

# The Listening Post

"NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER"



## Our Color Guard Leads Labor Day Parade Marking Annual Tradition



Gene Shurtz (LtoR), Jim Davis, Tino Madrid and Mike Redner pictured.

2016-2017 Officers

Dick Nolte/ Pres.

Bob Stewart/ V. Pres.

George Hart / 2nd V.P

Clyde Appleby/Secretary

Gene Shurtz/Treasurer

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## Chapter Bus Trip To Tigers Game Needs Participants!

Special arrangements have been made for Chapter 35 members and their guests to go on a chartered bus to Comerica Park in Detroit for the baseball game on September 29, against the Cleveland Indians. The game is scheduled to begin at 1 pm.

"This game will be important to both teams as the Tigers and Indians are battling for the Central Division title," said Associate Member Jerry Eversman who is coordinating the trip. The losing team will be in wild card contention for the playoffs, he added.

Chapter 35 has a significant outlay in funds to get the tickets and prepay the bus charter, as required. Seats on the bus cost \$55 each and include your game ticket along with a voucher good for a free hot dog, soft drink, and chips at the ballpark. One person will win \$55 in cash when a drawing is held on the bus trip.

There will be other free "door prize" drawings held on the bus as well as a 50/50 raffle.

Chapter members are urged to support this trip again. In June of 2013, our chapter sponsored a trip similar trip to a Tigers baseball game and with the help of some non-veterans, we filled the bus. 13ABC TV, was on hand to put us on the evening news.

The bus leaves from Mathews Ford Oregon at 10:15 am.

**Call Jerry Eversman, at 419-266-7776 to reserve your spot!**



A 56 passenger bus has been rented for the trip. There is WI-FI on the bus! Those veterans needing to take a wheel chair in lieu of walking into stadium can do so. A limited number of handicapped section tickets are available. The Detroit Tigers have donated raffle items for the bus trip.



Meeting

Sunday September 11, 2016 at 7 p.m.

LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING

Corner, St. Rt. 795 and Cummings Rd.

Lake Township, Wood County

"Coffee and fellowship at 6:30 p.m."

# Looking Back At 1990 Chapter Events

As the year 1990 began, Dave White was continuing to lead the chapter, having been elected the previous year. Loren Cox is the chapter's chaplain.

The January newsletter advertised a "Tet Offensive Party" at the Sheik Nightclub in Cleveland on Jan 13, 1990, to benefit incarcerated and homeless veterans. Also in that issue was a note about the chapter's November 1989, Jam fundraiser being a huge success.

There are now 17 life members in the chapter as of March 1990.

On March 17, an Awards Banquet is held at the Sommerset Hall where some 120 people attended. Jeff Heitz, news anchor for WTOL Channel 11 television station was the guest speaker. Mike Flowers was the master of ceremonies. U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur is in attendance and received a certificate of appreciation from the chapter.

Also receiving a certificate was Lynn Casey of WIOT FM104 radio station for her success in bringing famed



Gene Shurtz served on banquet committee back in 1990.

Vietnam radio on-air personality Adrian Cronauer to Toledo for an appearance on Memorial Day 1989. Cronauer, the Air Force Sergeant was known for his signature "Good Morning Vietnam" and was played by actor Robin Williams in the movie *Good Morning Vietnam*.

The chapter secured new office space at the Control Data Business & Tech Center, 1946 N. 13th St., in downtown Toledo.

Elections were held on April 8, 1990. The following were selected:

- Mike Flowers - President
  - Leverett Hobbs - 1st Vice President
  - John Eckhart - 2nd Vice President
  - Bob Mettler - Secretary
  - Ray Johnston - Treasurer
- Board of Directors elected were: Rick Hostettler, Larry Roehl, and Rick Wilson. John Maxcy became the Chaplain, while Deb Stalker of Swanton was named the A.V.V.A. chapter rep.

Other officer holders were: Phil Czyzewski, of Swanton, and Barb Roach as state delegates; Ed Digby as parade committee chairman; and Loren Cox as editor of newsletter.

Once again the chapter's continuing mission of assisting Vietnam Veterans and all Veterans in getting jobs was addressed. The chapter held another job fair on May 17, 1990, at the Masonic Auditorium in Toledo. Job fairs by the chapter were in conjunction with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services. They were well attended.



Dave White was Chapter President in 1989 to 1990. He has continued to help out on the color guard through the years. Dave is a VVA life member.

## No Connection to Agent Orange

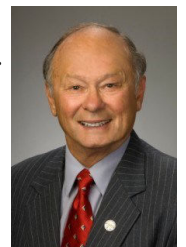
Found in the chapter's files from 1990 was a Toledo Blade article that cited a U.S. Centers for Disease Control study that refused to link Vietnam Veterans' health concerns to Agent Orange contamination. The study did say Vietnam vets were at a 50% increased risk for a rare cancer - non Hodgkin's lymphoma.

According to article, the study found "no evidence" that the increased risk stems from Agent Orange exposure.

Researchers found no evidence that Vietnam veterans were at risk of soft tissue sarcomas from their exposure to Agent Orange phenoxyherbicides.

## Mike Sheehy Makes Donation!

Chapter member Mike Sheehy, Lt. U.S. Army, now serving in the Ohio House of Representatives, has made a donation of gift cards for the bus trip! Thanks Mike.



## Tigers Bus Trip Super Sponsor !



**Mathews Ford Oregon  
Mike Johnson**

A Navy Veteran & father of four sons who have served in, or are serving now, in the U.S. Armed Forces.

"Thanks for the prizes Mike!"



### Meeting

Sunday October 9, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.  
LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING  
St. Rt. 795 & Cummings Rd.  
Lake Township, Wood County  
Fellowship at 6:30pm

## Online Exchange Shopping For 19 Million Veterans Eyed For 2017

The Defense Department's Executive Resale Board voted unanimously last week to recommend that military exchange services open online discount shopping to 19 million honorably discharged veterans starting in late 2017. The plan to extend shopping discounts to most American veterans has two purposes. One is to reward them for their service with product savings that, on average, should be 20 percent over commercial department stores, with military exemption from state and local sales tax part of the discount. The other goal is to increase exchange revenues to offset worrisome declines recently due to the sharp drawdown in active-duty forces, base closures particularly overseas, elimination of on-base tobacco product discounts and reduced margins from selling cheaper gasoline on base.

Whether exchange products are sold in base stores or through online portals, the military relies on the revenue to fund its Morale, Welfare and Recreational activities. Given the defense budget squeeze since passage of the 2011 Budget Control Act, with its sequestration mechanism, some services have had to use exchange "dividends" for needs beyond golf courses and movie theaters. The Army has used exchange earnings of late to pay for new day care centers, a need it used to solve with appropriated dollars.

Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work is expected to give final approval to the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit within 60 to 90 days. He will be urged to do so not only by the resale board, which advises defense leaders on base store operations, but also by senior Pentagon manpower officials who finally are backing the initiative after more than two years of study, internal debate and some very detailed preparations, sources said. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, whose chief executive officer Thomas C. Shull has led the more-than-two-year effort to expand online

shopping, has been building out its shopper website, its customer call centers, and its warehousing and distribution systems, sources said.

All the exchange services also have been working with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Defense Manpower Data Center to develop methods to verify that potential shoppers are honorably discharged veterans. And most recently, the exchange services have reached agreement on how to divide revenue from online purchases using ZIP codes of buyers to estimate service affiliation, said Patrick B. Nixon, president of the American Logistics Association. ALA lobbies on behalf of manufacturers, brokers and distributors doing business with military exchanges and commissaries. By giving honorably discharged veterans only access to exchange products and only online, proponents believe they will dampen criticism from active and reserve forces, military retirees and families, that their own hard-earned shopping benefit is being diluted or improperly shared.

The more highly prized commissary shopping benefit isn't involved. Store traffic won't increase. Exchange officials also will emphasize to current patrons that the veterans' benefit will increase online traffic enough to deliver deeper discounts for all. Yet discounts for exchange shopping on base are expected to remain more robust than the savings available online. All of these factors helped to persuade most major military associations to support the initiative.

ALA, with its close ties to military resale executives, was first to report to its members the Aug. 9 board vote in favor of online shopping for most veterans. Nixon said he agrees with plan proponents that expanding the population of online exchange shoppers will enhance the benefit for all.

Exchanges acknowledge they are losing sales to popular commercial online sites such as Amazon, and as military patrons grow increasingly comfortable

with using smartphones and tablets to shop.

By adding veterans to the online patron base, exchange services expect total annual online sales to jump from \$250 million to \$1 billion in less than four years. That would produce up to \$72 million in additional earnings, half of which would be dividends to support quality-of-life programs.

If, as expected, Deputy Secretary Work approves the initiative, Congress would be notified and given 30 days to object. But department lawyers have concluded that neither congressional approval nor new legislation would be required. Work only would need to make modest changes to an instruction (DoDI 1330.21) governing exchange operation.

Exchanges are eyeing a "soft launch" of the expanded online benefit to segments of veterans by mid-2017, to gauge demand and test system capabilities including the process to verify veteran status. A full launch with much fanfare and promotion is expected by Veterans Day in November 2017.

One lingering concern is the need for the plan to be approved and set before the Obama administration leaves office in January. Otherwise proponents will have to argue the merits again to a new leadership team.

E-commerce is the fastest growing segment of retail "inside and outside the gate," Nixon said. "Normally the military resale system is a little bit behind the power curve. I applaud the fact that exchanges ... have aggressively moved out [on] realizing brick and mortar will not sustain any resale program. Online is the future. And for them to keep pace with initiatives outside they really need to focus on their e-commerce capabilities. This is a great opportunity to bring a large shopping population into the fold." Marine Corps Exchange already refers online shoppers to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service website. Navy Exchange Service Command has



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its own online portal and product selection. That would remain so that honorably discharged veterans would be able to use either online portal. Military retirees, 100-percent disabled veterans and Medal of Honor recipients would still be the only veterans allowed to shop in base exchanges. Key arguments proponents used for expanding online shopping is that it will: incentivize a deeper connection between veterans and their services; send a fresh signal that the nation values their service, and reward the many recent veterans who deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan and yet had to leave service during the draw-down short of retirement eligibility. VA estimates, however, that the median age of the veteran population is 64. So exchanges are using the online shopping behavior of military retirees to predict level of use on expanding the benefit. Retirees generate 40 percent of online revenue for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and 28 percent of online revenue for the Navy exchange system.

*By Tom Philpott Special to Stars and Stripes*

### **The Man that fought In His Friends Place In Vietnam**

In 1966, Paul Mahar switched identities with his childhood friend, and quickly found himself being shipped off to Vietnam.

What started as a simple plan between old friends to help one get out of deploying to Vietnam resulted in a case of mistaken identity that took decades to unravel. When Paul Mahar switched places with his drafted friend Frank Clouse, Jr., they hoped it would result in a quick discharge. Instead, Mahar was shipped off to Vietnam as Clouse, where he spent more than a year impersonating an Army soldier.

The story of one man's sacrifice and service for his friend offers an unseen narrative into contentious national service during Vietnam, showing the deep bonds of friendship and upending the

storyline about draft-dodgers versus patriots.

The two men grew up together in North Newark, New Jersey, enjoying a childhood history of youthful scrapes, including a wrestling match that left Mahar with a metal pin in this arm. That pin would prove decisive for both of them later.

After their families moved, the two drifted apart, though they still kept tabs on each other. Mahar eventually dropped out of high school and tried to enlist in the Army in 1965, even though the Vietnam War was starting to involve large numbers of American troops in bloody combat. He was rejected because of the pin in his arm. He bounced around various jobs in Pittsburgh and New Jersey, while attending his old friend Clouse's wedding along the way. In 1966, Clouse was drafted, and things took a surreal turn.

"I knew he would eventually come to see me," [Mahar wrote in 1993](#) in his short autobiography "Scattered Shots." [Related: 3 fathers and their sons who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.](#)

"It was Frank's way, and the nature of our friendship, and he was still my friend. Frank was usually the one with the ideas, and he usually started to make plans, at least in his mind."

Clouse showed up at Mahar's boarding house in New Jersey in uniform, informing him that he was AWOL. He couldn't bring himself to leave his wife and was scared about what would happen to him in Vietnam. The two of them came up with a plan that seemed ingeniously simple.

After altering Clouse's records to have Mahar's height and weight recorded, Mahar would report to Fort Dix pretending to be Clouse and say he had lost his military identification. He would then draw attention to the metal pin in his arm and use that to get a medical discharge. Clouse would be off the hook.

At first all went well. Mahar was accepted at in-processing as Clouse and given a new identification card. But then Mahar found himself being shuffled onto a C-141 on the tarmac of

McGuire Air Force Base after being handed a pack of cigarettes. So began his journey to Vietnam, a journey that would last 406 days, without the slightest bit of military training. Mahar continued to play along, however terrified he must have been. After being assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, he attended a short five-day field orientation course with other replacements.

Mahar knew how important it was that he learn everything he could, watching other soldiers in the field and reading the small handbook for U.S. forces in Vietnam religiously. After the course, he was assigned to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion 27th Infantry Regiment, or the "Wolfhounds," which had seen ferocious fighting ultimately leading to the award of two Medals of Honor. His platoon was known as the "dead man's platoon" because of the casualties it suffered.

Mahar leaned heavily on his squad leader and fellow soldiers to learn everything he was supposed to already have known. Mahar noted his squad leader thought very little of him. His unit was soon sent to the Iron Triangle, northeast of Cu Chi, enemy territory infested with booby traps and tunnels hidden in the dense jungle. Soldier after soldier he knew fell victim to landmines and improvised explosives.

Mahar proved adept as a tunnel rat. Later, in his memoirs, he wrote: "The words are easy enough to remember. 'the lieutenant wants someone to go down into the tunnel.' The platoon had plenty of volunteers. I was just one of many. But why did I choose to go? I wondered. My self-imposed new identity wouldn't accept ignoring the Lt.'s invitation."

One such claustrophobic excursion rapidly descended into farce. Worming his way into a tunnel with a .45 and a flashlight, expecting booby traps at every turn, Mahar nearly soiled himself at a "god awful noise."

"Charlie must have heard me entering his home; He left me a little surprise to slow me down."

Two feet in front of him was a very upset chicken.

**Continued on page 5**

Mahar performed very well as a soldier despite his unorthodox beginnings, being promoted to sergeant in the fastest time possible. He ended up extending his time in the field, so he could be discharged as soon as his tour was over.

After Mahar made it back to New Jersey, he met with Clouse to begin re-assuming his identity.

“We reversed ourselves. In 1966 Frank taught me all he knew about the Army of Fort Dix, New Jersey and Fort Polk, Louisiana. I was now teaching him about the Army of Vietnam in 1967.”

The gulf between the two friends had become too big to bridge, and after the switch, they swiftly drifted apart. In 1981, Mahar became nostalgic for his old unit and identity as a soldier, and attempted to contact the media for help in clearing up the mess with the Army. This was to take over a decade of frustration.

After several media appearances, he was told his claim would be investigated by the Board of Correction of Military Records in 1991, a slow process in an Army bureaucracy already notorious for its inertia.

After waiting for two years, the Army confirmed that he had indeed served in Vietnam as somebody else. On Nov. 24, 1993, a board met and determined that Mahar should be given an official military file and an honorable discharge. As a Vietnam veteran, he was official. Mahar continued to meet with old members of his unit who had supported him in his quest, until his death on Sept. 21, 2004 — exactly 10 years ago in Coeur d’ Alene, Idaho.

It was not unusual during the Vietnam era for people to hire others to take their place in the military, but Mahar had done it as a favor to a friend, and what was supposed to be a quick road to discharge turned into over a year in the mountainous jungles of Vietnam. Their friendship never recovered.

But Mahar had found in that experience a new group of friends with a bond he cherished for the rest of his life. Though he may have fought as Sgt. Clouse, for everyone afterward he was Sgt. Paul Mahar.

## “Eventually The Thing Did Fly Did Fly” : Vietnam Pilot To Receive Medal Of Honor

WASHINGTON – Charles Kettles knew the eight troops climbing aboard his helicopter would overload it, potentially grounding them amid North Vietnamese machine gun and mortar fire.

As bullets raked the UH-1D “Huey” and shrapnel blew out a section of its windshield, Kettles made a long slow takeoff, piloting the last group of men out of an ambush near Duc Pho, Vietnam in 1967.

For his combat heroism, the 86-year-old Kettles, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and former flight commander, will now receive the nation’s highest military award, the Medal of Honor, during a White House ceremony scheduled for next month. The award is an upgrade from the Distinguished Service Cross as a result of support from Michigan lawmakers.

During the 1967 mission, about 80 soldiers with 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division launched an assault and were surprised by enemy forces along a ridgeline.

“They were caught in an ambush, a bad scene,” said Kettles, who retired from the Army in 1978 and now lives in Michigan. “A few hours after they were inserted, they got pretty well mauled over.”

Kettles, who spoke about the mission during a recent interview with Stars and Stripes, was a flight commander assigned to the 176th Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. He was called up to lead a platoon of Hueys in support of the soldiers, who had requested additional forces. His helicopters made multiple flights to the battle site and ferried back wounded and dead.

“Near the end of the day, things didn’t get any better,” Kettles said.

The battalion commander called for all remaining troops to be extracted, including soldiers from Kettles’ platoon who were trapped when their helicopter had been destroyed in a landing zone.

Kettles was down to one serviceable

helicopter and had to call up another unit from nearby to assist.

“I should have had eight helicopters and I ended up with a net of six, but that is all we had,” he said.

The helicopters went in to extract the last of the remaining soldiers and loaded up. As they flew away, Kettles had just one infantry soldier on his Huey. The others had been loaded up first.

“We lifted up and went out and started back toward Duc Pho at about 1,000 feet,” Kettles said. “Then we were informed that there were 8 troops who didn’t get on helicopter.”

The prospects for a rescue were grim. The support artillery had gone quiet and the fighter jets had left the scene. Kettles knew his D-model Huey lacked the kind of lift power that could guarantee they would get back off the ground with an additional 8 soldiers on board.

Kettles took the controls of the helicopter from the copilot and turned back toward the site of the ambush. As they landed, the infantry soldiers immediately began climbing aboard — suddenly they were hit by North Vietnamese mortar fire.

“Shrapnel took out part of the left and right windshield and chin bubble where I was,” Kettles said.

“Apparently, the shrapnel went between my seat and the copilot’s seat.” Several of the soldiers were wounded. Later, the crew would find about 30 holes were enemy bullets pierced the aircraft.

“The helicopter began fishtailing violently to the left and right,” Kettles said. “One of the grunts flew out and caught a skid.”

The other soldiers pulled the hanging man back in, but the Huey was still badly overloaded and the rotor blade began to lose speed. To get the men out, Kettles would have to execute a running takeoff, flying slow and low over a long, open space.

As enemy fire continued, Kettles lowered the Huey’s nose skid to nearly

*Continued from page 5*

touch the ground and flew along a dry riverbed.

“Eventually the thing did fly and came out with a rather shallow departure,” he said.

Kettles, who was 37 years old at the time, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism. A push from lawmakers in Kettles’ home state of Michigan sought to upgrade his award.

Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., said Kettles went “above and beyond the call of duty during one of the darkest times in our nation’s history.”

Too often Vietnam servicemembers were not celebrated or treated with respect, Dingell said in a released statement.

“These individuals fought for our country and put their lives on the line and because Lt. Col. Kettles turned his helicopter around and braved enemy ammunition and shell fire, he saved the lives of 44 men,” she said.

Kettles was already considered a local hero in Michigan, where he is featured in a museum exhibit by the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

“He is a great guy, he is just marvelous,” said Alvin Rudisill, the society president.

The White House announced Tuesday that he will receive the Medal of Honor.

Kettles will be the 260th recipient from the Vietnam War, and only its 54th living recipient, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The last service member to receive the award was Chief Edward C. Byers, Jr, a Navy SEAL involved in a hostage rescue in Afghanistan in 2012. He received the award in February.

*Stars and Stripes reporter Alex Horton contributed to this story.*

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## Homeless Veteran Stranded

Shawn Michael Barnes’ pit bulls were flying through the air, jumping into his arms and bouncing off his body as he attempted to play catch with them late last week in a vacant field off the south end of Cerrillos Road.

The homeless Army combat vet — whose “stranded-in-Santa Fe” plight in July brought him national attention that helped raise about \$3,000 through a GoFundMe account — is back in the city after a thwarted trip to Colorado.

His vehicle is once again broken down, undone by transmission problems. Last time, in a dry July with record-breaking heat, he found himself stranded near the landfill several miles from town. Now he’s within walking distance of a grocery store and a water supply for the dogs.

“I feel like I’m supposed to be out here,” he said one recent morning while playing with his seven dogs. “It’s where I keep getting stuck.”

Barnes, 31, took to the road in February from his home state of New Jersey to find inspiration, land and support to build The Barracks, a nonprofit motel for veterans and their dogs. It would be a place where veterans can get a hot meal, a shower and a warm bed for them and their canines.

According to the National Coalition For Homeless Vets, about 48,000 military veterans are living on the streets on any given nights. Some have dogs.

Barnes has seven pit bulls: Prince, Sateen (pronounced “Satin”), Xena, Apocalypse, Paris, Syria and Sienna. They are oblivious to their plight, happy to be sleeping in the back of Barnes’ SUV and running around the vacant field. Low-flying ravens and fast-moving lizards continually distract them. When he was stuck in Santa Fe last month, Barnes got some help from local people, including Brian Redondo, an ex-Marine mechanic, and managed to get back on the road for a trip to the mountains near Westcliffe, Colo. When he hit Trinidad just across New Mexico’s northern border, however, his car broke down again. He stayed in a chain store parking lot for nearly a week until Redondo drove up to help him. His first night in Trinidad, flashlights beamed in through his car window, waking him and alerting the dogs. The next thing Barnes knew, he said, a couple of police officers were putting their hands on their weapons and asking him if he was hoarding fight dogs.

“I said, ‘Whoa, whoa, calm down, you surprised us. They are good dogs. They are service dogs,’” Barnes recalled. “Once I

explained it to them, they backed off. They left me alone. It could have been a lot worse.”

He returned to the safety of Santa Fe, where he broke down once again a few days ago.

Barnes has always been wary of general contact with other human beings — he said he knows combat vets and pit bulls are often viewed as dangerous — but his experiences in Northern New Mexico have warmed him up to the idea of companionship and of asking for help.

Barbara Odell of Santa Fe, one of the local people who have reached out to help him, spent some time tracking Barnes down last week to bring him food and gas. One day, she loaded him and his dogs into her car for a shopping trip to Wal-Mart. She waited outside with the dogs while he ran in to buy supplies.

When he returned, she noticed he had bought transmission fluid, dog treats and hot dogs for the pit bulls.

“Did you buy yourself any food?” she asked him. “No,” he said. She said another once-homeless veteran who has gone through a similar situation is working to help Barnes — who has post-traumatic stress disorder — become eligible for more veterans’ benefits so he can “find his footing and get out of that car and get a house and take care of those dogs.

“I feel it’s our responsibility as human beings to give back,” Odell said. “I feel it is my responsibility to do that.”

Barnes said he knows his refusal to abandon his dogs is preventing him from finding housing — permanent or temporary — and damning him to a life on the road. But while a month ago he saw his pets as both a blessing and a curse, he’s since changed his mind. “I’m glad I keep them together, glad I have them with me because they push this purpose of mine farther,” he said. “The more I struggle and tell people I’m not splitting them up ... the more they can see I’m serious about The Barracks. ...

With seven dogs, maybe I’m making a statement. They’re my trademark. They are a blessing.” Odell, among others, is urging Barnes to get his dogs neutered and spayed. He’s beginning to consider it. The GoFundMe account created by one of his sisters should help.

In the meantime, Barnes has met a number of homeless people — some veterans, some civilians — near his improvised campsite. He’d never envisioned himself in their similar situation, but his experience has opened his eyes.

“They’re just people who want to help other people make it another day,” he said. “That means a lot to me.”