



Honoring the Quiet Ones

Boasting may not be in their DNA, but military veterans are going on well-deserved display thanks to PennWell's Wall of Honor.

By Chris Greer

Spotting them can be tricky. Maybe it's their training. For some, staying under the radar is a character trait. Whatever the reason or method of concealment, recognizing military veterans can sometimes prove to be an exercise in futility.

Clyde Krout, president of Hydro Consulting & Maintenance Services, Inc., knows this firsthand, having employed a couple for years — more than 20 in one instance — without ever knowing much, if anything. Tight-lipped, it took years of small talk before one of Krout's employees shared his experiences keeping supply routes open during the Vietnam War, manning a .50-caliber machine gun.

"I like to say that it's really hard to tell who is a military veteran because most of the time heroes don't brag,"

says Krout, who has nearly 50 years experience in the installation, repair and service of hydro turbines and generators. "The way I see it, any person who puts on a uniform, whether they sit behind a desk or grab a gun, is a hero and should be honored. If I pass someone I can tell fought for our country, I take the time to thank them, but I don't see many others regularly doing it.

And that's a form of recognition that the Tulsa, Okla.-based PennWell Corporation aims to change.

From Normandy and Seoul to Baghdad and Bunker Hill, military veterans have protected our country at conflict crossroads, sometimes making the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of principles greater than self. Since the Revolutionary War, more



At the time this article was written, Chris Greer was associate editor of Hydro Review and HRW-Hydro Review Worldwide. Graphics in this article were created by Clyde Krout, president, Hydro Consulting & Maintenance Services, Inc.

than 3.7 million Americans serving in the military have been laid to rest from Arlington, Va., and Gettysburg, Pa., to Willamette, Ore., and Fort Bliss, Texas. Another 22 million have transitioned to lives beyond the call of duty, far too often with little fanfare.

Why has the general populace found it difficult to more frequently honor and celebrate the contributions of the veterans who embody the exceptional character and values our nation was built upon? While there are occasions where veterans are celebrated, outside of Memorial Day and a few wreaths laid on Veteran's Day, collective appreciation on a national level is usually lost in the shuffle of stores promoting holiday sales.

After all, as novelist G.B. Stern once lamented, "Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone."

"Memorial Day has become just a day when people get off work and go to the beach or something," said Krout, who was labeled 4-F (not fit for service) when applying to serve in the military during the Vietnam War. "These special military holidays mean more to me than going swimming. People have lost the meaning over the years."

And PennWell, which publishes 130 print and online magazines, including *Hydro Review*, agrees more needs to be done to recognize those who served with courage and distinction while demonstrating an unfaltering commitment to their country. In the past five years, in the midst of the debate over troop levels, exit strategies and progress assessment, many have lost sight of those who do the real fighting. The company behind more than 60 conferences and exhibitions on six continents annually felt a need to devise a more personal way to pay homage to the brave men and women of our nation's past and present for time-honored service.

"Our current CEO (Robert Biolchini) is a Vietnam-era vet, and his wife had a brother (Joseph Lauinger) who was killed in Vietnam," says PennWell Senior Vice President Richard Baker, whose son, Richard Jr., has



served two tours of duty in Iraq for the U.S. Air Force. "In fact, (Patrick Boyle) the founder of PennWell and great-grandfather to our CEO's wife, fought for the North in the Civil War. Many of our current and former employees or their sons and daughters have also served in one branch or another. You could say military service is in our company DNA.

"So it got me thinking that we need to honor these people who are allowing us to do our jobs in a fashion where we're not in constant danger."

During a retreat in April 2011, Baker pitched his idea of a traveling Wall of Honor, designed as a tool for remembrance, reflection and respect for those men and women who cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to serve. PennWell began soliciting nominations in August 2011 to populate the inaugural wall. The call was for military service personnel (past and present) from any country's military.

"We opened it up to any- body who has served and

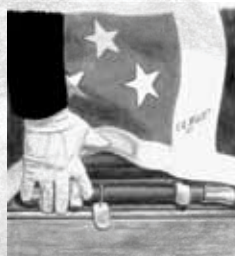


has a connection to the electric power industry," Baker says. "We wanted it to be inclusive of as many people as possible."

With more than 130 names submitted by people in the power industry, the Wall of Honor, which stands 8 feet tall by nearly 10 feet wide, was unveiled at December 2011's POWERGEN International event in Las Vegas. The wall will travel to other PennWell events and make a stop at HydroVision International in Louisville, Ky., on July 17-20.

While the Wall of Honor is not unique in terms of military memorials, it does have the distinction of recognizing a select group in a select market. Included on the wall, which is scalable to expand as more names are submitted, are the honoree's branch of service, rank, division of service and tours of duty. The names range from Adam Vogel, a captain in the U.S. Air Force with tours in Libya and Afghanistan to Jimmy Agrios, a flight lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II.

Dr. James Stevenson, a representative from Project Mercury, the first



human spaceflight program of the U.S., also made the list. The program, which included 20 unmanned launches followed by two suborbital and four orbital flights with astronaut pilots, ran from 1959 to 1963. "I thought the fact we had someone from the space program was fabulous," Baker adds.

All of this is taking place as U.S. soldiers withdraw from Iraq after more than 10 years of conflict. Nearly 100,000 service members remain in Afghanistan but are scheduled to return home by the end of 2014. International forces have already begun transferring security responsibilities to Afghan counterparts.

How veterans are treated differs by geographic location, with some being openly supported and others being outright ignored. In the United Kingdom, red or white poppies are worn on lapels during Remembrance Day. After World War II, it became a tradition in Russia for couples to visit a military cemetery on their wedding day. And in France, vets can usually expect people to give up their seats on crowded buses.

"What PennWell is doing is very important," says Krout, an artist who creates and mails more than 900 holiday cards honoring veterans each Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, Easter and Christmas. "All the military personnel who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan are getting the honors they rightfully deserve. But there are many of our veterans who didn't get treated the same. So any time those people get honored, I think it's great."

As did those who stopped by the wall in Las Vegas. The companies exhibiting in the vicinity of the wall were constantly asked for the back story.

"When you do something like this, you don't know how it will be received," Baker says. "Sometimes it's like grabbing smoke. But we were very pleased at the feedback and the overwhelming positive response."

The wall could just be the first in a line of future initiatives PennWell plans to roll out in the ongoing military veteran campaign. Since POWER-GEN, PennWell has received nearly 60 additional names to add to the wall. Plans call for a

larger wall to be created in 2012, as well as offshoots including possible association with Blue Star Mothers of America Inc. and foreign agencies. Blue Star Mothers was formed during World War II to provide support for mothers who had sons or daughters in active service.

"It makes me very humble when I think of all these men and women," Krout says. "That is why I feel the heroes are not athletes or movie stars. True heroes are the veterans."

PennWell is continuing to accept names for future editions of the Wall of Honor. To nominate a veteran, visit the HydroVision website: www.hydroevent.com/index/wall-of_honor.html. ■