



# THE HOOSIER VETERAN

ISSUE 1-22 • JANUARY 2022

[in.gov/dva](http://in.gov/dva)

**National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day  
Jan. 9**

**International Holocaust Remembrance Day  
Jan. 27**

## WELCOME!

BY JOE DEVITO

Happy New Year! This month we enter 2022 with the hope and anticipation of what a new year can bring. We recognize National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day and we thank our first responders for keeping our communities safe. We also take a moment to remember the Holocaust during International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The team at IDVA is busy setting new goals and pushing new boundaries to ensure we continue to serve the Veteran community with our best. In this holiday season of gatherings, and in these coming winter months, let us all remain vigilant in our battle with COVID-19 and look out for one another. IDVA is committing to solidifying Indiana as the best place for all Indiana Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive! We welcome contributions and feedback to [outreachedva.in.gov](mailto:outreachedva.in.gov).

THE HOOSIER VETERAN  
NEWSLETTER

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Blog: [Indiana Vet View](#)



# INDIANA VIETNAM VETS GIFT



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317-549-5900

jill@vetaranevents.org

# Vietnam War Veteran awarded Purple Heart 53 years after being wounded in action

*By Kirsten Clark*

CORYDON, Ind. – After being wounded in action 53 years ago in the Vietnam War, U.S. Marine Corps veteran Frank Bill was awarded a Purple Heart during a ceremony this month. It was an honor the Bill family had been pursuing for more than 16 years when they first submitted his application.



*Photo credit Studio 199: Maj. Charles Clark (Left) Gunny Sgt. Laronald McKinney (Right)*

We are just absolutely thrilled this day has finally arrived,” said Julie Bill, Frank’s wife. “Frank is finally getting what he deserves for his service in Vietnam, and the day has come when we can honor him properly. It took 53 years to get here, but who’s counting?”

A ceremony was held Dec. 16 at the Harrison County Government Center in Corydon, Ind., with Bill’s family and friends to honor his bravery in combat. The citation was read by U.S. Marines Gunny Sgt. Laronald McKinney and Maj. Charles Clark. Harrison County Veteran Service Officer, Tara D. Avis, also attended and was a key figure in Bill’s final approval for the Purple Heart.



***“We are so thankful for Frank’s service; he is so brave to stand where so many would not dare to kneel,” said Avis. “I hope this was everything he hoped it would be 51 years after his service and 16 years after starting this process.”***

*Photo credit Studio 199 : Tara D. Avis Harrison County VSO*

Bill served in his beloved Marine Corps until 1970. As a lance corporal, he was wounded during a routine road clearing operation. Bill's platoon entered an area where mines had been planted in the road. As he swept the area, a 40-pound anti-tank mine was manually detonated by the enemy, causing blast injuries to Bill's face and much of his body.

"Frank weighed a buck-20 and wore birth control glasses, but he was a born Marine. He didn't know it until he went to boot camp and that brought it out," said Vaughn Seruby, a fellow Marine who served with Bill in the 1st Engineer Battalion, C Company, 3rd Platoon. "We went out on the roads, clearing land mines and we knew we could be ambushed at any time, and we still went out. We crawled around on the road looking for them [land mines], knowing we could be vaporized in an instant, so it took great courage. I admire him and guys like him."

Frank Bill didn't want to pursue a Purple Heart initially but credits his wife's persistence for finally getting him to start the process of applying in 2005.



*Photo credit Studio 199: Julie Bill (Left)*

***"I was just trying to let go of my experiences in the war, and I didn't care to pursue the Purple Heart early on," said Bill. "But my wife really wouldn't let it go - she was concerned for my health mainly - it was her persistence that got me into VA healthcare and started the process of looking into how to receive a Purple Heart."***

The Bills began writing letters to the Department of the Navy about the Purple Heart medal, which responded in turn with a request for more information that was required to document the event that caused Bill's injuries.

"We didn't get a lot done at first because we really didn't know how to go about it," Julie said. "This was really something that developed over the years as we continued to add evidence to his application each time the Purple Heart was denied. It was a great struggle just to get the medical records from when he was in Vietnam because Soldiers and Marines were treated on the battlefield by corpsmen, not doctors."

The search for answers was a learning process for the Bills, and with each denial they grew weary of pursuing the medal. Bill was forced to recall the events of his service and medical care in Vietnam many times, aggravating his PTSD, causing anxiety, and increasing the frequency of his nightmares.

The couple eventually connected with Avis and received the help and support they had so long needed. From her efforts to compile evidence to her encouraging attitude, the Bills pressed forward ever hopeful for a positive outcome.

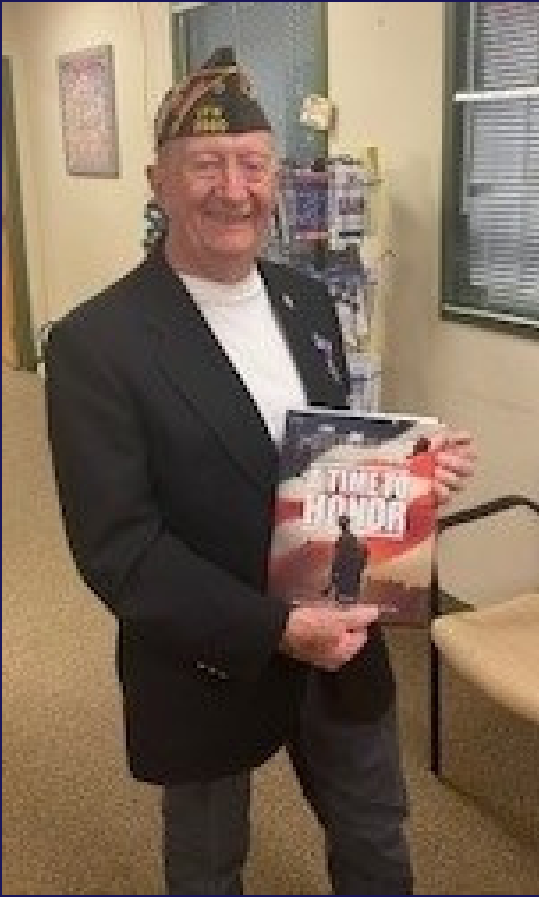
"His injuries are well-documented, and he currently is under VA medical care for this service-connected disability," said Avis. "He deserves every bit of this Purple Heart and more."

"His application was just overlooked for so long; we were tired. I even wrote to President Trump in the hopes it would be approved quicker," said Julie. "We at last met with Tara, and she submitted medical paperwork and justification and proof. Thanks to her and Frank noticing a discrepancy in the record that he was injured but never evacuated from theatre, we finally made it happen."

***Frank Bill talks with friends at the ceremony to award his purple heart Dec. 16.***



*Photo credit Studio 199*



Bill is a proud veteran and has used his time in Vietnam to help others. He is a member of American Legion Post 133 in Alton, Ind., and the VFW Old State Capitol Post 2950. Frank and Julie have lived in Corydon for many years, raising their blended family together since 2003.

Bill credits his Purple Heart award to Avis and his wife Julie, along with fellow veterans Tony DeBlasio and Seruby, who served as witnesses to the event in 1968 that changed Bill's life forever.

*Frank Bill Receiving his Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran Book*

***"It gives me great pride and makes me feel better [knowing my injuries weren't for nothing], especially after watching other Marines get killed, knowing they are your own and now they're gone," said Bill. "It is nice to be recognized, but I wish my fellow Marines were still alive. I'd have wanted to see them live their lives instead."***



*Photo credit Studio 199: Tony DeBlasio (Left) and Vaughn Seruby (Right)*



*2022*  
**INDIANA  
MILITARY  
VETERANS  
LEGISLATIVE  
DAY**

**JANUARY 10, 2022  
10:30 A.M. EST**

Indiana State House  
Info: 317-632-0500  
hawkins@vsc.ooo

**JOIN US!**

**MEET WITH  
LEGISLATORS  
AND VENDORS**

**HELP  
VETERANS  
TURN  
IDEAS INTO  
LAW**

[www.veteranlegislateday.org/](http://www.veteranlegislateday.org/)



# PLAYWRITING FOR VETERANS

ALL VETERANS  
welcome at the  
Indiana Veterans  
Center for this  
FREE unique  
course.

**Thursdays:**

**Jan. 13 - May 5th**

**4:00 - 6:30 pm**

Hybrid online option possibly  
available

Over the course of 16 classes, all playwrights are taught the fundamentals of scriptwriting.

Those who take this class will read established plays together, write their own original scripts, and workshop those scripts through in-class readings with classmates.

**Instructor:**

**Angeline Larimer**

To enroll,  
please contact:  
[alarimer@iu.edu](mailto:alarimer@iu.edu)



# INDIANA VIRTUAL-VETERANS EXPERIENCE ACTION CENTER



**Jan 25–27, 2022**

**10:00 AM–3:00 PM ET**

## Sign Up for 1-On-1 Personalized Assistance with Veteran Health care, Benefits, and Services

Get Assistance On:

- » VA Claims and Appeals Filing and Status Updates
- » VA and Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs
- » VA Healthcare Eligibility and Enrollment
- » Community and Peer-to-Peer Networking Referral
- » Education, Employment, and Pro Bono Legal Referral
- » Family Member, Caregiver, and Survivor Benefits & Services

To learn more about this event and to register online,  
visit: <https://www.va.gov/initiatives/veterans-experience-action-centers/>

Limited appointments available. Registration runs through Sunday, January 23rd.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**2.1.1**

Indiana



# Hoops For Troops

Free Tickets for Veterans and Guests

Proof of service required. Tickets are limited to five (5) per veteran and may be picked up the day of the game at the Screaming Eagle Arena veteran ticket window. Brought to you by the American Legion Post 324 and the USI Student Veteran Association.



IDVA Events Calendar: [Click Here](#)



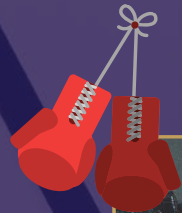
## The Society of the 3rd Infantry Division

The Army's oldest continuously active military society has supported Dogface Soldiers of the division since 1919. The Society exists to honor fallen Dogface Soldiers, to support division and family members, and to perpetuate a social network of Dogface Soldiers, past and present. View Types of Membership and Eligibility [Here](#)

# Into The New Year

VETERAN EVENTS ALL 2022

**PUNCH FOR  
VETERANS BOXING  
CLINIC  
SATURDAYS 9 TO 10 A.M.**



## **PUNCH FOR VETERANS BOXING CLINICS**

For disabled veterans or civilians with a disability

**Saturdays  
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM**

**Mike Ford Fitness  
2326 E 44th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46205**

**\$5 Per class  
FREE for disabled veterans**



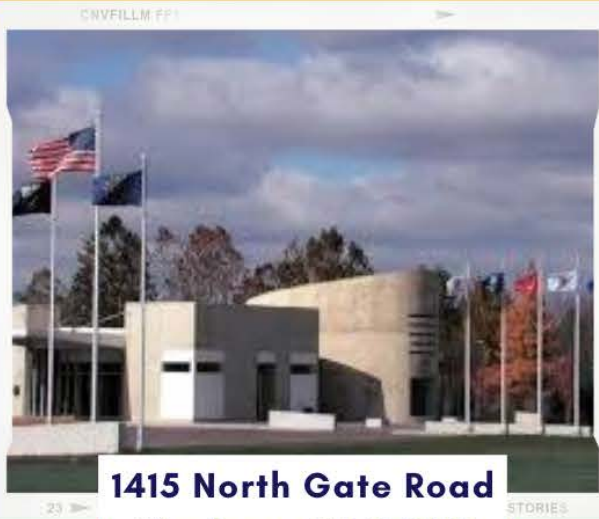
**SCAN HERE  
TO REGISTER  
OR FOR  
MORE INFO**

Or go to: <https://rhipunchforveterans.eventbrite.com>



Writing in Peace, a program of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum & Library in partnership with Turkey Run State Park, is a creative writing workshop for veterans. This is a monthly workshop. Sign up by emailing to [info@vonnegutlibrary.org](mailto:info@vonnegutlibrary.org) indicating which dates you would like to attend. Visit the **Vonnegut Library** website for more information.

# ROLL CALL!



**1415 North Gate Road  
Madison, IN 47250**

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery is open for visitors. Please follow all COVID-19 guidelines:

- Wear a mask in all buildings.
- Maintain 6 feet social space.

We understand and appreciate your contribution to keeping everyone safe to enjoy their visit.

Click [HERE](#) to see the webpage.



## Indiana Veterans Home News



Every veteran grave received a Christmas wreath this year through our Wreaths Across America event Dec. 18. Thank you to all our volunteers, staff and residents who helped make the event a success and helped make the cemetery beautiful for the season.

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*Socially*



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