

NATIONAL COURT REPORTERS FOUNDATION
VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT INFORMATION GUIDE



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ABOUT THE VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

The Veterans History Project (VHP) of the American Folklife Center at the U.S. Library of Congress collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.

The project collects firsthand accounts of U.S. veterans from the following wars:

World War I, 1914-1918

World War II, 1939-1945

Cold War

Korean War, 1950-1953

Vietnam War, 1961-1975

Grenada – American Invasion, 1983

Panama – American Invasion, 1989

Persian Gulf War, 1991

Operation Restore Hope, 1992-1993

United Nations operation in Somalia

Haiti – American intervention, 1994-1995

Operation Allied Force, 1999

Peacekeeping forces – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Operation Joint Guardian, 1999-present

War on Terrorism, 2001-2009

Afghan War, 2001-present

Iraq War, 2003-2011

In addition, those U.S. civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (such as war industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, etc.) are also invited to share their valuable stories.

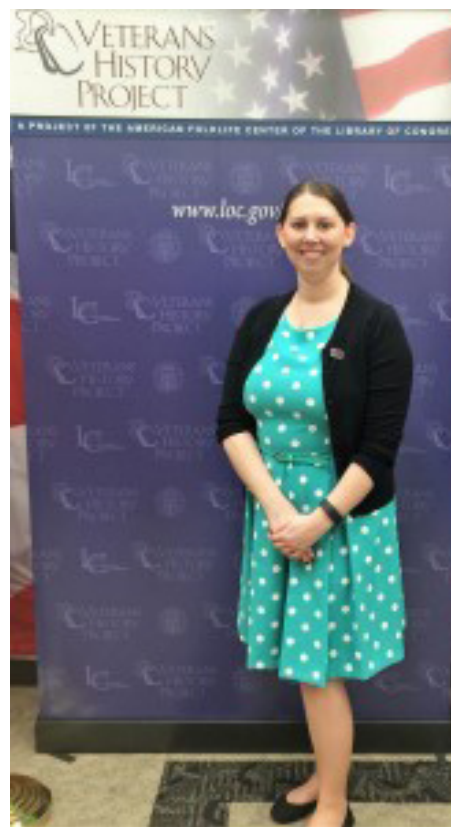


NCRF AND THE VHP

Since 2003, NCRF has partnered with the Library of Congress to have court reporters transcribe oral histories from its collection. Court reporters are uniquely qualified to transcribe oral histories and interviews as their certifications require keyboarding speed of at least 225 words per minute.

In 2007, the program was expanded and taken to the public to interview veterans in their communities for the collection. Since then, court reporting firms, schools, state associations, and NCRF have hosted VHP Days, interviewing multiple veterans concurrently, and hundreds of individual court reporters have conducted personal interviews of veterans on their own.

As of August 2016, NCRF has submitted more than 4,000 completed VHP transcripts to the Library of Congress, including transcripts of interviews from the Library's collection, personal interviews taken by court reporters, and transcripts from veterans at VHP Days.



NCRF PURPLE HEART DAY, AUG. 7, 2016



To commemorate Purple Heart Day on Aug. 7, the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) and NCRF hosted a Purple Heart VHP Day at the annual NCRA Convention & Expo in Chicago.

Eight Purple Heart recipients from the Military Order of the Purple Heart Illinois Chapter were interviewed and their stories preserved for the VHP archives by stenographic court reporters and captioners.

The event received high praise from the veterans, volunteers, and media.



PURPLE HEART DAY MEDIA COVERAGE

Chicago Sun Times

CHICAGO NEWS 08/07/2016, 06:31pm

Purple Heart Day celebration immortalizes war veterans' stories



Navy veteran Mike Lash, a Purple Heart recipient, is interviewed Sunday by Jill Thomas (left) and Angela Baker for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. | Jacob Wittich/Sun-Times

Jacob Wittich
@JacobWittich | email

Chicago CBS

Purple Heart Veterans Share Stories For Library Of Congress

August 7, 2016 2:49 PM By Nancy Harty

Filed Under: Library of Congress, Nancy Harty, Purple Heart



Ken Laforge (right) and John Domina (left), two of eight veterans who shared their stories of earning a Purple Heart as part of the Veterans History Project. (Credit: Nancy Harty)

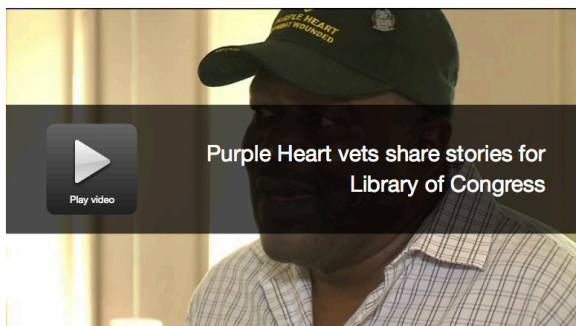
CHICAGO (CBS) — As the nation honors wounded and fallen military personnel for Purple Heart Day, several veterans sat down to retell their war [stories](#) so they can be recorded in the Library of Congress.

WGN TV

Purple Heart vets share stories for Library of Congress

POSTED 5:27 PM, AUGUST 7, 2016, BY SEAN LEWIS

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CHICAGO -- Soldier Field is glowing with purple light tonight in honor of Purple Heart Day in Illinois.

ABC7 Chicago

LOCAL VETERANS SHARE THEIR WAR STORIES FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PROJECT

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The stories of Purple Heart recipients are being collected. (WLS)

abc Laura Podesta

PURPLE HEART DAY MEDIA COVERAGE

[Chicago Tribune](#)

Purple Heart recipients tell of sacrifice: 'They shed blood for their country'



Friends John Domina, 65, and Kenny LaForge, 64, from left, talk about returning home after being wounded together in a 1970 rocket-propelled grenade attack in Vietnam. They joined several area Purple Heart recipients in recording memories of their military service for the Veterans History Project at the Hilton Chicago on Aug. 7, 2016. Domina is from Tinley Park and LaForge is from Antioch. (Michael Tercha/Chicago Tribune)

By **Marion Renault**
Chicago Tribune

[Atlanta Journal Constitution](#)

(reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune*)

Purple Heart recipients tell of sacrifice

Marion Renault - Chicago Tribune
Updated 10:01 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2016 | Filed in *Atlanta Life*

CHICAGO — Patrick Furlong's 16th birthday wish was simple: to know how his dad lost his leg in the Vietnam War.

At 21, Jim Furlong had seen an enemy soldier toss a hand grenade. He jumped as high as he could, hand stretched out. It brushed his fingers, then dropped to his feet.

It took 30 years before Furlong recounted those minutes out loud for the first time, and he only did it for his son.

"I kept it all bottled in for a long time," Furlong said. "I just didn't think I wanted to talk about it."

On Sunday, National Purple Heart Day, Furlong told that story once more, as did seven other local Vietnam War veterans who have received the military award. Transcripts of their interviews are part of an ongoing Library of Congress project to document the personal accounts of veterans from World War I through the Iraq War.

Vietnam War veterans in particular said many of Sunday's participants returned home without a homecoming. Instead, they felt pressure to swallow the horrors of warfare and get on with the reality of civilian life. The Veterans History Project, they say, is now immortalizing their experiences after decades of suffocation.

"It dawned on me that veterans don't go out there and tell these stories," Furlong said. "That's a disservice to the people who didn't come back. That's a disservice to the people I'll always remember being 20 years old. I'm their voice."

[Bend Bulletin](#)

(reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune*)



Purple Heart recipients tell of sacrifice: 'They shed blood for their country'

By Marion Renault / Chicago Tribune
Published Aug 13, 2016 at 12:02AM

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[PCMA Convene](#)

GIVING BACK

Purple Heart Recipients Share Their Stories at NCRA'S Annual Event

How the National Court Reporter's Association helps preserve stories from the battlefield.

Nancy Hopp's father was on his deathbed when he told her about the wounds he suffered in World War II. He had rarely discussed his combat experiences, but as pancreatic cancer consumed his 83-year-old body, he shared the entire story. How he and his buddies were trapped in a barn in Metz, France. How some of them were picked off by snipers as they tried to escape. How he was shot in the lower back, his body riddled with shrapnel.

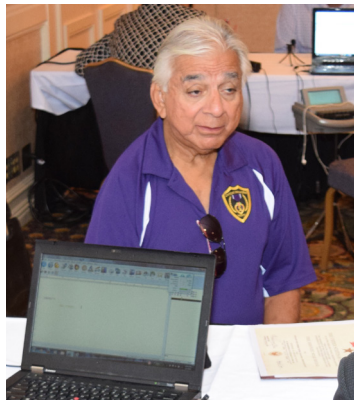
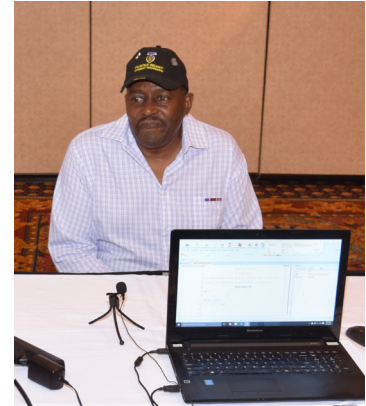
"It was the first time I had heard the story from start to finish," said Hopp, a court reporter in St. Louis. "He talked about how he was in a constant state of fear during the war, and how he would hold his rifle with a rosary wrapped around his finger. I think he wouldn't allow himself to die until he had shared his story."



At the National Court Reporters Association's (NCRA) 2016 Convention & Expo in Chicago this past August, Hopp helped other veterans tell their own stories. She and a team of fellow court reporters

PURPLE HEART DAY TESTIMONIALS

“Thank you for the opportunity to be a participant in this endeavor. I am amazed at what your organization is doing for the veterans and do appreciate the efforts of all that are involved.” – *Allen Bush*



“As you know, the Vietnam Vets were not treated very well when we came back and it was great to get some recognition after all these years. ... I hope your organization will continue to recognize all veterans, especially the Purple Heart Recipients. Again, I want to thank you all and thanks for listening.” – *Tom Vargas*

“It was an honor to participate ... Many friends nominated me for the Medal of Honor, which was quite touching. But I think overall my message that this was being done for those who can no longer speak for themselves was well received. That was my intent. I speak today for Mike Nathe, Ernie Gallatdo, Mie Simpson, Steve Whire, and so many others and not for my own ego. They are always first and foremost on my mind. Thank you again for this opportunity.” – *Jim Furlong*



HARD-OF-HEARING HEROES PROJECT

NCRF has established a new program that combines its current work with the VHP and the profession's work with the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Hearing loss can make it difficult to interact with others, and, to aid in communication, some highly skilled stenographic court reporters with specialized training, usually called CART captioners, have developed a system to take down the spoken word and translate it to the written word through Communications Access Realtime Translation (CART). CART is recognized as an auxiliary aid by the Americans with Disabilities Act and provides those with hearing loss a verbatim transcript of live speech, including live events, classroom sessions, meetings, and more. CART would even allow veterans with profound hearing loss to be interviewed for the VHP with questions and answers appearing on a computer screen in front of the person in real time.



While there are many oral history programs, to NCRF's knowledge, the Hard-of-Hearing Heroes Project would be the first devoted to interviewing veterans with hearing loss. This is increasingly important because hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears) are two of the most common service injuries (U.S. Veterans Administration), 2.3 million veterans are either currently receiving compensation or treatment for hearing loss (Hearing Loss Association of America), and 60 percent of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer some form of hearing loss (Hearing Health Foundation).

Through this project, NCRF will capture the stories of veterans with hearing loss, who may have otherwise not been interviewed, by hosting VHP Days to interview multiple veterans concurrently, as well as encourage court reporters, firms, state associations, and schools to do the same.

GET INVOLVED

Veterans and Hearing Loss Organizations

If you are a war veteran, or an organization with veteran members, NCRF wants your help! NCRF is looking for war veterans with hearing loss for the Hard-of-Hearing Heroes Project, and any other war veterans for the VHP.

Court reporters, captioners, and interviewers

Each veteran's interview requires an interviewer to ask the questions, a stenographic court reporter to transcribe, and a captioner to provide realtime for the veteran (if the veteran needs it). NCRF members can earn professional development credits (PDCs) for transcribing or captioning interviews.

Sponsors

There are sponsorship opportunities available for companies and individuals interested in supporting VHP Days and the Hard-of-Hearing Heroes Project. Sponsors receive considerable promotion in return for their support, including their logo on signage at the event, recognition in press releases, and a priority opportunity to participate with the interviews.



The 2016 Purple Heart VHP Day was sponsored in part by Larry Hunt, president of AristoCAT.

Media

NCRF is happy to grant media access to cover its participation in the VHP, its Hard-of-Hearing Heroes Project, and its VHP Day events.

Contact April Weiner, aweiner@ncra.org or 703-584-9052, for more information.