



Honoring Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Veterans





“From the very beginning of the Civil War, Roman Catholic sisters across the country responded to the call to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers. Out of the war’s 3,200 military nurses, more than 600 were sister nurses from 12 religious orders. Thirty-six Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy were among those who answered the call. The Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy were able to provide skilled nursing care as they had experience through their work at Mercy Hospital, which they established in 1847. Their on-the-job training was valuable at a time when there was a lack of available trained nurses. Living out their religious vows, the sisters provided altruistic nursing care by showing God’s love for all people. The nuns were highly qualified nurses at a time when little thought had been given to planning for the soldiers’ health care.

At the war’s onset, the military structure was ill-prepared for handling the sick and the wounded, which was why the sisters were so useful. Initially, patients often ended up in ex-

isting permanent hospitals. By 1862, Pittsburgh’s Mercy Hospital was filled beyond capacity. Reacting to this ever-increasing need, the U.S. government began establishing military hospitals throughout the North. With this increase of hospitals, the demand for nurses grew as well. In 1862, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton personally appointed the Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy to staff Washington, D.C.’s newly erected Stanton Hospital. When the hospital doors opened to 130 waiting patients, the sisters went into action, providing quality care to all war casualties.

Due to the condition and the sheer numbers of patients, the work at Stanton was draining for the sisters. There was a time when the sisters had 500 patients under their care. The sisters established a system of rotating sisters from Pittsburgh to alleviate the stress. The result was that a total of 26 Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy served at the Stanton throughout the course of the war. The doctors, patients and community valued the nuns for their selfless hard work.

During the war, President Lincoln visited Stanton Hospital and noticed and respected what the Sisters of Mercy were doing for the patients. After his visit to Stanton Hospital, he wrote: “Of all the forms of charity and benevolence seen in the crowded wards of the hospitals, those of the Catholic sisters were among the most efficient. ... More lovely than anything I had ever seen in art, so long devoted to illustrations of love, mercy, and charity, are the pictures that remain of these modest sisters going on their errands of mercy among the suffering and the dying” (“Nuns of the Battlefield”).

Secretary of War Stanton evidently agreed with Lincoln's sentiments and turned to the Sisters of Mercy again. He received permission from Pittsburgh's West Penn Hospital to commandeer its building and turn it into a military hospital. The hospital was in an ideal location, adjacent to railroad tracks, with trains transporting the wounded. Renovations were completed and West Penn was established as a military hospital for Pennsylvania soldiers. Once completed, Stanton enlisted the help of the Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy to organize and supervise the nursing care at this Pittsburgh-based military hospital.

The Oct. 22, 1863, edition of the Pittsburgh Post noted the following: "Everywhere, these sisters have inaugurated by their presence order, cleanliness, comforts and attention to the poor wounded soldiers which have rivaled the endearments of home. A visit to the United States Military Hospital here will give some idea of the value of the services of these unostentatious and self-sacrificing women, whose highest rank on the roll book of the department is that of nurse, but who have been accorded by common consent, their true title **Sisters of Mercy.**"

With permission ~ Washy, Kathleen

****President Lincoln appointed a White House artist to paint a Sister of Mercy tending to a wounded soldier in a tent hospital, according to Sister Patricia McCann, archivist of the Sisters of Mercy of Pittsburgh. The painting (shown on opposite page - the original or a copy is unclear), hangs in the Mercy convent in Oakland.*

Honoring Mercy Nurses: Civil War Period

Sister M. Otilia Dusch	Sister M. Gonzaga Myers	Sister M. Aloysia Ihmsen
Sister M. Vincent Delaney	Sister M. Joanne Rooney	Sister M. Estelle Curran
Sister M. Bernard Maher	Sister M. Nolasco Kratzer	Sister M. Xavier Maher
Sister M. Apollonia Leahy	Sister M. Remigius McQuade	Sister M. Joseph Laughran
Sister M. Flavia Byrne	Sister M. Berchmans Hostetter	Sister M. Benedict Duffy
Sister M. Helen Devlin	Sister M. Basil McGinn	Sister M. Louise Griffin
Sister M. Julia Forde	Sister M. Borgia Doherty	Sister M. Bernadine Kittell
Sister M. Marcella McKeon	Sister M. Regina Cosgrave	Sister M. Stephana Ward
Sister M. Celeste Rafferty	Sister M. Francis McCormick	

Western Pennsylvania Military Hospital Staff

Sister M. dePazzi Russell	Sister M. Rose Hostetter
Sister M. Leo Driscoll	Sister M. Neri Brown
Sister M. Sebastian Gillespie	Sister M. Madeline O'Donnell

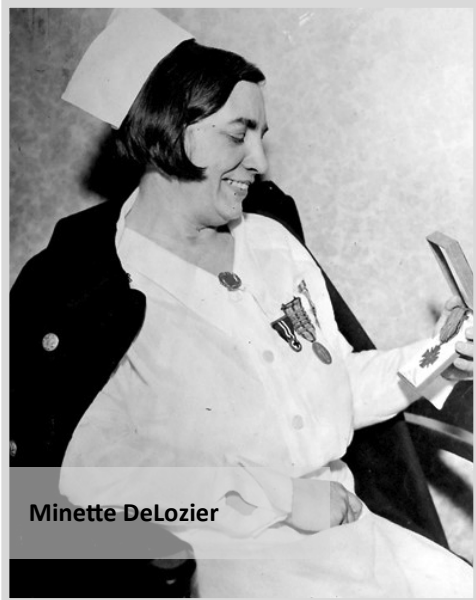
Honoring Mercy Nurses World War I

“The Great War is often noted for its innovations in warfare, from machine guns to tanks. However, it also brought incredible changes to nursing - a profession that would ease suffering, save lives and provide women with a new role in American society. “

~ Kay Hawes
University of Kansas Medical Center



“The battlefield conditions presented extreme challenges for nurses. Patients had massive wounds to the face and head incurred as they poked their heads out of trenches, massive wounds to extremities that would require amputations, and also burns from poisonous gases. Injuries from battles on French farm fields featured both shards of shrapnel and imbedded soil and manure. Antibiotics were not available, and rubber gloves and wound irrigation solutions were recent innovations. Nurses managed infections with great success under these trying circumstances, especially considering there was no electrical power and bandages from wounds had to be washed by hand and re-used.”



Minette DeLozier

Photos courtesy of the UPMC Mercy archives

World War I Veteran Nurses also served the 1922 Mercy Hospital School Nursing Alumnae Association:

Treasurer: Minette DeLozier

Directors: Mae Kearns and Bride Phelan

Honor Roll WWI Mercy Nurses

*Margaret Artzman
Kathryn Beatty
Irene Bennis
Cora Bridge
Nell Brink
Madeline Christie
Julia Connelly
Eleanor Crosby
Lillian Davis
Minette DeLozier
Nancy Ditty
Frances Fennel
Mary Hallisey
Mae Kearns
Florence Laird
Mary Mangan
Mathilda Miller
Loretta Murray
Caroline McCoy
Grace O'Donnell
Nora O'Neill
Nell O'Sullivan
Bride Phelan
Catherine Quigley
Marie Rust
Helen Saupp
Susan Schmader
Cecelia Schnupp
Mary Sterley
Mary Strobel
Rebecca St. Clair
Blanche Wisecarver
John Dougherty
Andrew Downey
John Haney
Lawrence Schirra
George Weddeburn*

The nursing profession was growing, and nurses were seen as a critical part of the health care team.

As the role of nurses expanded, so did the numbers of nurses involved. Six months after the United States entered the war, around 1,100 nurses were serving overseas in the Army Nurse Corp. By the end of the war, there were more than 21,000 nurses, with 10,000 having served abroad. A full one-third of all nurses in the United States, had served.





Vera Machek ~ Class of 1942



Mary Quigley



Nancy McShane ~ Class of 1944

**Elaine Capko Couch
Helen Bearer Hahn
Margaret Schlosser Ryan
Class of 1950**

US AIR FORCE NURSE CORP

Date served: 1952-1954

Rapid City Air Force Base Rapid City, South Dakota

We were classmates and joined at same time and were sent to South Dakota together.



US Navy Nurses 1956: Bernadine Wojtanowski, Judith Cavalier, Margaret Plunkett, Anne Selfchock

The National Nursing Council for War

“The council was created in July 1940 by President Roosevelt to represent the nursing profession in the United States. The council’s role included the promotion of the creation of a national inventory of registered nurses, expansion of existing nursing schools facilities, creating two categories of nursing: military or civilian nursing and supplied additional nursing services to hospitals”.

Irene Yagmin ~ Class of 1941

World War II needed nurses. Irene enlisted in the United States Army Nurse Corp in May 1943 as a 1st Lieutenant assigned to the 59th Field Evacuation Hospital. She enlisted because Mercy Hospital School of Nursing had trained her and enlisting was “the right thing to do”.

Irene was very proud of her contributions toward the “war-effort”. Irene traveled to Africa, Italy, France and Germany in support of our troops. She arrived in Dachau, Germany a day after the Americans liberated the concentration camp. She nursed the Holocaust victims back to health, starting with one teaspoon of milk every hour, gradually attaining a soft diet. Irene was discharged from the Army Nurse Corp as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1946 and immediately joined the United States Army Nurse Reserves. She used her GI Bill to obtain her Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education from Duquesne University in 1955. Irene continued to serve the veterans for an additional 35 years at the Pittsburgh Veterans Administration Hospital, retiring in 1980. Irene died at the age of 99 on October 12, 2020.



Lipstick & Canteens



To view the video, scan the QR code above with your smartphone QR code scanning app. (you can download the app from Apple App . Store or Android Play Store). Or you can view online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lfb4T7ao2_4

341

Graduates of the Mercy Hospital School
of Nursing served during World War II



Velma Jablunovsky
Class of 1938



Christine Huth ~ Class of 1942



Rosina Mayce



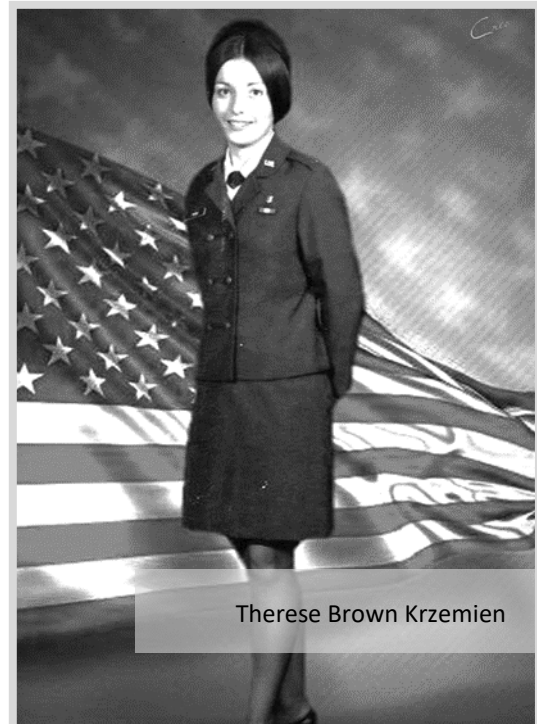
—●—
Linda Martin Petro
Class of 1958
—●—

Army Nurse Corps
March 1969 -March 1970
Basic at Fort Sam Houston
San Antonio, Texas
Operating Room at the 36th
Evac in Vung Tau RVN.

I served as the OR supervisor
for a time and scrubbed on
the separation of conjoined
twins .

I met my husband while I
was in San Antonio in 68 and
got married on my return
from Viet Nam in 1969 and
spent 10 years as an Army
wife at several different
places.

Carol Miller
Class of 1958
United States
Navy



Carolyn (Doo) Ryall Baierlein ~ Class of 1958

Served in the U.S. Navy. Training was in St. Albans, New
York and stationed in Jacksonville, Florida



Wayne Morris US Army ~ Class of 1960

Barbara Jean Yonker ~ Class of 1963

In August, 1963. Barbara applied for entry into the U.S. Air Force, but her fingerprints were initially rejected because they were not clearly visible. She worked at Bradford Hospital waiting for her subsequent fingerprints to be accepted. (she worked her fingers to the bone!)

Barbara joined the Air Force in May 1964. By June, 1968 she had attained the rank of Captain and attended the flight nurse course in San Antonio, Texas. Barbara graduated from the Nurse-Midwifery class on Sept. 5, 1975, at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Prior to her retirement in 1984 after 20 years of service, and attaining the rank of Lt. Colonel, the Air Force presented Barbara with a plaque for delivering 1,000 babies. Barbara died this past January 21, 2021.

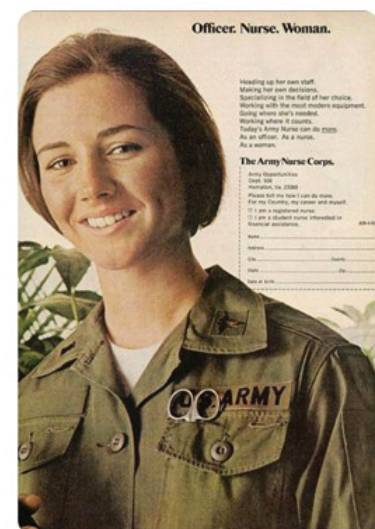
Florence Arrigo Harvey ~ Class of 1963

I joined the Army Nurse Corp in September 1962 during my last year of nursing at Mercy Hospital. In my 20 years of service, in addition to several assignments in military hospitals in the United States, I had three overseas assignments: two in Germany and one in Vietnam. In 1970, I attended the Army School of Anesthesia in El Paso, Texas. Shortly thereafter, I met my husband Noel in 1973 who was also an officer in the Army. I retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in October of 1982. After retirement from the Army, I continued my anesthesia career in Anniston, AL. Noel died in May 2012, and I once more retired in October 2012 after 25 years of civilian anesthesia nursing. Since retirement, I have spent many happy hours with my two children and five grandchildren. I also have been active with volunteer work in both my church parish and local community. Looking back, I could not be more happy with my education at Mercy Hospital and the way it prepared me for a lifetime of nursing.

Mary Catherine Crooks Greisinger ~ Class of 1963

I served in the Army Nurse Corps attached to the 339th reserve unit out of Pittsburgh from 1966-1969.

We spend 2 summer camps at Camp Picket, VA supporting other reserve units medically and one at Fort Dix hospital in NJ. We also trained the corpsmen at three hospitals, including Mercy, one weekend a month. I was a 1st Lt when I resigned my commission to finish my BSN.



Theresa Brown Krzemien Class of 1973

USAF 1974 to 1976

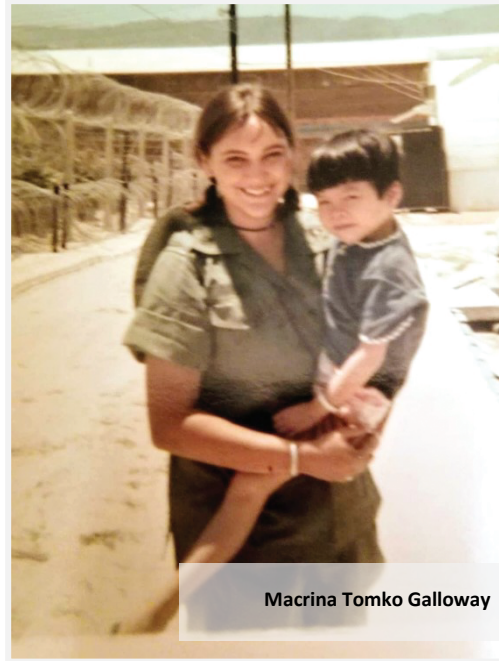
March Field Strategic Air Command ,
Riverside , California

In 1973, I joined and was stationed
with my nursing school friend Katie
Elsesser.

After Basic Training in Texas, we ar-
rived on base and immediately start-
ed our first shifts. I was surprised and
intimidated by an on-site visit in the
Coronary Care Unit by the Chief Nurse
and Hospital Commander. They said
they had already received feedback
about the two new nurses that had
accepted an assignment at March
AFB. A neurologist stopped in their
office to tell them how fortunate they
were to have two Mercy Nurses from
Pittsburgh join the Hospital team.
He told them "Pittsburgh Mercy
Nurses are special".



Katie Elsesser
Theresa Brown Krzemien



Macrina Tomko Galloway

"I Hold Them"

*Tossed together in a
sea of dread*

*Wounded, injured, sick
or dead*

*Through monsoon rains
and black of night*

*In hell's own heat, sun
burning bright*

I hold them...

*~poem by Penny
Kettlewell*

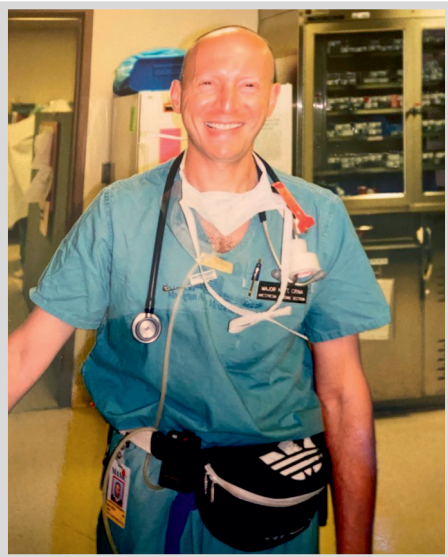
Macrina Tomko Galloway ~ Class of 1967

I was an Army Nurse from February 1968 -1971. I did my training at Ft. Sam Houston as we all did. Then was assigned to Ft. Bliss, Texas for 3 months and then went to the 95th Evacuation hospital in Danang, Vietnam from July 1968-1969, one of the best years of my life. Then was assigned to Walter Reed in DC until Feb 1971, when I resigned my commission. Used the GI bill to get my BSN at the U. Of Arizona in 1983. I am a military wife, and we recently celebrated our 50th anniversary. I lost my oldest brother, Capt. Joseph Tomko, who was with the 1st Air Cav. in Nam. He died of his wound injuries in Japan, in June of 1967, just a few months before my graduation from Mercy. He is on The Wall 21 East. He had always encouraged me to join the Army. After he died, I knew I had to do it. Thanks for doing this for all of our grads

Judith M. Dzyak ~ Class of 1968

I was commissioned as a major in the United States Army Nurse Reserves in 1981. I served until 1993. I retired as a colonel. I was assigned to both general hospitals and field hospitals. I did annual training in Honduras and Germany.

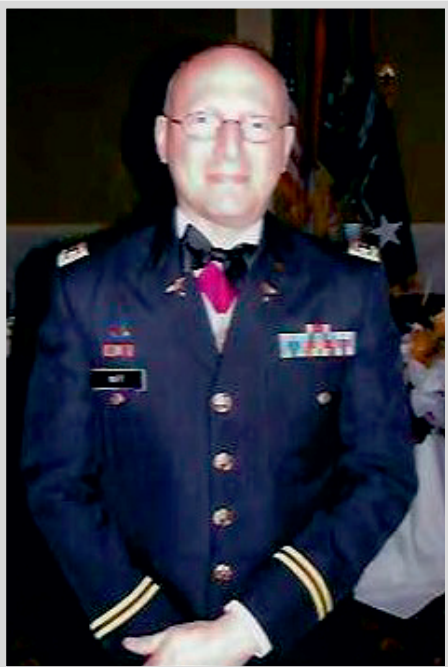
Michael Neft ~ Class of 1983



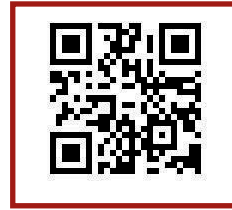
2000—Major Neft, Anesthesia. Fort Lewis WA



2002—121st General Hospital, Yongsan, S. Korea



2006—Lt. Colonel Neft, Fort Bragg (wearing the Official Order of Military Medical Merit neck piece)



To view Dr. Neft's interview, scan the QR code above with your smartphone QR code scanning app. You can download the app from Apple App Store or Android Play Store

Michael Neft, DNP, MHA, RN, CRNA, FNAP, FAANA, FAAN is also a retired Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army.

Dr. Neft graduated from the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in 1983 and believes his training at Mercy provided a solid foundation for his future career paths and education. He states, "I felt fully prepared".

Following completion of his BSN, Dr. Neft was commissioned into the Army Nurse Corp and furthered his clinical experience in the field of anesthesia. During his armed forces service, he was able to continue his graduate education and complete his Masters in Healthcare Administration and Masters of Science in Nursing. During his tour of duty, Dr. Neft provided international patient care in Germany, Honduras, Columbia and South Korea.

Dr. Neft retired as a Lt. Colonel and transitioned to civilian nursing as a CRNA at UPMC Shadyside. He completed his doctoral degree with a DNP from Chatham University in 2009. He was recruited into a position at the University of Pittsburgh School of Anesthesia and currently serves as a role model for both anesthetist and DNP candidates.

He is nearing completion of his PhD at Duquesne University and will defend his dissertation in the spring.

Dr. Neft served the Board of the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association from 2006—2013 with his last three years as president.

Mark Hennigan ~ Class of 1993

U.S. Army: 18 December 1990 through 30 September 2018

Fort Sill, OK, WVU Army ROTC Program (Morgantown, WV), Iraq (OIF II), Bahrain, Kosovo, U.S. Army War College (Carlisle, PA), The Pentagon (two tours).

I began my military career by attending the Virginia Military Institute where I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army as a Field Artillery Officer in December of 1990. While awaiting my initial training I attended Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1993. After graduation I worked as an RN at Mercy Hospital then at the Hershey Medical Center while in the U.S. Army Reserves. In 1996 I went on active duty with the U.S. Army and served in various leadership positions leading up to being assigned as a Battalion Commander for a Field Artillery Battalion that supported combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II). As Battalion Commander I was in charge of 435 soldiers in combat to complete various operations from Iraqi-Kuwait border to Baghdad. Upon return from Iraq, I was assigned as the Assistant Professor of Military Science and Executive Officer for the West Virginia University Army ROTC Program. After a number of other various positions, I was promoted to Colonel and assigned as a Brigade Commander leading over 2,000 soldiers. After Brigade Command I was assigned to the Pentagon as the Deputy Director of the Strategic Plans, Policy and International Affairs Directorate after which I retired.





Honoring Norma G. Boyette ~ Class of 1946



The Family of Norma G. Boyette is thrilled to establish a scholarship at UPMC Mercy Hospital School of Nursing honoring the memory of their beloved aunt. This scholarship celebrates a warm and intellectually curious woman and her life spent in the service of her patients and country.

Norma began her nursing career as a student at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1946 and later earning her BS in Nursing from the University of Minnesota in 1961. A staff nurse at Mercy hospital until enlisting in the Navy Nurse Corps in 1949, she spent 25 years in the service before retiring with the rank of Captain, having served during both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Her Naval career took her all over the nation and abroad, from the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy, to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, both facilities for which she was Chief of Nursing Services. Prior to these deployments she was the Operating Room Supervisor at Naval Hospitals in Newport, RI, and Portsmouth, VA and Assistant Chief of Nursing Services at the Naval Hospital in Great Lakes, Illinois.

Norma passed away at the age of 94 in March of 2020. Honoring the institution that launched her inspiring career, she made provisions in her estate for a scholarship to be established at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing.

The scholarship, for veterans and their family members, will be awarded to second year students beginning in June 2022.



References and Resources

Washy, Kathleen, Gathered Fragments 8(1) Fall 1997

<https://www.kumc.edu/news-listing-page/news-archive/world-war-and-its-impact-on-the-nursing-profession.html>

<https://warnursing.wordpress.com/2012/04/16/world-war-iis-influence-on-nursing/>

With gratitude to all who contributed their photos and stories for this special tribute to our veteran graduates including the UPMC Mercy Archives/Library

Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2021



From Your President:

Please join me in honoring our alumni heroes who currently serve, or have served in the military, to remember their achievements, their courage and their dedication, and to say “thank you” for their sacrifices. Thinking of the heroes who join us in reading this newsletter, and those who are here only in spirit, a person can’t help but feel awed by the enormity of what we encounter. We join in the midst of patriots and the family and friends of those who have nobly served. Thank you for answering the call to duty. You have made our armed forces the most respected in the world.

On Veterans Day, people throughout the country will gather together to remember, to honor, and to pay gratitude to those who have served our country. Our newsletter is just one small spark in the flame of pride that burns across the nation on Veterans Day, and every day. It’s not a lot, but its one small way we can honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can live in freedom.

I would also like to thank Deborah Pesanka for her time, dedication, and creativity in creating this special edition of our newsletter.

Sincerely,

Corie (Greece) Schultheis '07

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**Spring Forward!... We have so much to share, but we couldn't fit everything in this edition!
You can look forward to reading about the following and more in our Spring 2022 newsletter:**

⇒ **Remembering our Mercy Angels**

⇒ **Alumni News**

⇒ **School Updates**

MHSN Alumni Association
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