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VETERANS DAY

November 11



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Jarvis credits service in the U.S. Navy as a turning point in her life

RACHEL AUBERGER

Staff Writer

For Amy Jarvis, joining the United States Navy wasn't what she envisioned herself doing with her life, but the retired E7 Chief Petty Officer acknowledges that sometimes you end up where you are supposed to be after all.

"Throughout high school, I was mixed up with the ever famous 'wrong crowd.' I was into drugs, which led to robbing and stealing and all sorts of 'wrong crowd' things," Jarvis admitted, but was quick to add that it was the US military that gave her a chance to start over. "Thankfully, it only took a year for the light bulb to turn on, and I made the decision to join the Navy and try to do something worthwhile with myself. I was 19 when I held my hand up and took the oath in Phoenix, Arizona."

Jarvis turned what started out as thrill-seeking, destructive teen years into a thrill-seeking, productive, honorable career as she found herself aboard aircraft carriers as part of the United States Navy.

"I absolutely loved the thrill of working on the flight deck. High tempo, high action. Being a foot away from an F-18 as it launched off the deck. Seeing the afterburners light up at night as they powered up to get airborne or the number of stars you see in the middle of the ocean with no other lights around for hundreds of miles. I also loved all of the countries I got to visit," Jarvis said, before adding that she quickly found a new 'crowd' to hang with and that they made all the difference. "The best, though, is the camaraderie. We were a team, we worked hard together, and played even harder together. Some of the best friends I have I made in the Navy."



Amy Jarvis is pictured next to President George W. Bush.

Jarvis served five different Western Pacific deployments during the 20 years she was in the Navy, along with numerous small trips or "work ups" associated with battle group deployments.

"I was active during 9/11 and the ensuing Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. These operations quickly ramped up deployment schedules and turned a planned six-month trip into

10," Jarvis said. "Being in the Navy, I didn't have to deal with any actual conflict or 'boots on the ground.' I stayed on my aircraft carrier fixing and launching aircraft."

It was during the operations that followed the attacks of 9/11 that truly defined her career and gave Jarvis a sense of the enormity of what she was a part of.

"I guess my most defining deployment

JARVIS 4A



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JARVIS

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would be the one those of us who were there call the U-turn. Most people would know it as mission not accomplished," she said. "We did our time on station in the Arabian Gulf and were on our way home. We were excited because not only were we heading home but we were also getting to spend Christmas in port, in Australia."

But the plan changed, and Jarvis would not be coming home anytime soon. Instead, on Christmas Day, she and her crewmates were told that instead of going home they were heading back to the gulf. The boat did a U-turn as they returned to participate in the Battle of Baghdad.

"The eeriest feeling I have ever had while deployed was after launching EVERY aircraft on the ship in one big wave," Jarvis explained as she remembered the feeling like it was yesterday. "Being in the Arabian Gulf, at night, on an aircraft carrier, without a single aircraft on deck was pretty chilling."

When the extended deployment was finally over and the ship returned home, Jarvis and the rest of the crew were made to sit off the coast of San Diego for three more days, just looking at home. The crew who was four months late getting home was waiting for the president to come make a speech about how they had accomplished their mission.

For Jarvis, transitioning from military life into civilian life when the time came wasn't easy.

"I joined the Navy young, so all I knew was military. As such, I was not prepared for civilian life at all," she explained. "The environment is different, people act dif-

ferent, being able to do things without permission is different. I floundered for a bit when I decided to try to jump back into the workforce, but I have found an area that excites me and has a lot of similarities to being in a squadron - emergency medicine."

Jarvis didn't jump right into starting another career right after leaving the Navy, and she says that's the best thing about being able to retire young - she can now live the life she wants, how she wants, when she wants.

"I spent a year traveling the country in an RV with my family, I piddled and played for a while. I used my GI Bill to get a degree in education, and now I am using the rest of it in nursing school on my way to becoming an emergency nurse," she said about the variety of things she has tried out in the past six years. "Who knows what's in store after that. I love having the security to follow my interests to do things I WANT to do."

Jarvis said that she would recommend the military life for anyone, even if it is just for four years to be eligible for the GI Bill and pay for a higher education.

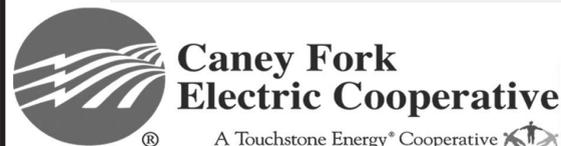
"It is one of the best decisions I have ever made," she said, adding that it was a decision that drastically changed her life in a multitude of positive ways. "I'm neither dead nor in jail, which I surely would be if I hadn't decided to join the Navy. I was able to see and do and learn things many people don't get to. Of course, there were highs and lows, but I retired from my first career at the age of 39, and I have the financial stability to do things because I want to and not because I have to. I wouldn't be where I am today without it."



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38-plus years of military life was extremely rewarding and educational for Rabchenia

RACHEL AUBERGER

Staff Writer

Bill Rabchenia made a career out of being on the water and said that the course of his life was set the day he decided to make the U.S. Navy his career.

For Rabchenia, the Navy sounded like an adventure, and that was just what he was looking for. So, armed with military stories he had heard from family members throughout his youth, he set out for an adventure that would span 38-plus years.

During that adventure, Rabchenia, who ended his career when he retired in 2016 ranked as an O-6 Captain, served on 21 different deployments around the world, including Operation Earnest Will, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and United Nations Operation in Somalia II.

"Those were hard deployments that demanded a lot from us, but they contributed to a very successful and rewarding career," he said. "The deployments that defined my time in the Navy were the long hours in the Persian Gulf clearing underwater mines."

Rabchenia said he found the adventure he was looking for, and it kept him busy, focused, and productive.

"Military life is not boring and there's always something to do because each duty station has a different mission," he explained, and then added that he finds the same to be true even now that he is just a 'regular civilian.' "There's not much difference between military life and civilian life to me."



Rabchenia might feel like the transition was not difficult as he simply went from working life to retired life, joining his wife and children at home, spending his time working on wood-craft projects, building a home, and helping with Clean Heart Ministries in downtown Sparta. Rabchenia has helped with the non-profit's anger management classes as well as being instrumental in helping them to open their Veterans Outreach Program, which provides retired service members a place to meet with fellow veterans, receive help searching for jobs, seek advice and use internet services, along with a variety of other services.

While he enjoyed his time in the United States Navy and he knows that the career choice was the right one for him, Rabchenia said he knows that the military "now" is not the same as when he served, and he would recommend that young people today go to school and get an education.

"I actually started out with plans to get my GI Bill, and, after my first four years of service, I took that and headed on to school," he said, explaining that serving in the military is a great way to pay for a college education. "But then President Reagan signed a significant pay raise into effect, so I headed back out to sea."

And the rest is history - Rabchenia's history of an adventure lived out at sea.

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Kelsey is proud of his service in Vietnam

RACHEL AUBERGER

Staff Writer

“I loved my country and still do,” Jerry Kelsey stated.

Kelsey said serving in the United States Army and being deployed to Vietnam was a very stressful time, but his love for America has never wavered.

Kelsey, who was an E-5, joined the United States Army, in 1965, and immediately went to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to complete basic training. After graduating, the Sparta-native was set to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, before receiving orders to deploy to Vietnam.

“I spent the next three tours there,” Kelsey, who was discharged in 1969, said. “I still have flashbacks about my experience in Vietnam.”

Kelsey wasn't the only White Countian to serve in Vietnam, but he knows he was one of the “lucky” ones - he came back home and met and married his wife a few

years later.

“I also served with Capt. John Michael Casey from Sparta,” Kelsey said solemnly, stating that Casey would never make it home, having been killed in action. “There is a monument in his honor in front of the high school here.”

Kelsey knows that a monument in person's honor isn't the same as a life lived, family raised, and memories shared with loved ones. He knows that as hard as those three tours in Vietnam were and as disturbing as flashbacks can be, he still has a reason for hope and love. He served a country that guarantees his freedom.

“I would advise anyone wanting to join the service to do so; there are great opportunities available,” Kelsey said, and then gave a little more insight into how to know what branch of the United State military would be a good fit. “If you want to fight, join the Army or Marine Corps. If you want great technical experience, join the Air Force or Navy.”



Jerry and Ruthie Kelsey



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**MEMORIES THAT
WILL LAST FOREVER**



SERVICE OVERVIEW

Name	John Michael Casey
From	White County, Tennessee
Death	March 25, 1968
War	Vietnam War
Rank	Captain
Branch	US Army
Group	Army Security Agency, 509th Asa Group, 371st Radio Research Company
Cause	Hostile, Killed in Action
Location	South Vietnam, Thua Thien province
Awarded	★ Purple Heart

History of Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day

Veterans Day (originally known as Armistice Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans of the United States Armed Forces (who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable). It coincides with other holidays including Armistice Day and Remembrance Day which are celebrated in other countries that mark the anniversary of the end of World War I. Major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect. At the urging of major U.S. veteran organizations, Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

Veterans Day is distinct from Memorial Day, a U.S. public holiday in May. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans, while Memorial Day honors those who have died while in military service.[5] Another military holiday that also occurs in May, Armed Forces Day, honors those currently serving in the U.S. military. Additionally, Women Veterans Day is recognized by a growing number of U.S. states that specifically honor women who have served in the U.S. military.

HISTORY

On November 11, 1919, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson issued a message to his countrymen on the first Armistice Day, in which he expressed what he felt the day meant to Americans:

ADDRESS TO FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

The White House, November 11, 1919.

A year ago today our enemies laid down their arms in accordance with an armistice which rendered them impotent to renew hostilities, and gave to the world an assured opportunity to reconstruct its shattered order and to work out in peace a new and more just set of international relations. The soldiers and people of the European Allies had fought and endured for more than four years to uphold the barrier of civilization against the aggressions of armed force. We ourselves had been in the conflict something more than a year and a half.

With splendid forgetfulness of mere personal concerns, we remodeled our industries, concentrated our financial resources, increased our agricultural output, and assembled a great

army, so that at the last our power was a decisive factor in the victory. We were able to bring the vast resources, material and moral, of a great and free people to the assistance of our associates in Europe who had suffered and sacrificed without limit in the cause for which we fought.

Out of this victory there arose new possibilities of political freedom and economic concert. The war showed us the strength of great nations acting together for high purposes, and the victory of arms foretells the enduring conquests which can be made in peace when nations act justly and in furtherance of the common interests of men.

To us in America the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service, and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of nations.

WOODROW WILSON

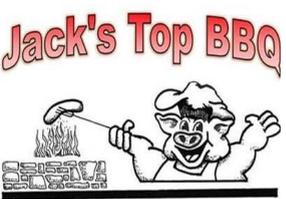
The United States Congress adopted a

resolution on June 4, 1926, requesting that President Calvin Coolidge issue annual proclamations calling for the observance of November 11 with appropriate ceremonies.[6] A Congressional Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U.S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made November 11 in each year a legal holiday: "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day'".

In 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks from Birmingham, Alabama, had the idea to expand Armistice Day to celebrate all veterans, not just those who died in World War I. Weeks led a delegation to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, who supported the idea of National Veterans Day. Weeks led the first national celebration in 1947 in Alabama and annually until his death in 1985. President Reagan honored Weeks at the White House with the Presidential Citizenship Medal in 1982 as the driving force for the national holiday. Elizabeth Dole, who prepared the briefing for President Reagan, determined Weeks as the "Father of Veterans Day".[8]

U.S. representative Ed Rees from Emporia, Kansas, presented a bill establishing

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HISTORY

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the holiday through Congress. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, also from Kansas, signed the bill into law on May 26, 1954. It had been eight and a half years since Weeks held his first Armistice Day celebration for all veterans.

Congress amended the bill on June 1, 1954, replacing "Armistice" with "Veterans," and it has been known as Veterans Day since.

The National Veterans Award was also created in 1954. Congressman Rees of Kansas received the first National Veterans Award in Birmingham, Alabama, for his support in offering legislation to make Veterans Day a federal holiday.

Although originally scheduled for celebration on November 11 of every year, starting in 1971 in accordance with the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday of Oc-

tober (October 25, 1971; [13] October 23, 1972; October 22, 1973; October 28, 1974; October 27, 1975; October 25, 1976, and October 24, 1977). In 1978, it was moved back to its original celebration on November 11. While the legal holiday remains on November 11, if that date happens to be on a Saturday or Sunday, then federal government employees and a number of organizations will instead take the day off on the adjacent Friday or Monday, respectively.



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Veterans Museum of White County serves to educate the community



The Veterans Museum of White County strives to honor the numerous veterans who either were born and raised in White County or who made White County their home later in life as well as to educate the community and showcase experiences of war and military.

"The museum offers a rich history of uniforms, military artifacts, documents, and photographs," Sandy Witt, the museum's curator, said. "The displays span wars and conflicts dating back to World War I and continuing to the present day."

One of the museum's most prized exhibits is the Dr. Charles Mitchell Exhibit. Dr. Mitchell was a White County resident who served in World War II. The exhibit includes Nazi memorabilia from Dr. Mitchell's capture of a platoon as well as other items from his time serving in Europe.

The Eldridge Collection "Faded Letters" is another of the museum's displays and contains a collection of letters written by a soldier to his mother during the Korean War. The soldier was killed in



North Korea, and his remains have yet to be located.

A third exhibit that draws a lot of attention is the Betterton Exhibit which showcases Joseph Betterton, a naval

photographer who was at Pearl Harbor during the attack on Dec. 7, 1941. Many of the photos that Betterton took that day are now on display in the national Smithsonian Museum, however, his camera is in

the White County museum.

"No matter if it is a large exhibit or just a photograph, the story of the soldier it represents is important as we always want to honor and never forget the sacrifices made," Witt said, noting that there is a large variety of exhibits available to connect visitors with the soldiers who call(ed) White County home.

In addition to housing military artifacts, the museum, which is located in the historic American Legion Building, on Liberty Square, the Veterans Museum assists with the Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Patriot Day programs in White County.

"We also supply, free of charge, 400 grave marker flags for Memorial Day to individuals, organizations, and cemeteries to honor our veterans," Witt said.

The museum is open for visitors 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Friday, and is open on Saturdays by appointment or special occasions. Call (931) 836-3595 for more information or an appointment.

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Veterans Service Office launches support program



RACHEL AUBERGER
Staff Writer

United States veterans are some of the most respected and honored persons within our community, having given a portion of their lives, whether a couple of years or a couple of decades, to serve the country and protect the American way of life.

After leaving military service, there is a variety of programs that are available to veterans as they navigate through civilian life and the Veterans Service Office is where information about those programs, including, but not limited to, veteran-specific benefits.

Matthew Elmore, White County veterans service officer, provides assistance to veterans and their families in filing claims and accessing veterans' assistance benefits. However, despite everyone's efforts, sometimes those claims can take weeks, or even months, to be processed by the government.

"At times we may have a veteran who may be eligible for VA benefits but urgently needs helps with lodging, gas,

or food," Elmore explained and further stated that sometimes the assistance doesn't arrive when needed and there is a significant gap for individuals and families. "We are proud to announce that our American Legion Post #99 has a new program to provide such assistance."

Elmore said the new American Legion Post #99 Veterans Support can help homeless or in-need veterans with food, clothing, sleeping bags, and blankets, short-term emergency lodging and transportation while they wait for their VA benefits to kick in.

Supporters of the program will be necessary to keep the program functioning, and those who wish to support the program through donations are encouraged to contact the Veterans Service Office. To help the program be stocked and ready to service veterans in need, the White County High School JROTC made a large donation of non-perishable food items.

"If you are a veteran in need, call Ron Lapierre at 931-256-5023, Colleen Sandell at 931-808-7210, or Matthew Elmore at 931-836-3595," Elmore said.



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★ VETERANS ★**