

# DONALD EUGENE REBROOK

1932 – 2013, KOREAN WAR  
U.S. MARINE CORPS, SERGEANT

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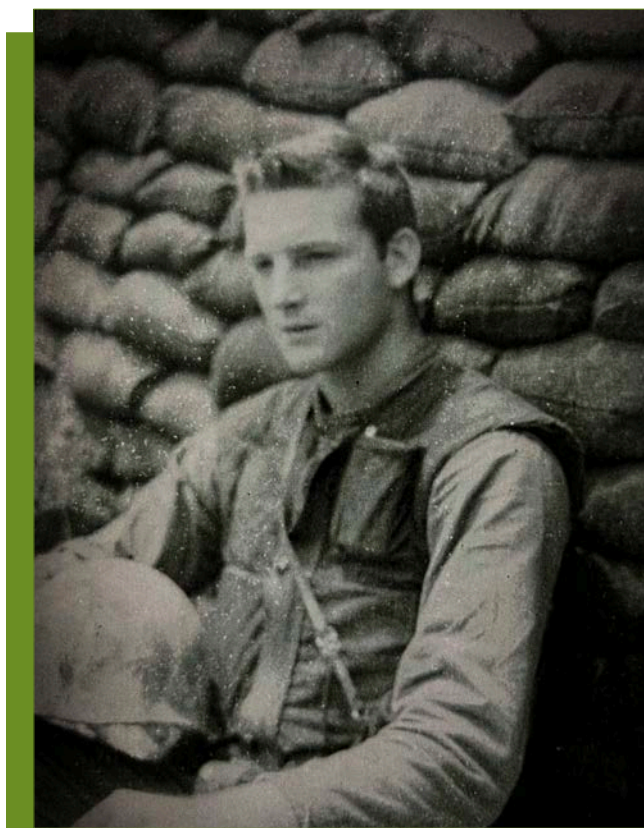
**Donald Eugene Rebrook was born on April 13, 1932**, in Harrison County, West Virginia, to Charles Ernest and his wife Zula Belle. Donald was the third child of what became a very large family, including two older siblings, Joanne and Robert. Donald himself was followed by Connie, David, Gloria, Jerry, and Brad, though little David passed away before his first birthday.

The Rebrook children's mother and father both grew up in the vicinity of Clarksburg and married in 1923. By 1930, the family was living at 1660 Roane Avenue, a dead-end road on the northwestern outskirts of Clarksburg near the confluence of Stone Coal Run and the West Fork River. This was the address the Rebrooms would call home while the children were being raised.

Charles Rebrook worked for Rolland Glass at a time of rapid change and consolidation in the glass industry. Advancements prior to the First World War shifted glassmaking from smaller craft shops toward mass production. The onset of the Great Depression over a decade later accelerated the trend of small firms merging to remain competitive. During young Don's early years, West Virginia's window glass firms fell from 21 operations to only six, and Rolland Glass combined with three nearby companies to form Fourco.

Despite this climate of economic uncertainty, Don's father managed to keep his job at Fourco, working 35 hours a week on a salary of about \$2,100 dollars

annually (\$48,000 in 2025 currency) which allowed the family to enjoy some level of comfort as the town's growth stalled. Clarksburg's population peaked at 35,115 in 1929 along with its burgeoning chemical plants, brickworks, potteries, foundries, machine shops, and steel works, but did not see full recovery until World War II revitalized the economy around 1940.



RIGHT:  
Fourco Glass Factory  
in Clarksburg,  
where Don and his  
father worked. *West  
Virginia & Regional  
History Center,  
WVU Libraries*

OPPOSITE:  
Don Rebrook in  
Korea. *Rebrook  
Family collection*



Welcome as the resurgence of jobs and goods might have been in the 1940s, the Second World War that finally engulfed the United States in December 1941 wrought less desirable changes. Charles Rebrook enlisted in the U.S. Army's 13th Armed Service Forces Training Regiment in December 1943. Fortunately for the family, he was sent home in July of the following year. Whether this was due to injury, his age, or other mitigating circumstances is not known. With all of the Rebrook children being too young to fight, their father's return precluded any danger of losing immediate family members to the world's bloodiest war before it ended in 1945.

Donald started at Clarksburg's Victory High School in 1946. Since the school was only a mile from the Rebrook house on Roane Avenue, he probably walked most days in the company of family and friends. Indeed, Victory High School was full of Rebrooms: his older brother Robert, plus his cousins Hodge and Jack, were all important players on Victory's football team.

Not to be outdone, Don played halfback, then added basketball and track and field to his dossier.

Sports built discipline and hard work into Don's ethos, qualities that would serve him well later during the Korean War.

Employment also became a priority during his 1949-1950 senior year. Knowing that Fourco was willing to hire family members of longtime employees, Charles pretended Donald's age was 18 and secured a spot at the glass factory, as Charles had already done for Don's older brother Robert. Therefore, Don was already working steadily at Fourco Glass after graduation when war erupted once more on the other side of the Pacific Ocean in a country few Americans had heard of: Korea.

Donald Rebrook was scarcely out of his graduation cap and gown when communist North Korea invaded U.S.-backed South Korea on June 25, 1950. Armed with Soviet weapons, tanks, and planes, North Korea's dictatorship expected a quick victory, calculating that the United States would not wager their geopolitical might for a distant territory smaller than California. Defying these predictions, President Harry S. Truman committed air, ground, and naval forces and designated World War II legend General Douglas MacArthur as





ABOVE: Rebrook's earliest Marine Corps portrait. *National Archives*



RIGHT: Rebrook (left), cousin Pete, and brother Bob after their night on the town in Clarksburg, April 1951. *Rebrook Family collection*

commander of the United Nations (U.N.) forces entering the fight.

The war see-sawed violently across the border between North and South Korea for months. Millions of Chinese troops began deploying into North Korea in late 1950, reversing U.N. military momentum. By February 1951, Donald Rebrook had seen and heard enough on the radio and in newsreels, and wanted in on the action. His older brother Robert had signed up for the Air Force the year before, and Don made up his mind to get into the business, too—in his own way, like on the football team at Victory. He traveled down to Huntington, West Virginia, and signed on the dotted line at the Marine Corps recruiting station.

Boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, was eight weeks long. The Marine Corps training system, perfected by the end of World War II, was a well-oiled machine capable of turning out

effective fighting Marines in such a short time through a grueling schedule of rifle training, drill, physical fitness, and field maneuvers. The Marine Corps motto “Every Marine A Rifleman” ensured that even rear echelon Marines met basic marksmanship standards.

After finishing boot camp in April 1951, Donald had ten days' leave to see family and friends. Later in life, one of Donald's favorite memories was the resulting night of barhopping across Clarksburg with his brother Bob and cousin Pete, in their respective Air Force and Army uniforms, while he wore his snappy Marine dress blues. The trio “never bought a drink” the whole night. A few days later, he was on his way to California and the Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton.

The Corps' highly effective boot camp did not mean newly minted marines were ready to pitch into battle. Don was attached to the 5th Training



Cold weather training made a difference for the Marines in Korea. *Rebrook Family collection*

fighting environment, elements that took the first Marines deployed to Korea by surprise back in 1950. Many had returned from the brutally cold Chosin Reservoir campaign with frostbite, putting some out of action permanently. To prevent such mishaps in the future, 3rd Marine Regiment went into cold weather training in the rugged mountains of

Battalion at Pendleton to learn how to be part of a weapons platoon, augmenting the firepower of his fellow riflemen with heavier ballistics. Most notable in his new kit were the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), the .30 caliber machine gun, and the M2HB .50 caliber, affectionately known as the “Ma Deuce.” These could all inflict considerably more damage on enemy infantry than a squad of Marines with M1 rifles.

Don qualified with high enough marks to make section leader of a machine gun platoon. With this new responsibility Donald oversaw two of the platoon's six machine guns and their crews. He relayed orders from the platoon and company commanders, oversaw the placement and operation of his guns, and ensured they worked to the deadliest possible effect. Don's experience in manufacturing probably helped when it came to maintaining the guns, as well.

Donald went on leave for Christmas, then returned in January 1952 to join Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. Now the intense work began to prepare the unit for Korea's climate and

California. Located in Toiyabe National Forest just north of Yosemite National Park, the relatively new Pickel Meadow USMC camp had just redesignated the “Cold Weather Battalion” training center as a branch of Camp Pendleton. Fifty tents, a mess hall, and several Quonset huts accommodated the shivering Marines.

Since the state of California did not keep Highway 108 open from October to May when it was deep in snow, the Marines were completely isolated during training, removing “civilian distractions.” At Pickel Meadow, Don and his leathernecks learned how to manage “COLD” in Korea:

- C - keep clothes clean
- O - avoid overheating
- L - wear layers
- D - keep dry

The Marines in training learned to move in snow, how to stay alert, and how to fight even during low visibility periods at dawn or in blizzard conditions. Donald Rebrook's training period in winter 1951-



Marines fighting for their lives in Outpost Vegas.

National Archives

52 included a brutal period of -39 degrees in early January, which “the local population had already declared . . . the worse winter to strike the region since 1891.”

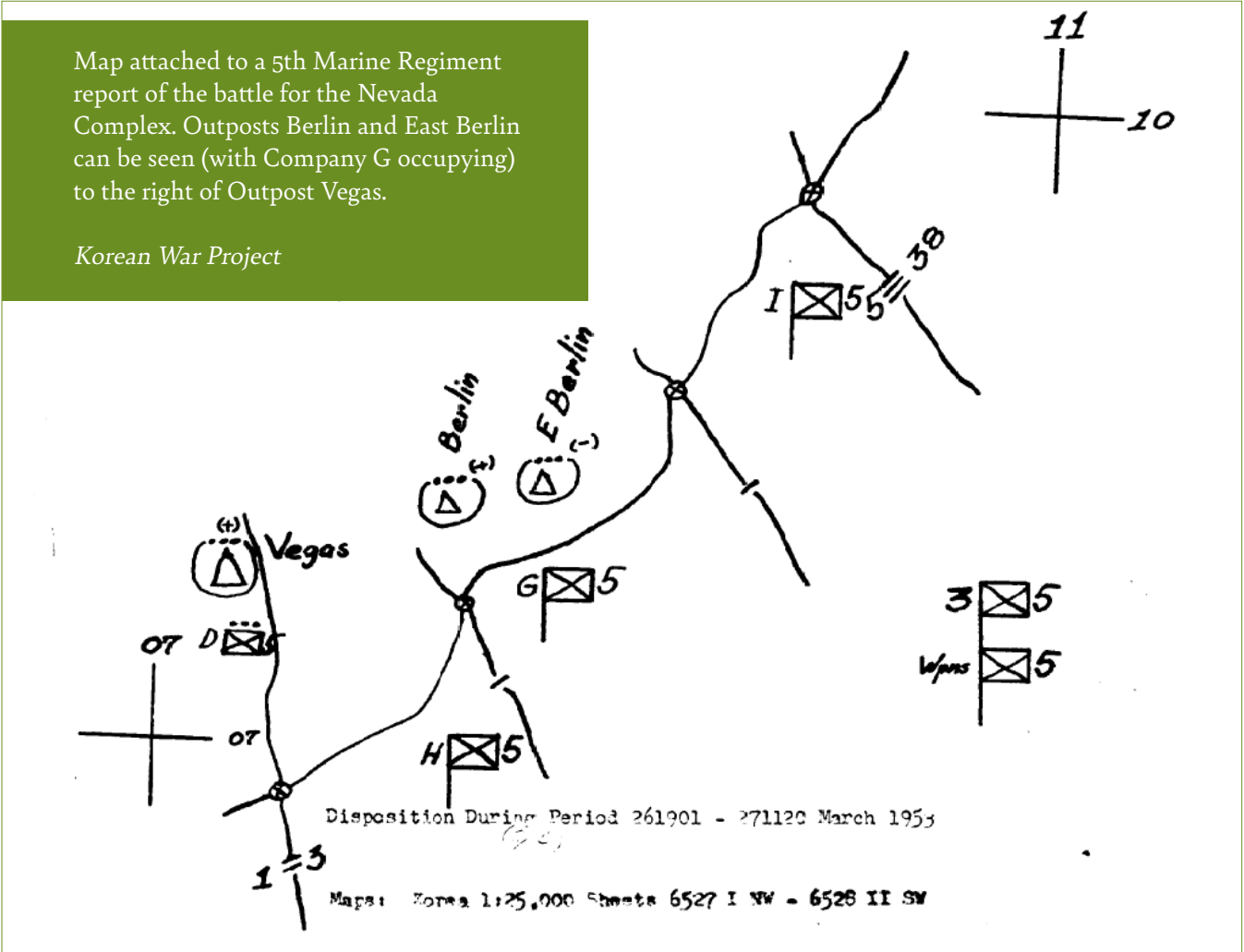
A few weeks later he was back in Camp Pendleton for mock amphibious landings conducted with the Navy, the first such joint exercises since World War II. Donald was promoted to sergeant in July 1952, showing yet again his aptitude for leadership. Finally, at the end of the year, Sgt. Rebrook was transferred to Company G, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (or “3/5 Marines”), 1st Marine Division—and orders arrived sending the unit to Korea.

The Marines of 3/5 had already seen some of the hardest fighting in Korea. Many had fought at Chosin Reservoir, where the harsh conditions and hard fighting became legendary in Marine Corps history. Though he was not the only new Marine joining these veterans, as a sergeant and section leader Donald had a lot to prove. On January 22, 1953, Donald embarked on the USNS *Gen. N.M. Walker* at San Diego, California, and arrived in

Kobe, Japan, two weeks later. He was only in Kobe for a day before he shipped across the Sea of Japan to Inchon, Korea.

The war in the Korean Peninsula on February 8 looked very different from what Donald and his family had heard about on the radio two years before. Long gone were the moving fronts, amphibious landings behind enemy lines, and big offensives aiming for the enemy’s total destruction. Something resembling the trench warfare of World War I had taken their place by 1953. Soldiers from both sides faced off from fortified positions near North and South Korea’s original borders, trying not to get hit by snipers, artillery fire, and air raids. Donald was stationed along the United Nations’ main line of resistance (MLR) known as the “Jamestown Line,” consisting of a string of linked outposts. The strongest point along Don’s section of the line was called the Nevada Complex, consisting of Outposts Carson, Reno, and Vegas.

Here the 5th Marine Regiment settled into a tense routine of frontline trench life. Near the end of March, Don’s Company G was rotated



into Outposts Berlin and East Berlin, just a short distance away from the Nevada Complex and guarding its right flank. All was quiet, except for a March 25 inspection from the battalion medical officer that found Company G’s latrines to be unsanitary. This state of quiescence, however, was shattered a few days later.

Peace talks between the United Nations and North Korea were ongoing, but the Chinese (who poured in around 2.4 million troops between 1950 and 1953) wanted to secure more territory for North Korea before the war officially ended. Chinese leadership decided to launch a surprise attack on the Nevada Complex and pierce the Jamestown Line, an operation scheduled to commence just over a month after Donald arrived at his new post.

A mixture of Marine units held the Nevada

Complex’s defenses, but U.N. military intelligence did not expect an attack during Korea’s heavy spring melt. Most roads and trails turned into thick mud that made transporting supplies and large numbers of troops almost impossible. Nevertheless, on the night of March 26, 1953, some 3,500 troops of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) attacked the Nevada Complex, part of a larger assault up and down the line.

Chinese artillery and mortar fire tore up telephone wires, roads, and other infrastructure behind the Nevada Complex, destroying the outposts’ ability to communicate with other units. PLA infantry swarmed into the trenches, outnumbering 20-to-1 the reinforced Marine platoons holding each of the three Nevada outposts. By midnight, Reno and Vegas had fallen; in the case of Vegas, every marine at the outpost was killed or captured as other





companies of the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments tried to break through to their relief.

Thankfully for the men of Don Rebroke's Company G, Outposts Berlin and East Berlin were not the main point of attack. The Chinese did need to prevent Company G from helping their comrades in Nevada, however, since Don's Marines were the next closest outpost along the Jamestown Line. As Nevada's Marines fell under the weight of the PLA assault, the Chinese hit Company G with a diversionary attack. By this time, Don and his comrades were forewarned and the enemy was mowed down by machine guns and artillery fire.

Company G sat tight and held Outposts Berlin and East Berlin, guarding the assembly areas from which more companies of the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments mobilized and counterattacked the enemy-held redoubts at Vegas and Reno. It took nearly three days of constant artillery, air-to-ground, and infantry assaults to dislodge the determined Chinese from Vegas, even as the PLA fed its own reinforcements into the fray.

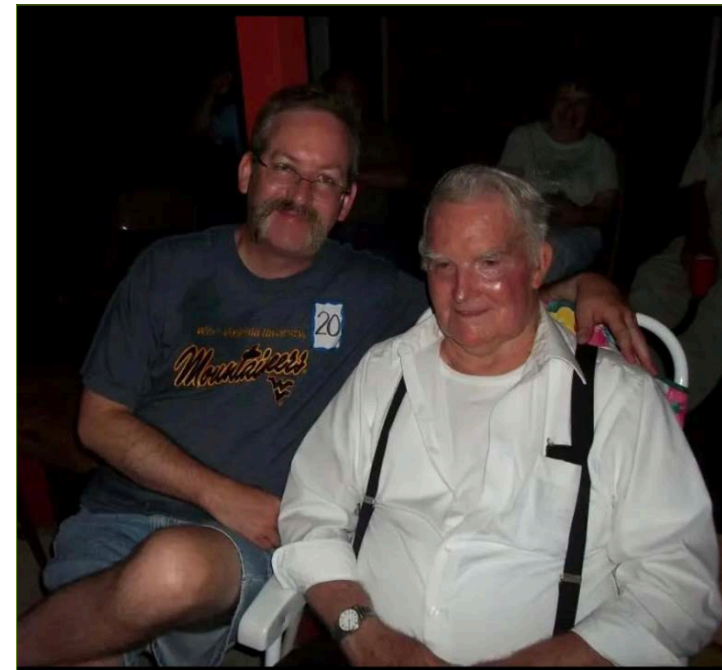
As March 30 dawned, Company G was finally ordered out of its trenches to relieve one of the companies rotating out of Outpost Vegas. That same morning, five Chinese soldiers approached Vegas pretending to surrender, then threw grenades at the Americans, who cut down the intruders. After days of exhausting fighting, the unsettling episode was a reminder to Don and his fellow Marines to stay on their guard. They continued digging into the revamped outpost "like rabbits," and held on while artillery and planes pounded Chinese positions to discourage more attacks.

The five-day battle for Nevada cost the 1st Marine Division over 1,000 casualties, more than half of their dead and wounded that month. Outpost Reno remained in Chinese hands, but the line was stabilized and would remain so until the end of the war. The 5th Marines were rotated out of line later in April. Besides one more brief period on the line, Don was out of the combat zone until the armistice was signed on July 27, 1953.

Donald's regiment remained in Korea to deter any renewal of hostilities. On January 19, 1954, he shipped out. His time in-country had spanned one year and two days. Crossing the Pacific Ocean back to California, he was honorably discharged on February 2 with a Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Korean Service Medal with two stars, and the United Nations Service Medal. He also carried invisible scars from that harrowing year in Korea.

Back in Clarksburg, Donald was soon working at Fourco Glass Company once more. The return home reacquainted him with a local girl named Georgia Olive Humphrey, who knew Donald's sisters Joann and Nancy from church and school. The Rebroke and Humphrey families lived near each other, so it was easy to spend time together. The young couple married on September 21, 1954, a little more than six months after Donald's return from service.

Settling into a home near their families, Donald and Georgia soon welcomed a girl and two boys—



Jennifer, Donald, and William. While Donald continued to work at Fourco Glass, Georgia took care of home and children. She loved working in the garden, and always made sure to have a well-stocked bird feeder.

Donald had a long career at Fourco, both in the Clarksburg factory and the company's Jerry Run factory in Grafton. He held many different positions, most notably as a union leader. Donald probably took part in labor negotiations in 1963, when Fourco signed a new contract with the Window Glass Cutters League of America. He was extremely dedicated to his work, often alternating between shifts to accommodate the laborers under his care. When able to spend time at home, he tried to make the most of it with his kids. The Rebrokes' oldest daughter Jennifer had a lifelong illness which prevented the family from vacationing, but Donald took time to fish and hunt with his sons, and made Christmases special for his children and grandchildren.

Being a Marine remained a lifelong source of pride. Donald traded long distance phone calls with a fellow Marine in California for many years. He served as a proud member of his Clarksburg Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion

LEFT:  
Donald Rebroke and son William  
enjoying a concert together.

OPPOSITE:  
Rebroke in Korea with a Thompson  
submachine gun.

*Rebroke Family collection*

chapters, stopping in regularly for beers with friends. Veterans Day, the local Blackberry Festival, and the Apple Butter Festival were particularly enjoyable occasions for Don.

Sadly, Don could not entirely escape what he had experienced in Korea. Fourth of July fireworks were difficult to bear—probably a vivid reminder of those horrible days of shelling and aerial bombardment on the Jamestown Line. Nightmares were common, and his children recognized much later that their father exhibited the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Despite these struggles, Don never talked about his service with his children, and focused his energy on making a positive life for his family.

Donald Rebroke contracted lymphoma/leukemia and passed away on December 12, 2013. He was interred in the West Virginia National Cemetery with full military honors on December 17, "Semper Fidelis" to the end.



**PLACE OF INTERMENT:**  
West Virginia National Cemetery  
**SECTION 7**  
**SITE 489**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The West Virginia National Cemeteries Project is a program of the West Virginia Humanities Council, funded in part by the Veterans Legacy Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and initiated in 2021. Biographies produced as part of this program are composed by West Virginia high school students and West Virginia University graduate students and PhD candidates, who conduct original research on veterans interred at the Grafton National Cemetery or the West Virginia National Cemetery, both of which are located in Grafton, Taylor County, West Virginia.

As home to one of the nation’s first national cemeteries—founded shortly after the Civil War—the community of Grafton has longstanding traditions of honoring America’s veterans, including the longest continuously celebrated Memorial Day parade in the United States. The Grafton National Cemetery, located in the heart of the city and founded in 1867, is typically the endpoint of each year’s parade. Since the Grafton National Cemetery began to run short of space during the 1960s, the West Virginia National Cemetery was dedicated in 1987, just a few miles outside of Grafton.

The West Virginia Humanities Council is proud to thank the following organizations for their participation in the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project: West Virginia Archives and History, the West Virginia University history department, Taylor County Historical and Genealogical Society, Taylor County Public Library, Grafton High School, and University High School, among many others.

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For readability, bibliographies have been omitted from this publication. Student research for these biographies relies heavily on primary sources—census records, city directories, draft cards, muster rolls, and more—made available digitally through Ancestry and Fold3. Yearbook repositories and the digitized collections of many universities and archives have been invaluable resources. Most newspaper research was conducted digitally via Newspapers.com, NewspaperArchives, and the Library of Congress’s *Chronicling America* database.

Servicemembers’ Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) and Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPFs) are another essential part of project research, provided free of charge in most cases by the National Archives through standard records requests.

As the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project has grown and matured, the team has found that new sources sometimes surface for veterans researched in prior project years. To better maintain a “living bibliography” of all its veterans, a single master document is kept up on the project’s webpage under the “Programs” tab at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org).

Views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Archives of the United States, or any other federal agency. For more information about the Veterans Legacy Memorial and the Veterans Legacy Grant Program, visit [www.vlm cem.va.gov](http://www.vlm cem.va.gov).

