

# Tuesday meetings resumed on March 16, 2021



Photos by Ed Reynolds

## Hardy Soles Resume Physical Meetings in Tarzana

There was frost on the ground when I departed home at 08:00 on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 to drive to the Tarzana Community Center to join a group of hardy soles to resume the Tuesday meetings. Lee Auger, Bob and Susan Bermant, Bob Donovan, Glenn and Donna Fairly, Jane Leisure, Jerry Lief, Joseph Mueller, Kurt Rademacher, Ed Reynolds, Oscar Stein, Bill Tapp, Bill Wentz, and Reuven Zeavy attended the first meeting. We picked up where we left off a year ago with war stories and history lessons from Joe Mueller and Bob Berment.



Photos by Larry Kushner

## March 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> Meetings

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Barry Chapman and Larry Kushner attended the meeting in warmer weather. By the 30<sup>th</sup> Lee Ambers and Abe Rosenzweig joined the group as the weather got even warmer. It was nice to see the hardy soles and resume our history and war stories while Larry took pictures of the group.



# March 2021

## Meetings

### March 1, 2021



Youtube.com

## The Mystery of Amelia Earhart

Celebrating National Women's History Month, at the March 1 meeting, we watched a video uncovering even more about Amelia Earhart's story. We all know who Amelia Earhart was: a groundbreaking female pilot that made history year after year. We also know of her tragic disappearance during yet another attempt to make history. This documentary goes deep into who Amelia was and what may have led to her vanishing.

Amelia Earhart began flying lessons on January 3, 1921, taught by another woman pilot, Neta Snook. Neta was the first woman aviator in Iowa, the first woman accepted to Curtis Flying school in Virginia, the first woman to run her own aviation business, and the first woman to run her own airfield. Neta's mentorship is what propelled Earhart to be even more of a pioneer in the aviation industry for women.

After she bought her first plane, a Kinner Airster, in July 1921, Earhart went straight to breaking records. Just to list some of her accomplishments:

- October 22, 1922, Earhart broke the women's altitude record at 14,000 feet
  - First woman to fly across the Atlantic
  - Published her first book, 20 Hours, 40 Minutes, in Fall 1928
  - Set the women's speed record at 181 miles per hour
  - First woman to fly solo across the Atlantic
  - First woman to fly non-stop from coast to coast
  - Broke the transcontinental women's speed record twice
  - First person to fly solo across the Pacific
- Needless to say, Amelia was an experienced pilot and

broke all kinds of barriers for women. But, she wasn't the only female pilot to do so. So what made her more famous than the rest? Well, after Charles Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic, a publisher named George Palmer Putnam encouraged Lindbergh to write his book, *We*, about the flight. He shot to worldwide fame as he also made a three-month speaking tour around the globe.

George Putnam found Earhart and sponsored her to make a flight across the Atlantic because he saw an opportunity for another best-selling book. Earhart would obviously want to be part of history. She took the offer and flew as a passenger. Amelia wasn't permitted to actually touch any controls, so she didn't take pride in her part of this flight. Back home, the public praised her for being the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. Like Lindbergh, she wrote books and articles, spoke worldwide, and did promotions for brands and even her own products, making her a worldwide star. She even married George Putnam, who helped her and gave her more press opportunities and record-breaking flight opportunities.



Now, to her disappearance. On her first attempt to fly around the world, the plane crashed on takeoff in Hawaii. This didn't demoralize her, and she went ahead and tried again. On her second attempt, she would depart from California, flying to Florida, South America, Africa, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Australia, Hawaii, then back to California. After flying more than 35,000 kilometers, Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, reached New Guinea. They departed for a refueling stop at Howland Island which was only about 3 kilometers by 1 kilometer in size. As she approached, air traffic control could hear her, but she could not hear them. Lack of communication led to her never actually finding Howland Island, ultimately meaning she never landed. She went radio silent and was never heard from or seen again. 80 years later, nobody has confirmation of what happened. Some believe she crashed into the water and sank with the plane. Others believed she landed on another small island. Some believe that this was set up by George Putnam so that he could gain her estate and money. Some pieces of evidence point to this being a giant cover-up, saying that the government knew that she was alive after her "disappearance." This means that maybe one day we will know what happened to Amelia Earhart. But for now, we can only wonder what happened to Earhart, one of the most iconic pilots of all time..

# March 8, 2021



## Spitfire Sisters – Women of the ATA

Continuing to celebrate National Women's History Month at the March 8th meeting, we watched the documentary *Spitfire Sisters – Women of the ATA*. The documentary is about the many women that flew planes in England during World War II. Back in World War II, British women were not allowed in combat. Seven million women still helped, either in medical services or emergency services. However, in 1939, some women had a new opportunity to fly planes outside of combat.

The Air Transport Auxiliary, or the ATA, ferried planes for the RAF from factories to airfields for pilots to fly them in combat. Pauline Gower, an experienced female pilot who worked for the Civil Air Guard, was assigned to assemble a women's ATA branch in late 1939. At first, only eight women were invited to ferry the planes. One of the pilots was the 17 year old Joan Hughes, the youngest female aviator in Great Britain. At first, there were doubts that women were even capable of flying combat planes, and they were limited to a few less powerful aircraft. After a few months, they proved that they could fly just as well as the men and were soon granted to fly all planes.

In the summer of 1943, the ATA had a shortage of qualified pilots and began to train civilians that had never even touched a plane before. Women came from all around the world to take part, from Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, United States, Netherlands, Poland, and Chile. They would receive general training at first, but after their training, the pilots took it into their own hands to figure out how to fly each plane. They ferried such a large assortment that they could decide their favorites and least favorites. They had an opinion on all of the planes, but one thing that all women had in common was their love for the Spitfire. The plane was very maneuverable and resonated well with every woman who flew it.

Overall, the Spitfire Sisters who served with the ATA did lots of important work. They paved the way for all women in the military by proving they could do just as well

as men. Men would be impressed and shocked to see women landing at airstrips but would be thankful that they were delivering the planes that they were excited to fly. This documentary was yet another excellent piece for us to appreciate women in the air force during Women's History Month.

# March 15, 2021



Photo by Bob Eisenhart

## Betty Jane Williams Lt Col USAF (Retired)

We featured the British women WWII pilots on the 8<sup>th</sup> to celebrate National Women's History Month.

Continuing to celebrate National Women's History Month on March 15<sup>th</sup> we honored the memory of Wings Over Wendy's departed member: Betty Jane (BJ) Williams, Lt Col USAF (Retired).

BJ had been an active member from 2006 to her "flying west" in December 2008. We loved to hear her stories of her experience flying, especially her duty flying planes that towed targets for aerial gunnery practice.

She loved to educate school children on flying and, at the time of her untimely death, planned a roadshow to visit schools.





## Flying Dreams: Women Airforce Pilots of WWII

Also, at the meeting of March 15, we watched the documentary *Flying Dreams: Women Airforce Pilots of WWII*. This documentary is about the American women who ferried and tested planes during World War II, also known as the WASPs.

After Pearl Harbor, countless US Army pilots were being shipped overseas to help in the war. Some of these were mail pilots, and some had no experience at all. What they all had in common was the fact that they were men.

Back in 1941, women were still prohibited from flying military planes. However, the pilots' shortage hit quickly, and the military had no choice but to consider allowing women to fly in the military.

Jaclyn Cochran and Nancy Hartness-Love were at the head of the effort to get women pilots into the military. On September 10, 1942, Harold Lee George, the ATC commander, announced the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron formation. The head of the WAFS, Nancy Hartness-Love, inducted 28 women to join it, making them the first women to fly in the military. However, the restrictions were strict, and many women needed more additional flying training to be accepted into the WAFS.

General Hap Arnold then permitted Jaclyn Cochran to form the Women's Flying Training Detachment. In 1943, the two branches would merge, creating the Women's Air Force Service Pilots or the WASP.

25,000 American women applied to be a WASP. However, only 1,800 women were accepted into training, and only 1,000 made it through training and graduated.

Avenger Field in Texas was transformed into the first all-women military flight school in the world. Cadets were under extreme pressure every moment because they could be demerited or thrown out of the school at every little mistake. Training was also somewhat dangerous, and 38 women lost their lives while learning to fly.

After graduation, the women would either ferry planes, serve as flying targets for live anti-aircraft practice, or test planes. Even if they were not directly in combat, they were all excited to help out the war efforts and took their jobs very seriously.

Through the war, the WASPs flew 60 million miles in every single military aircraft. The women also had a higher safety record than the men who flew as mail pilots.

However, by 1944, the need for pilots was decreasing. The German forces were being weakened, and fewer and fewer pilots were needed in combat overseas. Flight instructors back in the United States were no longer working on training new pilots.

In December of 1944, the WASPs were suddenly disbanded with very little notice. The women were all sent home and deeply saddened. Afterward, Congress didn't even recognize them as veterans.

It took 60 years of rallying until in 2009, a bill was passed to recognize the WASPs as veterans.



**Congressional Gold Medal, Women Airforce  
Service Pilots**

These women broke barriers in the military by proving they were worthy of flying alongside the men and doing it just as well. But, unfortunately, these heroines received very little recognition from either the government or the press.

## March 22, 2021



## Medal of Honor Day

(Continued page 5)





**Woody Williams and Bob Eisenhart**

In honor of the National Medal of Honor Day on March 25, we watched a short video about veteran Hershel “Woody” Williams.

Williams is the last living World War II veteran to receive a medal of honor. Hershel grew up as a farmer in West Virginia with no interest in joining the military. However, when Pearl Harbor was struck by the Japanese, he felt threatened. Even though he had no war knowledge, he wanted to fight for the American people's freedom.

He enlisted in the US Marine Corps because he was impressed with their uniform and saw the girls in his hometown attracted to the Marine uniform.

When he joined the Marine Corps, he thought he would stay in the United States. Little did he know that he would be shipped to the island of Guam in his first campaign in 1944, where he helped the effort to take back Guam from the Japanese.

Next, he was shipped to Iwo Jima. His unit believed the mission would only take a few days, but it turned into the 36 day Battle of Iwo Jima. He stayed for 34 of the 36 days as a demolition man, using a flamethrower to destroy Japanese battlements.

He received his Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in the battle. He was assigned to use his flamethrower to destroy seemingly indestructible concrete bunkers. He destroyed seven bunkers while under enemy fire as he had to retreat to the American lines to get a fresh flamethrower and return to destroy another bunker.

Usually, the Metal of Honor is recommended by a soldier's commander. In William's case, his fellow Marines that witnessed his work came forward to testify for him to receive the Medal of Honor by President Jimmy Carter years after the war..

After we viewed the video we heard from two of our members: Bob Eisenhart who met Woody on a cruise to the Pacific Islands to honor Medal of Honor precipitants. He told us about his experience talking to Woody.

Bob Donovan met Woody at a US Marine Corp Reception and told us about his conversation with him.



## Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery



Photos by Bob Eisenhart



## The Women's Memorial Honors 'Sisters in Arms'

(Continue page 6)



To continue National Women's History Month, the next video we watched on March 22nd was about the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. Recently, there have been significant efforts to make sure each US woman war veteran is registered at Arlington. So far, only 10% of the women who served are registered. However, women are currently the fastest-growing group of veterans.

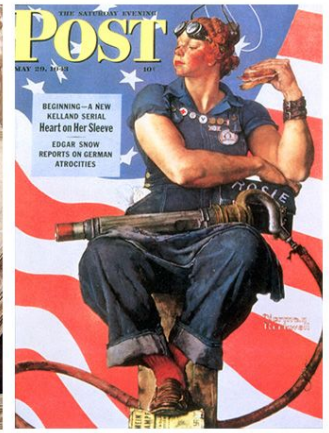
Since 2015, women have been cleared to serve in all combat roles. The memorial features the accomplishments and triumphs of the brave women who have served in the US military. Some exhibits feature important items to heroes in the US military, such as the cane of Mary Edwards Walker, who is the only woman in history to receive the Medal of Honor. Other exhibits tell the stories of the different roles women played in wars since the Revolution. Overall, this memorial is important to honor the women who helped preserve America's freedom and risked their lives to strengthen our nation.



## Rosie the Riveter Day

The third video we watched on March 22 was to honor Rosie the Riveter Day on March 21. Rosie the Riveter is the figure representing the hard defense work women did during World War II.

The drawing we all know today of the woman with a red bandana, flexing her right bicep, was illustrated by J. Howard Miller.



Another version by Norman Rockwell was also famous and was featured on the cover of Saturday Evening Post. The term “riveter” came from the women who built airplanes in factories. They would fasten aluminum by using a gun that shot rivets into the metal.

These women were hired into factories because all of the workforce men were being sent off overseas. Industries had no choice but to consider hiring women. In the 1940s, there was still reluctance towards women in the workforce, but defense workers were crucial in the war.



Extensive advertising campaigns were launched to encourage women to seek employment in defense fields. Ultimately, these women built the equipment needed to win the war, and it could not have been done without these Rosies.

# March 29, 2021



## Vietnam War Veterans Day

In honor of Vietnam War Veterans Day, March 29, we watched a 25-minute documentary explaining the Vietnam War, followed up by a presentation by Ed Reynolds who served near the end of the war in Vietnam as the Senior Intelligence Advisor to the Vietnamese Air Force.

Vietnam had been the target of French colonialism and Japanese invasions since the late 19th century. A long struggle for independence for Vietnam and its leader, Ho Chi Minh, ended at the end of World War II.

During Harry Truman's presidency, Russia spread into Eastern Europe and approached Turkey, Greece, and Iran as the Cold War began. France warned America that if their colonies became independent, France could also fall under the Soviets. America decided to help France keep Vietnam as a colony sent soldiers to Vietnam to fight against communist invasions. Vietnam fought against France and came out victorious, forcing them out of the country.

Afterward, Vietnam split into North and South Vietnam. Almost a million Catholics moved to South Vietnam, which was known as the Republic of Vietnam to practice their religion which was not supported by the Communist North. At the same time as the migration south, Ho Chi Minh's followers in the South fought against the Republic to achieve unity for the nation once again. Ho Chi Minh's men were officially called the People's Liberation Armed Forces, but America gave them the name Viet Cong.

During JFK's presidency, Cold War tensions were higher than ever. He didn't want to let Vietnam fall into communism, but he did not want to send troops. He did send a small group of very skilled soldiers and military advisors to train and organize South Vietnam's military. As things escalated, JFK doubled military funding and started to attack the Viet Cong.

The South Vietnamese Buddhists were not happy with President Diem and rebelled against what they felt was Catholics' favoritism. JFK reluctantly agreed to a Military Coup which got out of hand when Diem and his brother were assassinated in 1963, shortly before JFK's assassination.

In March of 1965, Lyndon Johnson sent ground troops to Vietnam to not only fight against communism but fight

against a humiliating US defeat. Bombings of the North Vietnamese forces and Viet Cong got more and more severe as the years went on. By the beginning of 1968, 500 thousand troops were in Vietnam. After some ugly battles, including Tet's attacks and large protests back in the US, Johnson promised to stop the bombing of Vietnam and wanted to transition to peace talks. Nixon's team contacted South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu to pull out of peace talks to get Nixon elected, US troops continued to fight pointless battles. Eventually, After he became President, Nixon put his Vietnamization Program into effect, calling on the US to teach the Vietnamese to stand on their own as the US slowly pulled their troops out. Eventually, after the US had pulled all troops, South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam. The war was over, and Vietnam was now a unified communist nation.

Next, Ed gave his own presentation on the Vietnam War with his own thoughts and experiences based on his role in the war. Ed joined Aviation Cadet Navigator Training with two Vietnamese classmates in 1957 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in August of 1958. In June of 1966, he transferred to Pease AFB in Portsmouth, NH, deployed to Okinawa for KC-135 combat operations. His military focus was more on the Soviet threat than Vietnam, so he was caught off guard when he was given an assignment in Southeast Asia as a Top Secret Control Officer in remote Thailand. Ed did not want this assignment at all because it meant he would be required to stay at a base 24/7 leaving no time for to pursue his love for flying, traveling, or computers. He contacted a former boss who changed his assignment to be the Senior Advisor to the Chief of the Vietnamese Air Force Intelligence. He was transferred in April 1971.

Ed flew C-54s and C-47s in Vietnam. He traveled to each VNAF base to help expand, equip, and train the Vietnamese during Vietnamization. He discovered that the US did have good intentions for the Vietnamese, but a lot of officers and NCOs were just there to fly missions, get air medals, and go home instead of focusing on Vietnamization.

He discovered it was a very religious war, between the Catholic, Buddhist, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Confucius, and Taoist religions. Another observation was that these Vietnamese soldiers had been fighting for their entire adult life, and they viewed it as a 5-day-per-week, 9-5 job. One issue for Vietnamization was that the American systems were very hard to pass down to the VNAF. After Ed returned to the US in 1972, he felt he had succeeded. After grad school, he was reassigned to the USAF headquarters in the Pentagon, where he no longer focused on Vietnam. Unfortunately, the complex systems left behind by the US, lack of US funding, and little determination to continue the war led to North Vietnam taking over the South and reuniting Vietnam into a communist nation.



# Wings Over Wendy's in the News

Los Angeles Daily News  
Sunday, March 19, 2021

## March is your month, Betty Jane. Thanks for what you did for women in Air Force

The late military veteran who  
lived in Woodland Hills was  
fondly remembered by local  
veterans during Women's  
History Month



Lt. Col. Betty Jane Williams, a member of Women Airforce Service Pilots, is remembered for her service by Wings Over Wendy's veterans group during Women's History Month. (Photo by Bob Eisenhart)

By DENNIS MCCARTHY |

*"An airplane doesn't respond to sex, it only responds to skill." – Betty Jane Williams.*

This is your month to be remembered, Betty Jane – March, Women's History Month – a time to honor the accomplishments of some very special women – or what too many men of your generation used to call the "weaker sex."

They never said it to your face, though, did they, Betty Jane? You would have knocked their block off. Let me tell

people the story.

When World War II broke out, Betty Jane went down to the recruiting station in her rural, Pennsylvania hometown, and asked where she needed to sign up to fight? Thanks, but no thanks, the recruiting officer said. Women needed to be protected, not be the protector. They just didn't have the right stuff for war.

Try me, Betty Jane said. She was 17, a farm girl who loved to fly. She had just completed the Civilian Pilot Training Program – the only girl in a class with 50 men. She finished number one, flying circles around the guys.

After Pearl Harbor, the men went off to fight the Nazi's in the skies over Europe, while Betty Jane stayed home and joined the WASPs – Women Airforce Service Pilots. More than 25,000 women applied, only 1,800 were accepted.

Everyday, the so-called weaker sex put their lives on the line by towing targets attached to the tail of their planes so raw recruits on the ground could get some practice firing at moving targets with live ammunition in their machine guns.

Gee, what could possibly go wrong with that?

"A couple of times they almost blew me out of the sky," Betty Jane told me in a 1997 interview. "We also flew planes that had been repaired after an accident to make sure they were proficient and capable of wartime operations."

Let's think about that for a second. Women pilots couldn't fight with the men pilots in combat because they didn't have the right stuff – what, courage, skill, they couldn't reach the pedals? Yet, it was perfectly okay for them to be shot at by raw recruits firing live ammo, and climb into the cockpits of damaged planes to see if they were now airworthy.

"Here's the keys, ladies, take it for a spin. And good luck. There may be some guys on the ground shooting at you." They had the right stuff for that?

"There were 38 of our gals killed," Betty Jane said in that interview. "They made the supreme sacrifice."

Which made what happened next a national embarrassment, and a recruitment poster for women pilots who followed in Betty Jane's footsteps. Today, there are more than 800 women Air Force pilots trained and ready for combat.

When World War II ended, the WASP's were disbanded and forgotten, given no military benefits. It took Congress 34 years to recognize their military service and grant them the same veteran's status as men.

And, for every one of those 34 years, it was Betty Jane Williams from Woodland Hills, California, knocking on those Congressional doors, asking our elected officials to do the right thing.

Betty Jane went on to have a successful career in aviation, and retired as a Lt. Col. in the Air Force reserves. In 2006, was inducted into the "Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame." (Continued page 9)



“BJ always felt she was capable of doing so much more for her country,” said her good friend, Jan Edwards, who met Betty Jane in Wings Over Wendy’s – a veteran’s group started almost 20 years ago by old World War II pilots and navigators living in the Valley.

When Betty Jane died in 2008 at 89, her memorial at a Canoga Park funeral home was packed with veterans, many of them men from her generation. Betty Jane had taught them all how wrong the thinking was about women in 1941.

They had the right stuff, they just didn’t have the chance to show it in combat.

How did Betty Jane think she would have done in those dog fights with the Nazi pilots over Europe, I asked Jan Edwards? She laughed.

“Look out for anyone coming her way,” she said. “BJ had that quality of being feminine when she wanted to be, but tough as nails when she had to be.”

As Betty Jane said herself, “What difference did it make if it was a man or a woman in the cockpit? An airplane doesn’t respond to sex. It only responds to skill.”

March is your month, Betty Jane. We remembered.

*Dennis McCarthy’s column runs on Sunday. He can be reached at [dmccarthynews@gmail.com](mailto:dmccarthynews@gmail.com).*

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## In Other News

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### BOB’S BRIDGE: IT’S ALL OF THE ABOVE

March 18, 2021 | WRITTEN BY: Kevin Schmiegel

Last week I wrote about the significance of the royal blue t-shirt worn proudly by 120 of our longest-serving and most dedicated volunteers. Our Blue Shirts helped build Operation Gratitude from its humble beginnings into a grassroots movement that now represents more than one million volunteers across the country.

One of those Blue Shirts is also OG’s first-ever Ambassador — Air Force Vietnam Veteran, Bob Donovan, who has represented Operation Gratitude at hundreds of events in Southern California. With his words and with his actions, Bob has helped Operation Gratitude achieve its mission. He has forged strong bonds and built bridges between the civilian, military, and first responder communities.

By sharing stories about our founder, our history, and most importantly our impact in countless conversations — at service projects, luncheons, care package deliveries, ceremonies, and parades — Bob Donovan has impressed upon every person he has met the importance of saying thank you to those who serve our nation.



What better person than a Vietnam Veteran, who never heard the words “thank you” during his career in the military, to explain why simple acts of gratitude make a difference? Who better than a Blue Shirt who has experienced the magic of OG at dozens of Assembly Days to describe how Operation Gratitude gives every American the opportunity to express appreciation to our men and women in uniform in tangible ways?

In those conversations, Bob did something else — he told his own story and stories about fellow service members and veterans. He talked about the sacrifices military families make. He described deployments, extended separations, frequent moves, and the unimaginable loss of a loved one. In the process, Bob built bridges by creating understanding and empathy for what it means to serve in our military.

Through his storytelling, Bob not only encouraged other Americans to say “thank you”, he also inspired them to go a step beyond by making more meaningful connections with service members and their families who feel disconnected from their communities. He helped close a divide that many people have been talking about for two decades.

Additionally, Bob has worked to forge strong bonds between civilians and first responders too. His role as the original OG Ambassador expanded. With his appearance on the Today Show, he made an impact nationally, helping us build bridges between police officers and their communities last year.

This started, as it often does, with a simple “thank you” to Officer Jason Medina serving with the Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department 3,000 miles away. Bob and Jason now communicate with each other routinely.

(Continued page 10)



departments across the country. In doing so, he not only said “thank you,” he also helped Operation Gratitude start our First Responder program in 2017 and bridge divides that exist between civilians and the brave men and women who serve and protect our communities as police officers, firefighters, and EMTs.



I often think about why Bob serves with Operation Gratitude. Is it to give back and say “thank you” to servicemen and women who have followed in his footsteps? Is it because he wants others to experience what he has for years as a Blue Shirt — for them to find their own sense of purpose and to belong to a community of patriots who join in service to their country and one another? Or is it to build bridges and ensure our nation’s service members and veterans feel connected to their communities, never experiencing the disconnectedness, disrespect, and lack of gratitude that he felt as a Vietnam Veteran?

My guess is Bob’s motivation to serve with Operation Gratitude is the same as mine. It is all of the above. And it can be that way for all of us.

I’ve never asked other Blue Shirts like Army Veteran Jack Knight or Navy Mom Melinda Vaughn why they choose to serve with Operation Gratitude either.

Jack traveled 8,000 miles singing his “Hero Song” to thousands of first responders at hundreds of police and fire

I often wonder why Melinda Vaughn comes to our FOB every day to serve, too. Is it to have a sense of purpose and feel part of the community of volunteers who come to the FOB to receive, log, and sort the items we receive each day? Is it because she wants to give back and say “thank you” to men and women like her son, Bill, who served in Iraq as a Navy Seabee when the war first started? Or is it to build bridges and understanding about the sacrifices men and women like Bill make in service to our nation and the issues they sometimes face when they come back from war?

(Continued page 11)

Again, it’s likely all of the above. My guess is Melinda





This week we have a wonderful opportunity for you to do all of the above, too! You can give back in a hands-on way, say “thank you,” and help us build bridges between civilians and Vietnam Veterans like Bob Donovan. Starting today, you can handcraft tangible expressions of appreciation for this forgotten generation of veterans.

Think about the impact you will make for veterans like Bob and the Navy Veteran pictured below, who cried tears of joy when I placed a paracord bracelet on his wrist two years ago. Look at the expression on his face when he realized one of our volunteers hand-made the bracelet in the Vietnam Paracord Bracelet colors just for him.



I hope you take this opportunity with Operation Gratitude to give back in a hands-on way. I hope you will be part of our important efforts to express gratitude to this often forgotten and the under-appreciated era of veterans who served during Vietnam. I hope your heart is filled with joy and a sense of purpose as you get more involved and become part of our ever-growing community of volunteers. And I hope you know that, together, we will go a step beyond saying “thank you for your service” — ultimately building bridges that will strengthen the resolve of those who serve our communities and our nation.

Like our Blue Shirts, Bob, Jack, Melinda, and me, you have an opportunity to do all of the above if that is what you want.

The truth is: whatever your reason is (or what your reasons are) for serving with Operation Gratitude, I'm very grateful that you do... Because I know together, we will continue to make a difference for more than a half-million service members and their families each year.

A horizontal line of 25 small airplane icons, all facing right, used as a section separator.

**Wings Over Wendy's members look forward to the day they can return to help Operation Gratitude assemble the boxes.**





# In Memoriam

During March 2021, one of Wings Over Wendy's members faithful members “flew west”:



**Dick Edwards**  
**August 31, 1930 to**  
**March 1, 2021**

Born August 31, 1930 in Hempstead, Long Island, New York. He attended Hempstead schools graduated from Hempstead High School, and then Hofstra University in Hempstead, and earned a BS in Applied Physics in 1952.

Following college, he joined Grumman Aerospace Corporation, Bethpage, Long Island, New York, as an Instrumentation project engineer. He then became a flight test instrumentation specialist at Edwards AFB in 1954. He advanced to the preliminary design flight test proposal manager. Representing Gruman in 1959 he became a Resident Manager at Bendix Aviation, where he worked on the Apollo project, especially with the LEM program. Grumman then assigned him as a representative at Teledyne Systems, Northridge, CA on the F-14 jet fighter Black Box project. He was promoted to Director of the Grumman West Coast Office until his retirement.

During his periods of assignments to the Los Angeles area, he earned a degree from the UCLA Graduate School of Business Administration.

After retirement from Grumman, Dick created Edwards Consulting Service and had another successful

career helping corporations write proposals and create ways to motivate employees.

Dick gave many motivational and educational speeches to various corporations, academic groups and schools featuring the Apollo Program.

Ocean fishing was his favorite sport. He coached his children in sports.

Dick is survived by his five children, ten grandchildren, one great-grandchild, his wife Jan, who still attends Wings Over Wendy's meetings and events.

## Prayers

Unfortunately, several of our most active members were hospitalized or are either in Nursing Homes or at home recuperating from their injuries or illnesses. Our prayers are for a speedy recovery and a return to our meetings: **Ginger Lyons, Lazar Saunders,**

[illegible]

## April Birthdays

Liliane Pofcher	April 01, 1954
Marilyn Brooks	April 04, 1930
Thomas Maiden	April 04, 1949
Jim Glennie	April 06, 1948
Nonie Lann	April 07, 1929
Mark Ax	April 07, 1949
William Lashbrook	April 09, 1937
Jim McMichael	April 09, 1955
Richard Burns	April 11, 1927
Steve Holohan	April 14, 1944
Marion Lovelace	April 16, 1927
Vincent Cicone	April 16, 1941
Margot Marty	April 16, 1991
Marty Fentress	April 17, 1952
Larrie Rhodes	April 20, 1943
Tom Bates	April 21, 1940
Morris Litwack	April 24, 1941
Connie Hein	April 24, 1947
Andy Kopetzky	April 25, 1951
Joseph Mueller	April 26, 1949
Peter Marshall	April 30, 1940

## New Members & Guests

We welcomed the following new members, guests, friends, and relatives to our Zoom meetings during March 2021:

**Christopher Anderson**

**Dennis Goff**

**Anh-Thu Nguyen**

**Wayne Scott**

**Mark Waldman**

The following is a list of WOW members who have contributed \$10 to fund the publication for 12 months.

# WOW Events Calendar Additions

The key is: **kswpdaeovnb1jans4**

## Wings News Staff

**Technical Assistance:** Charles Scott

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## LALEH FRAZIER

Wife of ROSCOE FRAZIER Retired US ARMY

Pinnacle Estate Properties  
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# Congress Passes Sweeping New Rule Allowing VA to Vaccinate All Veterans, Spouses

19 Mar 2021, Military.com | By Steve Beynon

The House passed a sweeping new authorization for the Department of Veterans Affairs that would boost the agency's ability to deliver shots to millions of Americans, following President Joe Biden's pledge to have COVID-19 vaccines available to all adults by May.

The Senate recently passed the measure and now heads to the president's desk to be signed into law.

"Unanimous passage of our bipartisan bill means we're one step away from ensuring that every veteran, spouse, and VA certified caregiver in this country has access to a vaccine from VA," Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., said in a statement.

"This legislation is a critical step in reaching our common goal of saving more lives and getting our economy back on track as quickly and safely as possible," added Tester, who chairs the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

The Save Lives Act would greenlight the VA to vaccinate all veterans, veteran spouses, VA certified caregivers, and Civilian Health and Medical Program recipients.

Currently, the VA is administering vaccines only to employees and its 9 million patients. The new law would open up who could receive the vaccine, regardless of a veteran's eligibility to receive VA care, adding yet another option for a large portion of the country to get vaccines.

However, patients enrolled in VA care will get priority.

About half of the 18 million total U.S. veterans are enrolled in VA care, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The bill's passage comes during a massive concerted effort from the Biden administration to get shots to as many Americans as possible, with the country's goal to return to relative normalcy by Independence Day.



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