Wisconsin State Senate
32nd Senate District

(608) 266-5490
(800) 385-3385

BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2023

Contact: Sen. Pfaff
608.266.5490

Honoring our Veterans

It takes a tremendous amount of courage and selflessness to step forward and serve others. Many generations of men and women have worked to protect and preserve democracy, and it is our job to keep it.

As we celebrate Veterans Day, I hope you take the time to thank the veterans in your life for the sacrifices they have made.

I'd like to share the stories of five veterans from western Wisconsin who stepped up in service to others. Although their stories are unique, there are many men and women who have their own stories across the Driftless Region and our country.

These are everyday citizens who went above and beyond to protect freedom and democracy. These are friends, neighbors, and family members who risked their lives so that we may enjoy ours.

Karri Kline lives in La Crosse.

In 1976, Karri Kline was in the first class of women accepted at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. After her graduation, she served in active duty.

Today, she and her husband live in La Crosse.

Alvin Blackdeer lived in Brice Prairie.

After graduating high school in 1943, he joined the U.S. Navy. During WWII, he worked on the U.S.S. Tangier in Hawaii and traveled to the Philippines and Corregidor before he was discharged. He returned home to western Wisconsin where he started his family, worked to support fellow veterans, and helped incorporate the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Not only did Alvin serve our country, but in 2015, he along with other members of the Ho-Chunk Nation were acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Defense as code talkers. Code talkers were Native American members of the military who used a secret code that could only be deciphered by their native languages.

Stanley Christianson lived in Mindoro.

Stanley Christianson first enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1942 at the age of 17. During World War II he fought at Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa.

After his discharge, Christianson reenlisted in the Marine Corps and served for five more years before giving his life in a one-man stand against an attack that threatened to destroy his platoon in Korea in 1950. He posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his heroic efforts in support of his platoon.

Charles Dickman lived in Cashton.

Charles Dickman served in the Army during the Korean War. At the age of 17 he went missing in action after engaging in defensive actions north of Chochiwon, South Korea.

His remains were recently identified and returned to Cashton, where he was honored for his sacrifice. On October 21st, flags across Wisconsin were flown at half-staff in his honor.

Eugene Moran lived in Soldiers Grove.

Eugene Moran's story, wonderfully told by the book *Tailspin*, is one of the most remarkable you will ever hear. During World War II he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps and served as a tailgunner in the 96th Bomb Group.

On their way back from a mission, Moran's plane was shot and the tail section of the plane separated before plummeting down over Bremen, Germany. At just 19 years old, he fell four miles without a parachute in the tail section of the plane, and survived.

Following his harrowing fall, Moran survived POW camps, a "Hell Ship" and a 600-mile death march before being liberated a year and a half later. He returned home to Soldiers Grove where he started his family, career, and lived the rest of his life.

We will never know everything that these and other veterans have endured in the pursuit of freedom, but we can show our thanks and appreciation.

For many of our veterans and their families, war never ends. While it is important that we share their stories, it is even more important that we continue to support them through education and economic opportunities, as well as health care when our veterans return home.

Their sacrifices carry on and are remembered even today, many decades after their enlisted service ended.

Thank you to all who have served.

<p style="text-align:center">###</p>

Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.