

## Two tours in Vietnam and a trip back

**By Lisa Loomis** Dick Kingsbury was 17, a high school dropout, when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy to fight in the Vietnam War.

He served two tours, enduring what he called a "horrible war," before he returned home to Waitsfield where he went to found a very successful excavation and contracting business. But he carried with him a severe case of PTSD that informed everything in his life. That PTSD came from the horrors of war but also from what greeted him when the young man returned to the states at the height of the civil protests over the war.

Kingsbury started his basic training at 17 and, in 1967 at 19 years old, began his tour of duty in Vietnam as a "riverine," serving on Task Force 116 as a member of a four-man team patrolling the rivers of Vietnam in a 30-foot fiberglass-sided boat.

"When I first got there, the first month, we never heard a gunshot. Then all hell broke loose," he said.

"Our boats were called death traps. We were basically sitting ducks. The boats went 35 miles an hour which is not fast compared to a bullet," he said.



From left to right: Dick Kingsbury, Clesson Eurich and Kevin Eurich.

verted ship. After three and a half months in the south they were transferred north to the DMZ following the TET offensive.

"We were in Dong Ha where it was much more dangerous," strators who were gathered around our bus, throwing tomatoes and protesting the war. People were so bad to soldiers. I wanted to come home so badly. They took us to the airport and I sat there still. As horrible as his wartime experiences were, being greeted by tomato-throwing protesters was pretty difficult for a 21-year-old to understand.

"I was talking to someone

about this not long ago and how we didn't know anything going into this. I'd be a lot more scared now if I were going into the service because I've been there. I know what *Continued on Page 2* 







Dick and Laura Kingsbury on a return trip to Vietnam. Photos courtesy of Dick Kingsbury

Riverines patrolled the rivers 24 hours a day in the Mekong Delta in some 250 Patrol Boats River (PBR), stopping native boats called "sand pans," checking identifications and searching for enemy combatants.

"I liked patrolling nights better because you could see the incoming fire," he said.

Their base, when they didn't sleep on the boats, was a con-

he said.

His boat was blown up on the Perfume River in an attack where his crew saw casualties. That was not his first or last experience with losing friends and fellow crewmen.

When his second tour ended, he and others were flown to Norton Air Force Base and then bused to a rehab facility.

"The biggest thing that bothered me was the crap demonfor two days waiting for a military standby seat," Kingsbury said.

When he got home he began experiencing the symptoms of PTSD and at the urging of his wife, Laura, began seeing a counselor.

"But people didn't know what it was then," he said.

He got better, with some therapy and some medication, but the PTSD stays with him



The Valley Reporter Honors VALLEY VETERANS

# **Education kept Dumas in the Air Force**



Photo: Lisa Loomis Vic and Anne Dumas and their two sons moved around the country during his time in the Air Force.

#### **By Lisa Loomis**

For Waitsfield resident (and Warren native) Vic Dumas, the constant educational opportunities were one thing that led to his career in the armed services.

The 87-year-old volunteered

and enlisted in the Air Force in 1951 when he was 21 years old. He completed his basic training at Sampson Air Force Base in Geneva, New York, and went to flight engineering school at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas before being deployed to Okinawa where he began his work as an airman first class. When he retired from the service, he'd risen to the rank of master sergeant and had flown 15,000 hours.

Dumas was moved around a fair amount during his career, spending time in New Hampshire, New Jersey, Newfoundland, Maryland and Kansas (which he really did not like). As a career service member, his wife, Anne, and later his sons, Spencer and Steve, moved around the country with him.

ger, but by then we were back at Mc-Guire Air Force Base and Anne and I didn't like it. At the time, I was gone a lot flying cargo and personnel into Vietnam," Dumas said.

"Our missions took us from McGuire to Anchorage and then to Yokota, Japan, and then down somewhere to Vietnam," he said.

"The worst part about those flights was that because Vietnam was such a big political deal, we were fine when we had a load of cargo, but going into most bases, when we were carrying personnel, we could expect ground fire," he recalled.

noted.

The C-141 planes they were flying could carry 160 troops plus their equipment. In addition to transporting troops in, they ran medivac flights, picking up wounded soldiers and returning them stateside.

Dumas' interest in the Air Force was fostered by his neighbor and good friend Lauren Whitworth, a career serviceman who serviced in World War II, Korea and Vietnam over 30 years.

"I enlisted because I liked the Air Force. Lauren got me interested. He took me up on "I could have stayed in lon- two or three flights. During

> "We need more negotiation. We sure don't need more armed conflict; that's for sure," Vic Dumas on tensions with North Korea.

> > tour in observation posts and would report every time an airplane went over," Dumas recalled.

After high school Dumas spent several years hauling granite to Chicago and then hauling lumber and logs and Christmas trees to New Jersey.

Their son Steve considered the service as a career, but they did not encourage him

"We only got hit once," he to pursue it. He's a structural engineer in Burlington today. Their other son, Spencer, owns Key Krafter in Waitsfield

> When they returned to Waitsfield, Dumas had a small engine repair service and worked at Bisbee's. His wife, Anne, worked at Mehuron's where she'd worked before they were married. Her maiden name is Mehuron. She worked at the grocery store from 1971 through 1989 and Dumas went part time at Bisbee's in 1996 and retired completely in 2000.

> Dumas said that military service has changed so much

> > since he was in the service. Asked if he had any advice for people considering the service, he said, "Stay out."

"It offered such a great education years ago, but it has changed so much

World War II, I used to do a now. Living on a base is like living in a hotel and there are so many more regulations," he said.

Asked for his thoughts on the current tension with North Korea, Dumas favors negotiation over war.

"We need more negotiation. We sure don't need more armed conflict; that's for sure," he added.

### **Kingsbury returns**

**Continued from Page 1** it's like," he said.

'Vietnam was horrible. It was the nastiest war," he said. When he returned he worked for several companies in Vermont before forming Kingsbury Construction and raising his children, Jamie and TJ, with Laura.

But the PTSD was always there. About a decade ago, Laura was reading the book Up Country and got interested in Vietnam and asked if he'd ever think about going back.

"My shrink had been trying

group, but I resisted. She kept at me and finally I said yes," he recalled.

"The first few nights were pretty bad. I had the sweats and couldn't sleep and then it got better. I'm so glad we went," he said.

"The people were so open and so forgiving. When our boat got blown up, I lost everything, all my pictures, so going back and seeing the country again helped," he said.

They were there for a month and their trip included several homestays, including one where they

a portion of the way and had to hike up the terraced rice paddies to a tiny home where their host was cooking over an open stove into which she kept feeding rice stalks.

Those homestays and the warmth of the people they met helped him heal, he said, especially the faces of the children.

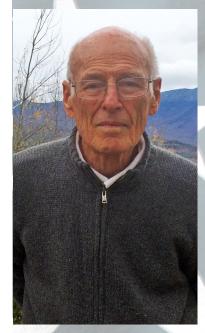
"But what helps the most is to try and put it out of your mind. It will bother me for a few days after now after talking to you," he said at the end of this interview.





## The Valley Reporter Honors ALLEY VETERANS Art Trezise recalls his service in Korea

By Helen Whybrow, contributing writer



Art Trezise.

On Upper Mountain Road above Mad River Glen, Art Trezise lives in a modest log cabin that he built from a kit many decades ago. His love of skiing drew him to the Green Mountains in 1954, on his return from service in the Korean War.

Inside the cabin the wood-

stove is burning and the cofthat gathered intelligence on through the winter. fee is on. On the very day that President Trump visits South

Korea in a time of escaterests in Korea impacted his life many years ago.

A native of Long Island. Trezise went to Columbia University where 90 percent of his classmates were just returning from World War II. "Back then, I was a very non-typical military candidate," he said. "I had even had a letter published in the New York Times as a young man opposing the

draft in peace time." But after touring Europe for "six weeks on \$600, from a small inheritance from my grandmother," Trezise came home to a draft notice. It was 1950. Korea, which had been a Japanese colony, was split in half at the end of World War II. When North Korea invaded South Korea, the U.S. declared war against the Sovietbacked forces in North Korea.

Trezise joined the 4th Infantry Division and was sent to Fort Benning for basic training. He never went to Korea. Instead, he was assigned to

the Soviet military and sent "As an old man, now I feel that lating tension, Trezise AS all old Inall, now ricer that friend also posted in talks about how U.S. in- there should be compulsory mili-germany, he bought a 1931 Chevy which tary service for everybody, the way the Swiss do. Once there's a draft, the mothers and fathers

### start paying attention, and when there's no draft, they don't." - Arthur Trezise

air-drops of food and supplies into Berlin.

"It was a tense atmosphere. ... Berlin was then completely encircled by the Soviet Union." Flights were taking off minutes apart day and night, he recalled. "We were always in a state of readiness for something to happen."

He remembers young Czech and Lithuanian refugees who were taken in by the U.S. Army. He helped tutor them in English.

He remembers many times having to leave the barracks with no warning and set up bivouacs in the German forest as a way of testing their readiness and self-sufficiency. They

Other memories are lighter. From a childhood a 1931 Chevy which he drove around whenever he had a chance. "Every spare part imaginable was stuffed under the seats," he said.

"We had marvelous accommodations for the infantry, in a stone building outside of Frankfurt. There I saw for the first time a never-stopping elevator. The elevator would come by and never stopped and you had to jump on it quickly. Apparently no one ever died!"

After the war, Trezise worked for a company in New York that transferred him to Brazil, and there he became the head of the overseas division.

He was reluctant to be posted to Brazil at first. But he thought, "Maybe this is just what I need, and I'll meet my wife there." That's exactly what happened. He married Maria Lucia, who was known by her nickname Puzas, and

a unit in occupied Germany had canvas pup tents, even they raised three children. She died in 2013.

His profession, first in international business and later in the foreign service, took him to Bogota for three years and Paris for two, but most of his life has been split between Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Fayston.

He has changed his mind about the draft and says he learned a lot in the military. "As an old man, now I feel that there should be compulsory military service for everybody, the way the Swiss do. Once there's a draft, the mothers and fathers start paying attention, and when there's no draft, they don't."

Trezise is concerned about the trends he sees away from democratic participation and toward what he calls "a state of perpetual war." He is active in Democratic politics and with Veterans for Peace, a group that meets regularly in Montpelier. "We as citizens need to have stronger control of our military," he said. "Young people need to get engaged locally. ... Otherwise, I don't know how democracy is going to survive."



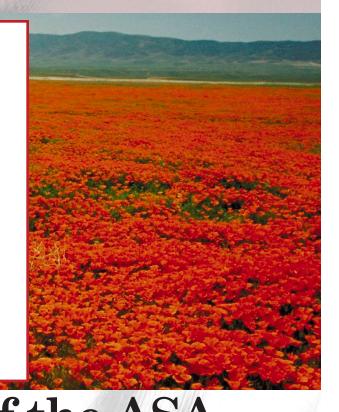
### In Flanders Fields

by John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow Between the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sky The larks, still bravely singing, fly Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe: To you from failing hands we throw The torch; be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders fields.



#### -11 member of the ASA Bob Brightbill a



**Bob Brightbill.** 

#### **By Christopher Keating**

At age 86, Bob Brightbill, Waitsfield, can still tap out his name in Morse code at a rate of 50 words per minute, a skill he learned while serving in the Army during the early stages of the Cold War.

After Brightbill was drafted, he was able to defer entering the Army until he graduated from West Chester University in May of 1953, and because of a back injury he sustained as a gymnast, he had to wait longer.

However, Brightbill said he still needed a job in the meantime, so he got a job teaching

healed though, the Army took him in out of the school and sent him to basic training.

in Ohio. When his back was Europe, between Austria and Germany, listening to Soviet operations across the Iron Curtain.

"There ought to be better ways to solve problems."

### - Bob Brightbill

While he was in basic training, the Korean War ended and he was chosen to serve in the Army Security Agency (ASA), where he learned Morse code and trained as a high-speed radio operator.

After finishing his training, Brightbill spent two years in

"We weren't trusting those guys over there so we listened to everything they did," Brightbill said.

Brightbill explained that he and other "receivers" worked 24 hours a day in three shifts listening and transcribing five-letter codes.

Brightbill got out of the service in 1956, after two years, and moved to New Jersey to become a teacher once again. He taught at an elementary school for three years and then left to become an eighthgrade science teacher, where he stayed for 33 years before moving to The Valley to ski.

Brightbill said that he left the Army realizing how stupid war is.

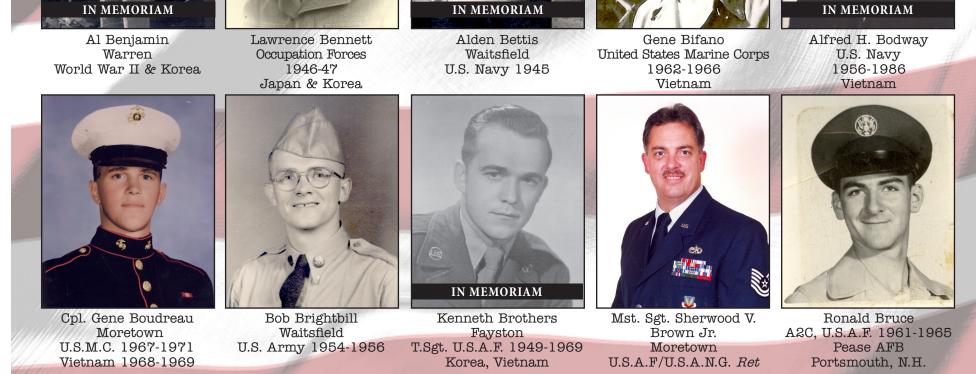
"There ought to be better ways to solve problems," Brightbill said.



N MEMORIAM

4







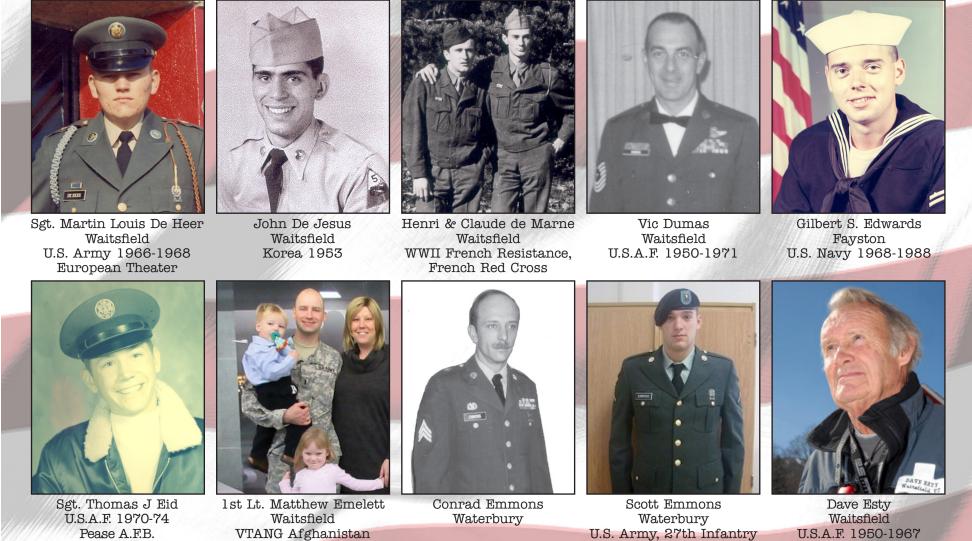
Larry Corthell Waitsfield U.S. Navy 1964-1968

IN MEMORIAM Frank Covino

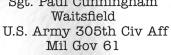
Fayston Sgt. U.S. Air Force 1953 - Korea







Sgt. Paul Cunningham Waitsfield





Gary E. Dalley Waitsfield U.S. Army Specialist Vietnam

Capt., Pilot Active/Reserve





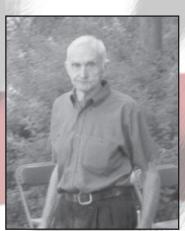


Stuart T. Ferris Sgt. U.S.A.F. 1955-1959 529th Bomb Squadron





PFC Robert F Fielder Waitsfield Marine Corps 1964-1966 Killed Vietnam 1966



Donald Foster Moretown U.S. Army Infantry 1942-1945 European Theater





Warren U.S. Army1970-2007 5<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, U.S.A.R.

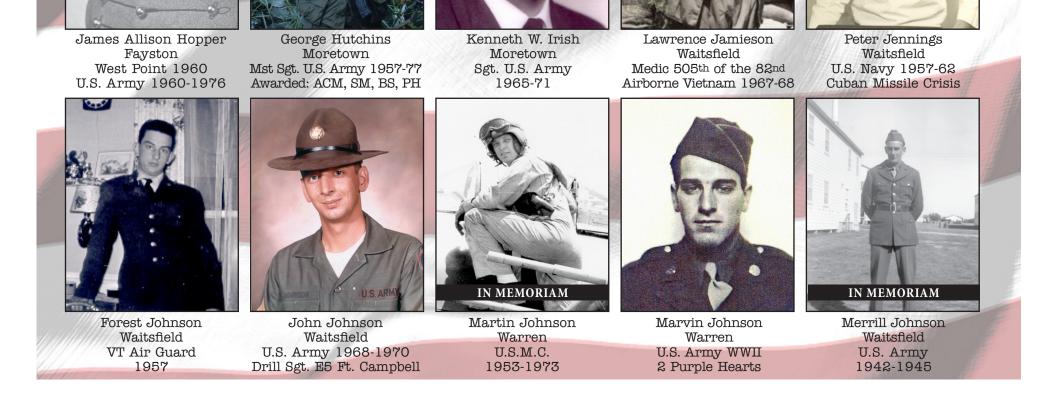


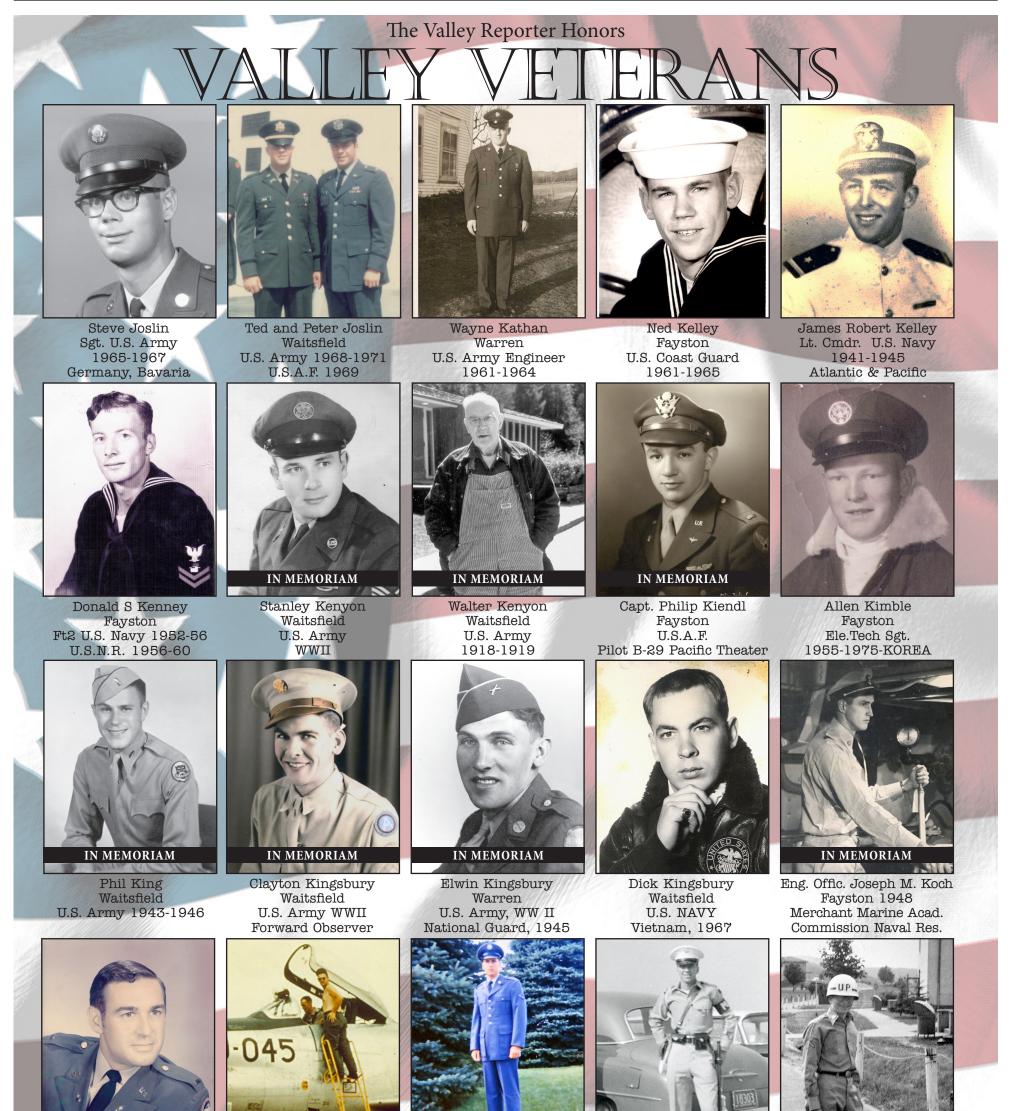


Teresa Grandfield Freeman CTO U.S. Navy 1978-1982 Japan











THE VALLEY REPORTER













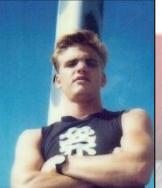


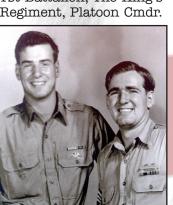






**IN MEMORIAM** 





IN MEMORIAN



**NO PHOTO AVAILABLE**