), recipient of the Purple Heart, and Volunteer Coordinator and Park Ranger at the National Park Service.

## John "Chip" Akridge

*As the Founder and Chairman of the commercial real estate firm bearing his name, Chip is an innovator in the industry, a committed advocate of community initiatives in the Washington, D.C. region, and a dedicated supporter of philanthropic and charitable organizations. He is the Founder and Board Chair of the Trust for the National Mall and has served as a member of the Economic Development and Executive Committees of the Federal City Council and as chairman of the Greater Washington Board of Trade's Emergency*

*Preparedness Task Force. He has received numerous industry awards and is a strong advocate for the environment. He has served on the boards of leading environmental nonprofits and various agencies of the city government. Chip is a Distinguished Eagle Scout and a Vietnam veteran.*

*Chip talked with us about his own experience as a veteran, what he hopes visitors take away from their visits to the memorials, and what he wants to share with those who can't be here in person. These are excerpts from our conversation. Read more [here](#).*

"I served proudly in the Army as a First Lieutenant during Vietnam. My service began in 1964 when I enrolled at Georgia Tech and joined the ROTC program. I served in ROTC through college and business school and then did two years of active service, followed by four years of in-active, on-call service. It really drove home my belief in this country and what it means to be an American. I'm a proud patriot, and I pray daily for our nation and am thankful to God to have been born here.

The Army is a good place to learn by leading others. It's very structured and organized, and with everything written down, there's very little done on the fly. I still use [these skills] today in business and in my role as Board Chair at the Trust for the National Mall.

Every year on Veterans Day, I try to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for some quiet, reflective time. Having served during the Vietnam era, I am always saddened and moved by the memorial to the young lives we lost. It's important to take time each year to remember those who served. Even with the sadness, it makes me proud to be an American and a veteran, and it makes me proud that the Trust for the National Mall is here to enrich the visitor experience with the help of Veterans."

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Retired Senior Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force, Harry F. Miller honorably served the United States from World War II through the Vietnam War.

## Harry Miller

*Retired Senior Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force, Harry F. Miller honorably served the United States from World War II through the Vietnam War. Over the course of his more than twenty-year career in the military, Miller experienced "The Battle of the Bulge," tours in Vietnam, Korea and Japan, the Cuban Missile Crisis and so much in between.*

"The first thing all kids ask me, "Were you scared?" And my answer of course is, "You're darn right I was scared, anybody that wasn't is a liar." Other things they like to ask is, "Why on earth did you go in when you were so young?" And I say, "Well because during World War II the people in this country were much different than they are now. They wanted to pitch in and get the thing done and get it over with." You have to remember all through the thirties we learned about Hitler. Every time you went to a movie, or picked up a newspaper or magazine, they told you about what Hitler was doing. We just got madder, and madder, and madder, at least I did, and I just wanted to go in so bad and all my friends started going in. All the guys in my neighborhood were about four years older than me, and when they all went in, I thought I had to go in too."

On the dedication of the World War II Memorial: I went with my wife and we came from Seattle. We had heard about it and were sending money to it for years, and when they were going to have the dedication ceremony, we made

sure we got there. When we got there I couldn't believe it. There were seats all the way from the entrance to the World War II Memorial all the way to the Washington Monument, row after row after row, and they were completely full. There must have been thousands of people there for that. And they had great big television screens and speakers so you could see the dignitaries that made the speeches, and they were playing good World War II dance music. My wife and I got up and started dancing in the aisles and before long some other people got up... I fell in love with that memorial the first time I saw it. I have a deeper feeling for the World War II Memorial I guess because I grew up there, I grew up in World War II."

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Left: Hank Lazzaro at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with former Commandant of the Marine Corps General Al Gray, who passed away several years ago. Right: Hank Lazzaro at Marble Mountain in Vietnam in 1967.

## Hank Lazzaro

*Veteran and volunteer on the National Mall Hank Lazzaro shares the importance of these memorials to educate visitors from around the world about the sacrifices the men and women made in conflict, and to heal those who served. Lazzaro served a 13-month tour in Vietnam and was in the Marine Corps Reserves, totaling 11 years of Marine Corps service. After he graduated from law school he spent 32 years with the Navy, retiring as a Captain. He was*

*a Staff Sergeant in the Marine Corps; when he left there to go into the Navy to be Captain, he served in the Judge Advocate General Corps. In total, he had 11 years in active-duty time and 32 years reserve time.*

"When you visit the Vietnam Memorial and you see the names of the 58,279 men and women who died in Vietnam and you take a step back and realize that that's 58,000 sets of parents, countless children, siblings, friends, and what could have become of those 58,000.

There are so many times [as a volunteer] that I'm engaged by people and I'm able to educate them and explain to them and let them go away with a greater understanding. People frequently ask me if I think Vietnam was worth it. And it gives you the opportunity to explain to them the history of everything from colonialism to going back into the late 19th century up to those things that brought us into Vietnam."

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Wilbur Snyder stands in front of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial of the scene depicting General Eisenhower's address to the 101'st Airborne on D-Day.

## Wilbur Snyder

*Wilbur Snyder, a West Point graduate, served for twenty-five years in active duty. He was stationed in Germany, studied Russian, served in the Pentagon in*

*the intelligence part of joint staff doing arms control inspections in the former Soviet Union, and served one tour at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in a unique unit called the Psychological Operations. He is a volunteer at the newly-opened Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial.*

"I retired as a civilian from the Pentagon in April 2020, and a close friend of mine from West Point has been a major volunteer at the World War II Memorial. I shadowed him one day as I was preparing to retire, before COVID and thought, "is this something I want to do." I was asked if I would be interested in the Eisenhower Memorial. So, I said yes of course I would.

I saw Eisenhower twice, once as a seven-year-old, and once as a 17-year-old. I remember him as President. [At West Point in 1957], I remember seeing cadets on parade, the Army beating Cornell in football, and I most especially remember the limousine with President and Mrs. Eisenhower. And that visit also put the idea of going to West Point in my own mind. When I was 17 in 1967 at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania...my father was invited to the dedication of the Eisenhower Chair of Strategic Studies there, and my mother and I were allowed to attend in the crowd and we got to see General Eisenhower from a distance.

On what he hopes visitors to the National Mall will take away:

Understanding of the sacrifices that were made by men and women in the armed forces of the United States and also the citizens of the United States throughout the many conflicts we were in from 1775 to the present...You can get a sense of it at the Washington Monument, which was used as a supply point for the Union Army during the Civil War...at the Lincoln Memorial...at the Vietnam Memorial, which records the names of every man and woman killed in the Vietnam War. The Korean War Memorial...showing soldiers in combat wearing ponchos and moving through high grass. The World War II Memorial, a conflict in which my father served, reflects the great national effort and sacrifices from 1941-1945. At the other end of the Mall, the Civil War is also commemorated by the Ulysses Grant Memorial.

The Eisenhower Memorial is dedicated to a great American who was a professional soldier and who also went to West Point as I did...He was one of only nine Generals and Admirals to reach five-star rank, while I retired as a mere Lieutenant Colonel. The statues and sculpture commemorate the greatest

invasion in the history of warfare as Eisenhower addresses soldiers on the eve of D-Day, the 6th of June, 1944...Although not on the Mall, there's a Women in Military Service Memorial at the entrance of Arlington Cemetery that also gives great evidence of the contribution women have made throughout the country to its defense."

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Left: Don Adam at the Vietnam Memorial on the National Mall performing a name-rubbing service for a visitor. Right: Don Adam in uniform while in service in the US Air Force. Courtesy of the Department of U.S. Veteran Affairs.

## Don Adam

*Veteran Don Adam has been a volunteer on the National Mall with the National Park Service since 2002. Adam has [volunteered over 20,000 hours](#) at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in honor of his cousin and comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice. On August 25, 2020 Adams received the George & Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. The [virtual ceremony](#) was hosted by the National Park Foundation. Adams spent four years in the US Air Force from 1966 to 1970. He served in Japan and South Vietnam.*

"I flew in excess of 100 combat missions while in Vietnam while being awarded several Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross....I always enjoy meeting /

talking with friends and family members of those I served with. Buddies finding buddies ... old vets meeting younger vets or active-duty servicemen and servicewomen.

The camaraderie between vets - whether old or young - is immediate. They understand one another and have a bond no matter what service they were in or what rank or rate they obtained. During the height of the Iraq/ Afghanistan wars, active-duty servicemen would bring their wounded buddies from Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval down to the Wall before they went back to the sandbox for their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th tours. I told each and every one to come back and see me when they returned. This actually did occur on a couple of occasions.

I am extremely fortunate that I live close enough to volunteer at America's front yard. I volunteer to honor my cousin who was killed in Vietnam, other family members who served, friends, classmates and those I was proud to serve with in Japan and Vietnam. I also want to portray a positive view of a Vietnam Veteran."

[READ MORE](#)

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## Veteran's Day Ceremonies on the National Mall

### **World War II Memorial Virtual Veterans Day Ceremony**

**Wednesday, November 11, 9 AM**

Hosted by Friends of the National World War II Memorial. The Veterans Day ceremony will consist of a pre-recorded ceremony shared at 9AM and a livestreamed event beginning at 9:30AM, all available to view on [Facebook](#).

### **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Virtual Veterans Day Ceremony**

**Wednesday, November 11, 1 PM**

Hosted by Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF). The annual Veterans Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is taking place as a virtual only

event. Live stream through VVMF's [Facebook](#) or [website](#).

### **US Navy Memorial Veterans Day Wreath Laying Ceremony**

**Wednesday, November 11, 1 - 2 PM**

Hosted by [US Navy Memorial Foundation](#). A wreath laying ceremony will take place at the US Navy Memorial to honor all veterans.

### **Korean War Veterans Memorial Veterans Day Virtual Wreath Laying Ceremony**

**Wednesday, November 11, 2 - 2:30 PM**

Hosted by Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation (KWVMF). KWVMF will host a wreath laying ceremony on Veterans Day, which will be available to the public as a virtual event, livestreamed on [Facebook Live](#).

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**Please #MarchOn with us!**

- Do you or the veterans in your life have a special memory from a visit to one of the memorials on the National Mall? Share it with [#MyNationalMallStory @TheNationalMall](#) and [HERE](#)
- [Give your feedback on the Tidal Basin Ideas Lab.](#)
- Watch and share: [March On: History, Heroes and Hope on the National Mall](#). If you missed its live airing or want to watch it again, please share this special program with your friends, family and colleagues.
- [Support our work year-round!](#) Learn more and help keep us growing strong.
- Keep in touch! Follow us in social [@TheNationalMall](#) and encourage your friends to [subscribe to our newsletter](#).
- Make a donation. Donations from supporters like you help the Trust continue its important mission. [Donate Today!](#)



## About the Trust for the National Mall

As the leading nonprofit, nonpartisan philanthropic partner of the National Park Service dedicated to restoring, enriching and preserving the National Mall, the Trust brings expertise, private funding and in-kind support to time-sensitive restoration and sustainability projects, mobilizes volunteers and provides educational opportunities to ensure that the National Mall endures and evolves as a vibrant space for all. With over 36 million visits annually to the National Mall, combined with aging infrastructure and the need for better visitor amenities throughout the park, the Trust is helping the National Park Service tackle the more than \$800 million needed for critical repairs and improvements. To learn more and to support our mission visit [www.nationalmall.org](http://www.nationalmall.org) | [information@nationalmall.org](mailto:information@nationalmall.org) | [@thenationalmall](https://twitter.com/thenationalmall)



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