

MOWW REVIEW



Mesothelioma & Military Veterans

While serving this country, many veterans were exposed to asbestos – a dangerous mineral that can cause the rare cancer mesothelioma.

\$30B in court-ordered asbestos trust funds has been established to help victims and their families

4 Facts You Need to Know About Asbestos Exposure

1 – HISTORY

Widely used across every military branch

Asbestos-containing products were used in every branch from the 1930s through the late 1970s.

2 – IMPACT

Nearly 44% of clients are U.S. veterans

Veterans are disproportionately affected, representing clients from states across the country.

3 – TIMELINE

Symptoms can take 20-50 years to appear

Mesothelioma symptoms often develop decades after initial asbestos exposure.

4 – BENEFITS

Filing a claim does not affect VA benefits

Claims are filed against manufacturers – not the government. VA benefits and pensions are unaffected.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with mesothelioma or another asbestos-related cancer, you may be eligible for financial compensation. Many claims are resolved without filing a lawsuit or ever going to court.

Our team is available 24/7, every day.

Don't wait – give us a call now.

Call 800-958-1950

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ON THE COVER

University of Michigan Pershing Rifles demonstrate expertise in handling their weapons. Published In the Ann Arbor News, 29 May 1957





Proudly Identifying with MOWW

As Commander-in-Chief, I believe membership in the Military Order of the World Wars is more than having our names recorded on a membership roster. It is about who we are, what we represent, and how proudly we identify ourselves as Companions of MOWW.

Each of us came to the Order by a different path. Our military experiences, professions, communities, and generations may differ, but we are united by common values: service, patriotism, leadership, and devotion to our Nation. Those values give meaning to our membership and purpose to our continued service.

When we say, "I am a Companion of MOWW," we make a statement about our commitment. We demonstrate that commitment through our chapters, support of veterans, development of young leaders, patriotic education, and service within our communities. Our insignia represents the ideals we have chosen to uphold.

To our newest Companions, I encourage you to become involved, learn about our Order, its traditions, and discover where your talents can best contribute. To our longtime Companions, I ask you to welcome and mentor those who have recently joined.

As we approach Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and the December holiday season, we are reminded of service, gratitude, family, fellowship, and the freedoms generations of Americans have defended. These occasions offer opportunities to reach out to fellow Companions, veterans, families, and neighbors and demonstrate MOWW's continuing spirit of service. During this season, may we also remember those serving far from home today.

As America concludes its year-long 250 years of independence celebration, let us reaffirm that patriotism is not merely a remembrance of our past. It is a responsibility we carry forward.

Let us proudly wear our insignia, speak of our mission, invite others to serve, and demonstrate what it means to be a Companion.

Together, let us carry MOWW's legacy forward with pride, purpose, and dedication.


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Commander in Chief and CEO, MOWW, Inc.

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79th Commander-In-Chief COL Philemon A. St. Amant II

GENERAL TROY MIDDLETON CHAPTER, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA



COL Philemon A. St. Amant II, USA (Ret), during his tenure as Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of the Military Order of the World Wars, presenting a memento to LTG Robert F. Foley, USA (Ret), a distinguished Medal of Honor recipient who was honored with the MOWW 2010 Distinguished Service Award (DSA). Below, during the 2009 National Convention: COL St. Amant II with his wife, Mrs. Harriet St. Amant at his side.

Philemon A. St. Amant II passed away on 10 September 2026, at the age of 84. He was born in Baton Rouge, LA, on 6 October 1941 to (then) Lieutenant Philemon A., and Mrs. Corinne L. St. Amant.

CINC Colonel Philemon A. St. Amant II retired from the Regular Army in 1993, after more than 30 years of commissioned active service as a Field Artillery Officer and Foreign Area Specialist in the Middle East and North Africa. His assignments included command and staff tours with various airborne units, and a teaching assignment at West Point. He commanded Observer Group Lebanon, in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (Palestine) during the civil war in that country, and served subsequently as Middle East Branch Chief, J-5, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He traveled extensively throughout the Middle East, and participated in policy negotiations in Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Iraq, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. He was sent to Baghdad during the Iraq-Iran War as part of an 8-man team investigating the Iraqi attack on USS Stark in 1987, and later commanded the US Army NATO forces in Greece. His last assignment was as Chief of Staff of the Joint Command in Alaska.

Colonel St. Amant joined MOWW in 1980 and became a Perpetual Member in 1993. He served as Chapter Vice Commander and Commander, Region Adjutant, GSO and Commander, and National GSO (appointed).



COL PHILEMON A. ST. AMANT II
79TH COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
2009-2010

He chaired the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for three years, and headed the National Security Committee from 2006-2009, and served as National Commander-in-Chief in 2009-10. Colonel St. Amant earned a Bachelor's Degree from West Point, and a Master's Degree in French from Middlebury College (with studies at the University of Paris). He graduated from the US Army Command and General Staff College and the Naval War College (Senior Course).

He was also a Life Member of the Military Officers Association of America; The American Legion Post #38; Hancock Lodge #311; St. James Lodge # 47 of Baton Rouge; National Sojourners' Heroes of '76; Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, 32° (SJ); a Knight Templar of the York Rite of Freemasonry, and a member of Abdallah Shrine Temple of Overland Park, Kansas. He was a Life/Benefactor Member of the NRA.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Harriet O. St. Amant; daughters, Renée S. Hudson (Karl) and Lys S. Penney Fuchs; grandchildren, Kristina B. Hudson Murray (Trist), Emily H. Hyde (Eric), Niko B. Penney, and Rayne S. Penney; eight great-grandchildren; and numerous nephews, nieces and cousins.

He was predeceased by his parents; his sisters, Suzanne Corinne Carson and Jeanne Yvette Harvey; his brother, Alexis Alexandre St. Amant II, and his son, Philemon A. St. Amant III.



LEADERS, LEGENDS, AND HEROES

The Untold Legacy of the Pershing Rifles

LTC KEVIN UPTON, USA (RET)
GREATER BOSTON CHAPTER, MA
COMMITTEE CHAIR, PERSHING HERITAGE TEAM



Many Companions have at least a passing familiarity with the National Society of Pershing Rifles, the 132-year-old national military honor society for ROTC cadets and midshipmen. But not all may be aware that the Pershing Rifles and MOWW share a common heritage: While General John J. Pershing inspired MOWW's founding in 1919 in the aftermath of World War I, a then-unknown Second Lieutenant John J. Pershing inspired what became the Pershing Rifles when he was Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Nebraska in the early 1890s.

Even fewer know that since 2016, the Pershing Rifles Group—the organizational parent of the original society—has partnered with MOWW. Together, they champion leadership. Since 2016, the National Society of Pershing Rifles has partnered with MOWW, and both partners are committed to supporting leadership development while fostering discipline, character, patriotism, and a steadfast commitment to service, both in uniform and beyond.

Pershing handpicked and trained Company A to be the pride of the University of Nebraska cadet corps. Only the most exceptional and dedicated cadets earned a place in Company A, where Pershing instilled his unwavering “highest ideals”—the very values that would later inspire MOWW's founding. Their dedication shone brightest at the 1891 Maiden Cup national military drills, where Company A triumphed over the nation's top cadet units, including the United States Military Academy, to claim the coveted cup.

After their victory, Company A cadet leaders established the Varsity Rifles as a student activity to carry on the pride, precision, and professionalism that were the hallmark of Company A. The cadets renamed it the Pershing Rifles in 1894 to honor their mentor and drillmaster.

The Pershing Rifles blossomed into a national organization, famed for its precision drill teams that rivaled the standards of Service academies and elite military drill units. Yet for years, stories of how Pershing Rifles cadets and midshipmen turned those “highest ideals” into real-world achievements and sacrifices—shaping the fabric of modern American society—remained largely untold.

The combined efforts of the Pershing Rifles Group historian and a Heritage Committee established by the Pershing Rifles national alumni association have gradually been unearthing more than a century of lost history and recording the notable achievements, innovations, contributions, and heroism of Pershing Rifles' alums in a Pershing Rifles Heritage List that currently includes almost 400 entries in seven categories.

This article summarizes a sampling of the most compelling and inspiring heritage list entries, starting with...

The Leaders

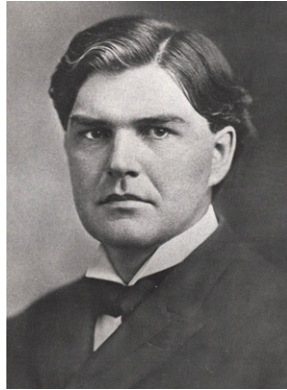
Lieutenant Pershing knew natural leadership ability when he saw it. So it was no accident that he selected George L. Sheldon, a tall, imposing Nebraska farm boy, as Company A's cadet commander. Sheldon led the team to the 1891 national drill championship and later helped organize the Varsity Rifles. He went on to be elected Nebraska's 14th governor in 1906—the first native Nebraskan to hold that office. As governor, Sheldon championed progressive reform and promoted democratic accountability.



(L-R):
Nebraska's 14th
governor
George L. Sheldon

Arkansas's 34th
governor
Sid McMath

Kentucky's 51st
governor
Edward T. Breathitt, Jr.



But Sheldon wasn't the only state governor shaped by the Pershing Rifles experience.

- Major General Sidney McMath, USMC, an alumnus of Company D-7 (University of Arkansas), became Arkansas's 34th governor, serving from 1949 to 1953. He championed rural electrification, massive highway and school construction, and the establishment of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

- Edward T. Breathitt, Jr., from Company C-1 (University of Kentucky), became Kentucky's 51st governor, serving from 1963 to 1967. Governor Breathitt championed and signed the Kentucky Civil Rights Act into law, the first desegregation law enacted by a southern state.

But others among the original University of Nebraska Pershing Rifles founders also left indelible marks.

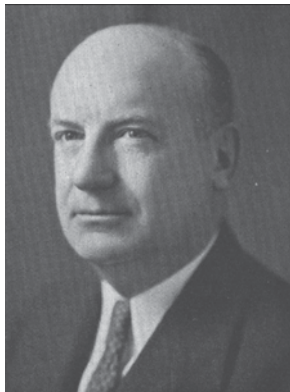
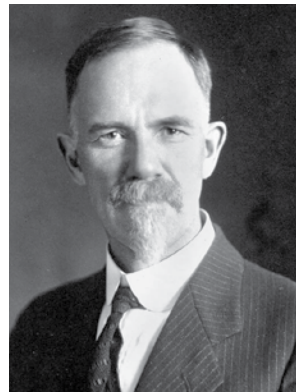
- Colonel Charles Burton Robbins was awarded a Silver Star and Purple Heart for gallantry in action during the Spanish-American War. He later served as Assistant Secretary of War in 1928-29.

- Colonel William Hayward organized and led the African-American 369th Infantry Regiment—the

fabled "Harlem Hellfighters"—which fought with distinction for 191 days in combat while detached to the French Army in some of the bloodiest battles of World War I. Following the war, Colonel Hayward became United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

- In the private sector, Charles Erwin Davenport co-founded and served as a longtime director of The Gannett Co., Inc., which established and still operates an extensive international network of print, television, and digital media outlets.

- A longstanding inside joke (among at least some alumni) is how much better they would have performed academically if not for the time demands of Pershing Rifles activities. Beyond the many leaders who shaped public policy, the Pershing Rifles organization also boasts an alumnus who reached the pinnacle of academia. Dr. Elvis J. Stahr, a distinguished member of Company C-1, demonstrated exceptional intellectual and administrative leadership by serving as president of two prestigious universities, West Virginia University and Indiana University. If leading two major universities wasn't enough, he led the National Audubon Society from 1968 to 1981,



(L-R): Colonel Charles Burton Robbins, Colonel William Hayward, Charles Erwin Davenport, Dr. Elvis J. Stahr





(L-R):
General Colin L. Powell
General Henry Hugh
Shelton
General Curtis LeMay

spearheading its greatest period of growth while championing a broad array of environmental reforms. The Kennedy administration appointed him Secretary of the Army.

The Pershing Rifles organization has produced countless general and flag officers. Of the eight members who attained four-star rank, six are especially notable:

- General Colin L. Powell (Company A-8 – City College of New York) – 12th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- General Henry Hugh Shelton (Company L-4 – North Carolina State University) – 14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- General Curtis LeMay (Company A-1 – Ohio State University) Air Force Chief of Staff
- General Jack Keane (Company D-8 – Fordham University) – Vice Chief of Staff of the Army
- General Larry R. Ellis (Company J-8 – Morgan State University) – Commanding General, US Army Forces Command
- General Gary Brito (Company B-5 – Pennsylvania State University) – Commanding General, US Army Training and Doctrine Command

The Legends

One of a Kind

If anyone exemplified the bedrock MOWW principle of “nobler to serve than to be served,” it would be Colin Luther Powell. In addition to being one of eight Pershing Rifles alumni to achieve four-star rank, Colin Powell served as Secretary of State under George W. Bush.

As Secretary of State, he developed the Powell Doctrine, which set conditions for American military action, including consistency with national security interests, projection of overwhelming force, and underlying public support when all other diplomatic and economic options fail.

In his biography, *My American Journey* (Random House, 1995), General Powell pointedly maintained that he never would have risen to military and civilian prominence without the discipline, structure, sense of duty, and attention to detail he gained from his Pershing Rifles experiences.

Following his retirement from public life, General Powell attended the 2016 Pershing Rifles national

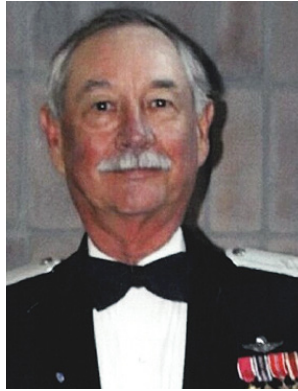


(L-R):
General Jack Keane
General Larry R. Ellis
General Gary Brito

(L-R):
James Earl Jones

Brigadier General
Robert L. Efferson, USAF

Tuskegee Airman
Brigadier General
Charles McGee, USAF



convention, where he unforgettably presented his original membership fourragère, signet ring, and rank insignia to then-Cadet (now Army Captain) Arthur Zych, his successor as Cadet Commander of Company A-8.

A Generation's Favorite Villain

Almost everyone recognizes James Earl Jones as one of the greatest actors of his generation, widely known as the voice of Darth Vader in the original Star Wars trilogy, and one of the few performers to win Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards, some multiple times. But few know that Jones was a Pershing Rifles alumnus of Company H-1 (University of Michigan), and even fewer know that he was an Army Captain and Ranger before pursuing his award-winning acting career.

Bulletproof

First Lieutenant (later Brigadier General) Bob L. Efferson, USAF, who was a member of Company D-6 (later D-7/D-17) at Louisiana State University, received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in 1991 after coming under intense fire while supporting ground troops in the Gulf War,

then safely landing his A-10 Warthog with 368 bullet and shrapnel holes.

A Modern Pioneer

Brigadier General Charles McGee, USAF, Company P-4 (Tuskegee University), was one of the original Tuskegee Airmen. Beyond breaking a racial barrier, he flew 409 combat missions as a fighter pilot in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. General McGee earned three Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Congressional Gold Medal, among other military decorations.

The Heroes

Medal of Honor: Two Pershing Rifles alumni received the nation's highest award for extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty. Both were awarded posthumously.

- Marine Corps Major Kenneth D. Bailey, an alumnus of Company C-3 (University of Illinois), led the 1st Marine Raider Battalion in more than 10 hours of close combat, despite suffering a head wound, while repulsing a strong Japanese attack on Henderson Airfield, Guadalcanal, on 12-13 Sep 1942. A month earlier, he earned the Silver Star for

(L-R):
Marine Corps Major
Kenneth D. Bailey

Army Captain
Riley L. Pitts

Lt Col Richard O. Joyce





(L-R):
 Capt Richard E. Miller
 2LT Bernard Horowitz
 Captain John Z. Wheeler
 (LT Faulkner-No photo
 available.)

gallantry in action at Tulagi in the Solomon Islands. Although he survived the attack on Henderson Airfield, Major Bailey ultimately gave his life on 26 September while leading his Marines in an attack on entrenched Japanese positions.

- Like Major Bailey, Army Captain Riley L. Pitts of Company F-7 (Wichita State University) led from the front. While commanding Company C, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, CPT Pitts led an airmobile assault near Ap Dong, Vietnam, on 31 October 1967 that initially overran strong enemy positions. Captain Pitts then maneuvered his soldiers through heavy enemy fire, directing continuous small arms and artillery fire on fortified positions while personally directing and urging his men forward until he was mortally wounded.

The Doolittle Raiders

Two Pershing Rifles alumni were aboard Army B-25 bombers that daringly launched from the Navy carrier Hornet in the Pacific and bombed Tokyo on 18 April 1942. They included 1LT (later LTC) Richard O. Joyce, of Company A-2 (University of Nebraska), who piloted bomber No. 10, while 1LT (later CPT) Richard E. Miller, of Company A-3 (Indiana University), was bombardier on bomber No. 2. Nobody knew for sure if the lumbering Army bombers could successfully launch from the relatively short carrier flight decks of the day. The takeoff rolls must have been terrifying.

Known as the “Doolittle Raid” after mission commander Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle, the mission saw all 16 Army bombers launch successfully and achieved complete strategic and tactical surprise.

LT Joyce and LT Miller both completed their missions and flew on to China, where—out of fuel—they bailed out in the dead of night and were rescued by Chinese nationalists. Both received the Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry. Lieutenant Joyce continued to fly combat missions in the China-Burma-India Theater and later held important positions in the newly established U.S. Air Force after the war. Sadly, Miller, by then a Captain, was killed in action less than a year after the raid when his B-26 bomber was shot down over North Africa.

Damn the Destroyers – Full Speed Ahead

Navy Lieutenant Clark W. Faulkner, another A-2 (Nebraska) alumnus, was awarded the Navy Cross, the nation’s second-highest award for valor, for attacking multiple Japanese destroyers at close range off the coast of Guadalcanal on the night of 11-12 January 1943, sinking at least one and crippling others before escaping under a hail of gunfire.

Less than a month later, LT Faulkner commanded PT-124 in a daring night raid against 19 Japanese destroyers, scoring two confirmed direct torpedo hits. *No photo available.*

“The Fighting Jew”

Anything but a slur, Second Lieutenant Bernard Horowitz, a Pershing Rifles alumnus of Company D-5 (later A-8) (City College of New York), was given that name by his troops out of admiration for his daring and tenacity as a platoon leader and tank commander in the 746th Tank Battalion. LT Horowitz was wounded in the early stages of the Battle of the Bulge and evacuated to a field hospital but left the hospital against orders and made his way back to his unit to keep fighting.



"Be it resolved, that the Military Order of the World Wars and the National Society of Pershing Rifles pledge to support this resolution in order to promote and expand participation and involvement in mutually beneficial programs throughout the Nation for a better America."



He survived the Bulge but was tragically killed in action on 15 March 1945 while physically shielding one of his soldiers from a German artillery barrage during intense fighting to secure the Remagen bridgehead over the Rhine River.

Last of the Horse Cavalry

Captain John Z. Wheeler, a Pershing Rifles alumnus of Company E-2 (University of Minnesota), received both the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star for leading the 26th Cavalry in multiple horse cavalry charges that repeatedly delayed, disrupted, and confused an overwhelming Japanese invasion force while covering the withdrawal of Allied forces on the island of Luzon, Philippines.

Although the cavalry delaying actions enabled hundreds to escape the inevitable occupation, Captain Wheeler was captured by the Japanese and survived the Bataan Death March. Tragically, he died in captivity while confined to a Japanese prison ship mistakenly attacked and sunk by friendly forces.

The Pershing Rifles Today

The original cadet organization now functions under the administrative umbrella of MOWW partner The Pershing Rifles Group, which has extended its commitment to youth leadership development and civic responsibility to the high school level by reviving the formerly defunct National Society of Black Jacks to serve high school JROTC units. The group also includes the National Society of Pershing Rifles Alumni Association and the National Society of Pershing Angels, originally established as a drill and social organization for women.

Although considerably smaller than it once was, the original National Society of Pershing Rifles (www.pershingriflessociety.org) continues to embody Pershing's "highest ideals" as the premier cadet-run national military honor society for senior ROTC cadets and midshipmen. Now under the command of Cadet Major General Jahan Martin, an Army ROTC cadet at Seton Hall University, the organization continues to emphasize drill,

discipline, duty, and scholarship as underpinnings of the standards expected of aspiring military and civilian leaders.

Cadet leaders also plan and conduct the John J. Pershing Memorial Drill Competition each spring for Pershing Rifles and Black Jacks units, in conjunction with the Pershing Rifles national convention. Notably, the two-time defending champion is Company I-9, located at the United States Air Force Academy.

Local units continue to support civic and patriotic observances with color guards, honor guards, and ceremonial groups, including active participation in Veterans Day observances at the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC, and at the MOWW-sponsored remembrance ceremony at General Pershing's graveside in Arlington National Cemetery.

With military service funding support for Pershing Rifles units no longer available, the Pershing Foundation (www.thepershingfoundation.org) has been established to provide critical scholarships and essential funding support for local units.

The entire Pershing Rifles Heritage List is available for review or download under the Heritage tab on the foundation's website.

Your Help is Needed

Companions aware of Pershing Rifles alumni whose military or civilian achievements may warrant recognition on the heritage list should send names and relevant information to heritage@pershingriflesalumni.org. The Pershing Rifles Heritage Committee will consider nominations of those who have distinguished themselves in the military, government, or civilian professions, have received the Silver Star or higher awards for valor, or who have given their lives in the service of the nation.

Contributions to The Pershing Foundation are always welcome and may be made through the foundation's website. ★



2026 JROTC/ROTC Awards Ceremonies

MAJ WILLIAM M. TARPLEY, USA (RET)
GREATER EL PASO CHAPTER, TX

Each spring, the JROTC and ROTC units in our area hold awards ceremonies for their top cadets. The Greater El Paso Chapter of MOWW provides Medals of Merit and Certificates to 36 JROTC units and 4 ROTC units representing Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps cadets. Chapter members participate in as many ceremonies as possible.

This year our members will present medals and certificates at 22 JROTC and 3 ROTC units. The ceremonies are as varied as their instructors' and students' creativity. Some are simple gatherings

in the classroom, others in a cafeteria or auditorium. Parents often organize a potluck meal for everyone who attends. The cadets always appreciate recognition from their instructors and affirmation from their peers.

Two awards ceremonies stick out in my mind. The first was a Navy JROTC ceremony that included the cadet change of command. The senior cadets were called individually to the NCOIC, where they relinquished their white service hat and were presented with a graduation sash in school colors.



Each senior then walked through crossed sabers while being "piped out," symbolizing their final departure from the program.

Another memorable event was when an Army JROTC unit combined its Awards Ceremony with the annual Military Ball.

The evening was modeled after a traditional Army Dining Out. Starting with a formal receiving line, the Senior cadets were escorted through crossed sabers by their parents and the announcement of the official party.

The cadet Color Guard presented the colors, followed by the National Anthem and Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and Cadet Creed, each led by cadets. Traditional toasts (non-alcoholic) were presented to the President of the United States, the United States of America, the United States Army, Army Cadet Command, the High School, the Cadet Battalion, and Guests.

A senior cadet explained the meaning of a small table set for one with a rose and a lit candle, representing an absent service member who had given their life for our country. A toast was then proposed in honor of the fallen comrades and those missing in action. The cadets had participated in fundraisers during the year to pay for the dinner.



After the guest speaker, representatives of the veteran organizations presented the medals to selected cadets with pictures taken by a photographer. The night continued with a dance for the cadets and their dates.

It is a pleasure to be a part of these activities with cadets and to note their maturity, enthusiasm, and growth as young citizens of our country. The heritage and love of country that they are learning from their instructors is inspiring. ★



Multiple JROTC units marched alongside various El Paso veteran organizations in honor of Veterans Day. Burges High School, Franklin High School, and Irvin High School were recently recognized for their outstanding marching skills, color guard, and drill techniques. Awards were presented by Mr. Garza, leader of the El Paso Veterans Day Parade Association



General Pershing and Fort Bliss

LTC JOHN A. HAMILTON, USA (RET)
HISTORIAN, GREATER EL PASO CHAPTER



General John Joseph Pershing had a remarkable, varied career. Born in Missouri on 13 September 1860, he graduated from the US Military Academy on June 12, 1886, ranking 30th in a class of 77. He served as First Captain of the Corps of Cadets during his senior year, the highest position a cadet could hold. Commissioned into the cavalry, Pershing was on frontier duty from 1886 until 1891. He served through the end of the Sioux Wars from 1890 to 1891.

After his field duty, Pershing became the Professor of Military Science and Tactics (PMS&T) of the officer training program at the University of Nebraska. There he established a precision drill team that exists today in many university ROTC programs as the Pershing Rifles. After that assignment, Pershing served as an instructor at West Point, then commanded 10th Cavalry troops in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. He subsequently served in the Philippine Islands in the Philippine Insurrection, in the United States, and as

an observer of the Russo-Japanese War. He moved from the Regular Army, where he was a lieutenant and captain, to the Volunteer Army, where he was a major, and reverted to his permanent rank when he completed his Volunteer service. By 1905, he had established a reputation as an officer of rare ability and skill, but after 19 years of service, he was still a captain.

Accordingly, President Theodore Roosevelt had him promoted to brigadier general, skipping three ranks. This was unheard of at the time; the Army had a strict seniority-based promotion policy. Pershing passed 835 officers when he was promoted. There was some outrage over this, but many officers who knew Pershing recognized his abilities and professionalism and accepted what happened.

Between 1908 and 1909, Pershing served as a military observer in the Balkans, based in Paris. After that, Pershing was again in the Philippines,

Above, General John J. Pershing leading his troops in El Paso, TX. Source: DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University



Fort Bliss had no barracks available to billet the incoming 5,000 troops, and the units were placed in tent camps, 1916

Source: http://www.markboyd.info/MarionsOwn/camp_pershing_1916.html

commanding there until 1913. He then returned to the United States to command the 8th Infantry Brigade at the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1914, his career brought him to Fort Bliss, TX, and the city of El Paso.

In 1914, as the great conflict in Europe began, El Paso, TX, became a focal point for the Mexican Revolution. In 1911, this great upheaval began in Ciudad Juárez, just across the Rio Grande River from El Paso. As a border town, El Paso was quite small until five railroads arrived in 1881. The 1880 census recorded only 736 citizens in El Paso. By 1910, the population had grown to 39,279. Ten years later, the population had almost doubled. In 1914, El Paso was the largest city on the border. It was a hotbed of intrigue. The Revolution began in earnest in May 1911, when followers of Francisco Madero, who had been lawfully elected president of Mexico, seized Ciudad Juárez. The Maderistas, as they were known, gathered in a camp just across the river from the copper smelter, immediately northwest of downtown El Paso. When the shooting started, Americans observed the battle from buildings and boxcars on the border. Some Americans were wounded, and some US property was damaged. This prompted President William Howard Taft to dispatch 11,000 cavalry troopers to the border.

In 1914, El Paso had become a base of operations that sustained different factions in Mexico. El Paso was “a source of munitions, money, and volunteers” to sustain the fight in Mexico; a “refuge” for those on the run from Mexican authorities and a place to rest and reorganize; an “arena for propaganda”; and a “market for loot” seized in battle. Mexican revolutionaries, including Pancho Villa and his brother Hipolito, had crossed into El Paso to avoid arrest and possible execution in Mexico, look for volunteers, and arrange for weapons, ammunition,

uniforms, and other supplies. Businesses in El Paso profited from selling materiel to the revolutionaries, including the Shelton Payne Arms Company, the Krakauer, Zork, and Moye Hardware and Machinery Company, and even the Popular Dry Goods Company, which could handle uniforms, socks, underwear, and footwear. Due to an American arms embargo, smugglers had to handle the actual transfer of materiel across the river very carefully.

Fort Bliss occupied a large area of land three miles northeast of downtown El Paso. The post was moved to this location in 1893 when citizens essentially gave the land to the Army for a new post. The Army contracted with builders locally and from other places to build two new modern barracks (for the time) to house two companies each of infantry, a headquarters building between the barracks, four sets of captains’ family quarters, eight sets of lieutenants’ quarters, three modern senior NCO fourplexes, and other buildings. Notably, the barracks had modern dining halls and bathing facilities with running hot and cold water, a first for military construction in El Paso.

From 1911 to 1914, the military situation in El Paso worsened. Mexican revolutionary leaders joined together to depose the Mexican dictator Victoriano Huerta, who had murdered Mexican president Francisco Madero and his vice president. The leaders were victorious, ousting Huerta in 1914. With Huerta gone, the leaders turned on each other. Coahuila governor Venustiano Carranza and his general Álvaro Obregón faced off against rebels Pablo Orozco and Francisco “Pancho” Villa. The rebels captured Ciudad Juárez, and Villa began moving rapidly to seize all of northern Mexico.

As border problems intensified, the Army moved more troops to the border. Focusing on El Paso as



a problem area, the Army mobilized a full infantry brigade to join troops already at Fort Bliss. On 27 April 1914, the 8th Infantry Brigade, Pershing commanding, was issued orders to move from the Presidio of San Francisco to El Paso. Within 12 hours of receiving the order, the brigade loaded trains and moved out. This was a remarkable feat, worthy of a modern and mobile Army.

Upon arriving in El Paso, Pershing immediately inspected the troops in the border area before his headquarters had been unloaded from the train. By noon that day, Pershing was in his new headquarters in the post headquarters building on Fort Bliss. Two full regiments of infantry, the 6th and the 16th, immediately followed the headquarters. Pershing boasted that his troops were "ready to take the field with five minutes notice, with 30 days' field rations, ammunition and supplies for conducting any campaign that the war department may order." This brought an additional five thousand troops to El Paso in quick time. The 20th Infantry Regiment joined the 6th and 16th

Infantry Regiments. Pershing also assumed overall command of the other troops on Fort Bliss. They included the 12th and 13th Cavalry Regiments, three batteries of the 6th Artillery Regiment (Horse), Battery B of the 3rd Field Artillery, and I Company of the Signal Corps. Pershing was designated commander of the El Paso patrol district, extending from the Big Bend of Texas west to the Arizona territory. Pershing remarked to the press that "I have not been in El Paso since 1904, when I came through here attached to the staff of MG Samuel S. Sumner."

Significantly, Fort Bliss had no barracks available to billet the 8th Infantry Brigade, so the units were placed in tent camps. The 16th Regiment was placed in camp near the corner of Campbell and 7th Streets just east of downtown, and the 6th Regiment established a tent camp at Camp Cotton, now the Chamizal National Memorial. Pershing moved into Quarters One on Sheridan Road on Fort Bliss, a comfortable home built in 1910. With him were his enlisted aide and his two officer



General John J. Pershing, at the head of his men, fords a stream in Mexico in 1916 while leading the United States troops there in pursuit of Pancho Villa. (AP Photo)

aides-de-camp, Martin Shallenberger and James Lawton Collins. Pershing's wife and children remained in quarters at the Presidio of San Francisco, a decision that would have tragic consequences.

Pershing set about running foot patrols along the river and horse patrols east and west of the city along the Rio Grande. He soon faced a major problem. Across the street from Camp Cotton was the community of Chihuahuita, a row of Mexican jacales (wattle-and-daub mud huts) occupied by Mexican families. The occupants threw all refuse into alleys or streets. Outbuildings were unsanitary and fly-infested. The danger was that troops nearby could come down with diseases including dysentery and other fevers. Pershing asked Mayor Charles E. Kelly if he could assist in cleaning up the Chihuahuita area using his troops along with city sanitary personnel. As a result, the community received thorough cleaning along the south side of Camp Cotton, probably the best cleanup in years. After finishing that project, Pershing put his troops to work on an extensive training program.

The national press featured Pershing for hosting a conference between General Pancho Villa, Mexican General Álvaro Obregón, and other representatives of different factions in the Mexican

Revolution. On 26 August 1914, the Mexican generals and their entourage arrived by train at the Santa Fe Street bridge in El Paso, intending to settle a dispute over who governed the Mexican state of Sonora. BG Pershing met the group at the bridge with a company of the 20th Infantry and a troop of the 13th Cavalry. The group drove to Fort Bliss, with throngs of people lining the streets to cheer for General Villa. Pershing hosted the group in his quarters for toasts, with a military band and a mounted color guard offering a salute. The reception lasted about 30 minutes, after which Pershing escorted the two groups back to the border. A legend about this meeting is that Villa spent the night with Pershing in his quarters, but in fact Villa returned to Ciudad Juárez to spend the night in the house he owned there. Practically speaking, Villa was not about to spend the night on a US military installation surrounded by US troops.

Following this, Pershing put the troops in the field. Infantry units drilled daily, marched, practiced live-ammunition target shooting, and ran force-on-force tactical exercises day and night in and around El Paso. Infantry units conducted 16-mile marches with weapons and full field equipment. Pershing required full field equipment, including a wool blanket, a shelter half (one half of a pup

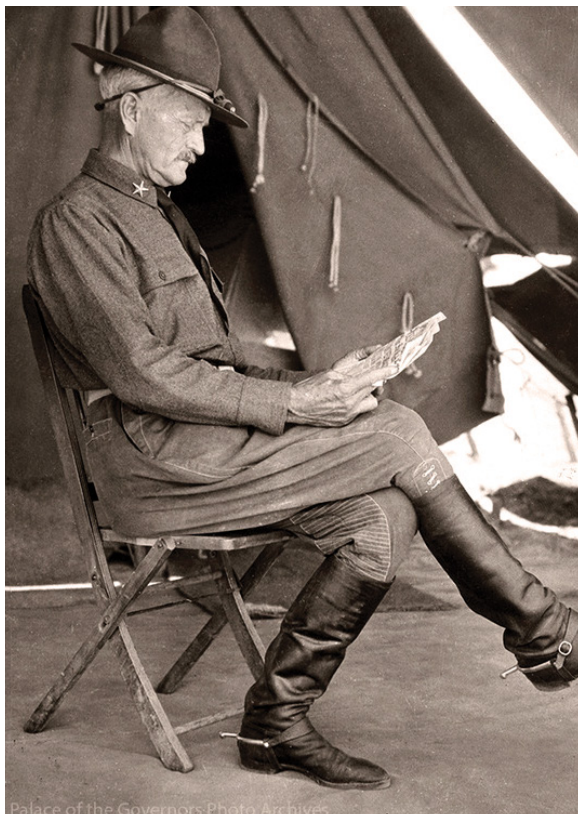


Obregón, Villa, and Pershing at Santa Fe Street Bridge, 1914.



tent), a rain poncho, a mess kit, a weapon, and a bayonet. Reports from US Army umpires indicated that the training objectives were met, but there were issues with passing information between infantry units. After all, there were no tactical radios, so units had to pass information by hand and arm signals, whistles, runners, and semaphore flags. In November 1914, Pershing commanded a major training exercise on the west side of El Paso, along what is now Rim Road and extending to the copper smelter. All three infantry regiments, the 15th Cavalry Regiment, and supporting artillery attacked fixed targets using live ammunition. The troops employed a turning movement against notional enemy forces invading from Mexico. By the end of the day on 10 November, the enemy was deemed routed, and El Paso was saved.

General Pershing engaged with the city on many occasions. On 30 May 1914, he officiated at a Memorial Day ceremony for Civil War veterans in El Paso, speaking in full dress uniform at Evergreen Cemetery on Alameda Road. Pershing read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and the 6th Infantry Regimental Band played.



GEN Pershing reviews orders.

Pershing also attended or hosted luncheons in El Paso, including one on Sunday, 22 November 1914, at Hotel Paso Del Norte downtown. Pershing hosted General James Parker, commander of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, who was inspecting the 15th Cavalry Regiment at Fort Bliss. Afterward, the party drove to Washington Park to watch polo games. Among the guests were COL and Mrs. Herbert J. Slocum, commander of the 13th Cavalry Regiment. Slocum would play a prominent role in the Pancho Villa raid on Columbus, New Mexico, two years later.

A year after the Mexican delegation visited Fort Bliss, tragedy struck the Pershing family. Just a week before Helen Pershing and her four children were scheduled to move to Fort Bliss, a fire broke out in the family quarters at the Presidio of San Francisco. Mrs. Pershing and her three daughters died in the fire. Only Pershing's 5-year-old son Warren survived. Several versions exist of how GEN Pershing learned about the fire. Most likely, an Associated Press reporter called the Pershing quarters on Fort Bliss. Thinking that he was talking to LT Collins, Pershing's aide, the reporter asked if the general knew of the fire. The caller realized that it was Pershing that he was talking to, however. Pershing was devastated, and very quickly left for San Francisco. It took over a month for the funerals to be completed, and Pershing returned to Fort Bliss a thoroughly injured man.

Six months later, Pancho Villa raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico, in the early hours of 9 March 1916. Three days later, the United States ordered Pershing to lead a punitive expedition into Mexico to disperse or capture Villa's forces and to bring Villa to justice. After a year in Mexico, Pershing returned to the United States as a major general with the Punitive Expedition in February 1917. Although the expedition did not capture Villa, the troops did capture or kill several of his subordinates and disperse the band.

Pershing returned to Fort Bliss but was soon drawn away—his commander of the Southern Department, MG Frederick Funston, died suddenly in the Menger Hotel in San Antonio. Immediately, Pershing received orders to move to San Antonio and assume command of the Army's Southern Department. But from there he very quickly received orders to France, to command the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in WWI.

Gathering his staff, he left San Antonio for New York to board a ship for France. He never expected to see El Paso, Texas again.

But Pershing did return to El Paso. In January 1920, General of the Armies Pershing embarked on a rail trip across the country to visit places in his past and see old friends. Pershing arrived in El Paso aboard his railroad car, alighting Sunday morning, 2 February, and greeting the crowd with his famous smile and "Hello, El Pasoans!" A long blast of railroad locomotive whistles heralded his arrival. The American Legion hosted the events and maintained the schedule; the Fort Bliss commander, MG Robert L. Howze, and the commanders of the cavalry regiments on Fort Bliss served as escorts. Pershing had a private breakfast with El Paso's military officers and civilian leaders, then attended church at St. Clement's Episcopal Church. The rest of the day was spent visiting with locals at the Toltec Club until a formal dinner at the Paso del Norte Hotel on Sunday evening. On Monday morning, General Pershing conducted a review of the troops stationed at Fort Bliss, an event that also included the participation of all Boy Scout troops from the El Paso area. An informal gathering of officers and their families took place at the Fort Bliss Officers' Club, followed by lunch with the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs at the Hotel Sheldon downtown. Pershing then addressed all assembled schoolchildren at the El Paso High School sports

field. He then attended a military carnival and tactical demonstrations at Fort Bliss. At 5:30 PM, he boarded his train car and departed, after being officially adopted as an El Paso citizen.

This was not the last time El Paso celebrated Pershing, though. Many years after his death, El Paso celebrated the 100th anniversary of General Pershing. A city proclamation dated Sep. 13, 1960, declared that day as GENERAL OF THE ARMIES JOHN J. PERSHING CENTENNIAL DAY. The United States Congress and President Dwight Eisenhower called on the people of the United States to honor and respect General Pershing and those who served with him. A Pershing Centennial Day ceremony was held at the Fort Bliss Replica, hosting approximately 300 distinguished guests, including El Paso officials and Fort Bliss military and civilian personnel. Remarkably, among the guests were elderly veterans who had served under Pershing. The El Paso Historical Society President, Mr. John B. Neff, was the principal speaker. Mr. Neff's father was a personal friend of GEN Pershing when Pershing was stationed at Fort Bliss. City Mayor Raymond Telles also gave a short speech about El Paso's cordial relationship with Pershing during his time there. A palm tree was planted at the Fort Bliss Replica and designated as the Pershing Palm to commemorate Pershing's years of military service. The tree is still there. ★



GEN Pershing at El Paso High School, 1920. The high school still stands and is in use by the El Paso Independent School District.



Looking Forward, Bridging the Generational Gap

MAJ CHRIS W. SCHMIDT, USA (FMR)
WEST VALLEY CHAPTER, AZ
COMMANDER, REGION XIII



One of the more interesting discussions held at the recent San Antonio MOWW Convention focused on recruiting younger veterans. There was a consensus that offering a ride to a meeting and a meal simply has no appeal for them. The best way to attract younger veterans is through events consistent with their more active, family-oriented lifestyle.

A 75-year-old veteran and a 35-year-old veteran may live in the same community, but they occupy entirely different social circles. We older veterans are most likely retired, spending time with a spouse, participating in civic organizations, volunteering, or attending activities during the week. While older veterans often enjoy a more settled pace of life, younger veterans are frequently balancing full-time careers with the demanding logistics of raising children and navigating modern family life. Our generational differences extend even to our leisure time—where we might prefer quiet activities like reading, they often gravitate toward active pursuits like pickleball. Even our connections to the military may be separated by decades. Most of us remember Vietnam-era service, the draft, or a Cold War military. While their service occurred in diverse contexts—from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to the professionalized all-volunteer force—these historical distinctions do not diminish the bond we share. Although the unique demands of our respective eras separate our experiences of military life, we are ultimately unified by the enduring identity we forged in service to our nation. This common ground is the foundation on which we can build meaningful relationships, proving that despite the decades between our deployments, our core values remain aligned.

The MOWW faces a challenge that cannot be solved simply by recruiting more members. We added 423 new Companions to our rolls in 2025-26. This is outstanding, yet the average age of the Order remains over 70. At the same time, about 3.9 million veterans are under age 45. The numbers alone suggest a natural opportunity for intergenerational fellowship.

Traditional MOWW activities can unintentionally reinforce the generational divide. We understandably plan events to our convenience and schedules. We value meetings, parliamentary procedure, and a respectful, well-organized event. They value their rare free weekends, physical activity, and quality family time. This isn't one generation rejecting another; we just seem to be living different existences. But are we really? We probably interact on the golf course, in Church, at a school activity, sporting event, or even on the pickleball court. That can be our gateway to recruitment, but we have to be respectful of their contrasting priorities. Our differences don't need to be a barrier: "Improvise, adapt, and overcome."

Our mission is to prioritize service to youth as a gateway for meaningful engagement. The challenge is to creatively involve young veterans through their children in the Massing of Colors, YLCs, YLSs, and the NYCS. A simple start would be to hold events during times accessible to working veterans. We could design activities that foster parent and youth interaction during events. We might also solicit input from parents when planning our programs and activities. Additionally, inviting young veterans to serve as judges at events or award ceremonies could help them become more involved. Let them see what the MOWW does, get them subtly involved. Over time, some will want to stay involved—no pressure, no lunch meetings, just the satisfaction of doing great things with great people. Ultimately, the goal is not to replace the traditions that built the MOWW. It is to make sure those traditions have someone to carry them forward. I believe younger veterans want to continue to serve, and many would welcome the opportunity to do so in an active, family-friendly way.

Can we bridge the generational gap to make that happen? ★



IRS Reporting Requirements for MOWW Chapters

CW4 GARY L. SMITH, SR., USA (RET)
NATIONAL TREASURER GENERAL, MOWW

COL MICHAEL FARRELL, USMC (RET)
CHIEF OF STAFF, & COO, MOWW, INC



The Internal Revenue Service recently issued Revenue Procedure 2026-8, which establishes updated requirements for organizations operating under a group exemption letter. MOWW, as a 501(c)(19) veterans' organization, maintains IRS Group Exemption Letter 1300 on behalf of its chapters and subordinate units. To preserve our collective tax-exempt status, MOWW must demonstrate annual oversight of its chapters and provide the IRS with updated information. These changes are designed to improve accountability while ensuring continued compliance across the Order.

What Is Changing?

Beginning with the 2026 reporting cycle, MOWW will implement a **three-step** annual compliance process:

1. Each Chapter Files Its Required IRS Return

Every chapter must continue to file the appropriate IRS Form 990 series return based on its financial activity: Form 990-N (e-Postcard), Form 990-EZ, or Form 990. Chapters must file no later than 60 days after the end of their respective tax year.

2. Each Chapter Submits MOWW Form 9

After filing with the IRS, the chapter must then submit MOWW Form 9 (IRS Compliance Certification) to the MOWW Treasurer General and MOWW Headquarters NLT 30 September annually. The form provides information required for MOWW's annual group exemption reporting, including gross receipts, assets, filing status, and authorization to remain under the MOWW group exemption. Chapters filing Form 990 or 990-EZ must also provide a copy of that return.

MOWW form 9 is available online at <https://moww.org/members/moww-forms/>

3. MOWW Files the Annual IRS Group Exemption Update

Using information received from chapters, the Treasurer General will submit the required Supplemental Group Ruling Information (SGRI) to the IRS to maintain MOWW's Group Exemption Letter prior to 31 December annually.

What Chapter Commanders Need to Do

Chapter commanders remain responsible for ensuring their chapter complies with IRS filing requirements.

To meet the new standards:

- Ensure your chapter files the appropriate IRS Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N on time.
- Complete and submit MOWW Form 9 annually. Ensure the form is signed by a Chapter Officer.
- Provide a copy of Form 990 or Form 990-EZ to the Treasurer General, if applicable.
- Maintain chapter records supporting the filing.
- All MOWW Chapters must update their bylaws to include the below standard purpose statement. This purpose statement is now included in Appendix C, Chapter Bylaws Template of the MOWW Policy Manual:
"This chapter is organized and shall be operated exclusively for purposes described in Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code and in furtherance of the mission of the Military Order of the World Wars, Inc., to which it is subordinate and subject to the general supervision."

These procedures will help protect MOWW's tax-exempt status, simplify annual reporting, and ensure continued compliance with federal requirements. Chapter Treasurers should contact the MOWW Treasurer General, CW4 Gary L. Smith, Sr., USA (Ret), treasurergeneral@moww.org for any questions or additional guidance. ★



Discover Purple Star Schools!

Purple Star School (militarychild.org/programs-and-initiatives/purple-star-schools) programs recognize the experiences of students from military families, including Veterans, active-duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members.

Memorial Day and Veterans Day provide meaningful opportunities to connect classroom learning with the lived experiences of these students in a culture of respect and understanding. In Purple Star Schools, this commitment extends beyond a single day, as educators support military-connected students through transitions, inclusive practices, and collaboration with school resources, bridging military and civilian experiences, building empathy across the classroom, and reinforcing the value of service in our society.

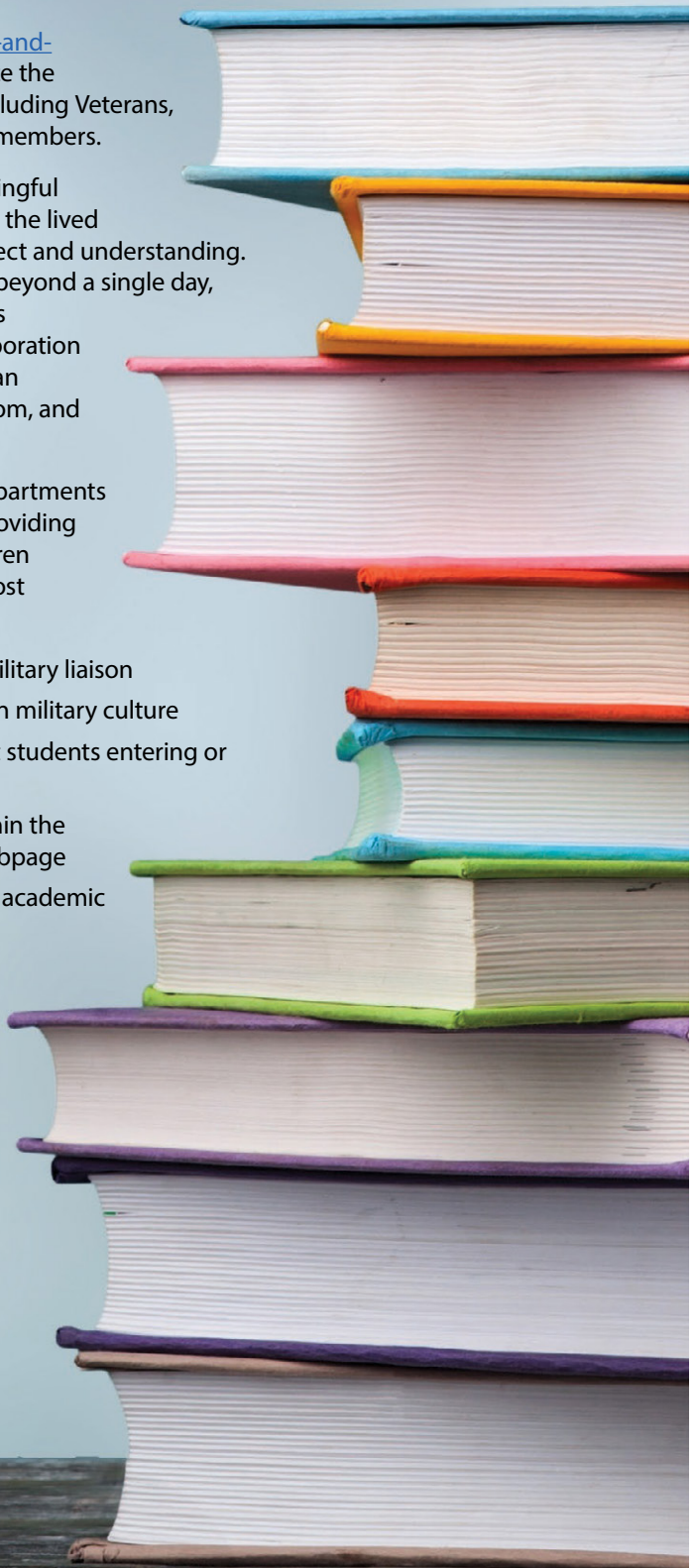
Purple Star Schools are designated by state departments of education to recognize schools that excel in providing a supportive and informed environment for children of military families. While criteria vary by state, most programs include:

- A designated staff member serving as a military liaison
- Professional development for educators on military culture
- Student-led transition program to support students entering or leaving schools due to military moves
- Visible recognition of military families within the school community to include resource webpage
- Resources and programming that address academic and social-emotional needs

Why This Matters in the Classroom

Military-connected students often navigate relocations, parental deployments, and reintegration challenges that can shape their academic journey, peer relationships, and emotional well-being. Teachers in Purple Star Schools help:

- Create stability in times of transition
- Recognize and honor students' lived experiences
- Build inclusive classroom communities
- Connect curriculum to real-world service and sacrifice



FITNESS FOR LIFE: The Military Commitment Continues

MG GEORGE A. ALEXANDER, MD, USA (RET)
SURGEON GENERAL, MOWW

Military service teaches us the value of physical readiness. After retirement, however, the challenge is to maintain that readiness while adapting exercise to age, lifestyle, and changing physical capabilities. Fitness should not end when military service does; rather, it should become a lifelong investment in health, independence, and quality of life.

Regular physical activity is associated with lower risks of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, certain cancers, and premature death. It also supports mental health, cognitive function, sleep, and healthy body weight. For former service members, maintaining fitness can help preserve the strength, endurance, balance, and mobility needed to remain active in family, community, and veterans' organizations. A practical goal is to accumulate 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, such as brisk walking, cycling, swimming, or recreational sports. Alternatively, 75–150 minutes of vigorous activity may provide similar benefits. (1, 2) The key is consistency rather than intensity. Inactive individuals should start gradually and increase activity over time.

Strength training is equally important. Adults should perform muscle-strengthening exercises involving the major muscle groups on at least two days each week. Exercises using resistance bands, weights, machines, or body weight can help preserve muscle mass and strength. This becomes increasingly important with advancing age because muscle loss can interfere with walking, climbing stairs, lifting objects, and maintaining independence.

Balance and flexibility also deserve attention. For adults aged 65 and older, current recommendations emphasize combining aerobic exercise, strength training, and activities that improve balance and functional ability. Walking, tai chi, yoga, light calisthenics, and recreational activities can provide combinations of these



benefits. Balance training is particularly valuable because it can help reduce the risk of falls and fall-related injuries.

Former military members should also recognize that fitness is not a competition with their younger selves. The objective is functional fitness appropriate to the individual's current capabilities. Previous injuries, chronic conditions, medications, or limitations may require modifications and, when appropriate, advice from a healthcare professional. The military taught us that readiness requires discipline, regular training, and personal responsibility. Those principles remain valuable after service. A sustainable program of walking or other aerobic activity, strength training, balance exercises, and sensible nutrition can help former service members remain physically capable and engaged for many years. ★





American troops trying to stay warm by a fire in the rough winters at Valley Forge. The engraving was created by Albert Bobbett

CHRISTMAS AT VALLEY FORGE: **Hope, Light, and Endurance**

LTC VICTOR W. BURNETTE, USA (RET)
CHAPLAIN GENERAL, MOWW

Companions, as Thanksgiving gives way to the sacred season of Christmas, Americans pause to reflect upon God's blessings, the warmth of family, and the enduring gift of hope. This season also invites us to remember a winter long ago when hope was tested, faith was strengthened, and the destiny of a nation hung in the balance.

In December 1777, General George Washington and the Continental Army entered winter quarters at Valley Forge. The conditions were harsh beyond imagination. Food was scarce. Clothing was inadequate. Disease spread through the camp. Many soldiers lacked shoes, leaving bloodstains in the snow as a testimony to their suffering. Yet despite these hardships, they endured.

The men of Valley Forge understood a truth that remains relevant today: Circumstances do not determine destiny—faith, perseverance, and character do. Psalm 46:1 states, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

For General Washington and his Soldiers, faith in Divine Providence provided strength during the darkest days of the Revolutionary War. What appeared to be a season of despair became a season of preparation. By Spring, the Continental Army trained in basic soldier skills like D&C and emerged more disciplined, more unified, and better

prepared for the challenges ahead.

The Christmas story carries a remarkably similar message. The birth of Christ occurred not in comfort but in humble surroundings. Yet from that modest beginning came the Light of the World. As Scripture declares in Matthew 4:16: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light." That light continues to shine today, reminding believers that God's purposes are often accomplished through seasons of difficulty, uncertainty, and sacrifice.

This time of year, also coincides with Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and celebrates God's faithfulness and the triumph of light over darkness. Although Hanukkah and Christmas arise from different traditions, both point to enduring themes of hope, faith, perseverance, and the victory of light over adversity. These are values that unite people of faith and resonate deeply with America's heritage.

The lessons of Valley Forge continue to find expression in the service of today's military men and women. As we celebrate this Christmas season, we are mindful of those serving far from home, especially Sailors, Marines, and Aviators who deployed aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln. Extended deployments require extraordinary

resilience from service members and their families. Holidays are missed. Family gatherings are postponed. Precious moments pass while duty calls. Much like the Soldiers who endured the winter at Valley Forge, these men and women remain steadfast in service to a cause greater than themselves. Though separated by nearly two and a half centuries, both groups demonstrate the same qualities of sacrifice, commitment, and devotion to the security and freedom of others.

The Apostle Paul encouraged believers in Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not." Those words could well describe the Continental Army at Valley Forge, the Service members deployed today, and all who faithfully serve their communities, churches, and nation.

As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables and Christmas/Hanukkah celebrations, let us wear our MOWW Deployed T-shirts; let us remember in prayer and thank those whose sacrifices have preserved our freedoms. Let us be grateful for the blessings we enjoy, mindful of God's continual provision, and inspired by the examples of courage found both in our nation's history and among those currently standing watch around the world.

May the perseverance of Valley Forge, the light of Hanukkah, and the hope of Christmas remind us that even in life's coldest winters, God's presence remains constant, His light still shines, and better days lie ahead.

Companions, may you and your family enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving, a joyful Christmas, and a New Year filled with faith, hope, peace, and purpose. ★



MOWW FLASH STORE MERCHANDISE SALE

30 November to 14 Dec 2026



**MEN'S & WOMEN'S
TWO-LAYER FLEECE VEST
IN NAVY**



MOWW HAWAIIAN SHIRT



**MEN'S & WOMEN'S
PERFORMANCE POLO,
IN RED AND NAVY**



**LIGHTWEIGHT NAVY
WINDBREAKER
FULL-ZIPJACKET IN NAVY**

MOWW has partnered with Authentically American Apparel to offer exclusive MOWW merchandise to purchase as a Fundraiser for the MOWW Foundation. The MOWW Flash Store is a limited-time opportunity to purchase exclusive MOWW merchandise while supporting youth leadership across the country. All proceeds from the store benefit the MOWW Foundation, which funds youth leadership programs that promote character, civic responsibility, and leadership in young Americans. When you shop here, you're not only showing your support for MOWW, you're also investing in the next generation of leaders. Thank you for being part of the mission.

ALL ITEMS are PRE-ORDER only and will be produced and shipped AFTER the store closes on 14 December 2026. Please allow 6 weeks from the close date for items to start shipping. Items will not be shipped prior to Christmas. Items will arrive to you in early-February. ALL items purchased in this store are FINAL SALE. We only produce the items that are ordered and no additional items will be available for exchange.

Visit the Flash Store:
https://www.wherisyoursmade.us/pages/moww-flash-store?_ab=0&key=1791899761378





Colorado Springs Chapter, CO

Blue Star Families Launch COS Chapter

BY LTC MICHAEL D. BERENDT, USA (RET)

Companions attended the launch of the newest (15th) Blue Star Families in Colorado Springs on 2 October 2026, at Cheyenne Mountain Resort. Executive Director Sarah Frey led the event, which featured Founder Kathy Roth-Douquet, Senator John Hickenlooper, and General Whiting. Craig Newmark Philanthropies announced a \$1 million matching pledge to support military families. The Chapter will partner with Blue Star Families, as the organizations work together to help local military families in need.

(L-R): Blue Star Families CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet, COS Chapter Leader Sarah Frey, and COS MOWW Treasurer, LTC Mike Berendt



Puget Sound Chapter, WA

34th Annual Northwest Youth Leadership Conference

BY PCINC COL DAVID B. GIBSON, USAF (RET)

The 34th Annual Northwest Youth Leadership Conference at Pacific Lutheran University from 21–24 June. Pictured are 78 students, 10 counselors, and 4 staff at the front gate of Joint Base Lewis McChord, with statues of Captain Lewis, dog Seamen, and 1st Sgt Orday in the background.



Colorado Springs Chapter, CO

Blue Star Families Launch COS Chapter

By CPT Paula R. Mitchell, Ed.D., USAR (Ret)

Presentation of a MOWW National Citation to HPM Mrs. Laura S. Beltran for her exceptional service as Chaplain for the Greater El Paso Chapter and her activities in Scouting. This is HPM Beltran's second National Citation. In 2020 Region XIII Commander LTC Patrick Stolze presented the National Citation signed by then-MOWW Commander in Chief LTC Charles D. Chamberlin, USA (Ret).



Sun City Center Chapter, FL

Buffalo Soldiers Memorial Dedication

BY COL LONNIE D. VONA, USA (RET)

The Buffalo Soldiers were African American soldiers who served in segregated units after the Civil War, earning a reputation for bravery and dedication. The Veterans Council of Hillsborough County, FL, (VCHC) recently dedicated a memorial to the Buffalo Soldiers at its Veterans Park. The ceremony was attended by over 500 guests, and Companions.

(L-R): Companion and President of VCHC Lt Col Joseph Muhlberger, USAF (Ret); Companion COL Lonnie D. Vona, USA (Ret), Chair Youth JROTC/ ROTC VCHC, Companion Mrs. Marilyn S. Westropp, Chair Memorials and Monuments VCHC, and Companion 1LT Anthony F. Abbate, USA (Fmr), Treasurer VCHC.



Puerto Rico Chapter, PR

Honoring Veterans in Puerto Rico

BY COL ADALBERTO RIVERA, USAF (RET)

The Chapter organized and led the Memorial Day Ceremony at Morovis National Cemetery. MOWW Patriot Edwin Ramos-Jourdan was master of ceremony, CAPT Mario Miranda gave the invocation, and Major General Juan Garcia was guest speaker. Companions also participated at Bayamon and Aguadilla cemeteries, presenting MOWW Memorial Markers to commemorate America's 250th Anniversary.

(L-R): National Cemeteries Director for Puerto Rico Col Carlos A. Quinones, USAF (Ret); Mr. Juan Nieves; MAJ Segundo Melendez, USA (Ret); Veterans Advocate for Puerto Rico Agustín Montañez-Allman; CSM Segundo J. Ferro, USAR, and Lt Col Sonny A. Marcombe, PRANG (Ret).





Knoxville Chapter, TN

NJROTC Cadet Earns MOWW Award

BY MAJ TRENT D. LAVIANO, USA (RET)

MAJ Trent D. Laviano, USA (Ret), presented a MOWW Certificate of Merit and the MOWW JROTC Medal to NROTC CDT Emily Chen at Farragut HS on 17 April 2026. The MOWW JROTC Award recognizes excellence and personal growth in high school cadets. Instead of evaluating purely a single highest test score or physical achievement, it explicitly targets comprehensive development.

(L-R): Cadet Emily Chen and MAJ Trent D. Laviano, USA (Ret) at Farragut High School.



Northern Virginia Chapter, VA

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

BY VCINC COL VICENTE C. OGILVIE, USA (RET)

NOVA Chapter Scouting Program Chair SSgt Robert Kahn, USAF (Fmr), and NOVA Chapter Commander VCINC COL Vince Ogilvie, USA (Ret), had the honor of attending the Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Tristan Johnson, son of NOVA Companion LtCol Kirk Johnson, USMC (Ret). The ceremony was held in the magnificent Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

(L-R): VCINC COL Vicente C. Ogilvie, USA (Ret), Eagle Scout Tristan A. Johnson and SSgt Robert Kahn, USAF (Fmr).



Conejo Valley Chapter, CA

Flag Day Tribute

BY BG DANIEL H. PEMBERTON, USAF (RET)

The Chapter has formed an informal partnership with the local America Supporting Americans (ASA) chapter, a non-profit that sends care packages to deployed personnel. This year's ASA annual fundraiser, "A Salute to Our Troops," drew over 300 attendees and raised almost \$25,000. MOWW Companions included BGen Dan Pemberton as Master of Ceremonies and 100-year-old WWII Veteran Jack Moran as distinguished guest. Speakers were CAPT Charlie Plumb (Vietnam POW for 2,103 days) and COL Jerry Knotts (112 missions over North Vietnam as a Wild Weasel flying the F-105F).

(L-R): CAPT Charles. Plumb, USN (Ret), Jack Moran, BGen Dan Pemberton, USAF (Ret), Col Jerry Knotts, USAF (Ret), and ASA President Mr. Jim Sumner.



Sun City Center Chapter, FL | Northwest Florida Chapter, FL

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: YLC 2026

BY CW3 EDGAR L. SMART-HOMER, USA (RET)

Companions played a pivotal role in the resounding success of the Youth Leadership Conference (YLC), which concluded recently (9-12 SEP 2026). The Youth Leadership Foundation ran this conference, established to inspire and educate high school students through single- and multi-day leadership conferences with a variety of sessions and activities centered on patriotism, leadership, and the free enterprise system.

Skilled instructors led a curriculum focused on leadership (50%), US government and history (30%), and the free enterprise system (20%). This year's conference was held at the Warren Willis Conference Center in Fruitland Park, FL. Sixty-seven students attended from sixteen Tampa Bay Area high schools along with cadets from the Civil Air Patrol, the US Naval Sea Cadet Corps, and the Scubonauts. Companions 1LT Thomas D. Hart, USA (Fmr); COL Ronald L. Tucker, USA (Ret); LTC Robert T. Russell, Jr., USA (Ret), Capt Vernon A. Elarth, USAF (Fmr); MAJ Roberta M. Troxell, USA (Fmr); CAPT Deborah A. Dombeck, USCG (Ret); CDR Ralph D. Lewis, USCG (Ret), and, our Chapter Commander, Col Lonnie D. Vona, USA, (Ret), play important roles in running the conference.

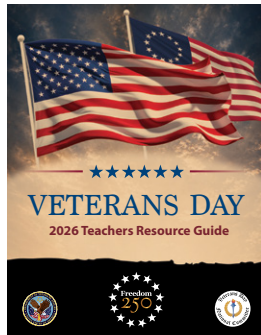
The top three graduates will compete for a spot at the MOWW National Youth Leadership Summit next summer in Washington, DC, and are also eligible to compete in the MOWW Phoenician Award Essay Contest. Congratulations to all the students. This year's top graduate was Tristen Ellison from the Bloomingdale High School Air Force JROTC. The MOWW Sun City Center Chapter, the Military Family Support charity, the Freedom Plaza retirement community, and the Interfaith Social Action Council provided funding. 1LT Thomas D. Hart, USA (Fmr), was an instrumental coordinator and facilitator of this year's YLC.

The YLC's group photo depicts the students, and coaches in their red shirts, and other Chapter representatives across the front row.





2026 VETERANS DAY TEACHERS RESOURCE GUIDE



VETERANS DAY TEACHERS RESOURCE GUIDE

The US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Day National Committee are pleased to provide this easily downloadable Veterans Day Teachers Resource Guide (PDF, 32-pages, 6MB).

Core Highlights of the Guide

This 32-page educational packet is designed to help students understand the significance of military service and includes:

- Historical Overviews: The origins of Veterans Day and how it differs from Memorial Day.
- Classroom Activities: Interactive lessons, student projects, and writing prompts tailored for different grade levels.
- Veterans Stories: Profiles and histories of the roughly 18 million Veterans living across the United States.

Please spread the word! Help amplify our impact—share this page with fellow teachers and educational organizations to reach more students and make a difference.

Sample Outreach Email:

There are about 18 million Veterans living among us, in every state and territory, and from every walk of life. Many of the students in your class may be the son, daughter, cousin, or other relative of a Veteran or current Servicemember. By engaging in discussion about these crucial members of our society, your students will better-appreciate the freedoms we have because of the men and women who have served in defense of the United States.



https://department.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026_VeteransDayTeachersGuide_15Sept2026_508.pdf





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LTC Timothy E. Zack, USA (Ret)

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CDR BERNARD J. LAFIANZA, USN (RET)**

Brig Gen Daniel H. Pemberton, USAF (Ret)

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TSGT CLAYTON HULTS, USAF**

Mr. Phillip M. Imperial

Taps

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**Denotes PM/HPM*

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DATA FROM 1 JUN-31 JUL 2026

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"IT IS NOBLER TO SERVE THAN TO BE SERVED"

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Promote Patriotic Education by sharing the 2026

VETERANS DAY TEACHERS RESOURCE GUIDE!

MOWW encourages all Companions to share the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs'** 2026 Veterans Day Teachers Resource Guide with their local communities, schools, JROTC units, Scouting organizations, and other youth program contacts.

The guide provides educational activities, classroom projects, and ideas for events that help young Americans understand, appreciate, and honor the service and sacrifices of our nation's Veterans.



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