



By Andrew Drea
Special to PressLines

When the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was finished in 1983, the wall listed about 58,000 servicemen and women who had either died in action or went missing in action. Due to a fire at a government storage facility in 1973, the U.S. military lost millions of personnel records, including many of those who were listed on the

Local newspapers participate in nationwide effort to find missing photographs of Vietnam veterans

wall. While the military and other organizations made efforts to recover lost data, 24,000 veterans listed on the wall still had no picture in military records in 2013.

But thanks to the efforts of Andrew Johnson, then-president of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association, nearly two-thirds of fallen servicemembers now have a photograph that will be displayed at a new Education Center that is being built by the wall in Washington.

Johnson worked with the Wisconsin Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Association to coordinate a nationwide effort to use local newspapers to locate the missing photographs. As a result, local newspapers have been directly responsible for finding pictures of more than 10,000 servicemembers and more than 17 states, including Wisconsin, have found a picture for every fallen servicemember through the Faces Never Forgotten effort.

Based on the successes of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and many other states that have found all of their photographs, the Illinois Press Association is joining the effort to locate the remaining missing photos. The IPA will provide customizable house ads for newspapers to run with names of missing servicemen and women from their counties, as well as suggestions on editorial content to promote the effort in communities they cover.

Full-state effort

It took nearly two years from Johnson's initial February 2013 presentation to the WNA's board of directors for all 450 missing photographs of Wisconsin veterans to be located. WNA and the

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund divided up the missing photos so that each newspaper had the missing veterans from their coverage areas. In that time, WNA member newspapers promoted the effort in a variety of ways. For example, the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram and the Post-Crescent of Appleton, Wis., created packages they ran on their front pages about the effort, showcasing photos that had been found and local photos that were still missing, while Madison's Wisconsin State Journal and the Green Bay Press Gazette ran stories about it on their local page. Newspapers like the Milton Courier highlighted the effort on editorial pages.

"That's how we found most of the pictures," said Johnson. Between public submissions and investigative work by reporters, Wisconsin newspapers found pictures for all but 64 of the fallen veterans. The remaining pictures were found through investigative work done by journalism students at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

While many newspapers promoted the campaign in their own, individual ways, the Wisconsin Newspaper Association provided common content to its members. Johnson designed a special section which included all pictures of Wisconsin Vietnam veterans for Memorial Day 2016 that individual papers could localize.

"It was incredibly well-read," said Johnson. "The public really wants to help. They really do."

Papers such as the Kewaskum Statesman and the Campbellsport News published the special section, selling advertising and sponsorship in it to local businesses. While Johnson doesn't know the number of WNA newspapers who published or localized the content, he did say that it was a success where it ran.

"The publishers that ran it had no problem selling ads," he said. "They sold most of the ads in two and a half hours. It'll probably be one of the highest reader-

DODGE COUNTY PIONEER MEMORIAL DAY 2016
Wisconsin Faces
VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
Created by the Dodge County Pioneer and released for exclusive use for Wisconsin Newspaper Association member newspapers.

Finding The Photos

By Andrew Drea
Staff Writer

In June 2014 when I was assigned to write about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's Faces Never Forgotten effort to find missing photos of Vietnam veterans, I was struck by the idea of a nationwide effort to find missing photos of Vietnam veterans. The idea was to use local newspapers to find missing photos of Vietnam veterans. The idea was to use local newspapers to find missing photos of Vietnam veterans. The idea was to use local newspapers to find missing photos of Vietnam veterans.

PFC ROBERT SCHAEFER
U.S. Army • 04-08-69
Jensen, Wisconsin

PFC KENNETH SCHAEFER
U.S. Army • 07-08-68
Benton, Wis., Wisconsin

PFC DAVID PERRELL
U.S. Army • 05-08-67
Benton, Wis., Wisconsin

SGT RALPH DAVIS
U.S. Army • 02-08-69
Iron Ridge, Wisconsin

SGT ROGER CARL HENRY
ACERSON
U.S. Army • 02-07-69
Lafayette, Wisconsin

SGT RONALD REINECKE
U.S. Army • 08-18-68
Vernon, Wisconsin

PFC LARRY LACAYNE
U.S. Army • 04-08-69
Barron, Wisconsin

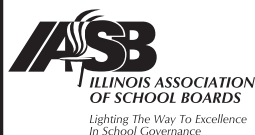
PFC FLOYD SCHLIEWE
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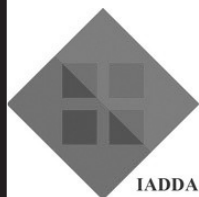


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● VETERANS

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veterans from Jo Daviess County, all of whom had their pictures located prior to the column's publication.

"I did it to talk about the power of community newspapers and what they can achieve," said Newton. "I was just trying to highlight the success that had happened in Wisconsin and raise awareness with the readership in my paper."

The IPA's goal for finding all the missing photos is Veteran's Day – Nov. 11, 2017.

If newspapers have any questions on downloading house ads or how to get involved, please contact Kate Richardson at krichardson@illinoispress.org or 217-241-1300.

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