



## The Knox County Joint Veterans Council are looking for **volunteers!!!**

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. **Contact Carol Riley @**

**740-504-3264 if you are interested in volunteering.** Thank you!



They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. And they do this without thought of payment. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased soldier, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

### Supreme Court upholds state government work protections for reservists

The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed a former state trooper to sue Texas over his claim that he was forced out of his job when he returned from Army service in Iraq.

The justices ruled for Army veteran Le Roy Torres under a federal law that was enacted in 1994 in the wake of the Persian Gulf War to strengthen job protections for returning service members.

By a 5-4 vote, the high court rejected Texas' claim that it is shielded from such lawsuits. "Text, history, and precedent show that the States, in coming together to form a Union, agreed to sacrifice their sovereign immunity for the good of the common defense," Justice Stephen Breyer wrote for the court.

Justice Clarence Thomas, joined by three other conservative justices, dissented, arguing that "when the States ratified the Constitution, they did not implicitly consent to private damages actions filed in their own courts — whether authorized by Congress' war powers or any other Article I power." Article I refers to the part of the Constitution that spells out Congress' power.

Torres says he suffered lung damage from exposure to open burn pits on his base in Iraq. He spent a year in Iraq and Separately, Congress is nearing final passage of a sweeping expansion of health care and disability benefits for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who were exposed to the open pits that were set ablaze with jet fuel to dispose of tires, batteries, medical waste and other materials.

The state and Torres dispute what happened when he returned to Texas, unable to resume his job as a state trooper because of the damage to his lungs. He eventually resigned and later filed his lawsuit. A state appellate court dismissed it, and the justices stepped in.

Congress first allowed returning service members to sue states to keep their jobs in 1974, recognizing discrimination because of opposition to the Vietnam War.

In March, the court allowed the Navy to take account of sailors' vaccination status in deciding on deployments, narrowing a lower court order. Three justices, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Thomas, dissented from the high court's order. Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined her colleagues in Wednesday's dissent

<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2022/06/29/supreme-court-upholds-state-government-work-protections-for-reservists/>

### Four soldiers to receive Medals of Honor for actions in Vietnam

President Joe Biden on Monday announced plans to award Medals of Honor to four soldiers for actions in the Vietnam War, fully recognizing the courage and heroism they showed during the fight there.

Three of the four men will attend a White House ceremony on July 5 to receive the medals. The fourth — Staff Sgt. Edward N. Kaneshiro — was killed during fighting in Vietnam and will be honored posthumously. Family members will be present to accept his honors.

All four men had previously been given other military awards for their actions, and were the subject of speculation about an upgrade to the military's highest battlefield honor in recent years.

Kaneshiro served as an infantry squad leader with the 1st Cavalry Division in the Kim Son Valley in December 1966. His unit was ambushed by North Vietnamese forces while on a search and destroy mission in the village of Phu Huu 2.

Army officials said Kaneshiro destroyed one enemy group with rifle fire and two others with grenades, enabling his men to withdraw from the area safely. He served four more months in the country until he was killed by hostile gunfire on March 6, 1967.

Spc. 5th Class Dwight W. Birdwell was serving with the 25th Infantry Division a year later when his heroism occurred.

During an assault on Tan Son Nhut Airbase near Saigon on Jan. 1, 1968, Birdwell's unit was overrun and his tank commander incapacitated by an enemy attack. Under heavy enemy fire, Birdwell moved his commander to safety and returned fire at the enemy with a nearby tank. During the subsequent firefight, he was wounded in the face and torso, but refused evacuation. He didn't receive medical care until reinforcements arrived and he was ordered to withdraw.

Spc. 5th Class Dennis M. Fujii was the crew chief aboard a helicopter ambulance during rescue operations in Laos and Vietnam in February 1971. During a mission to evacuate seriously wounded Vietnamese military personnel, his medevac helicopter was shot down.

Despite injuries, he waved off a rescue from another helicopter and remained behind as the only American on the battlefield. Over the next 17 hours, he provided first aid to allies in the area and called in American air support to help defend the outmanned Vietnamese allies. Army officials said he repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire in order to protect the other men.

Maj. John J. Duffy was serving as the senior advisor to the 11th Airborne Battalion, 2nd Brigade, at the time of his heroism.

In April 1972, the battalion commander was killed and the command post destroyed during an attack. Duffy was wounded twice in the fighting but refused evacuation in order to ensure other personnel could be evacuated from the area. The next morning, during another enemy assault, Duffy was wounded a third time while attempting to call in American air strikes. Over the course of two days of fighting, he maneuvered throughout the battlefield, identifying targets for American gunships and helping to get evacuated to safety.

Not including the four new awards, 260 service members have been presented the Medal of Honor for actions in Vietnam. Of those, 174 have been awarded to soldiers.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2022/06/28/four-soldiers-to-receive-medals-of-honor-for-actions-in-vietnam/>



## Lost rifle is latest in feud between Texas Guard and butterfly preserve

Along the banks of the Rio Grande in Mission, Texas, there is no shortage of bad blood between two unlikely antagonists. The National Butterfly Center, a non-profit nature preserve whose top official is an outspoken liberal activist, and the Texas National Guard, which is more than a year into its controversial, issue-plagued mission to monitor the state's border with Mexico, have clashed for months. The center's executive director, Marianna Treviño Wright, has been a polarizing figure since the center filed lawsuits when then-President Donald Trump's border wall plan threatened to cut the center's land in two. Treviño Wright has also open-carried a handgun on the center's property since an alleged fight in the center's reception area with a right-wing congressional candidate in January.

Border wall activist and Air Force veteran Brian Kolfage, who will go to federal prison for defrauding donors to his "We Build the Wall" fund, attacked Treviño Wright as a "left wing 'thug' with a 'sham' butterfly agenda" — a phrase now featured on mugs in the center's gift shop, according to the New York Times.

Two months after Trump lost the 2020 election, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott announced the deployment of Texas Guardsmen to the Mexico border, dubbing the mission Operation Lone Star. He later expanded it to 10,000 troops — only about 6,500 of whom are at the border — via massive involuntary mobilizations that resulted in hardship for troops on the mission.

Since Operation Lone Star began, Treviño Wright has spoken out about troops cutting the center's barbed wire fence and trespassing. In January, Guard troops also crashed a truck into an access road gate that Treviño Wright said was on center property, though Texas officials claimed the gate was on federal land.

The center's Twitter account also questioned whether a Texas Guard soldier had put a pistol to a migrant's head, citing April surveillance footage. But upon review, the video does not appear to depict a handgun. Texas Military Department officials said the member was holding a night vision device. But now the butterflies are armed — kind of.

In the latest incident Monday, a Texas National Guard soldier abandoned a loaded M4A1 carbine in a running pickup truck with its doors unlocked. The truck, an unmarked pickup with an Oregon plate, was parked alongside three marked Border Patrol trucks and another unmarked truck along a road near the butterfly center.

Worst of all, the rifle's dust cover was open.

The center director noticed the unsecured weapon, notified the local Border Patrol station chief, and took it to her office for safe-keeping, she recalled in an interview with Army Times. She shared screenshots of her messages to the station chief with Army Times, as well. Later that day, she decided to post about it on Twitter.

Later tweets included photos of the rifle in her office and an image of the lower receiver, which revealed the weapon was a former M4 carbine that was converted into an M4A1 to replace the burst feature with fully automatic fire.

Treviño Wright explained that she was worried that someone could get their hands on the weapon and harm either the agents, soldiers or passersby.

She posted that she had "returned the abandoned automatic weapon to the sergeant 'in charge' of this merry band of dip-shits."

A Texas Military Department spokesperson confirmed via email that "a weapon was left unsecured in a vehicle during the apprehension of illegal migrants," adding that the "incident remains under investigation. The Texas Military Department remains committed to providing safety and security along our southern border."

The spokesperson, who did not provide their name, did not respond to a follow-up question seeking to determine how many migrants were apprehended. Treviño Wright claimed there were none.

Since posting about the rifle on Twitter, she's received thousands of responses — some in support, but many more piled on, arguing that removing the rifle from the truck was a crime.

Several Instagram pages dedicated to creating memes and other humorous content about life on Operation Lone Star also weighed in, with one calling Treviño Wright "a very vocal nuisance to us" but acknowledging that "this was the best case scenario... what if a bad dude had found it?" Another Instagram page created a parody press release with the headline "Texas Guard arms National Butterfly Center." However bad their mistake, our unnamed hero did one thing right — at least the weapon was on safe.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2022/07/01/lost-rifle-is-latest-in-feud-between-texas-guard-and-butterfly-preserve/>

## Pictures of the Month



An Air Force F-15 Eagle flies in formation with a WWII-era B-17 during Sentry Eagle over Crater Lake, Ore., June 24, 2022. The exercise allows pilots to train against dissimilar aircraft and to practice aerial refueling and combat operations.



An armored vehicle maneuvers around the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., June 28, 2022.