STANDING PROUD

Saluting the Heroes Among Us
Thank you for your sacrifice and service

“Veterans are the air we breathe; they’re the reason we have a democracy. They give their eyes, arms and legs for us. I can’t think of a better reason to honor them than that.”

— Tomorrow magazine, Nov. 11, 1999

This poignant tribute from a UAW Local 868 member at the Atlanta Parts Distribution Center set the tone for our first Special Veterans Issue of Tomorrow magazine. That was nearly two years before the unthinkable 9/11 terrorist attacks that changed our lives forever.

Since then, many more men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces have made sacrifices — often the ultimate sacrifice — to preserve our freedom and protect the homeland against threats by faceless terrorists or traditional armies.

Many FCA US employees from union and management are among them, and some continue to answer the call to duty as war still rages in the Middle East and we publish our 12th Special Veterans Issue of Tomorrow.

It’s our way of saying “thank you for your service” to them and all other employees, retirees and family members who have served in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and other past conflicts.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to our citizen soldiers and their families. As members of the National Guard or Reserves, they and other “Weekend Warriors” have played an increasingly vital role defending our country since 9/11.

Last spring we were reminded of the Guard’s presence in the Middle East with deployment of an additional 350 members of the 127th Wing and 12 A-10 Thunderbolt II ground-attack jets from Selfridge Air National Guard Base near Detroit.

The airmen were deployed as part of Operation Inherent Resolve to help in the fight against the Islamic State terrorist group in Iraq and Syria. Over the last 13 years, more than 23,000 Guardsmen from Selfridge have been deployed.

Multiple deployments have become commonplace, with profound effects on work and family lives. We’re proud to tell the stories of several FCA US employees who serve in the Guard or Reserves on pages 8-11.

Throughout this special issue, we recognize contributions made by the Heroes Among Us. We also salute the efforts by veterans and non-veterans alike to support our warriors, whether it’s participating in Stand Downs to benefit homeless vets, building wheelchair ramps for disabled vets or sending care packages to troops overseas.

On distant battlefields and on the home front, you’re answering the call.

Space in this special issue doesn’t permit us to include all FCA US employees who deserve recognition for serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. If you’re a vet or current member of the National Guard or Reserves, or know coworkers who are, we’d also like to tell these stories in future issues of Tomorrow. Please send us a brief story suggestion and contact information to tomorrow@ucntc.org.
**Women in Uniform**

Despite recent victories, it’s been a long road for women longing to serve their country on the front lines.

**Citizen Soldiers**

When duty calls, it’s a juggling act for Guardsmen and Reservists balancing their military and private sector careers – with their families landing somewhere in between.

**Supporting Our Warriors**

In recent years, homelessness among America’s veterans population has reached epidemic levels. FCA employees are making a difference in the lives of struggling vets.

**Heroes Among Us**

They’re our friends and colleagues, fellow FCA employees and the military heroes among us. These are their stories.

**Dodge WC54 Ambulance**

Popularized on the hit television series M*A*S*H, the World War II-era Dodge ambulance was built by UAW Local 140 members at Warren Truck Assembly.

**Wounds of War**

With a severe spike in closed-head injuries during the Iraq and Afghan wars, FCA employees are helping vets recover from their “silent injuries” on and off the battlefield.

**Bravest of the Brave**

The Medal of Honor has been awarded to a mere 3,468 recipients over 26 conflicts across multiple centuries. See how one vet joined the ranks of the bravest of the brave.
Valor knows no gender,” President Barack Obama declared on January 24, 2013, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff lifted a ban on women in combat. He said the decision is “another step toward fulfilling our nation’s founding ideals of fairness and equality.”

On that same day, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said it’s every citizen’s responsibility to protect the nation. “If they (women) can meet the qualifications for the job,” he said, “then they should have the right to serve.”

Many women throughout the country had been waiting years to hear those words. UAW Local 685 member Lois Bell, a 21-year U.S. Air Force veteran, says women have always been up to the task. “I think if a woman is given a shot she can do it,” says Bell.

Bell joined the military in 1984 and served four years active duty. She then went into the reserves until she retired in 2005 as a tech sergeant. “If she can do it, then let her do it,” she says. “If she can’t do it, at least give her a chance to try.”

U.S. Army veteran Carol Tyler, a UAW Local 1166 member with 18 years’ seniority at Kokomo Casting, couldn’t agree more. “If it’s the female’s choice and she wants to go to the fighting line, I don’t have a problem with it,” she says. “I think it should be up to the individual whether she wants to go or not.”

Tyler joined the service in 1979 and was honorably discharged two years later when she got pregnant. She was placed on inactive reserves until she went to an active reserve unit in 1983. Tyler
served until she retired in 2008 as a sergeant first class. In all, she served for 27 years.

From January 2013, when the decision was made to lift the combat rule, until March 2015, 91,600 positions opened up for women in the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines. That amounts to 73 percent of the positions in the Army, 99 percent in the Air Force, 92 percent in the Navy and 67 percent in the Marine Corps, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

But there still is a long way to go. The GAO also reports that as of March 2015, more than 245,000 positions remained closed to women.

“We go through the same basic training as everyone else,” says Bell, who has worked at Kokomo Transmission for about 18 years. “Men and women are all in the same training courses. We have to learn the same weapons, and we should have the same opportunities.”

Women may not have always been recognized for their service, but they’ve actually been part of the military for centuries. According to the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), women served in traditional roles in the military as far back as the 1700s, as cooks, laundresses, nurses and seamstresses.

The DOD also notes that during the American Revolution, some women even served in combat alongside their husbands.

“If it’s the female’s choice and she wants to go to the fighting line, I don’t have a problem with it.”

But it wasn’t until May 1942 that the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps was created, officially recognizing women in the military. It was converted to full status as the Women’s Army Corps more than a year later.

That’s when longtime Detroit resident Emma Didlake decided to serve her country. At a time when most women stayed home, the 38-year-old wife and mother of five defied racism and segregation to join the Army in 1943. She held the rank of private and served as a state-side driver for about seven months during World War II.

As the oldest living veteran at age 110, Didlake was honored at the White House in July 2015 by President Obama. “She’s a true American hero,” Obama tweeted after visiting with her in the Oval office. The president also said she’s “… a great reminder of not only the sacrifices that the greatest generation made on our behalf, but also the kind of trailblazing that our women veterans made, African American veterans who helped to integrate our Armed Services.” Didlake died on August 16, 2015.

Back in the ’40s, women were trained as drivers like Didlake, switchboard operators, mechanics, postal clerks, stenographers, clerk-typists and seamstresses. They also maintained and repaired some weapons, but were not trained to use them until
1978. It wasn’t until the 1980s that women were actually issued firearms.

The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 brought more women into the military when it authorized regular and reserve status for women. However, their assignments were still heavily restricted as the act limited the proportion of women in the military to two percent of the enlisted force.

More milestones were achieved from 1969 to 1978 when the services opened their Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) programs to women and Congress granted women access to the military academies. A statute was also amended to permit women to serve permanently on ships not assigned to combat missions.

But over the next 10 years, women’s roles in the military were still limited, and in 1988 the so-called “Risk Rule” was adopted by the DOD. The department-wide policy “excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the units they supported.”

Throughout the ‘90s, women made further inroads, but not necessarily ground combat. In 1991 and 1993, respectively, Congress removed statutory prohibitions on women flying combat aircraft and serving on certain ships engaged in combat missions. In January 1994, the Secretary of Defense rescinded the “Risk Rule” and allowed women to be assigned to almost all positions except, of course, those that involved direct ground combat.

The big win for women came in 2013 when the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff rescinded the direct ground combat definition and assignment rule, giving the order to open positions closed to women by January 1, 2016.

“I would have chosen combat in a heartbeat, not a problem,” says Bell. “If you go into a job that requires possibly being deployed somewhere, you go into that job knowing what you’re getting into.”

Adds Tyler: “I think we’ve come a long way. Females are progressing much better in the military; we now have more female officers and more opportunities.” Tyler says being in the military was hard, but she says it was worth it. “It’s mind over matter — you make the military, don’t let the military make you,” she says.

Bell agrees, saying, “Don’t let anyone say that you can’t do it. If that’s where your heart is, you do it, you go for it and be the best you can be.”

Two women recently proved they are the best they can be. They made history.

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**Milestones for Women in the Military**

1700s ✫ Some women served in combat during the American Revolution.

1943 ✫ Women’s Army Corps is created from Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps.

1948 ✫ Regular and reserve status authorized for women.

1969-1972 ✫ Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) programs opened to women.
August 21, 2015, when they became the first female soldiers to graduate from the Army’s Ranger School in Fort Benning, Georgia. At first, their futures remained unclear. Unlike the male graduates, the two women couldn’t apply to join the elite special operations force, the 75th Ranger Regiment. They were waiting on the Pentagon to make final decisions about what combat roles women would be allowed to fill.

That decision came on December 3, 2015. Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that all U.S. military combat positions are now opened to women. The decision allows women to fill about 220,000 jobs that are now limited to men. They include infantry, armor, reconnaissance and some special operations units.

“This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards,” Carter said, “women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before. They’ll be able to drive tanks, give orders, lead infantry soldiers into combat.” He also said that women can now vie for spots on Navy SEALs teams and other elite units.

In a statement issued after Carter’s announcement, President Obama said: “One of the qualities that makes America’s Armed Forces the best in the world is that we draw on the talents and skills of our people. … As Commander in Chief, I know that this change, like others before it, will again make our military even stronger.”

The process of integrating women into combat roles will begin in early 2016.

What do you think?

Should women be able to serve in all direct ground combat positions, such as armor, infantry and artillery? To register your vote, go to the news section of the UAW-Chrysler NTC website at www.uaw-chrysler.com.

Sgt. Amanda Carrasco, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, crosses the finish line during the 25th Infantry Division Pre-Ranger Female Screening, in Hawaii. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Tramel Garrett.)

1975 • Women admitted to service academies.
1978 • Women permitted to serve on ships not assigned to combat missions.
1988 • “Risk Rule” issued, keeping high-risk noncombat positions and occupations closed to women.
1991 • Women allowed to fly combat aircraft.
1993 • Women allowed to serve on ships engaged in combat missions.
1994 • “Risk Rule” rescinded allowing women to be assigned to nearly all positions except ground combat.
2013 • Current closed positions and occupations directed to be open to women by January 1, 2016.
The terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, forever changed America. Nearly every segment of our society has been affected, but especially the Armed Services, which have shouldered a vast majority of the sacrifices required to respond to the attacks.

And in these days of reduced active-duty forces, those sacrifices have fallen heavily on citizen soldiers – the National Guard troops and Army Reservists whose service continues to place extraordinary demands on both their careers and their personal lives.

“Weekend Warriors” don’t just work weekends anymore.

In recent years, Guard and Reserve units have been called upon again and again for extended or multiple tours of duty in overseas combat zones and in the U.S., backfilling military roles as full-time units were deployed. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, 80 percent of all members of the Army National Guard were deployed between the September 11 attacks and 2005. Six years later, the trend continued, with half the troops deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq at that time coming from the National Guard and Reserves, many on at least their second deployment, according to National Public Radio. Today, the trend continues, with many state Guards reporting that recent years have been the busiest in recent memory.
Chief Warrant Officer Five Tom Holly, a helicopter pilot with the Joint Forces Headquarters, Aviation Unit of the Michigan Army National Guard, says spending upwards of 60 hours a month devoted to reserve duties is not unusual. His unit's training regimen frequently cuts into his family life and job as a Human Resources Manager at the Chrysler Technology Center (CTC).

“We do miss a lot of big events. We do everything we can to schedule training around sporting events and holidays, but sometimes there's no way around it,” Holly says. “And for our spouses, family and children – and employers – allowing us to serve while missing out on some of these things means a lot to us.”

But he says relying on the Reserve and Guard for overseas duty has strategic military advantages, particularly because many Reserve and Guard troops have worked together longer than their counterparts in most active duty units.

“There is a tremendous amount of experience in the National Guard,” he says. “There's a sense of continuity there, and with the amount of hours that they fly, they're very good at what they do.”

Holly joined the Guard after completing his active duty tour in 1984. In that time, he was deployed to Kosovo in 2005, supporting the 34th Infantry unit, and Iraq in 2010, providing air support for the 1st Infantry Division. He was just recently placed back on active duty, and is on standby in Lansing, Michigan, until he receives his orders for deployment once again.

Ronnie DeWeese, a Major in the Army Reserve and a Machine Repairman at Kokomo Casting, also says being active in the Reserve has meant he's missed plenty of family events at his house.

“I have 16-year-old twins and a 10-year-old daughter,” says the UAW Local 1166 member. “It can be tough missing some of those big adolescent moments they experience because I'm away training.”

DeWeese has been in the Reserve since 1988, and currently serves as the Commander of D Company, 412th Civil Affairs Battalion. In his 27 years of service, DeWeese has been called to active duty five times, serving in Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia, providing Basic Training for the units at bases in those states.

While being away from home for extended periods can be rough on service members, it can also be tough on the families that stay behind. Barb Choate’s husband, Ken, is in Kuwait with the Michigan Air National Guard, providing air support for ground troops fighting Islamic militants.

“Not living on base makes it especially difficult,” Choate says. “Because of Ken’s civilian job, we don’t live anywhere near base, and that limits the resources available to help me cope. On base, there are support groups to help, or at least a group of people who are in the same situation as you.”

Ken Choate is a member of the 127th Wing, and is based out of Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township, Michigan, which has been one of the most active bases in the Guard. It has deployed more than 23,000 guardsmen over the past 13 years primarily
in the Middle East, supporting the base’s A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft.

Barb Choate says being active in the Guard means that even when her husband is home, he needs to think beyond his daily life as a metal model maker and UAW 412 member at CTC; he always has his Guard unit on his mind.

“Ken looks at the big picture a lot and realizes he needs to be very careful about his health and the decisions he makes when he’s at home,” she says. “Not only do you have your military career to worry about, but you’re responsible for everyone else in your unit, too.”

Choate enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1986, and served as a full-time soldier through the Gulf War. After some time off, Choate’s civilian career started to take off, so he joined the Guard in 2009. As part of the 127th Wing, Choate maintains the guns on the unit’s fleet of A-10 Warthog planes in the fight against the Islamic State. Earlier this year, Choate was deployed to Kuwait.

Thankfully, Ken’s supervisor helps him balance his work and military responsibilities. “The company and the UAW have been absolutely wonderful in allowing him to serve his country,” says Barb Choate.

Without that support, balancing their military and civilian careers would be difficult, if not impossible in some cases, for members of the Guard and Reserves. “FCA US has been very supportive of my duties,” DeWeese adds. “Even on short notice for training exercises or anything, they have been very accommodating and very supportive.”

That support from union and management also extends to pay and benefits. Since the 9/11 terror attacks, UAW-represented employees whose Guard or Reserve units are mobilized have been eligible to receive short-term military duty pay. It makes up the difference between their military pay and their civilian income.

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Evolution of the Citizen Soldier in America

Due to the very nature of the Revolutionary War, the entire revolutionary army was made up of soldiers who held jobs on Tuesday and went to war on Wednesday. This marked the birth of what would become the National Guard, a concept literally as old as the country itself.

★ 1775 ★ Revolutionists rise up against British, launching Revolutionary War and enlisting a citizen soldier force.

★ 1903 ★ The success of the Spanish-American war led to new U.S.-owned properties across the world that needed to be protected. The National Guard is formed.

★ 1916 ★ The entire National Guard is positioned along the Mexican border, protecting the Southwest from Pancho Villa, who led an attack on Columbus, New Mexico.

★ 1917 ★ Three of the first five U.S. Army divisions to fight in World War I were from the National Guard.
This financial safety net, established in the National Agreement between the UAW and FCA US, also applies to health care and group life insurance benefits provided in the contract.

As tangible benefits of their service, these citizen soldiers have an opportunity to learn new skills and values that can be applied to their jobs at FCA US. For Ken Choate, welding skills he learned in the military helped him succeed at his job, fabricating metal models and prototypes.

“Ken learned to weld when he was in the Marine Corps before becoming part of the Guard,” Barb Choate says. “It is because of that training that he is now able to build metal prototype models for FCA US today. He brought a skill that not many people have along with him.”

For DeWeese, it’s a matter of military values and discipline that positively impact his life at home.

“The Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage apply to every aspect of life,” he says.

Despite their sacrifices, added career pressures and missed birthday parties, serving their country – and being part of something much larger than themselves – is a source of great pride for these military men.

“I have a tremendous amount of pride in what I do,” says Holly, “and having the ability to serve, especially after 9/11, makes me very proud.”

Barb Choate, who is fiercely proud of her husband’s service, offers a “big picture” perspective: The benefits to our country and our freedom are always worth the sacrifice.

“Does it make it any easier when he leaves?” Choate asks. “Oh my goodness, no. But it can only give me a sense of pride. It makes you well up inside.”

Having lived the sacrifices of balancing work and active duty, they all say they’d do it over again.

“In a heartbeat,” DeWeese says. “Absolutely.”

Ken Choate loads the payload on an A-10 Warthog in Kuwait.

**1940** National Guard was called into active duty after the first-ever peacetime draft, to prepare for World War II.

**1947** Air National Guard created in wake of World War II.

**1950** 138,600 Guardsmen are sent to Korea.

**1968** Eight National Guard units sent to South Vietnam.

**1974** The end of the draft means the citizen soldier units are relied upon more than ever.

**1990** Gulf War brings the largest mobilization of citizen soldiers since the Korean War.

**1992** Hurricane Andrew brings National Guard’s focus back to homefront efforts.

**2001** Since 9/11, more than 760,000 National Guard soldiers & airmen and 300,000 Army reservists have been deployed through 2015.

Source: 2015 National Guard Bureau Posture Statement
HOMELESS AT HOME: A ‘War Zone’ for Veterans

There are a few hard and sad truths about homeless veterans.

First, there are a lot of them. On any given night, there are nearly 50,000 homeless veterans in America, according to a 2014 estimate from the U.S. Veterans Administration. That’s despite a 2010 White House initiative that claims to have cut the numbers by one-third over the past five years.

Second, homelessness isn’t a problem that can be easily cured. Rather, homelessness is a symptom of deeper issues in a veteran’s life that became a downward spiral forcing the vet onto the streets or into temporary housing.

Once a veteran hits rock bottom, it’s anyone’s bet whether they’ll overcome the issues that got them there or if they’ll give up. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that 18 veterans die by suicide every day in the U.S.

Determined to make a difference, UAW Veterans Committees at FCA US facilities and individual members are helping to combat this epidemic of homelessness among veterans.

Outside the Detroit Rescue Mission is a line of homeless veterans that stretches around the block and down the sidewalk along Forest Avenue on the city’s east side. Inside, hundreds more are getting a warm meal and a break from the streets at the 2015 Southeastern Michigan Veterans Stand Down.

In that line is Darrell Albright, who spent two years in Vietnam. Most days, he wanders the streets of Detroit looking for food and a place to stay at night. Usually he finds refuge in an abandoned home or apartment building.

“Being homeless is worse than fighting in a war zone,” he says. “You wake up, find some way to get a meal. But at night, that’s when the battles really start” as drug gangs and other violent men roam the dark streets.

Despite the chaos, Albright still attempts to keep abreast of the social service agencies and other providers to improve his situation the best he can.

Successfully navigating that maze of support services for veterans is the basis for the Stand Down. It’s one of dozens of such annual events across the country where UAW members do their part to support vets.

“Stand down is a military term that means taking exhausted troops out of the line of fire and giving them a break,” says Southeastern Michigan Veterans Stand Down, Inc. President Norm “Gunny” Wilcox.

On this sunny October day, inside the mission, some 700 local vets will get a break – a hot lunch and an opportunity to find a new way forward. Meanwhile, a host of service providers and public servants are also inside, offering help with everything from clearing up traffic tickets...
In just two years, businesswoman Sandy Bower has built one of the more successful facilities to help homeless veterans. Vets Returning Home in Roseville, Michigan, is designed to help their “guests” overcome the underlying issues that led them to become homeless in the first place – in order to help them get off the streets and back into a place they can call home.

“They should really roll out the red carpet for these vets,” says Local 140 volunteer Angela Mumin. “My parents and brothers served, so this is my way to help. I feel proud.” Her group is unboxing hundreds of pairs of jeans, boots, hats and other items to help homeless vets survive the Michigan winter.

Army Reserve veteran Sheila Holmes, a UAW Local 7 retiree from Jefferson North Assembly, spent the day helping to register attendees and route them through the maze of tables and kiosks inside. Holmes, who rose to the rank of sergeant first class in the Reserve, recognizes many attendees, and she understands their challenges, she says, “from walking in their boots” for 22 years.

“This (event) brings valuable resources to them, where they need it – the physical, emotional – to get them to the next level,” she says. What that next level is, Holmes and others hope, will be a path toward self-sufficiency and a place they can call home.

Among them are UAW members from FCA US facilities.

“I cannot say enough about Sandy and the folks there,” says retired U.S. Marine Alan D. Opra, a UAW Local 961 member who serves on the UAW National Veterans Advisory Committee. “She’s tough as nails, but she’s also so committed to the vets that there’s rarely a dry eye whenever she talks about them.”

From Bower’s perspective, it’s all about saving lives, as those who come knocking at all hours of the day and night often are “broken and desperate.” Many have lost everything and don’t even know where to begin to turn things around.

“For many of these vets, the military had been their entire support structure,” Bower says. “Some were just kids when they joined the military and never learned the life skills many take for granted.”

Housing approximately 30 veterans at a given time, each has a custom-tailored action plan designed to untangle the barriers between them and their independence. They’ll learn to write a résumé, practice interviewing for jobs and sort through a room full of clothes to wear for job interviews. Top that off with balanced meals, mentoring and regular medical checkups, and it’s clear that Bower has spent a lot of time refining the process.

The center’s results-based approach and lean overhead attracted the interest and support from the UAW Region 1 Veterans Council. Members from UAW Local 412 coordinate an annual fundraiser and regularly donate goods to Bower’s facility.

“They’re very honest and very giving,” says John Wuerth, Local 412 Veterans Committee Co-Chair. “We want charities that give back as much as possible and they do that unselfishly.”

Despite being staffed with volunteers (including Bower), the facility has an annual budget of $125,000 and is constantly at risk of running out of funds. “Al (Opra) and those guys understand the plight of veterans and they spend endless hours trying to make a difference,” she says. “Sometimes that means keeping the doors open and the lights on.”

To volunteer or support Southeastern Michigan Veterans Stand Down, Inc., go to: www.4vets.org, or call 248-808-0929.

For more information or to donate, visit vetsreturninghome.org, or call 586-285-5606.

Vets Returning Home founder and volunteer, Sandy Bower and volunteer Ron Pittman (center) talk with guest veteran Frank Bell.

Helping Vets ‘return home’

by Todd Davis

To volunteer or support Southeastern Michigan Veterans Stand Down, Inc., go to: www.4vets.org, or call 248-808-0929.
Vietnam War veteran Mike Goodpaster is on a mission to help other veterans who fall on hard times and often wind up destitute, without a roof over their heads.

So no one had to twist the UAW Local 1264 Veterans Committee Chairman’s arm to get behind the inaugural Boot and Sock Drive at Sterling Stamping. The drive produced more than 700 pairs of new boots and 2,300 pairs of new or unused socks to benefit homeless and other needy veterans in the Detroit area.

“Homelessness among veterans is a staggering problem,” Goodpaster says. “America is the only country in the world I know of that doesn’t take care of its veterans. It often treats them like garbage after all they’ve done to defend our freedom.”

George Soyad, operator of a shoe and clothing store inside the plant, was the inspiration for the Boot and Sock Drive, first held in the fall of 2014 and repeated again this year. He wanted to donate boots to a good cause and shared the idea with UAW Health and Safety Representative Ken Gross Jr., who thought of the Veterans Committee right away.

Goodpaster loved the idea and in less than a week Local 1264 members contributed 2,300 pairs of socks to go along with more than 700 pairs of boots donated by Soyad.

“I knew the Veterans Committee would be able to get these boots to veterans who could use them,” says Soyad, whose store sells work boots, gloves, coveralls and other clothing items workers use on the job.

The Veterans Committee presented Soyad with an award for his donation on behalf of Sterling Stamping employees and Local 1264. “George has really taken the needs of homeless veterans to heart,” says Goodpaster, who served in the U.S. Navy from 1969-1972. He was a forward gunner on a river patrol boat in Vietnam.

Goodpaster and fellow Veterans Committee members John Yamuni and Sam McCree, along with Gross, delivered the footwear to the Michigan Veterans Foundation (MVF) in Detroit, just in time for Christmas last year.

Volunteers from the Local 1264 Veterans Committee deliver some of the 700 pairs of new boots to the Michigan Veterans Foundation in Detroit on behalf of employees at the Sterling Stamping Plant.

“I was heart-wrenching to see these people who put their lives on the line for us, standing in line for food,” Gross says the visit to the MVF, which operates a temporary home for veterans, was unforgettable. “It was heart-wrenching to see these people who put their lives on the line for us, standing in line for food. They had fallen on hard times and were desperate to have the simple things in life that most of us take for granted.”

With support from Gross and Soyad, the Veterans Committee conducted another Sock Drive this fall. Based on last year’s success, they raised their goal to 3,000 pairs of new or unused socks for homeless vets.

The Veterans Committee’s outreach also includes a dinner it hosts for about 50 homeless vets on Memorial Day and the same number on Veterans Day.

“That’s the least we can do to show that we care and thank them for their service,” Goodpaster says. “Our committee’s top priority at the present time is to help homeless vets in any way we can.”
by Kimberlee Charchan

“It’s been amazing,” says U.S. Army veteran John Stewart, who received a brand new home in Kokomo, Indiana, thanks to volunteers from UAW Local 685 and Habitat for Humanity. “It gives you a crazy sense of community and of camaraderie in the community.”

Up to 90 Local 685 members from the four Kokomo-area FCA US facilities helped build Stewart’s home on South Bell Street last spring. The 1,400 square foot, three bedroom ranch took 11 days to complete.

“It was an awesome experience,” says Local 685 member Gary Rhinebarger, a forklift operator at Tipton Transmission. Having served in the Army (1982-86), he spearheaded the project to help a fellow veteran.

“I think all the UAW Locals need to get involved in something like this. The work was hard, but the community support we received was great.”

Those who couldn’t work on the build, helped in other ways. UAW Local 685 member Tammy Mohr, (who’s helped veterans since she was 10), raised money from raffle and T-shirt sales at local FCA US transmission plants in Kokomo and Tipton.

“It’s so nice when people are really giving when it comes to veterans,” says Mohr. “They (veterans) deserve everything we can do for them.”

Even local retailers pitched in. The goal of $60,000 was surpassed by $10,000 – enough to build a two-car garage and furnish the entire house.

Stewart spent two tours in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2010. He helped build military bases and taught the locals basic construction skills. He and his daughter Bailey moved into their new home in August. Stewart says it was an emotional time. “Tears, lots of tears,” he says. “When we first went into the house Bailey just broke down, she just couldn’t stop crying. It was pretty intense. This gift truly is overwhelming.”

Rhinebarger, who was a specialist fourth class with the 84th Combat Engineers in Nuremburg, Germany, feels Stewart’s challenges and was proud to give up his vacation time for the project.

‘As Americans, we need to do more for our veterans,” he said. “They’ll go to fight for our American dreams and our freedom, but they come home and they cannot experience that dream because they can’t find a job. They should be able to enjoy that American dream like everybody else.”
Carlton Pace is a staunch believer that actions speak louder than words, especially when it comes to reaching out to fellow veterans in distress.

A UAW Local 889 member at the Chrysler Technology Center (CTC), Pace has earned his stripes as a veterans’ advocate through his work on the UAW Region I Veterans Council. He was recently elected as its chairperson.

Pace is one of four UAW-FCA employees who hold leadership positions on the council, one of the UAW’s most active veterans groups. Its outreach ranges from sponsoring an Annual Veterans Car Show fundraiser and organizing clothing drives for homeless vets, to supporting the John D. Dingell Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Detroit.

“I love being surrounded by people who want to help other people,” says Pace, who served in the U.S. Air Force from 1971-1975. “I’m not a real spiritual guy, but it fills a void in my life to work with veterans in need. They’re counting on us and deserve our support more than ever.”

Like many vets, Pace feels a special bond with others who have donned military uniforms. His passion is matched only by the pride he takes in standing up for veterans. He especially relishes his frequent visits with patients at the Dingell VA Medical Center.

“A lot of them don’t have many visitors, if any. That’s why they give the love back to you, and why you keep returning again and again,” says Pace, Local 889’s Health and Safety Representative at CTC. “It’s like food for your soul, because the guys are so grateful.”

Volunteers from the Council interact with patients in many ways. They conduct coffee hours and bingo games; they decorate the hospital for Christmas; they stage a summer carnival; they host an Oktoberfest celebration; and they make Valentine’s Day a special occasion.

Another labor of love for Pace is serving as captain of the Region I Honor Guard. It provides graveside military honors for veterans, including UAW members whose families request an honor guard. The 11-member unit also attends services for vets at funeral homes, presents the colors at special events and marches in parades.

A photograph of Pace was on the cover of the 2013 Veterans Special Issue of Tomorrow, which featured a story about the Honor Guard.

During his four years in the Air Force, Pace was an aircraft mechanic and did his part to make B-52 bombers and F-4 Phantom fighter-bombers ready for combat in the Vietnam War. He also maintained other aircraft and missiles while stationed in Georgia, Guam, Thailand and Arizona with the U.S. Strategic and Tactical Air Commands. He mustered out as a sergeant.

Pace has been active in the Region I Veterans Council since 1991. He credits the UAW for giving him the opportunity and the inspiration to serve and honor other vets.

“If it wasn’t for the UAW,” he says, “I wouldn’t be involved. From the beginning, I have experienced the same camaraderie with union brothers and sisters dedicated to helping veterans, that I felt with members of my Air Force unit when carrying out a combat mission. It has been a perfect fit.”

Other UAW-FCA employees who hold leadership positions on the UAW Region I Veterans Council are Dawn Frydenlund, Recording Secretary, UAW Local 1264 at Sterling Stamping; Donnie Phipps, Treasurer, UAW Local 212 at FCA US Transport, and Charles Scott, Sergeant At Arms, UAW Local 961 at Marysville Axle.
UAW Local 412 vet ramps up union efforts to give disabled comrade mobility

When Roy Lee and fellow UAW Local 412 members heard that Jim Sims, a U.S. Air Force veteran and skilled tradesman, needed help building a wheelchair ramp at his suburban Detroit house, it was a call to action they couldn’t resist.

Having teamed with the United Way for Southeastern Michigan and the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO to build wheelchair ramps for needy recipients in the past, the group quickly got to work to build the ramp for their union brother and Chrysler Technology Center (CTC) employee.

“Building wheelchair access ramps is all about us giving back to the community,” Lee says of his local’s favorite cause to provide barrier-free access for disabled veterans.

The ramp built for Sims, who is wheelchair-bound due to health reasons, was part of the United Way’s Ray West Memorial Ramp Project.

Lee’s leadership in the community was recognized when he received the 2014 Bernie Firestone Labor Volunteer Award. Named for Bernard “Bernie” Firestone, a prominent labor leader, social activist and advocate for those facing oppression or injustice, the award recognizes the outstanding community service initiatives of a rank-and-file member.

“The UAW provides a great platform for community service, along with the support and resources to make positive things happen,” says Lee, who currently is a UAW WCM specialist at CTC.

“For me, it’s a chance to bring my talented UAW brothers and sisters together with organizations that share our views, in support of our military heroes who have made sacrifices to preserve our freedom.”

Helping to ease inconvenience for physically challenged veterans is important to the 18-year FCA US employee, as Lee served in the U.S. Navy from 1990-1994. Initially deployed in the Persian Gulf, he also spent significant time in Somalia.

“Veterans and Community Service Committees of our UAW locals offer many ways to get involved,” he says. “Through the UAW, I can connect with veterans in need and I am able to put my leadership skills to work to help make good things happen.”

Lee’s call to action is encouraging UAW co-workers to join him, as many hands make for lighter work. “I find community service work to be not just productive, but personally rewarding as well.” ■
HEROES AMONG US

TOMORROW is proud to once again salute our UAW-FCA US co-workers who have answered the call to defend America as members of the Armed Services. No matter what uniform they wore or where they served, they are all heroes who have earned our respect and gratitude. We hope you are inspired by their stories that follow. They may remind you of military heroes you know.

JENA LAWSON-LATIF

U.S. Army, 1985-1994
Specialist Fourth Class
HQ U.S. Army Europe
Intelligence Automation and Support Division
Receiving Clerk
UAW Local 685
Indiana Transmission I

“The skills and training that military service offered made me a better job candidate when I rejoined the civilian workforce.”

The time I spent in the U.S. Army proved to be time well spent. I served my country, carried on my family’s tradition of military service and gained valuable experience that prepared me for success once I returned to civilian life.

I enlisted in the Army in 1985 because I wanted to serve my country and learn new skills, and that’s exactly how things worked out. Today, I’m a receiving clerk at Indiana Transmission I in Kokomo, Indiana, and a member of UAW Local 685 with combined seniority of 20 years.

I’m one of four members of my family to wear a military uniform. My father Joseph Sr. served for two years in the U.S. Air Force and 20 years in the Army; my older sister Eileen was in the Army and my twin brother Joseph Jr. retired after 20 years of Army service.

I began my basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and eventually deployed to Heidelberg, Germany, where I was assigned to U.S. Army Europe Headquarters. Having attained a top security clearance, I served as a communications technician under the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, rerouting orders and dispatches across military bases worldwide.

The skills and training that military service offered made me a better job candidate when I rejoined the civilian workforce. Learning teamwork and enduring difficult challenges made me stronger and a better team player today.

My military background even helped me become an entrepreneur in my spare time. I started my own business creating and selling jewelry of my own design. While factory work can be challenging, just as military service can be difficult, so too is running your own business.

While my Army background helps me endure the challenges of life whether they’re jobs, people, or personal situations – it’s my mom and dad who taught me to never give up and to always think things through, and to put forth my personal best, because failure is never an option.

And, I learned to be all that I could be.
As I’ve gone along in life, I always found that fostering friendships pays me back manyfold. When I was nearing the end of high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do; I just knew that college wasn’t for me. So when my friend approached me with only a few weeks left in school and asked if I would join him in the military, I jumped at the chance.

It’s hard to find any stronger friendships than the ones you create in the Marines. Almost from day one in basic, that was an experience unlike any I’d ever had, training alongside other recruits who ultimately got me through it. While enlisted in the Marine Corps, I was stationed in Keflavík, Iceland, where I met Cpl. Dan Carrier, who is now employed at Mopar® Parts in Marysville, Michigan. As part of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, we traveled the world together, seeing Italy, Turkey, Germany and more.

But the real test of friendship came on Oct. 23, 1983. I was stationed on the perimeter of Beirut International Airport when a truck loaded with explosives detonated at the barracks of the headquarters of 1/8. It was the largest non-nuclear blast ever recorded and the deadliest attack on Americans overseas since World War II. In all, I would lose 241 fellow Marines, sailors and soldiers, something I will never forget. But to this day, I remain close to the other Marines I served with. In fact, 12 of us are getting together at our retired Col. David Hough’s house in Virginia for a reunion.

I have even spent thousands of dollars painting my retired 2002 Michigan State Police Harley Davidson with a tribute to that day in Beirut. One of my favorite moments was being able to park my Harley close to the Beirut Memorial in Jacksonville, North Carolina. I have both the entrance to and the inside of that memorial painted on the saddle bags, so to be able to bring my rolling memorial so close to the original monument was a big moment.

About three years ago, a friend came through with another opportunity. Fellow 1/8 (and UAW Local 961 member) Al Opra, who was deployed in Beirut with me, called me up and said that he’d thrown my name into the mix for a job as a driver for FCA US LLC. When they called me up and asked if I was interested, I said I was, and I got the job.

I love my job and the opportunities that the UAW has offered me to be involved in the veterans’ community. Since joining the UAW, I have been appointed to the Veterans Committee Chairman's position for UAW Local 212 Veterans Committee, a responsibility I take pride in.

And just recently, I was offered another opportunity to serve, and I’m glad I took it. UAW Region 1 Veterans Council Chairperson Carlton Pace approached me with the opportunity to run on the Red, White and Blue ticket for the Financial Officer’s position on the Veterans Council. Despite my protest that I wouldn’t know where to start, Carlton pushed me in the right direction, saying I could be taught the ins and outs, and that I would be great for the position.

Long story short, I was elected and am very excited to be continuing to serve my fellow veterans through the UAW. I have also joined the Region I Honor Guard, and am very proud to be representing my fellow warriors in that capacity as well.

The UAW has really allowed me to stay involved in the military community, and continue to serve those brothers and sisters who served alongside me, including those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Along the way, I have made even more friends and hope to repay their friendship the way friends have throughout my entire life.
I’m first-generation American. My parents emigrated from Mexico. At the time, they were working in the fields — it was like slave labor. That’s why I joined the military. I wanted to go to college and I thought it would be one less mouth for my parents to feed.

After I got out of the military I wanted to find a job where they respected workers. Seeing how my parents were mistreated, working in the heat with no water, I saw the need for a union, and that’s why I’m proud to be a union member today.

I went into the U.S. Navy in July of 1995 and was discharged in July of 1998. For boot camp, I went to the Naval Station Great Lakes in Chicago. After that, I got stationed back in San Diego, my home town, on board the USS Essex, an LHD 2 amphibious assault ship. Its purpose is to deploy Marines to the beaches via helicopter and hovercraft.

I was an aviation boatswain’s mate, so I started off in the hangar and then eventually went up to the flight deck and handled aircraft. We were in charge of all the helicopters coming in. My ship was basically a small aircraft carrier for the helicopters and sometimes Harrier jets.

I liked being out to sea. Some compare it to being in a union because you get the same camaraderie, the same brotherhood as you do being in a union. It’s similar on the ship because you’re with the same people; you see them all the time, every day. So I got that feeling that I do here at UAW Local 412.

For three months, I was stationed in the Persian Gulf where we were literally staring at Kuwait right through Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. We were doing flight operations, support and sending Marines out. This was after the Gulf War, but we still maintained a presence there to protect Kuwait.

The best part of the job was being on the flight deck. Being out there you would feel the waves and see the helicopters come in, standing there while this huge monster of an aircraft is coming toward you. You guide them in — a little bit to the left or right — then set them down. Then, you launch them again. I liked that.

I met my wife, who is from Warren, Michigan, in boot camp. We were both assigned to flag detail there, and during concerts or award ceremonies we would carry the flags of the 50 states onto the stage. Still, we hadn’t really met until “service week.” That’s when you have more freedom and more time to talk. Then we really hit it off. Kelly and I will soon celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary.

When my three-year enlistment was up, I chose to leave the military because I’m really a family man. Even though I enjoyed the military, and I enjoyed being out to sea and the camaraderie with other guys, I just couldn’t be away so long, especially with my first daughter coming. Gabriel was born in 1997, my other daughter Hannah was born in 2000.

My job in the military gave me structure. The military shows you how to follow, but then lead as necessary. I think those are values that go with you from job to job. Being able to take instructions makes me able to do my job as an instrumentation service technician at the Chrysler Technology Center in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

As I said, being a veteran and being in a union are similar — they both strike at my heart. When you’re in a union you have the same goal, which is to look out for your brother or sister, look out for the same goal, and treat everybody fairly and advance the right way.

I look back at my accomplishments in the military with pride. I’m proud of what I’ve done, but mostly I was able to take the lessons my parents taught me, use them and pass them on to my kids. I try to instill in my daughters the value of hard work. I tell them nothing is for free. If you want to advance, you have to put your heart and sweat into it.
I joined the U.S. Army in 1988 and was a combat engineer. I did basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and went to Airborne School after that in Fort Benning, Georgia, in February of 1989 where I learned to be a paratrooper.

“I always said I would do it again in a heartbeat if I had to.”

My first duty station was with the 78th Engineer Battalion in Ettlingen, Germany. I ended up not going to an airborne unit but I was in an Allied Mobile Forces NATO engineer unit. We did demolitions. If you’re in a battlefield and you want to prevent the enemy from going somewhere, you blow up a road so they can’t cross it, so the tanks can’t get by. We also cleared mine fields and built bridges.

I did that until Desert Storm. In August of 1990 the military was downsizing so we were in the middle of disbanding our unit. There were only about a hundred of us left, so they sent us over to Saudi Arabia as individual replacements. When we got there, they put us in a line and said ‘you 50, you’re going to be combat engineers; and you 50, you’re going to be door gunners on helicopters.’ I was on that side, so I ended up serving my time in Desert Storm as a door gunner on a UH-1 Huey helicopter.

We saw some combat missions and we took some enemy fire and returned fire, but luckily we were never too close. We were not an attack helicopter, we were just transporting troops. I was there from November of 1990 to May of 1991. I was awarded the Army Air Medal for my service during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield. I was also awarded my Army Crewmember wings for flying so many combat missions.

Once I came home from overseas, I went back to Fort Leonard Wood where it all started. I was with the 5th Engineer Battalion from May of 1991 until February of 1992.

When I left the military, I applied and Chrysler gave me a job on the line at Trenton (Michigan) Engine. I was there for 18 months, then got my apprenticeship as a pipefitter at Jefferson. I’ve worked at the plant now for 22 years.

I just took over as chairman of the UAW Local 7 Veterans Committee and I will become part of the UAW Region 1 Veterans Council. I’m also a member of the Region 1 Solidarity Riders. We’re a bunch of motorcycle guys who do a lot of work for veterans. I also volunteer at the VA Hospital in Detroit; I’m a patient escort, and I work the reception desk.

I loved my time in the military. I was honored. I always said I would do it again in a heartbeat if I had to. I cherish it and I will always cherish it.
When I graduated from Herscher High School southwest of Chicago, I auditioned for the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps. But before I could audition, I had to enlist in the Marine Corps. The recruiter said the odds of becoming an infantryman were better than 200 to one.

Either way, I knew the Marine Corps could take me places, and it certainly did. Before the Marines I was just a good drummer, just an OK baseball player, but I learned to be a leader, to inspire confidence and to drive change. It taught me how to be independent yet work as a team – and to always strive to be the best I can be in everything I do.

In the end, I made the cut for the Marine Corps, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. We were based in Washington, D.C., and every year we traveled more than 50,000 miles to give about 400 performances.

It was an incredible honor to serve. We performed at the White House and at the Marine Barracks in Washington before presidents and chiefs of staff for thousands of Americans at parades, fairs and veterans events across the country. And at the beginning of Desert Storm when we were deployed to guard the Capitol Building, we put down our instruments and picked up our rifles.

I retired from active duty in 1991 to begin my civilian career with Chrysler and start a family. I remained in the active Reserves for a few more years but eventually set aside my drums and active duty to focus on my career and raising my three children and two stepchildren.

Today, I’m Operations Manager at the Milwaukee parts depot and still draw on my experiences as a Marine every day. I’m also Post Commander of the Pewaukee, Wisconsin, American Legion.

My service to veterans is one of the most rewarding parts of my life. As an American Legion member, I’m able to provide counseling and support for today’s vets that previous generations didn’t get. I find it humbling to have a good, honest conversation with a veteran and to have the opportunity to help them prosper in the civilian world.

The other rewarding part of my Marine experience is supporting my community. It gives me great pride to mentor students through our American Legion post. Along with raising money for scholarships, we meet with area middle and high school students to talk about what it means to be a veteran, what it means to serve your country and about the cost of freedom in general.

For all this country has done for me, I’m proud to have served and still serve today. I definitely would not be where I am today if not for the Marines.
After high school, I wasn’t sure what I really wanted to do. I knew I didn’t want my father’s Army, I wanted to be in the best branch there was and I thought the Marine Corps was the best. So that’s what I did; I enlisted in the Corps in 1985.

I was a sea-duty Marine stationed on board an aircraft carrier — the USS Saratoga. I guarded special weapons — nuclear weapons. It was exciting at first, then after a while it became monotonous, because all we did was work six days a week. On the seventh day, which was like a Sunday, we usually had time for relaxation, but then we had to go right back to work. It was work, work, work.

We cleaned a lot. We used to call ourselves Uncle Sam’s maintenance crew. We cleaned spaces for the admiral, we cleaned tile; we had to clean the tile on the entire ship. When we weren’t cleaning, we were taking classes – guard classes, weapons classes, basic knowledge classes, classes about the rules of engagement. It was almost like going to school.

But my toughest job in the military was guarding those special weapons. That’s a lot of responsibility for an 18-year-old.

When I was on the carrier, we went to Libya for two or three weeks to watch over troops confronting the dictator Moammar Gadhafi, who had declared a “Line of Death” in the Gulf of Sidrha.

“My toughest job in the military was guarding those special (nuclear) weapons. That’s a lot of responsibility for an 18-year-old.”

We learned how to deploy in the mountains, how to climb, how to deploy, how to set up ambushes, all kinds of things. It was good training. When you’re in shape it doesn’t seem like it’s difficult. If I was to do it now, I’d probably die halfway up the mountain.

I served 1985-1988 – three years and eight months. I was coming back from one of our training exercises in California when I developed cellulitis and elephantiasis. They don’t know how in the world I got it. I ended up getting out with a medical discharge for my disability. I just missed the invasion of Panama by a few weeks. I still have problems with my leg, but it’s not as bad as it was. I’ve overcome it.

I went to college for a bit and then started to look for a job. I actually tried to get the job at the Parts Distribution Center for a friend of mine, but the woman at the employment office said, ‘no, no, no, you take the job.’ I was hired, now I’m a rewarehouser. I’ve been there for 21 years.

The Marine Corps prepared me for a lot but I also grew up in a military household. My father was an Army sergeant major, so when I went to the Marine Corps it was almost like being at home.
I started my service in the Army in 1991 and was stationed at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska. I was a 45 Bravo Small Arms Specialist. After four years of active duty, I was in the reserves for another two years at Grissom Air Reserve Base in Kokomo, Indiana.

My job was to support the infantry and make sure their weapons were all inspected and safe. It was exciting because you were always trying to make sure that every weapon was correct—you didn’t want to have any weapons malfunction.

Our training was excellent. It allowed me to do my job precisely, so I never worried about what I was sending out because of the training I had. I repaired M16 rifles, 50 caliber machine guns and 9mm pistols for the officers. It was fun to work on them because it was like a puzzle. You had to break them down and build them back up. If all the parts were present, I could fix the weapon in less than an hour. If I had to work on the barrel, it was a different situation, it would take longer.

During the time I was in the military I was young and was so proud to be there. I was proud to follow after my grandfather who was in the Navy and my biological father who was in the Army. My grandfather was a gunner on a Navy ship, my father was a drill sergeant and staff sergeant in Vietnam. My father joined when he was 17, and at the time, he was the youngest drill sergeant in the U.S. Army.

Now my son Anthony is in the Air Force, stationed at Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska. He wanted to go to Alaska because that’s where I served. Another son, Tone, works with me at the plant as a line operator, and my son Nathaniel is planning on attending college this spring.

I served my country, but I view myself as being a service member not a veteran. I never fought in a war—I never had to go to war.

I’m now a UAW Local 685 team leader at Indiana Transmission Plant I, and I think the military helped prepare me for my role at Chrysler by helping me become a leader. Being in the military also helps you learn how to think fast on your feet.

In the military you can do anything, and it doesn’t matter about your sex, or your color, or what your religion is. When you’re in the Army it doesn’t matter who you are and that’s what I think most Americans forget, that we are all Americans first, and it doesn’t matter about our race, religion, our sex or the color of our skin.

I’m just very proud of my service. I’m proud of my country and I’m proud to be a member of my local union. I’m also very proud to be working at Chrysler. It helped me take care of my children and it helped my father (who raised me) take care of me because he also worked at Chrysler as a maintenance foreman at the Kokomo Transmission Plant.
They called us the Hollywood Marines in basic training because we were in the Recruiting Depot in San Diego. After that, I went to the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in San Bernardino, California. The stumps, that’s what we used to call it. It was out in the middle of the desert. I spent so much time there I knew the desert like the back of my hand.

I was a heavy equipment operator. I either drove a “deuce and a half” (a 2½-ton truck) or a five-ton. I also drove dozers, backhoes and what they call a Gama Goat — a six-wheel drive vehicle that can go through water, mud and sand.

I trucked troops, supplies and ammunition out into the desert, and a couple of times took high-ranking officers out in Jeep® vehicles. But no matter what rank they were, if they wanted to go up the mountain at a dangerous angle, I was in charge of the vehicle so I could tell them no.

I was also stationed at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan, where I was in communications. We strung telephone and electric wires to the base camp.

Once, during a storm, we had to rescue the villagers and take them to safety. Their homes were little bitty wooden shacks. It was like a typhoon, you didn’t know what was going to be flying your way. But it was interesting, never a dull moment.

“It’s just the way the Marine Corps taught me, adapt and overcome.”

My last year, I was back at Twentynine Palms and we made dummy airstrips so we could go out there and blow them up. That was fun. After we made them, we’d go up on top of the mountain and watch everybody come in and bomb them. Then we’d do it all over again.

It was kind of a dangerous job. When remaking the airstrip, we’d often find live ammunition. You’d hear your vehicle hit something and you’d have to raise your blade and back up, then leave the area so they could explode it. It was scary the first time, but the second time you were kind of used to it.

I served from 1977 to 1981. My dad influenced me; he served in Korea as a master sergeant. My brother also went in the year before me; he was a sergeant. We were all in the Marines. My little brother Jimmy decided to go into the Air Force, but we won’t hold that against him.

When I was in the Marines it was during peacetime. I tried to go back to the military when Desert Storm started, but they told me I was too old. I told them, ‘You got young kids out there, you need people with experience,’ but they said no. Instead, I got married and started driving a semi.

In 1993, my wife was killed when she was working construction, so I had to give up trucking and come home and take care of my three kids. After two years, I went to the unemployment office and they helped me find a job at the Kokomo Transmission Plant. I was there until 2004 when I transferred to the Indiana Transmission Plant II, where I’m now a fork truck driver.

I’m still driving around equipment like I did in the military, and there’s nothing I can’t drive or operate at the plant. Like in the military, as team leader I took charge; I did things before the bosses even mentioned it. I already had it done.

It’s just the way the Marine Corps taught me, adapt and overcome. In any situation, you look at it, you adapt to it and you overcome it.
STILL ANSWERING THE CALL

Texas vet ‘can do’ after 51 years

Freddie Hughes has worked at the Dallas Parts Distribution Center for 51 years, a milestone he credits in large part to lessons learned during his days in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam era.

“The Army definitely disciplined me for life,” says the UAW Local 2360 member. “It really helped as a young man, teaching me right from wrong. As I grow older, I realize how much it really helped me.”

Now 74, Hughes is one of the oldest veterans from the UAW still working at FCA US. He’s Shop Chairman at the PDC and often applies the values he learned from military life to build discipline and camaraderie when resolving issues that arise on the shop floor.

“I enjoy helping other people out,” Hughes says. “If I see someone struggling with something in the depot, I enjoy giving them a hand and showing them the correct way to do something. I like to have an eye out for others.”

Hughes was a sergeant in the Military Police from 1961 to 1964, stationed in Vietnam for 96 days and in Germany for 18 months. In both tours, he was in charge of guarding ammunition depots. He also was responsible for sending munitions to other depots around the world, ensuring they made it to the right place at the right time.

Despite having suffered a stroke last year, which affected his speech but none of his other physical faculties, Hughes is driven by the “can do” spirit he learned in the Army and has no plans to retire any time soon.

“I’ve gotten my grandkids through college now,” he says. “But as long as I have my health and strength, this works.”

Once he retires, Hughes doesn’t plan to be idle for long. “I’ll probably go work for the church or something,” he says. ■
Belvidere (Illinois) Assembly Team Leader Eugene “Geno” Kuhnwald always keeps his eyes peeled for tattered American flags. Seeing that worn flags are properly and honorably put to rest is a priority for this UAW Local 1268 member and U.S. Army veteran.

Achieving the rank of sergeant, he served from 1982-1988, including duty in Grenada and Lebanon.

A longtime veterans’ activist with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Kuhnwald’s attendance at a UAW Region 4 Veterans Conference stirred an epiphany: he would create his own version of a veterans’ memorial that depicts the strength, courage and patriotism he sees in the flags he retires.

With Kuhnwald’s own military boots serving as a foundation, the memorial features an American flag that waves from an eagle-topped pole while a rifle capped by a helmer stands below. The boots rest on a round base reflecting military deployment destinations and touchstones of conflict.

The memorial is portable and Kuhnwald often displays it at the Local 1268 hall in Belvidere, Illinois.

“While personal, my memorial aims to bring wider public awareness of veterans’ issues and support from the UAW and Local 1268 for those who have served our country in the Armed Forces,” says Kuhnwald, who works on the Trim Line at Belvidere Assembly.

He runs a standing public service message in the Local 1268 newsletter asking that tattered American flags be directed to him. His notice cites the United States Flag Code as stating:

“The Flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”

A special event was held at the Local 1268 hall on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2015, to honor decommissioned American flags using proper military protocols. Kuhnwald has great reverence for the flag and his message is simple but powerful: “As our enduring national symbol, Old Glory should always signify strength.”

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**U.S. Flag Code**

- It should only be displayed from sunrise to sunset, unless it is illuminated at night.
- It should never touch the ground.
- Only all-weather flags should be displayed during inclement weather.
- It should only be flown upside down in an emergency.
- It should never be used as a decoration.
- If on the same staff with other flags, it should be at peak; in groupings, other nations’ flags are flown at same height.
- Worn flags should be burned and the ashes buried.
The M*A*S*H television series touched the majority of U.S. baby boomers and their families, running for 11 seasons and 256 episodes before achieving broadcast immortality in eternal syndication. Originally airing in the fall of 1972, the series ended in February 1983 with a finale that set a record for the largest U.S. audience share and highest rating of any single television program episode.

The long-lived program focused on the Korean War — three years — and in the opening title sequence shows a careening World War II-era Dodge WC54 delivering wounded soldiers to a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit. The Warren Truck Assembly plant and UAW Local 140 built approximately 26,000 of these three-quarter-ton, four-wheel drive rescue vehicles between 1942 and 1945. After universal use in WWII, these sturdy workhorses were sent virtually everywhere. Under Marshall Plan distribution after hostilities concluded in 1945, many Dodge WC54 ambulances were redeployed to European cities, villages and governments in the public service of postwar reconstruction.

“My ambulance survived by living much of its life in the benign climate of Greece, eventually ending up in the U.K.,” says Aaron Robinson, the owner of a 1942 model. A military history buff, Robinson attended the 65th anniversary of D-Day in a WWII Jeep. For the 70th anniversary event, he set his sights on something more. Driving the vehicle from the English Midlands to the coast, ferrying
Willock chassis swivel

Circa 1952 through 1958, Dodge WC-based Power Wagons offered a unique option known as the Willock Chassis Swivel, splitting the frame where the pickup bed meets the cab. A longitudinal swivel system enabled the two halves to rotate with respect to each other, allowing all four wheels to stay in contact with the ground over uneven terrain. Somewhere between 50 and 100 examples were built.

To France, he drove the ambulance more than 750 miles.

"Shifting the completely unsynchronized four-speed gearbox smoothly takes practice," says Robinson. "But navigating traffic circles — roundabouts in the U.K. — in a left-hand-drive vehicle of this size is a two-person job."

After the 70th anniversary event, the Michigan native shipped the ambulance to his current home in Southern California in a container. He now drives the vehicle in the Torrance, Calif., Independence Day parade.

All Dodge WC54 Ambulances were powered by 230-cubic-inch, L-head six-cylinder engines. As the transfer case has only one speed, Dodge provided ultra-low speed pulling power with a "creeper" first gear unable to reach 10 mph.

"The ambulance is a reminder of those soldiers fortunate enough to return home safely," says Robinson. "And it honors those military heroes who sadly weren't so lucky."

After WWII, Dodge revised WC-series models for civilian use, dubbing them "Power Wagons" and producing them in one form or another — mostly pickups — until 1980.
It hits you. You may not even realize it, not yet. But in that instant, your whole world changes.

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) are silent and hidden. They're caused when a sudden trauma or head injury disrupts the function of the brain. And they're considered the invisible wounds of our veterans, especially those from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

“They’re (TBIs) considered the signature wounds of the current conflicts,” says Capt. Jeremy Briggs, an FCA US employee who is currently serving in the Michigan Army National Guard. “I think TBIs are more prevalent than people realize.”

Briggs knows firsthand. He served as a Medevac Pilot for four years and as a military police officer for 4½ years. He spent time in Iraq and Afghanistan. He’s volunteered for the Brain Injury Association of Michigan and helps veterans recover from TBIs.

Briggs is an assembly supervisor at the Pilot Assembly Plant at the Chrysler Technology Center in Auburn Hills, Michigan, and at Conner Avenue Assembly in Detroit. He is currently the Commander of an Air Assault Company, Aviation Maintenance Detachment in Michigan and helps veterans recover from TBIs.

He says TBIs are underdiagnosed and underreported. He believes a lot of veterans don’t know they have a TBI or won’t admit it. “A lot of times guys think they’re too tough to try to get help or they think there’s nothing wrong, so family members or friends have to step in to help them get medical treatment.”

Symptoms can include headaches, confusion, light-headedness, changes in mood, trouble with memory and concentration, and in severe cases, there can be vomiting or nausea, seizures, slurred speech and weakness. These symptoms can appear immediately or take weeks or even months to show up.

Improvised Explosive Devices, rocket-propelled grenades and land mines are the leading causes of TBIs in active duty military personnel in combat zones, according to the Brain Injury Association of Michigan. A Johns Hopkins Public Health article says more than 260,000 troops have been affected by TBIs since 2001.

“There were a lot of people who had them (TBIs),” says UAW Local 889 member John Renard, who was a combat medic in the U.S. Army from 2010 to 2013 and received a Combat Medical Badge for performing duties under fire.

He believes TBIs were underreported because they’re so common. “Either (victims) didn’t think they had them, or the documentation was wiped away, or they got treated only one time.”

Renard is a supply and demand analyst at the Auburn Hills (Michigan) Complex. While in the military, he was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and was in the 101st Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1/61 Cavalry. He was deployed to Afghanistan where he was involved in patrol combat missions that...
included air assault operations that required helicopter transport to remote locations.

Briggs says TBI symptoms can be very similar to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. "PTSD and TBIs share a lot of the same symptoms, so sometimes it’s very hard for doctors to differentiate between the two. Sometimes diagnosing a TBI can be very difficult, so people really have to go to specialists to try to get treatment."

In the Johns Hopkins report, researchers said the military failed to document about 80 percent of the TBIs in the early years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. That means documentation exists for only one in five troops who sustained head trauma between 2003 and 2006. The study says an estimated 21,257 troops sustained TBIs in that time period, more than four times the cases recorded by the Pentagon.

Renard says the failure to report TBIs happened often. "When you were overseas, unless you ensured that documentation was brought back stateside, the VA (Veterans Administration) looked at it like nothing happened. Some guys whose documentation was lost, didn’t receive any service-related disability."

It wasn’t until late 2006 and 2007 that the military enacted policies to identify TBIs and began routine screening. But the study concludes that between 2003 and 2010, an estimated 32,822 combat personnel still suffered undocumented TBIs.

The Defense and Veterans Brian Injury Center says, based on existing data, veterans’ advocates believe that between 10 and 20 percent of Iraq veterans, or 150,000 to 300,000 people, have some level of TBI.

The Johns Hopkins article points out that there are now more resources available for veterans suffering from TBIs despite the lack of documentation for this condition. Officials at the U.S. Army’s Office of the Surgeon General say concussion care centers are being established and there’s more TBI research.

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**Rehabilitating through nature**

Jeremy Briggs is on the board of Camp Liberty, a facility in Jackson County, Michigan, focused on rehabilitating veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries through the use of outdoor recreation programs.

“We focus on trying to get them out using nature to rehabilitate, so we go camping, hiking, nature walking, hunting and fishing,” he says.

The exposure to nature makes a difference for TBI victims: "Camp Liberty has been phenomenal," says Briggs. “It’s hard to explain, but you get a small group of military guys together, and we share stories and talk about dealing with coming back to civilian life.

“IT’s easier for veterans to talk and open up to other veterans. Things that might sound completely crazy or insane to you, might sound completely normal to somebody else who’s been through it. Veterans just have to realize that they’re not alone, and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.”

Briggs is humble about his efforts to help veterans.

“It’s not just me, there are a lot of veterans helping out with Camp Liberty and with numerous other nonprofits because we want to help,” he says. “We’re still brothers and sisters so there’s a bond there. We just have to help each other out.”

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**Track chairs at Camp Liberty allow injured veterans to participate in outdoor activities, such as fishing and hunting.**
WORLD WAR II Marine veteran Hershel “Woody” Williams is among America’s bravest of the brave, one of an elite corps of Medal of Honor recipients who performed extraordinary acts of personal valor on the battlefield.

Considered the nation’s highest military honor, the Medal of Honor is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Services for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. It is often presented posthumously.

For Williams and the other recipients, the medal represents a herculean achievement and a life-changing experience.

“I had no idea the impact that it would have on my life,” says Williams, the only surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima and keynote speaker at the 2014 UAW National Veterans Conference.

“After I came home to a parade thrown in my honor, I began to realize that I was now a public figure. They paid me one of the greatest honors I could have possibly ever had. I don’t know if they could award me a greater honor than being associated with some of the greatest people that ever walked this earth.”

Congress established the Medal of Honor to recognize deserving soldiers who fought heroically in the Civil War. The earliest version was created by the Navy on Dec. 21, 1861, followed by the Army on July 12, 1862. The Air Force version was established on April 14, 1965. Each branch has its own design for the award.

The medal has been given to 3,469 recipients during 26 conflicts, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Members of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard receive the Navy decoration. The award is usually presented by the President of the United States in the name of Congress during a formal White House ceremony. Nineteen men have received two of the decorations.

The three-day Battle of Gettysburg, the largest engagement of the Civil War in July 1863, produced 58 Medal of Honor recipients. Former slave William Harvey Carney became the first African American to receive the award for his service during the Second Battle of Fort Wagner a few days later. In all, 1,522 of the medals were awarded for Civil War duty.

The Army was first to present Medals of Honor, on March 25, 1863, followed by the Navy on April 3, 1863.

Williams, who lives in Fairmont, West Virginia, is one of 464 Medal of Honor recipients from World War II. He served as a demolition sergeant with the 21st Marines, 3rd Marine Division in the Battle of Iwo Jima. He earned a place in U.S. military history by using a 70-pound flamethrower to singlehandedly attack heavily fortified Japanese machine gun positions on Feb. 23, 1945.

“Because of circumstances, I was the only flamethrower demolition person left in my company,” Williams recalls. “My company’s job was to be a spearhead and make our way to the other side of the island. We came across a large number of reinforced concrete pillboxes, which had us stalled.

“So my commanding officer asked me if I thought I could do anything about them with my flamethrower. I don’t
Congress has designated March 25 as National Medal of Honor Day. It commemorates the date in 1863 when the first Medals of Honor were presented to six soldiers who distinguished themselves with gallantry during the Civil War.

Because the medal is awarded in the name of Congress, it is often referred to as the Congressional Medal of Honor. However, the official name is Medal of Honor.

Medal of Honor recipients (from left to right): Sergeant William H. Carney (Civil War), Staff Sergeant Ambrois Guillen (Korean War) and Dr. Mary Walker (Civil War).

Williams’ CO assigned four other marines, two riflemen and two BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) men, to help carry out the assault. “They were to give me suppressive fire as I worked my way from pillbox to pillbox,” Williams says.

For four hours, he wiped out enemy positions while under heavy small arms fire in order to open a lane for infantrymen. His actions included scaling seven pillboxes to insert his flamethrower into the air vent, silencing the people and the guns inside.

“I used up six flamethrowers in the process,” Williams says, “but by eliminating seven of the bunkers, we were able to work behind them and gain the advantage.”

Williams’ CO recommended him for a Medal of Honor. “Four of the other Marines in the group gave testimony as to what they witnessed that day and the next thing I knew,” he says, “a typist showed up in my tent asking for me, saying that he had just written a recommendation for some sort of medal for me. He had never heard of the Medal of Honor, and I hadn’t either.”

It finally sunk in Oct. 5, 1945, when President Harry S. Truman awarded Williams and thirteen other Marines the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony.

Following the war, Williams served in the Marine Corps Reserve and retired as a chief warrant officer in 1969. He also was a veteran services officer at the Veterans Administration for 33 years until his retirement in 1978.

According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the total number of medals awarded in other conflicts includes:

- **Spanish-American War** – 110 (31 Army, 64 Navy and 15 Marines)
- **World War I** – 124 (95 Army, 21 Navy and 8 Marines)
- **Korean War** – 133 (80 Army, 7 Navy and 42 Marines, 4 Air Force)
- **Vietnam War** – 246 (160 Army, 16 Navy, 57 Marines, 13 Air Force)
- **Somalia** – 2 Army
- **Iraq** – 4 (2 Army, 1 Navy and 1 Marine)
- **Afghanistan** – 3 (2 Army and 1 Navy)

All Medal of Honor recipients are men with one exception. In 1977, surgeon Mary E. Walker had her medal restored by Army Secretary Clifford Alexander, Jr. Her medal had been rescinded in 1917 after it was determined her civilian status disqualified her from the honor. Walker was a civilian nurse who acted as a contract surgeon, to the detriment of her own health, during the Battles of Bull Run, Chickamauga, and Atlanta, and was held as a Prisoner of War for five months.

Eighty-eight African Americans have received the nation’s highest military tribute. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush presented the medal to Cpl. Freddie Stowers, an African American who fought for the Army in World War I. In the attack on Hill 188, the enemy drew Stowers’ company out into the open by feigning surrender before quickly retreating to their trench and ambushing American troops in the open. Corporal Stowers immediately inspired his men to follow him in an attack of the machine gun nest that was causing the greatest casualties of his company, and was mortally wounded in the process. Despite his wound, he pressed his soldiers onward to victory until his death. Unfortunately, due to racial prejudices at the time, no medals were awarded to any African Americans who served in World War I until 1991.

Six years later, President Bill Clinton awarded seven African American World War II veterans the Medal of Honor.

Asian-Americans also were denied recognition for their heroism in the military during World War II, prompting President Clinton to present the Medal of Honor to 22 Asian-American WWII veterans in 1994.

In all, there have been 59 Hispanic American, 33 Asian American and 32 Native American Medal of Honor recipients.
EARN YOUR STRIPES

Over the years, Chrysler factories, workers and resources have answered the call to support U.S. wartime efforts when needed. See if you know just how involved the company was by taking this 10-question quiz. Once you're done, head to www.uaw-chrysler.com for the answers.

1. This flying stronghold with a Chrysler engine was developed by Albert Kahn in the middle of the steel shortage during World War II.
   a. Aero Spacelines Pregnant Guppy  
   b. B-29 Superfortress  
   c. B-52 Stratofortress  
   d. Air Force One

2. This type of cannon – whose name also describes someone who can throw a ball with force – was made by Dodge Brothers for World War I.
   a. Mortar  
   b. Musket  
   c. Howitzer  
   d. Spiral Slinger

3. General George S. Patton instituted this resupply division that used Dodge WC-62 and WC-63 models to ensure the front lines were kept in constant supply after the French rail lines were bombed out in WWII.
   a. Red Ball Express  
   b. Blue Oval Runners  
   c. HEMI® Haulers  
   d. White Star Direct

4. This tank was originally developed by Chrysler in the '70s and is still in use today.
   a. Little Willie  
   b. Challenger II  
   c. M4A1 Sherman  
   d. M1 Abrams

5. What was the colloquial name for the M151, a military truck that Willys and Jeep manufacturers built from the '60s through the mid-'80s?
   a. HOUND  
   b. MUTT  
   c. RAT  
   d. PANTHER

6. What were Jeep vehicles actually called on the front line during WWII?
   a. Peeps  
   b. GPs  
   c. Trucks  
   d. Runners

7. Who once claimed that the Jeep was "America's greatest contribution to modern warfare?"
   a. George S. Patton  
   b. Winston L. Churchill  
   c. George Marshall  
   d. Franklin Delano Roosevelt

8. What was the nickname of the small, two-person, four-wheel drive vehicle that the Jeep replaced?
   a. Cannonball  
   b. Pencil  
   c. Gainer  
   d. Bellyflopper

9. What crucial defense technology did Chrysler engineers play a role in developing and building at a fraction of the cost of what the competition quoted?
   a. Lidar  
   b. Sonar  
   c. Radar  
   d. Ultrasound

10. What world-changing technology did Chrysler engineers use of nickel plating lead to?
    a. Cell phones  
    b. Atom bomb  
    c. Internet  
    d. Zeppelin
United we STAND

As of July 2015, nearly 6,500 active FCA US LLC employees from union and management had answered the call to military duty. This honor roll shows the number of veterans and current members of the National Guard or Reserves by location.

Arizona Proving Grounds .......... 26
Auburn Hills Complex ............ 1,234
Belvidere Assembly ............... 491
Chelsea Proving Grounds .......... 68
Conner Avenue Assembly .......... 16
Dundee Engine ..................... 96
FCA US Transport ................. 67
Indiana Transmission I and II .. 473
Jefferson North Assembly ....... 460
Kokomo Casting .................... 190
Kokomo Transmission ............. 590
Mack Ave. Engine ................. 82
Marysville Axle ................... 105
Mopar. Parts Distribution Ctrs. .. 255
Mopar Service & Parts .......... 24
Mt. Elliot Tool & Die ............. 31
Sales & Mkt. Business Centers ... 60
Sterling Heights Assembly ...... 292
Sterling Stamping ................. 290
Tipton Transmission .............. 145
Toledo Machining ................. 165
Toledo Assembly Complex ....... 577
Trenton Engine Complex ......... 159
Warren Stamping ................. 214
Warren Truck Assembly .......... 374

Total number of veterans: 6,484

Source: FCA US Human Resources Department
FOREVER REMEMBER OUR MIAs

With deep respect and profound gratitude, we honor the memory of more than 83,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces still missing in action. Many of the unfound rest at sea or in unmarked mass graves in foreign countries where they died while defending our country. Others are buried and memorialized by gravestones declaring them known only to God. Never forget them or the ultimate sacrifice they made to preserve our freedom.

Vietnam War Veterans Memorial wall honoring fallen U.S. Military personnel and those missing in action.