

# GRINNELL BUSINESS JOURNAL

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in Solidarity

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BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Our final issue of 2015 is presented with great honor. The appreciation for the service of the men and women of our military is even more significant as we contemplate the unthinkable evil of extremists in our world. On behalf of the staff of this publication, I extend our gratitude.

When the new year begins, so shall a new publication from the Grinnell Business Journal staff. Many of our readers have applauded our efforts and encouraged us to expand our focus. Some of you have suggested stories and topics that have seemed difficult to fit into the vision we've had thus far for our young journal. In response to your feedback, and in order to continue our evolution as a valuable resource for our community, we are dissolving the alternate brand we have used for this print edition. In its place, we are carrying over the digital brand, Our Grinnell, into a new print piece launching in January. This move will allow us to share even more of the amazing stories, livelihoods, and journeys taking place within our community, and will better integrate the print and digital mediums.

The entire staff of Our Grinnell Media Corp. thanks you for your support, your input and your readership. Visit us regularly online at [www.OurGrinnell.com](http://www.OurGrinnell.com), and look for our new print issue in January.

— Todd Reding, President, Our Grinnell Media Corp.



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# STUDENTS ON THE PATH TO SERVE

By Sadie Anna Tristam

GRINNELL COLLEGE INTERN

They're from two different parts of the country, but they've ended up in the same place: Kyle Sadler and Philip Trubee are both members of a branch of the United States military.

Sadler is a 19-year-old recent graduate from Grinnell High School. He had planned on furthering his education, paying his way through Marshalltown Community College until he could go to either Iowa State or University of Iowa. Instead, a few



**KYLE SADLER, A RECENT GHS GRAD**

years ago, Sadler attended a leadership track event at Camp Dodge and a recruiter approached all the participants. Since his college plans had fallen through, he contacted the same recruiter about the possibility of enlisting in the military. Sadler is now a member of the National Guard.

Philip Trubee joined the Air Force in a slightly different way. His family has a long historical background with the United States Government and the United States Military. Trubee's father and brother are an especially unique case.

"It is very rare that two people are able to father-son team in [Air Force] Special Operations. There are only five instances in the entire Air Force when that has ever happened," said Trubee.

Trubee joined the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), an auxiliary of the Air Force, as a sophomore in high school. As opposed to the Reserve Officer's Train-

ing Corps (ROTC) focus on getting students directly into the military, the CAP is more focused on teaching students about the military. The Air Force delegates tasks to the members of the CAP, which is part of the overall mission of the Air Force. Trubee confirmed that you are not obligated to serve in the military after you graduate from high school if you are a part of the Civil Air Patrol.

The different branches of the military have programs for high school students and college students. On each of the websites for each branch, there are pages listing the benefits of joining the military. The main benefit, especially for young students, is the paid college education. Each branch has a system which recruits students into enlisting, and then pays for their immediate college education - up to a certain monetary point in most cases. Many of

*Continued on page 26*

## 72 YEARS LATER: ISADORE BERMAN RECALLS HIS DAYS AS A WWII SERGEANT

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs

**T**here's a photo online of three young soldiers, members of the 48th Field Hospital in the early 1940s, sitting on the steps of their barracks with their helmets in their laps, smiling and squinting into camera. Peeking out of those helmet liners are four newborn puppies. Still kids themselves, these soldiers would have no idea what would await them during WWII - whether they'd see deployment or combat, whether they'd come home to their families and friends, whether they'd live to tell their tales.

On that day, they were just young men, cradling a sliver of innocence, a bit of fragility, a symbol of new life. For a fleeting moment, they were able to be just regular boys again before being called back to the reality of war.

Isadore Berman, just 20 years old when he was drafted in 1943, wasn't one of those young men, but he could have been. He, too, worked field hospitals over a 30-month period during WWII, from 1943-46.

Berman, who was born and raised alongside three brothers in Grinnell, was inducted into the United States Army in September 1943 and completed his basic training at Camp Dodge in Johnston before being sent to Fort Leonard Wood, an expansive camp located in the Missouri Ozarks. The group of men, who were to be trained as laboratory technicians, was delayed at Camp Crowder in Neosho, MO for a couple of days, and by the time they reached Fort Leonard



**ISADORE BERMAN OF SHARES MEMORIES OF HIS TIME OVERSEAS AS A WWII SERGEANT**

Wood, they were told the class was full. Berman found himself with an office personnel job instead.



"After awhile as general flunky, I was informed that as excess personnel, I was going to be sent to an ASTP Unit," Berman said.

Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) units were facilitation programs established by the Army during WWII to meet the need for both junior officers and soldiers with technical skills. ASTPs were administered at universities all over the country - including Grinnell College

- and offered training in several fields, including engineering, foreign languages, and medicine.

"Surplus troops that weren't involved in anything were sent to various colleges for educational training, and I was told I'd go to Grinnell College," Berman remembered. "I asked my first sergeant if we were gonna leave, and well, he had a very gruff way about him and I found out later that his problem was that he had a hangover every morning." Berman stopped and laughed heartily at the memory.

"Anyway, it didn't work out," he continued. "I found out at the 50 year reunion that personnel was going to be sent overseas, and we had to stay where we were."

Before long, Berman was sent to Camp Myles Standish, a port of embarkation in Boston.

"So after twelve days along the ocean in a tremendous convoy, we arrived in Gourock, Scotland," he said.

After a train ride through south Eng-

land, Berman arrived in Swindon, approximately 80 miles west of London, where he and a large company operated a station hospital for several months before the organization was taken over by another group. He found himself being sent to Exeter, awaiting deployment.

**"I GOT TO LAND AT OMAHA BEACH!" BERMAN EXCLAIMED, HIS EYES SHINING AS IF IT HAD ALL HAPPENED YESTERDAY. "BUT THAT WAS TWO MONTHS AFTER D-DAY."**



The Battle of Normandy, which lasted from June 1944 to August 1944, was codenamed Operation Overlord and began June 6, also known as D-Day. Nearly 160,000 American, Canadian and British armed forces landed on a 50-mile stretch of Normandy coast in France. By the time it ended in the dog days of August, all of northern France had been liberated, but 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded, or missing in action. By the spring of 1945, the Allies had defeated the Germans, and since then, the Normandy landings have been credited to ending the war in Europe.

Berman stayed in Normandy for a couple of weeks before his organization was sent to a camp in Paris, where they took over a general hospital that the Germans had operated. Once again, Berman found himself as administrative



## “IT WAS WILD, BERMAN RECALLED. “YOU COULDN’T BELIEVE IT.”

Back in Grinnell, Berman resumed his studies on the G-I bill and graduated with a degree in economics and history from Grinnell College in 1946. By 1951, he had his MBA from Columbia University - “an overgrown high school”, Berman winked - and once again returned to his hometown where he married, had children, and started a business: Sam Berman & Sons, a scrap recycling yard that was founded in 1923 by Isadore’s father. Today, Isadore Berman is 92 and still active in the family business, now managed by his son, Richard.

personnel, and was largely responsible for transporting troops who had been discharged from the hospital to the railroad stations to return to their own organizations.

“Unfortunately for me - but fortunate for them, I guess - most of ‘em went AWOL on me!” Berman laughed. “They wanted to stay and see Paris!”

Berman could still find the humor in those errant patients 70 years later, but sobered when talking about the Battle of the Bulge. The surprise attack by the Germans brought in huge numbers of casualties and injured soldiers and is still remembered as the deadliest operation of WWII. Although Berman was not sent into combat, many of his friends were.

“They took out about 100 of our personnel to different organizations to combat areas because there was a tremendous shortage,” Berman said.

Nevertheless, on May 8, 1945, a 22-year-old Isadore Berman found himself watching a sky full of fireworks amidst thousands of people popping champagne corks and laughing through tears on the streets of Paris. Victory in Europe Day - or V-E Day - saw Nazi Germany’s surrender of its armed forces and the end of WWII in Europe.

Before wrapping up his memories, Berman leafed through a dog-eared photo album emblazoned with a gold caduceus, filled with black and white and sepia images of long-lost soldiers he shared those three war-filled years with. He pointed out young men and women - some in uniform, some in civilian clothing, some serious, some smiling - stitched together in the camaraderie and uncertainty of the time and place.

And he smiled.



# BILL LANNOM: 'I'M NOT A WAR HERO'

By Teresa McCall

**"THE TRUE SOLDIER FIGHTS NOT BECAUSE HE HATES WHAT IS IN FRONT OF HIM, BUT BECAUSE HE LOVES WHAT IS BEHIND HIM."**

— G.K. CHESTERTON

The Vietnam War is perhaps the most misunderstood conflict involving US troops in the history of modern times. The word "Nam" evokes a variety of images and feelings depending on one's age and perspective. Many young people know only what they've seen in movies or popular video games. Yet, it was a very real war in which 2.5 million Americans served from 1956 through 1975. One-third of those who served were drafted. Two-thirds volunteered. Whether they were drafted or volunteered, one out of ten who served were injured or killed.

The average age of a US soldier during the Vietnam war was 21, versus 26 during WWII. The average soldier in WWII saw 40 days of combat in a period of 4 years. The average soldier in Vietnam saw 240 days of combat in a one year tour. The US soldiers sent to Vietnam were the most educated military force the US had ever sent to battle. Many young men attempted to take advantage of student deferment and enrolled in college, with the hope

the war would be over by the time they graduated. However, the war waged on for nearly 11 years from the start of the draft in 1964.

Bill Lannom of Grinnell entered Officer Candidate School for the US Navy at Newport, Rhode Island in April of 1968, after graduating from the University of Iowa. He finished OCS school in August of the same year, and in September entered Swift Boat School in Coronado, California, finishing in February of 1969. After a two week

orientation in February - though the mandated orientation was two months - Ensign Lannom was assigned to a swift boat and crew in Coastal Division

13, at a coastal base in Cat Lo, Vietnam at the peak of the US's involvement in the Vietnam war.

Listening to Lannom talk about his military experience in Vietnam, one is captivated and pulled into the action. There are aspects of combat he recalls in vivid detail, as if the events happened in slow motion and are there, frozen in time.

**THERE IS A REASON FOR THIS: TO FORGET, HE SAYS, IS TO GO CRAZY.**

It's easy to understand his fear, considering the things the young man from a small Iowa town saw during his time there. He saw death first hand: not only soldiers, but civilians, even babies. There are moments of sheer anger when he speaks about Ho Chi Minh and how the people of Vietnam idolized him and were murdered. Yet, what is clear when he speaks about his experiences is that he did not lose his sense of humanity and his sense of right and wrong, because right and wrong sometimes became blurred in the Vietnam War.





**LANNOM ALWAYS MADE SURE HIS BOAT HAD 8000 ROUNDS OF .50 AND 6000 ROUNDS OF M60 AMMUNITION**

While the US became involved to stop the spread of communism, it was not clear that the people of South Vietnam truly wanted the help. The North Vietnamese communist regime and their allies (Viet Cong) from South Vietnam were waging war on the citizens of South Vietnam, and the United



States became the principal ally of South Vietnam. The conflict originated in 1954 as part of the "Cold War" between the US and the Soviet Union. Though the US committed small numbers of troops beginning in 1956, the US's involvement became more heavily supported in the mid 1960's.

By the time Lannom arrived in South Vietnam, the war was at a peak. Once assigned to his swift boat, he and his crew began regular patrols of the Mekong Delta, which was divided into five branches. The crew would normally do patrols in two-day stints and they could have a completely quiet tour or all hell could break loose. Typically, three to five boats would patrol the canals and would board and search sampans to make sure they had proper documentation, as well as general patrol of the waterways. The swift boats were constructed of 3/8" aluminum, were 14 feet wide by 50 feet long, and were essentially floating targets. The swift boats normally carried 6000 rounds of .50 ammunition and 4000 rounds of m60 ammunition. Lannom always made sure his boat had 8000 rounds of .50 and 6000 rounds of m60 ammunition.

The swift boats were equipped with an 81 mm mortar, and on the gun tub-twin .50 caliber rotating machine guns. Many enemy troops hid in mangrove swamps and launched rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) without warning. There were also homemade claymore mines, B-40 anti-tank rockets that the enemy used to upset the progress of the swift boats in their mission.

While in Vietnam, Lannom was witness to and part of four medevacs, earning a

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Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. In May of 1969, the top gunner on the boat Lannom was commanding took fire that ripped off his flap jacket. Lannom was on the scene and helped remove the gunner's clothing and tend to the wound. Lannom was a smoker at the time, and used the cellophane from a pack of cigarettes to protect the wound.

## THE GUNNER WAS ALIVE WHEN HE WAS LOADED ONTO THE HELICOPTER FOR MEDEVAC, BUT IT WAS REPORTED LATER HE HAD DIED. THAT WAS THE FIRST DEATH LANNOM EXPERIENCED IN VIETNAM.

Lannom himself took shrapnel in his right arm on July 3, 1969 while patrolling a canal. His boat was the third boat in a four boat raid. They were idling while OV10 Broncos were covering the boats from the air. The OV10s were low on fuel and left. There was an explosion on the starboard side, and Lannom took the shrapnel cut, a shipmate took a hip injury, and when they realized the rear gunner was bleeding profusely from a diamond cut to his lip caused by shrapnel, Lannom ordered throttles up and they cleared the kill zone. Once they were clear, they idled down a few miles down the canal and were fired on by V59 tank rockets. Luckily, the rockets were not angled high enough and detonated on the water, otherwise the hit would have been devastating. Lannom commented that the QV10s were swiftly on the scene before he could get out, "starboard side hit" after the initial attack. A piece of shrapnel severed the battery cable. One of the crew quickly stripped the cable, reattached it and fired up the engine again.

In what would be Lannom's last live battle in Vietnam - Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 1969 - he had a new Vietnamese crew member acting as a helmsman who was blown from the hatch of the boat and into the water.

"The tide was going out and the canal was running fast," Lannom recalled. "An RPG hit the side of the boat, and as if in slow motion, the sailor trainee sitting on the hatch cover was blown up and into the water."

Lannom admits for a split second he considered leaving the young Vietnamese crew member behind, but soon was fishing him out of the water and onto the deck. In the flurry of fire, he



**LANNOM WAS HANDED THIS BABY AS A PART OF JUNK BOAT SEARCH**

accidentally grabbed the coastal microphone rather than the sector microphone and commanded, "Let's get the hell out of here!" Every destroyer and coast guard patrol was listening. To this day, Lannom does not know why he didn't just "throttle up and go", but in the flurry of activity it seems understandable. The medevac was called by the officer in charge of one of the other boats along with Lannom's on patrol. The entire crew received bronze stars for the battle, with Lannom receiving the "V" designation for valor.

Though Lannom experienced many situations with his fellow crew members involving life and death, there is one memory involving a small child that is indelibly etched into his memory. For Lannom, it underscored the fact that Ho Chi Minh and those who followed him were brutally ruthless. One day while out on patrol, a man and woman carrying a three-year-old child walked out of the brush. The father begged Lannom to help his daughter. A tax

collector had come to the family to collect, and because they had nothing to give, the tax collector shot the little girl. She was barely alive. Lannom was so moved by the parents plea to save their child, he got permission to medevac her to help. He personally took her from her mother's arms, took the child up the river to the landing zone, where a helicopter was waiting. However, the child died before being transported, and Lannom took the girl back up the river, beached the boat and handed the dead child to her father on the bow of the boat. The father placed the child in her mother's arms, bowed to Bill and walked away.

Bill Lannom was 24 years old and had held a dead child in his arms. When Lannom speaks of this experience, he reasons that in war, people are shot at - sometimes hit, sometimes missed.

"But this was pure genocide," he explained. "Inhumanity to man. War crime. I was beside myself, asking, 'How can their cause be right?' Ho Chi Minh was wrong. That sort of crime was not justified!"

When Lannom came home from Vietnam in early 1970, he took 30 days leave, saw an old girlfriend, and tried to process all he had seen and experienced. There were times he sat and watched the door, and to this day, still tries to avoid sitting with his back to a door.

"I wasn't one of these guys waking up strangling my wife, but I wasn't walking around in the rice paddies either - hand-to-hand, 30 days slogging with one extra pair of socks and underwear. Those guys were amazing," he recalled.

Once his 30 days of leave was up, Lannom still had approximately 16 months of service left and was to report to Washington, D.C., where he went to work for the Defense Intelligence Agency. He was one of five officers and 25 civilians in the Military Space Division of Soviet Area Office. Lannom would drive to the bus station every day, park the car, take the bus down-

town and report to the old post office in D.C., where he would check in at the desk to see if there was a briefcase to be picked up. Lannom says it was an "odd experience". There were also Soviet defectors who worked at the post office as analysts, reading newspapers.

Lannom received an early out in April of 1970. He came back to Grinnell and rented a secluded cabin near a pond nine miles from Grinnell. Lannom recalls that the cabin rented for \$300 per year and had no television or telephone. He lived there for six months and "did absolutely nothing". Lannom notes that he did not come back to the protests that many of his comrades in larger cities and other areas of the country may have experienced, but he was certainly aware of the sentiment. When asked how veterans cope with their memories from the war, he stated:

"Some go to memorial services, some drink, some just move on, but remembering is important."

Lannom says he is not bitter at all about Vietnam.

"It's a beautiful country," he said. Lannom and his wife, Anne, visited the country a few years ago, and visited some of the places he served.

Despite all the hardships he experienced and the loss of life he witnessed firsthand, it is clear he has not lost his sense of optimism. He reunites with other Vietnam swift boat operators through the Swift Boat Sailor Association every two years, usually in Coronado, California. Through these reunions, he reconnects with fellow veterans who shared similar experiences, but he also meets many young service men and women during these reunions.

Of these soldiers, he has this to say: "The young troops are so impressive. They are crisp, smart, and dedicated. They are so well-trained and are really great. I love seeing them."





## PAUL ACKERMAN RECOUNTS HONOR FLIGHT TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

By Keith Brake

**I**t has been about two years since Paul Ackerman of Grinnell went on his Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. What does he remember most? He loved it.

“Beautiful,” he said. “I have a lot of good things to say about it.”

Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization that pays homage to veterans for their sacrifices. They provide transportation - in Paul's case, on a full jet plane - to visit and reflect on the veterans memorials in Washington.

Paul, who left the Marine Corps in 1965, said his group was taken care of - with honor - every step of the way.

The day started at 4:30 a.m. and didn't end until 10:30 p.m., when the veterans arrived back at Des Moines International Airport. In between, there were bus rides and friendly faces.

“When we were going through the airport in Des Moines, people knew we

were flying,” Ackerman said. “They were willing to carry our bags and shake our hands. And we let them! Just a real nice bunch of people.”

Paul said he had been to Washington before.

“But I couldn't remember things from the first time,” he said. “Everything was well-organized, from doughnuts and coffee at the airport to a 100-cycle escort. And we didn't lose anybody.”

“It was a good round-trip,” Ackerman continued. “We were tired by the time we got back, but no one quit.”

They had a bit of a scare after returning to Des Moines. One of the veterans couldn't immediately be accounted for.

“But they found him - asleep in a bathroom!” he laughed.

Ackerman said he marveled at the organization of the trip and the depth of gratitude the veterans said they felt.

“I didn't believe it could be done, but they [Honor Flight] did it,” he said.

Honor Flight Network officials say top priority is given to World War II veterans or those who are terminally ill when organizing the D.C. trips. They report the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates 640 World War II veterans pass away each day.

## BROWNELLS PREPARES FOR A SEASONAL RUSH

By Keith Brake

**W**hen you have more than 90,000 items for sale, your business is global, and you bill yourself as “the world's largest supplier of firearm accessories, gun parts and gunsmithing tools,” that's to be expected.

But this time of year - early October through the holidays - it's particularly true.

“It happens as the hunting season nears,” said Ryan Repp, Brownells communication director. “We're not specifically a hunting company, but hunters are part of who we service.”

Brownells also serves law enforcement agencies, gunsmiths who are working from their homes, and retailers with storefronts.

“Consumers and retailers,” Repp said. “They all need inventory.”

The holidays and gifting figure in, as well. Gun cases, holders, ammunition, ear protection products - all are part of the mix.

How does Brownells get ready? If everyone is to keep their shelves stocked, Brownells must be stocked, too.

“It takes some planning,” Repp said. “We look at forecasting and study industry trends.”

The new Grinnell warehouse is busy. “I'm not sure if we'll need to add a shift, but we can get the temporary help we need from the staffing agencies,” Repp said.

Repp said the new Brownells warehouse at the south edge of town is “more efficient, from 20 to 30 percent in a given week,” compared with the quarters in Montezuma. But he said the seasonal rush “still impacts us in Montezuma, as well.”

Repp said Brownells business hits another peak in the spring, when the weather shifts.

“Customers are getting ready for the competition season,” said Repp.

“Shooting sports are very, very popular both with adults and kids,” he continued. “There are trap leagues, pistol competitions - just many and varied kinds of competitions.”

The demand is there, and Brownells is out there in front, satisfying it.

## PORT IN A STORM: GRMC'S INFUSION SUITE CHANGES THE LANDSCAPE OF CHEMOTHERAPY

By Keith Brake

**CHEMOTHERAPY IS UNSETTLING TO MOST. INFUSION IS PRETTY DAUNTING, AS WELL.**

The Auxiliary at Grinnell Regional Medical Center is helping to diffuse those fears with an attractive, serene infusion and chemotherapy suite right next to where these often anxiety-inducing treatments take place.

The suite, located on the first floor of the medical center, is flooded with natural light, windows, and art, a soothing space which offers chemotherapy/infusion patients advanced diagnostic options. Area residents can undergo testing, medical and surgical treatments, recovery, and rehabilitation while remaining in the community where they feel comfortable.

GRMC can now provide most infusion therapies, with the most common being Reclast, Remicade, antibiotics, hydration fluids, iron, blood product administration, injections, picc line and central venous line/catheter. Nearly all chemotherapy infusions can be done at the suite. Family practice physicians, surgeons, a visiting oncologist, diagnostic imaging and laboratory services have all teamed up to provide the best care and treatment options.

Architects worked with Iowa artist Lee Emma Running to create the tranquil environment for patients. Running was involved in developing the suite's art prior to construction. The art puts botanical life into the physical space, with plant etchings on the glass, a 200-foot dimensional painted mural of flowers and hand-cut

silhouettes, which create an interplay of object, light, paint and shadow. The imagery continues inside the waiting room and into patient spaces, where the botanical theme continues, a pattern which brings a sense of healing and wholeness. The artist event incorporated the hydrangea, a flower often found blooming in Iowa.

"Hospitals are a place where people wait. The art helps enrich the wait," said Todd Linden, GRMC's president and CEO.

"The space is the art," said Running. "Because of natural light, the pattern of the silhouettes and shadows are different, depending on the time of day, which adds another layer of interest to the space. This is a great example of what art can do."

**ONE FORMER CHEMOTHERAPY PATIENT SAID THE FEAR OF BEING DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER WAS EASED BY THE SUITE. SHE SAID SHE FELT AS THOUGH SHE HAD ENTERED NOT A HOSPITAL SUITE, BUT A MODERN SANCTUARY.**

For the last 15 years, GRMC has been following and implementing the research and advancement of Samueli Institute regarding optimal healing environments.

The quest is to find ways to increase positive outcomes for patients, said Linden. "We recognize that an environment that supports healing and maintaining or restoring wellness for our patients, their families and our employees is important to their experience."

"This new space," Linden continued, "is extraordinary."



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## THE MILITARY HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM IS GIVING BACK TO VETERANS

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs

Transitioning from military life to civilian life is often fraught with anxiety, financial hardship and frustration. Thousands of veterans face the daunting task of being unceremoniously dropped back into a world that has historically forgotten about or overlooked them, and many find difficulty with things those who haven't served take for granted: A job, a roof over their heads, and healthcare.

The Military Homeownership Assistance Program, administered by the Iowa Finance Authority and the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, is changing the landscape - literally - for Iowa veterans. According to state officials, the program has assisted nearly 3,400 military servicemembers and veterans purchase their own home, right here in the Hawkeye state. If eligible, a serviceman or woman can be provided with a \$5,000 boost toward a down payment and closing costs on a home. According to the Military Homeownership Assistance website, the grant may also be combined with a Plus grant for a total of \$7,500 in assistance for borrowers who qualify for both programs.

"It allows communities to put incentives into their housing industry and their employment to make it more hospitable and attractive for veterans to relocate," said Matt Karjalahti of RE/MAX Partners Realty Grinnell.

In October, Karjalahti spoke with Governor Branstad about the Home Base Iowa initiative, which assists veterans and servicemembers with employment

and housing opportunities on his KGRN radio show, Right At Home. The discussion also included the Military Homeownership Assistance program, which is a complimentary project.

"We have 900 Iowa businesses that have become Home Base Iowa businesses," said Branstad. "We have 15 colleges and universities that have become 'champs' or veteran-friendly, and we now are up to 21 Home Base communities. We've also eliminated the tax on military retirement, which makes us competitive with other states as a good place for people who are retiring from the military to stay."

According to Karjalahti, some Iowa Home Base communities are offering local incentives, as well.

"You could be entering a Home Base community that offers tax abatement, or a transactional credit," Karjalahti said. "So, you end up having multiple incentives. Some communities are handing veterans between \$5,000 and \$10,000 - plus employment - to live in their towns. They're taking care of the people who actually served and kept us safe, but at the same time are contributing to the economic vitality of the community by bringing people in who have advanced training and advanced technology knowledge."

Grinnell is not currently a Home Base community. The options are there, however, and if the community wanted to engage the Iowa Economic Development office and provide the information to them, Karjalahti sees no reason why Grinnell couldn't move forward.

"We're so healthy real-estate wise in this community," Karjalahti maintained. "This is an adjunct that could be contributing to maintaining our market stability and even adding growth to it. This is a way to make houses available and affordable."

To learn more about the Military Homeownership Program, go to [www.iowafinanceauthority.gov](http://www.iowafinanceauthority.gov)

To learn more about Home Base Iowa, go to [www.homebaseiowa.gov](http://www.homebaseiowa.gov)

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SAMPLE ISSUE



NEW

## CHANGE

*is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. ~ John F. Kennedy*

We live in a world that is changing rapidly. From the environment to politics to families to business, our day-to-day lives are constantly evolving and transforming.

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# C

olleen Klainert isn't the "office" type.

With her retro glasses, vintage dresses and long mane of hair that she sometimes weaves into German-style braids, Colleen Klainert isn't exactly the type you can picture sitting in a cubicle, watching the hands of the office clock creep toward five-o'clock.



## COLLEEN KLAINERT *offers a* GLASS OF CLASS to Grinnellians

*By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs*

But she looks right at home at Solera, the wine bar she dreamed about for years before making it a reality in March 2014.

**S**olera, a little jewel in the crown of Broad Street, is an intimate venue with seating for just over 40 people. Only about eight of those seats are at the bar - the rest make up cozy seating nooks and 4-top tables. Gleaming hardwood floors, pressed tin ceilings, and eclectic furnishings and wall art are all part of the charm of Klainert's wine bar. The rows of ruby and wheat-colored wine bottles - Malbecs, Zinfandels, Chardonnays, Pinot Grigios - go without saying.

"This is my gospel," Klainert said. "I want to spread the gospel of wine as a social instrument, and that is very much reflected in how I designed this space. A glass of wine is a great facilitator, but



if you come with your friends and you want your own little intimate space, there are private spots you can carve out that will create your own social mood

within the context of my wine bar and my wines."

Klainert, a native of St. Paul, MN, has been in Grinnell for decade. A relationship brought her to Iowa, and after doing the long-distance tango for awhile, she took a transfer with her job. At the time, she was selling wine with a very large wholesaler and had eight years of experience in the alcohol industry.

"That business went south for me," Klainert recalled. "It was very high stress - answering constantly to several managers, several tiers. It just seemed kind of sad that the wine business was becoming a very stressful drudgery."

Her partner at the time owned property in Ladora, IA, and the couple decided to open a wine bar. Klainert had always wanted to be on the other side of the business, so hanging up her sales career was a welcome change. Because she grew up with an "open door" policy, Klainert's segue was seamless.



*“I want to enjoy what I do,  
I don’t want it to rule me.”*

“The hospitality industry isn’t even really an industry to me,” Klainert mused. “It was kind of how I grew up. I grew up with life being a spontaneous social event. If somebody came over, the coffee pot was on, or there was a drink in your hand. There was always a reason to sit down with people and socialize. That’s really my aim with Solera.”

Although the relationship with her boyfriend didn’t work out and she ended up leaving the Ladora business, Klainert is diplomatic about the experience.

“Ladora Bank got my feet wet,” she said. “I realized I don’t play well with others and I really wanted to do it myself. When he and I broke up, I saw that this could be my break.”

**K**lainert acknowledges that although she could have gone anywhere, Grinnell had the diversity and lack of pretense Klainert wanted Solera to serve.

She had already experienced the high end of on-premise marketing in Minneapolis and had seen her fair share of pompous patrons and establishments. Klainert simply wanted Solera to represent the best wine growing regions for each type of grape with a good range of prices - period.

“There was an element of snobbery [in Minneapolis] that I just did not appreciate,” Klainert said. “I really enjoyed the customers in Ladora - farmers, forklift drivers, CEOs and everything in between - breaking down the experience. This is a social thing to be enjoyed - it’s never to be used to exclude someone from the in-crowd.”

“There’s something to be said for blooming where you’re planted, for having an attention span where you are right now,” she continued. “I think part of building Solera was building one of the things I would want to go to, that would make me want to plant my roots here.”



I thought a comfortable public space was what would help me to live in a small community. And it’s perfect.”

Klainert perused no less than 15 storefronts as a possible location for her fledgling business - from houses that could be redone to out buildings to strips malls. She searched for over a year before settling on 829 Broad Street. And although Klainert knew she was realizing a dream, actually doing it provided her some sleepless nights. She got through it with the help of friends.

“I have a lot of wine drinking friends and customers from my other place in Ladora who encouraged me so much, who are just always in my corner,” Klainert acknowledged.

*“I was wracked with fear and doubt, telling myself ‘this is your last shot, it’s do or die’. I risked it all. It was all in for me.”*

Klainert is still building Solera. She’s not planning expansion, but does from time to time offer classes, live music, and private parties. She eschews advertising for “organic growth” and says word-of-mouth is the most

valuable advertising. That, and providing a positive experience for new and regular customers. Because of her non-traditional hours - Solera is open Thursday through Sunday - Klainert is often told she should open Mondays and Tuesdays because nothing else is. Quality of life, however, trumps money in the bank.

“I want to enjoy what I do, I don’t want it to rule me,” she said. “I need my time to hug my dog and mow my lawn and visit my friends. That keeps me and my attitude much happier when I’m here.”

She admits she still has days where she finds herself sitting alone for hours behind the bar, nursing a Chardonnay and wondering why she ever thought to open the doors in the first place. But before too long, a party of six will burst through the doors, bubbling over with excitement to be discovering a new place. Once they’re sharing a bottle or two and laughing and having a great time, Klainert knows deep down, she’s doing exactly what she’s supposed to be doing.

“The self-doubt dissipates instantly and I’m ready again,” she smiled. “It doesn’t take much to bring me out of my funk.”

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*Look for the premier issue of the 'Our Grinnell – Print Edition' in January 2016*







VIEW MORE  
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FROM THIS  
DAY ON  
PAGE  
**27**

# GRINNELL COLLEGE'S UNSUNG HERO:

SGT. NORMAN F. BATES

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs

**N**orman Francis Bates was 17 years old when his father Sylvester purchased a farm in Poweshiek County from W.L. Zinc in 1857. He toiled in his family's fields during his youth, the sun mercilessly beating down on his face and neck, all the while dreaming about what he'd do next, where he'd go, and who he'd be.



**SGT. NORMAN BATES,  
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT**

When Bates enrolled in the English and Preparatory Department at Iowa College in Grinnell - now known as Grinnell College - he was exhilarated and determined to gain a formal education, to quench his insatiable desire for knowledge.

President Lincoln's call for a Union army changed that for Bates.

What he couldn't have known then is that although he'd have to shelve his dream of finishing school, he'd also make his mark in history as a war hero and Medal of Honor recipient.

As the secessionist South rose, Bates - alongside almost every other eligible young man enrolled at Iowa College - enlisted in Company E, Fourth Iowa Cavalry. During his service, Bates would participate in the Siege of Vicksburg and accompanied Sherman on his march to Meridian. But it was in Columbus, Georgia on April 16, 1865 that he earned his remarkable citation.

Sergeant Norman F. Bates captured an enemy flag along with its bearer.

According to Dennis Black, Iowa state Senator (retired) and historian, Bates kept a detailed journal in which he documented his four-year experience as a Union soldier.

The day he captured the flag and its bearer he wrote:

*"We started early - had 23 miles to mark - got opposit Clumbus about 2'ock - made a demestration but did not do eny thing - we the 1st Brig - moved around to the left a little after dark - we attack the town[.] The 3rd Iowa, 10 Mo [Missouri] dis-mounted while the 4th is prt off - I staid mounted - we all charged - tuck the place - loss was heavy, the enemy was more so - lost all thier artillery."*

The next day - April 17 - Bates entered:

*"We ware on picket last night on the Macon road - this morning the Regt come out here and camped - we were relieved - we camped till after noon then moved so that they could burn the Depot Bildings[.] Went to the city to Col Winslow H.Q. - took the Collers [flag] I captured."*

Three months later - July 4, in fact - his journal entry read:

*"We reported at Head Qtr at 8' ocl and there was 3 of us had medles of honer presented to us - I carried the colors."*

The flag Bates captured was of the 10th Missouri Battery and one of seven seized by the 4th Iowa Cavalry. It was registered by the war department as Flag No. 458.

"By executive order of President Theodore Roosevelt on March 25, 1905, the flag was removed from the federal archives and returned to the state of Missouri," Black wrote.

Although Bates had been honorably discharged from the Army in 1864 - after which he had married Almira H. Cummings of Poweshiek County - he re-enlisted in the same Iowa company and served until the end of the Civil War. Bates returned to Iowa - and Almira - after the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865. Like his father, he purchased a farm near Malcom, IA, and together, he and Almira raised three children, farmed, and produced livestock. He also dabbled in local politics by serving as a Poweshiek County Supervisor and was Clerk of Malcom Township.

"L.F. Parker, Grinnell College Professor and Historian in 1879, sent letters to all his 'boys' who had survived the Civil War, gathering research information for his pending book 'History of Poweshiek County, Iowa,'" Black wrote. "Norman Bates responded to Parker's inquiry with a beautifully penned letter of his experiences in the war and his subsequent activities."

Bates and his family eventually pioneered their way to the Dakota Territory, where he and his brother-in-law Sylvanus Meigs became founding members of the Highmore, North Dakota post of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). He also became a Mason and ran a McCormick farm equipment agency which went belly-up after his customers couldn't pay their debts. Until 1893, Bates and his wife moved to Luverne, MN, where they operated a

hotel. In 1903, the couple finally settled in Los Angeles, CA.

In October of 1915, Sgt. Norman F. Bates was killed by an automobile as he was stepping off a streetcar. He was buried next to Almira, who passed away in 1914, and was laid to rest in an unmarked grave at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, CA.

"Initiated by Ms. Andrea Crowell, Norman Bates' great-great-granddaughter, an official Medal of Honor bronze marker was set at the gravesite in the spring of 2004," wrote Black. "This culminated an initiative of several years by the family and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) in officially marking the grave of one of the Union's great and honored defenders."

Black has written extensively about the Medal of Honor, which is the highest level of recognition bestowed upon members of the United States Armed Forces. 108 Iowans have received the medal, and almost half of them were Civil War soldiers. The former senator is dismayed by the lack of interest from Grinnell College - the school Bates left to selflessly enlist - to honor its esteemed Medal recipient. Black would like to see Grinnell College acknowledge Bates with a plaque or a memorial and has made several queries and requests, to no avail.

"One of their own was recognized by the Congress of the U. S. for extreme intrepidity doing what he did, when it had to be done, regardless of the consequences," Black explained. "A Medal of Honor recipient quickly left the college to answer the call of President Lincoln, and was awarded our nation's highest military honor for valor beyond the call of duty."

*Special thanks to Senator Dennis Black for providing excerpts from his book "Profiles of Valor: Iowa's Medal of Honor Recipients of the Civil War".*

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# I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW AM FOUND:

## THE REDEMPTION OF PVT. HARRY WALLACE

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs

**“NO GREATER SERVICE COULD HAVE BEEN RENDERED TO THEIR COMRADES IN THE LINE THAN WAS GIVEN BY THESE SELF-SACRIFICING AND DARING MEN.”**

**~ GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING  
(1860-1948)**



**A HAUNTED PVT. HARRY WALLACE, HOME FROM THE WAR**

**P**icture a young marine - no more than 25 years old. Rivulets of sweat snake down the back and neck of the tall, auburn-haired young man, who locks his forearms under the almost lifeless upper body of a fellow soldier submerged in the thick mud of Belleau Woods. He presses his shoulder painfully against the bark of a beech tree to steady himself, waiting for his comrade to get a firm grasp on the wounded soldier's legs before they hoist him into the waiting T-Model truck, affectionately named "Betsy". The incessant, low-pitched thunder of German gunfire refuses to cease as they rumble forward, stopping seemingly every few yards for another injured man. A fresh-faced Midwestern boy like himself who may have eaten the tinned meat or bread Wallace and the other nineteen men in his regiment had delivered to the front lines just the day before. Bouncing through the sludge of the forest, he may have looked down at his boots - so neatly laced when he left his tiny town of Gilmore City, Iowa - now caked with mud and riddled with the rocks of a thousand footpaths. Or perhaps he gazed at his hands - which may have once been held by those of a young lady - now just mere barriers between life and death as he tries to staunch the grave wound of his friend. He wants to close his eyes, once full of life but now dimmed by too many deaths. But he cannot.

Soldiers are depending on him. They'll starve without the rations and the ammunition he's delivering. They'll die - slowly, agonizingly - without someone



**DAVE SMITH (L) AND HIS BROTHER BILL (R), SHOW COLLECTED WAR ANTIQUES THAT ARE DISPLAYED AT SMITH FUNERAL HOME**

to tend to their wounds. He can't be delayed.

*One more second*, he may have said to himself. *One more minute, one more hour, one more day.*

The gunfire continues. Harry clammers out of the truck. He sees another fallen soldier.

He'll do this for 36 more hours.

Pvt. Harry Wallace, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, earned a citation at Bouresches, France on June 16, 1918 for his bravery. He and only one other soldier of the original 20 were the only ones not killed or injured during the Battle of Belleau Woods.

Just shy of one year later - May 28, 1919 - Wallace would be honorably discharged. Free to attend family gatherings again. Free to make a living. Free to enjoy a hot dog at the ballpark. Free to get married. Free to live a life.

Instead, Wallace - recipient of two silver stars and five bronze stars - would die alone in the San Francisco General Hospital on February 7, 1955 after a Good Samaritan got him admitted. When asked, he said he had no family. He didn't reveal he was a veteran. He

didn't tell anyone he was a hero. The hospital attendant wrote down his name incorrectly: Henry Wallace. "Henry" lay in the county morgue for 18 days before being buried in a pauper's field.

He was nobody.

**“HE WENT IN A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY IRISHMAN AND CAME OUT BATTLE-RIDDEN,” SAID DAVID SMITH, WALLACE'S GREAT-NEPHEW. “HE WAS BROKEN.”**

What was once known as "shell-shock" is now, of course, widely regarded as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Approximately 30 percent of the men and women who have spent time in war zones experience PTSD, which can lead to a host of problems, including severe mental illness, addiction, inability to work, domestic violence and suicide. The psychological distress WWI veterans returned home with was often misdiagnosed or ignored completely, because it was deemed "weak" for a soldier to appear emotionally vulnerable. Instead, self-medication became commonplace. Wallace - unable to cope with the ravages of war - turned to the bottle, and his alcoholism would even-



After his discharge, Wallace tentatively attempted to build a life in his hometown of Gilmore City. He became a painter by trade and worked in the area for two decades. He married. He divorced. The intense pain of PTSD and his inability to stop drinking kept him mired in despair and desolation. Several embarrassing alcohol-related instances later, Wallace became estranged from his family and moved to California, never to be seen by his family again.

“His brother George had settled in California after the war,” Dave said. “He was actually the last one to see Harry as far as we know, but no one heard or saw of him after 1940. He became transient, which is indicative of mental illness and PTSD.”

ually ruin every relationship in his life before taking it altogether.

**“EVERYTHING I’VE LEARNED HAS BEEN SECOND HAND. WE NEVER KNEW HIM,” SAID BILL SMITH, WALLACE’S OTHER GREAT-NEPHEW. “MY MOTHER WAS ONLY 13 WHEN HE LEFT THE FAMILY IN 1940, SO HER MEMORIES WERE PRETTY VAGUE. BUT WHEN SHE WAS DYING, SHE WOULD TALK ABOUT HER UNCLE - A FAMOUS WAR HERO. SHE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAD BECOME OF HIM.”**

“We made a promise to her to find him,” Dave added.

The Smith siblings had two grandfathers and three great uncles (Harry, George, and Charles) in the military - all of whom served in a different branch of the service. But Harry, a marine, got the brunt: Out of 20 months in the service, he spent 16 of them on the frontlines.

Wallace was recorded as living in a single room occupancy (SRO) at the time of his death. SROs were developed to ease urban overcrowding as housing demands grew in cities experiencing intense population growth in the early 20th century. Once envisioned as an affordable - if exceedingly confined - housing option for working class Americans, SROs eventually became a last resort for desperately poor or transient individuals. Wallace was one of those people.

“Harry did the best he could under his circumstances and limited resources with his underlying mental illness,” Mary Smith, Wallace’s great-niece, lamented.

After the death of their mother Bette (Harry’s niece), the Smith clan began the long journey to find out what had become of their long-lost great uncle. All of the Wallace and Smith clans did their own sleuthing, writing letters and sifting through paperwork.

“Because of modern technology of scanning public documents and timeframe restrictions of releasing U.S. Census, the next Wallace generation had better resource and access to locate Harry,” said Mary. “My mom [Bette



**A PHOTO OF A WWI-ERA T-MODEL, SIMILAR TO WHAT “BETSY” WOULD HAVE LOOKED LIKE**

Smith] and dad [Bob Smith] even wrote a letter to the United States military division.”

When the families did find Harry, they discovered he was buried in a com-

mon grave in a pauper’s field in Colma, CA. He was laid to rest in a stacked grave, which was not an uncommon mid-century practice. Five people were buried that day at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery. Wallace shares his space with another man.

Bill and his other brother John wanted to exhume Harry and bring him home to Iowa. There’s a headstone in Gilmore City, and both men felt it was appropriate to have it be Wallace’s final resting place. But because his grave in Colma is stacked, the bones of both Wallace and the gentleman he shares his space with would likely be co-mingled. Disinterment simply wasn’t an option. They’d have to have a formal service at his resting place in Colma, and the bronze grave marker the Smiths had created would have to be affixed to the headstone in Iowa at a later date.

*Continued on page 26*



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## “DESTINED TO JOIN THE MILITARY”:

MIKE OLSON DISCUSSES HIS 29 YEARS WITH THE NATIONAL GUARD

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs



**M**ike Olson only has one regret about his 29 year career in the military: He didn't do it sooner.

In high school, Olson received two congressional nominations to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MA. He made the momentous decision not to pursue the appointment.

“At the time, I just wasn't sure it was for me,” Olson said. “Later, after visiting the Academy when stationed on the East Coast for Army officer training, I'll admit I had some regrets. But I'm satisfied where my long military career has taken me.”

Olson, who grew up in Waterloo, opted for college instead of Annapolis and got his Bachelor's at the Univer-

sity of Northern Iowa. At UNI, he joined the Reserve Officer Training Program (ROTC) and in 1986, became a member of D Troop, 1/194 Cavalry, which was a helicopter air cav unit. By 1987, he was commissioned to second lieutenant in the Iowa Army National Guard and became a platoon leader of the 3657th Maintenance Company at Camp Dodge in Johnston, IA.

“I was a 24 year old second lieutenant,” remembered Olson. “As a lieutenant, you're in charge of a platoon filled with people younger than you and also old enough to be your dad. In order to be successful, you need to listen to them. Some of them have been there much longer than you have.”

As an officer, Olson was able to select the area he wanted to pursue and chose ordnance, which involves ammunition, weapons, armor and vehicles. In 1991, Olson took command of the Oskaloosa unit one month before it was mobilized for Desert Storm.

**“WE WERE SENT TO THE MOJAVE DESERT TO PREPARE TO GO [TO SAUDI ARABIA], BUT THE WAR ENDED SO QUICKLY, WE WEREN'T SENT OVER,” OLSON EMPHASIZED. “THAT SAID, WHEN YOU MOBILIZE, IT'S A 'GROW UP REAL FAST' SORT OF EXPERIENCE. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. WE WERE PREPARING TO GO THE DISTANCE.”**

According to Olson, it was unusual at that time for the National Guard to face mobilization of any kind. He remains extremely proud of being a unit commander, a role he says has nothing to do with power, but everything to do with teamwork, trust, faith, and friendship.

“Many officers will say their best as-

signment is when they're a unit commander,” Olson said. “A commander has someone called a first sergeant, or detachment sergeant, and he's your right hand man. They are your trusted advisors and your connection to the soldiers. Many times, a commander will be placed in a position where he has two options and neither one is the best choice. You must rely on your noncommissioned officers (NCOs) to advise you, but in the end, those consequences fall on the commander. It builds a really strong bond of trust and friendship. It's truly an honor and a privilege.”

Olson went on to command units in Newton and Johnston and took on a variety of staff positions with the Guard. He had a major role as a strategic planning officer on the Iowa National Guard Joint Staff, during which Olson encountered one of the biggest challenges of his military career: The catastrophic floods of 2008. The disaster, which involved most of the rivers in eastern Iowa, began in early June and didn't recede until July.

“The floods were challenging,” Olson admitted. “As a joint staff member, I'd gone through a year's plus worth of training on providing assistance to local governments, but it's a very demanding assignment working with elected officials at all levels, as well as coordinating support through the Guard channels and getting them what they needed to fight the floods and maintain order.”

Still, Olson has great memories of the experience. Teaming with people from all walks of life - firefighters, construction workers, small business owners, nurses - remains one of the most remarkable highlights of his military career. He even has an anecdote about former Governor Chet Culver.

“I was working directly with the governor and the adjutant general in the first days of the flood up in northern Iowa before it reached Cedar Rapids,” Olson remembered. “Governor Culver and the adjutant general had a helicopter and



were flying to different towns along the way. I was the National Guard liaison officer assigned to the area, so after the third time the helicopter touched down, the governor said, ‘You're everywhere I land. How do you do that?’. I laughed and said, ‘Well, governor, my car is faster than your helicopter!’.”

And if he wasn't busy enough, Olson also served as one of the four congressionally nominated members of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee (CCAC) from 2009-2014. Olson was the first Iowan, first banker, and first member of the military to sit on the committee since its inception in 2003. Appointed by the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury and recommended by former House Minority Leader John Boehner, Olson advised the Secretary of the Treasury on themes and designs of coins and Congressional Gold Medals produced by the U.S. Mint.

Olson began his banking career in Waterloo in 1988. He worked at a couple of different banks before becoming the Vice President of Lincoln Savings Bank last fall. In May 2015, Olson retired from the Iowa National Guard. The ceremony was held at Camp Dodge, where he received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

“Any time you do something for 29 years it becomes a part of your way of life. To me, it still is,” Olson said. “By my nature and philosophies, I was probably destined to join the military. Most of my ancestors, going all the way back to WWI, have been in the military.

**MY UNCLE WAS KILLED ON SAIPAN I HAVE HIS FLAG. MY YOUNGER SISTER IS STILL SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY AS AN ARMY COLONEL AT THE PENTAGON."**

"It was an honor and privilege to serve, and every day was a good day, though some were better than others," he continued. "I am grateful for the support of my family and look forward to spending more time with them now that I'm retired."

Today, Olson is still passionate about military pursuits and cites one specific cause as extremely important to him: the fate of the Grinnell Veteran Memorial Building. He calls it a "touchstone" for all all veterans - past, present, and future - and that it serves as symbol of pride and honor. A symbol that matters.

"When someone joins the military, their family serves along with them in their own way," Olson said. "This piece of Grinnell history needs to be preserved to continue serving as a community gathering place that honors service to the country. I wish everyone in Grinnell could have been present when the now famous picture was taken in front of the Veterans Building last month.

**THE FEELING I HAD SEEING THAT SPAN OF SERVICE - ALL THE WAY FROM WWII THROUGH THE PRESENT DAY ALONG WITH YOUNG BOY SCOUTS WHO MAY SOMEDAY ASPIRE TO BE FUTURE VETERANS - ALL IN ONE PLACE ALONG WITH FAMILY MEMBERS WAS SOMETHING I'LL NEVER FORGET."**

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# A PLEA TO SAVE THE MEMORIAL BUILDING

BY TERESA MCCALL, BILL LANNOM,  
HOWARD MCDONOUGH, TAMMY KRIEGEL  
AND MIKE OLSON — MEMBERS OF THE  
VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING TASK  
FORCE

“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”

— President George Washington

The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building Task Force was formed this summer to bring a fresh perspective and renewed action to a situation that has taken far too long to resolve. We are a combination of veterans and supporters of veterans with a common goal of ensuring that this jewel of the prairie is preserved as a Grinnell asset for generations to come.

After almost 60 years of complementing each other in service to Grinnell and its citizens, the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building and Central Park are inextricably connected. It is as preposterous and unthinkable to tear down the Veterans Building to ‘restore’ and ‘beautify’ Central Park as it would be to pave Central Park to serve as a parking lot for the Veterans Building.

Rumors circulating indicate there is opposition to saving the Veterans Building, and the Grinnell Business Journal attempted to solicit an editorial from Grinnell citizens with an opposing view but could not find an opponent willing to write one. The fact that the opposition is unwilling to state their views publicly speaks volumes regarding the strength and popularity of their argument. We have heard one objection to the building and a reason



ARTIST RENDERING OF THE POTENTIAL RENOVATION OF THE CURRENT VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

to tear it down is that it obstructs the view of Central Park/Depot/Jewel Box bank. Those who feel this way should ask themselves the following question: What have I personally done to contribute to the defense of this country, and are my personal preferences regarding the aesthetics of the Veterans Building more important than those of the veterans it honors and serves? A large majority of veterans in the Grinnell area along with those who support them believe the building should be restored.

The leaders and citizens of Grinnell in 1959 thought it was important to construct a Veteran’s memorial building in a prominent location in Central Park. Since that time, in addition to serving veterans it has also functioned as a community center, hosting service club meals and events; trade and hobby shows; youth dances and activities; non-profit organizations; family reunions; and support for downtown events. In fact, the first production of the Grinnell Community Theater in 1972 was held in the Veteran’s Building.

According to the State Historic Preservation Office, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Through the years the building has garnered the love and respect of generations of Grinnellians and should be preserved for the future, not discarded like a piece of trash. We trust that present day leaders and citizens of Grinnell place the same amount of importance

on military service and recognize that a community center dedicated to Veterans past, present and future is as important today as it was when it was constructed.

Members of our task force have been asked their opinions about the possible construction of a veterans monument in Central Park in exchange for allowing the Veterans Building to be torn down. We respectfully disagree with such an arrangement for the following reasons: First, there is already a Veterans monument at the cemetery- there is no need for another one; second, the original intent for use of the building was to serve the community and to honor veterans-a mission that has worked well; third, we believe that by hosting a wide variety of events at the Veterans Building, the importance of service to our country will be underscored and will resonate with Grinnellians, especially our youth, more so than another static slab of granite sitting forlornly in Central Park.

Grinnell and surrounding areas have a proud history of military service. In fact, a Grinnell College student received the nation’s highest award, the Medal of Honor, for heroic actions during the Civil War. Sergeant Norman Bates, Company E, 4th Iowa Cavalry, captured an enemy flag and its bearer during a battle in Columbus, Georgia in 1865. Fewer than 3,500 of the millions of Americans who have served in the

military have been awarded the Medal of Honor. To our knowledge there is nothing in Grinnell that recognizes Sergeant Bates, who returned to the area following the war to farm before heading west. We hope to rectify this oversight in some way with a restored Veterans Building.

In the past 10 years, Grinnell has undertaken and completed three worthy major projects-the Public Safety Building, Drake Community Library, and the Grinnell Mutual Family Aquatic Center. Next year, Grinnell will break ground on the Central Park project, which is slated at a cost of \$3.5 million. For a fraction of the cost of any one of these projects, or approximately \$1 million, one of the few mid-century modern buildings in downtown Grinnell of which many citizens hold fond memories for can be preserved for decades to come. A public/private partnership committed to fund the restoration of the Veterans Memorial Building would send a strong message of support of the community’s veterans and sustain a community center as an asset to downtown Grinnell.

Our task force has consulted with a number of local contractors regarding the condition of the building and we are confident that it is structurally sound. All of the asbestos has been removed and it is a clean slate ready to begin the second phase of its life. We envision the addition of large windows on all sides facing Central Park, with perhaps a balcony on the southern exposure. The top level will remain a large meeting area with a kitchen and the restrooms will be modified to be ADA compliant. The lower level will be refinished to be leased as office space once again. The exterior will be reimagined to put a fresh face on the building. We believe that the finished product, in its prominent location, will be an attractive complement to the planned improvements to Central Park and will be in high demand once again for community events and office space, while at the same time serving and honoring veterans.





**REAR VIEW OF THE PROPOSED RENOVATION**

Won't you join us in supporting our local veterans through revitalization of this important symbol of our community's appreciation for their service? In the months to come, a detailed architectural plan will be made public and a fundraising campaign will be fully launched. We have an agreement in place with the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation to raise funds for this worthy project and they are set up to receive tax-deductible donations.



**RENDERING OF INTERIOR RENOVATION**

It is important to note that the fundraising efforts to restore the Veterans Memorial Building are completely separate from the simultaneous efforts to raise money to supplement the improvements to Central Park. Please contact the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation for information at 641-236-5518 or donate online at [greaterpcf.org](http://greaterpcf.org). There is also a Facebook page for "Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building". "Like" us and follow the

progress. You may also contact any one of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building Task Force members listed below to offer any assistance that you are willing to provide. We look forward to working together as a community to restore this significant Grinnell treasure.

**"THE CHARACTER OF A NATION CAN BE MEASURED BY THE WAY THAT NATION TREATS ITS VETERANS."**

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The Grinnell Business Journal made several attempts to solicit an opposing viewpoint for this op-ed. To date, no one we asked agreed to go on record as to why they believed the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building should be torn down. However, a query on Our Grinnell's Facebook did result in a variety of concerns about keeping a brick and mortar memorial alive and well in the community.

*"Although this building has a great intent behind it, the building itself is an eye sore to the center of our town. With the proposed park*

*improvements, a memorial to our veterans, whether it be a building or other tribute (wall, fountain, etc...) needs to be harmonious to the park plans. If a building will serve as the memorial it needs to be sustainable."*  
— Michele Weddle Jensen

*"I think the building has become a waste of public space and I believe the ground could be used to improve on your city's dreams for the future. This building was built with that purpose in mind. Now it has outlived that dream. Time for new dreams to be realized for the city of Grinnell. You have all the memories of her past memorialized in your museum. I've seen them and even took time to look at them, read the stories, and marvel in those show cases in the other building. Jewel box of the prairie..."*

*isn't that what that signs says on the interstate?"*

— Cherie McNaul

*"Considering that my grandfather was one of the people who built it, one would think I'd be in favor of keeping it. However, I also worked in this building when MICA was located on the lower level and let me tell you it's BAD, border lining on disgusting. A lot of things are beyond repair at this point. It hasn't been actively used by the community in ages. The building has sat idle for years and deteriorated and no one cared, but mention tearing it down and people flip out! If you really want to show respect for our veterans then tear this dilapidated eyesore down and put something respectable in its place!"*

— Corey Collum Innis

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the programs list the laws or programs that dictate their willingness and ability to pay for any enlisted soldier to attend college.

Next fall, Sadler will take advantage of his educational opportunities and will be attending Ellsworth Community College in Iowa Falls for two years. Upon completion, he'll go to Iowa State University and major in criminal justice and hopes to be involved in the Washington, D.C. or Oregon justice system.



**(L) GRINNELL COLLEGE STUDENT, PHILLIP TRUBEE**

“The path to these dreams will be paid for by the National Guard,” Sadler explained over coffee. He went on to explain the stipulations. Since Sadler was recruited in September, he's had to go to Waterloo for drills once a month. In January, he leaves for five months to start basic training. He will be in Fort Benning, Georgia during that time and once he returns, he can start at Ellsworth. While Sadler is in college, he has to go to drill every month and attend a few training programs over the summers. His education will be fully paid for.

Trubee mentioned the leadership opportunities and time commitment as key components of his college application process. Contrasting slightly with Sadler's situation, Trubee is not receiving any monetary benefit from being a part of the Civil Air Patrol or the Air

Force. Grinnell College does not have an ROTC program. “It was abolished in the 1960s because of the Vietnam War,” Trubee noted.

Technically speaking, as a Grinnell College second year student, Trubee is on leave from service. When he graduates in 2018, he plans on serving in the Air Force. Ideally, he would like to work his way up the ranks in the Air Force, or serve abroad for the CIA.

By the time he graduates with a degree

from Iowa State, Sadler will be able to choose if he wants to re-sign his contract. He will have two years to decide. Sadler named a current senior at Grinnell High School and a 2013 graduate, both of whom will be joining him for the next six years.

“It will help me with my mental and my physical state,” Sadler remarked.

It will be interesting to see where these two young men end up after graduation from college. In 2018, Trubee adamantly said in no uncertain terms that he would be serving in the Air Force full time by 2018. In 2020, Sadler will have the choice to continue to serve the National Guard.

What will they chose?



**THE WALLACE BROTHERS**

Nevertheless, they were told the area where Wallace was buried in the Bay area community was grassy and scenic. Bill wasn't disappointed when he saw it in person.

“It was so beautiful,” Bill recalled.

The siblings sprang to action. Bill Smith wanted a full military funeral: Taps, flags, a 21-gun salute. He called several places, including the Marine headquarters in Arlington, VA, before reaching Sergeant Angel Gomez in San Diego. They'd sent Gomez all of the information they had, but sadly, most of the records had perished in a government building fire in St. Louis, MO.

“I called Sgt. Gomez before Christmas of last year,” remembered Bill. “I said, ‘We've found our uncle, he's buried in San Francisco in a common grave and we'd like some closure.’ I told him I wanted the whole nine yards: 21-gun salute, flagpole, taps. I was kind of joking and said it would be pretty cool to have a fly-over. There was a pause from Gomez on the other end of the line, and then he said he'd look into it.”

“We scheduled [the service] for February 14,” Bill continued. “Gomez called me back and said, ‘Bill, I got you a fly-over.’ I about fell out of my chair I was so emotional.”

The Smith family was able to secure an Irish establishment - Wallace's grandparents were immigrants from Ireland - and discovered the founder of the funeral home was also a WWI veteran. They selected Rev. Piers Lahey of St. Andrews

Catholic Church in Daly City, CA, who - at 70+ years of age - was moved by Wallace's story.

“I went up [to Colma] a day early with my daughter and we sat down with Rev. Lahey. He's in his seventies and he told us it would be the most intriguing service he'd ever do,” said Bill.

The morning of February 15, 2015 - almost 60 years to the day of Wallace's death - was a glorious one, dipped in sunshine and blue skies. As two F-18 fighter jets roared overhead, the family said goodbye to a man they never knew but loved and respected deeply. Pvt.



Harry Wallace, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, had finally been given the honor he deserved.

And you have to wonder if Harry knew what his family had done for him.

Bill tells a story of a large hawk that flew into the area where the funeral was to take place. Right before the service, the powerful bird hovered and then alighted on a branch of the tree right above where the family was gathered. Mesmerized, Bill turned to his sons and said, “Do you see that?”

They looked back at him and said, “Yeah, Dad. We see him.”

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# A DAY TO REMEMBER

VETERANS AND SCOUTS SHOW UP EN MASSE TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT  
FOR THE GRINNELL VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

Photos by Sarah Bremer Pfennigs • Reported by Keith Brake



## MARY ELLEN LYNCH

Mary Ellen Lynch's husband - Jim "Schooner" Lynch - earned a Silver Star medal. Her husband served in the First Army, Third Armored Division. "They were the 23rd Engineers," she said. "They built bridges."

"On June 30, 1944, France sent in some new recruits. The Germans rained down mortar fire, and Jim risked his life to save other lives," she said.

Her husband was not killed in the German attack or the war, "but I lost a brother to the war," she said.

## CHRIS CLAUSEN

Chris Clausen was a Lt. Colonel in the Iowa National Guard and served almost 21 years. His greatest memory: "Deploying to Kosovo in 2003 and 2004 with the 1/113 CAV," he said. "I served as a judge advocate, or military judge," he said, adding that his service "gave me a huge sense of pride."

## GEORGE FOWLER

George Fowler was a Corporal in the Army and spent a month in the Korean War. His highlights included "getting out and coming home from overseas." The reason he was in the war for just one month was that they signed a ceasefire agreement.

## LARRY ELLIS

Larry Ellis served in the Army from 1958 through 1964. He was in the 305 Field Artillery and Armored Division and spent time in Arkansas and Kentucky. "It was an experience you never forget," Ellis said. "I wish the military was treated better by Congress."

## RON DAVIS

Ron Davis has been commander of the American Legion for 54 years. He had three tours of duty with the Navy during the 1971-1975 years. He recalled a riot on board the ship Kitty Hawk in 1972. "About 50 wound up being court martialled," he said. "There were knives - it was scary."



# DEAR MILLENNIAL RENTERS,

By Kevin Kolbe, Real Estate Broker Manager, Ramsey-Weeks, Inc.

With home ownership continuing multiyear declines as the number of renter households hits a 20 year high, one has to ask, "What happened to the "American Dream" of owning your own home?" Many of you watched as your parents, aunts and uncles, and neighbors were "downsized" out of the work force. Some who lost their jobs were unable to move for new employment elsewhere because they were "upside down" (owing more on their home than it was worth). You promised yourself you did not want to "drink from that same pitcher of Kool-Aid," basically turned off from the prospect of home ownership.

There was plenty of blame to go around when the housing market crashed in 2008. For example, lenders did not follow proper due diligence to determine who was qualified for a mortgage. Too many buyers borrowed money with interest-only payments built in for the first few years, believing that home prices would continue to rise 10 to 15% per year. Existing homeowners were even encouraged by lenders to leverage the equity built up in their

homes over the years by taking out home equity loans in order to build that family room addition, to pay for college or that trip to Tahiti. With the crash of the housing market though, the music stopped – and the sound was deafening.

Once the market crashed, many of you, younger people in your late 20's or 30's who may have once contemplated home ownership now vowed to never allow yourselves to get upside down with a home, unable to sell it without major financial loss. Furthermore, job security has been lost. No longer can young Americans expect to be employed by the same company for their entire careers. It is under this backdrop that renting a home became, not something you did until you "grew up" but a long term proposition necessitated by the need to remain "fluid and mobile" as your career inevitably takes you from place to place with every unanticipated job change. Other factors adding to the caution associated with home ownership is mounting school debt, a competitive job market, and stagnant wages.

But wait! Fast forward seven years:

today the housing market has stabilized and pricing for existing homes is rising. The number of people employed is also rising, although wages remain stubbornly stagnant. Yet, throughout the city of Grinnell, there are more people looking to rent than there are suitable homes and apartments available. This strong demand is pushing rental rates to historic levels especially when compared to the growth rate in employee income.

So is now the right time to get into the home ownership game? There will always be reasons to answer no to that question such as:

- "I hear the Fed may raise interest rates soon."
- "I am not sure if Any-Town-USA is where I want to put down roots."
- "I want to save some more for a down payment and/or pay off school debt."
- "Very few of my friends are buying a home right now."

So just when is the right time to buy a home? After much research, years of working with first-time home buyers, and my experience with my two millennial children as they struck out on their

own, I believe I have a fool-proof analysis for determining whether you are ready to buy. Ask yourself if you agree with these three statements and you may be ready to "take the plunge": 1) I want a dog, 2) I am tired of sharing a common wall and living with off-white paint, and 3) I want to mow grass, have a garden, and/or chickens.

There will be some other minor details like making sure you have a good credit score, been employed for two continuous years, and being reasonably assured that you will live in the same community for at least the next three years. Nevertheless, I encourage you take advantage of historically low interest rates, a great selection of homes for sale in Grinnell and the surrounding area, and very knowledgeable local lenders who will be happy to talk you through the "ins and outs" of obtaining a home mortgage.

After all, nothing beats waking up in your own home (and making your own Kool-Aid)!

Very Sincerely,  
Kevin



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