

Thank you VETERANS

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



THE BROOKINGS REGISTER • WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021

Thank you for your service!

Trust, knowledge and experience since 1984.



Terry Anderson
LUTCF



Jessica Blum
Licensed Agent for Health & Life



Nathan Kirby
Licensed Agent for Health & Life

- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Medicare Health Supplements



**ANDERSON INSURANCE
ASSOCIATES**

104 West 6th Street • Brookings
692-4722 • www.insurance4sd.com

Paying tribute to all American veterans, here and gone

On the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month in 1918, an armistice, or agreement to stop fighting, was reached between the Allied nations and Germany in World War I.

One year later, President Woodrow Wilson declared that Nov. 11, 1919, was a day to remember Americans for their military service in World War I. He called it Armistice Day. He suggested that Americans celebrate with parades and perhaps a “brief suspension of business” around 11 a.m. President Wilson also hoped it would be a time when Americans offered prayers of thanksgiving for those who had served and for peace for all times.

■ President Wilson originally intended Armistice Day to be observed one time, but many states decided to observe it every year to honor World War I veterans.

■ Congress followed the states’ lead and in 1938 declared that every Nov. 11 would be observed as Armistice Day.

■ Congress changed the name to Veterans Day in 1954 to honor veterans of

all wars.

■ For a brief time, 1971-1974, Veterans Day was observed on the fourth Monday in October. Since 1975, Veterans Day is always observed on Nov. 11.

■ If Nov. 11 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the federal government observes the holiday on the previous Friday or following Monday, respectively.

■ Nov. 11, 1921, when the first of the unknown soldiers was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, unidentified soldiers also were laid to rest at Westminster Abbey in London and at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

■ Memorial Day, the fourth Monday in May, honors American service members who died in service to their country.

■ Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans, living or dead, but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

– From the Missouri Press Foundation

A nation no longer at war?

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.”

Matthew 24: 5 and 6 (NIV)

In my introduction to the Register’s Veterans Day 2011 special edition, I posed a question: “Is there any end ahead for the ‘Long War’?” I noted that the All-Volunteer Force was “into its second decade in the ‘War on Terror.’”

After 20 years, a “long war” in Afghanistan ended in America’s ignominious defeat on Aug. 31, 2021. American armed forces hastily evacuated by air. Left behind were Afghans, and their families, who had helped the United States hold their nation together; their fate at the hands of the Taliban may be playing out as I write. Add to that maybe 200 Americans left behind.

As 2021 nears its end, I put together another special edition and introduce it with another question:

is the United States “a nation no longer at war?”

I ponder that question noting that 2021 has been a monumental



John Kubal

year, one of the most memorable of my 80 years on the planet. It had barely begun, when on Jan. 6 an unruly but somewhat well-organized mob violently stormed our nation’s capitol in what has been

billied by many of our citizens as an insurrection.

Law enforcement officers did deadly battle with a mob bent on disrupting the counting of electoral college ballots that would verify the people’s choice for who should lead our nation. History will ultimately decide what occurred that day.

Meanwhile, while American boots are no longer on the ground

See KUBAL, page 15

Saluting all Veterans

Kevin Witte, Agent
2012 8th Street
Brookings, SD 57006
Bus: 605 692 6363
kevin@kevinwille.net

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there®.

State Farm™
statefarm.com®

Thank You VETERANS

10% OFF to all Veterans

Nov. 17-20, 2021

1827 6th St. • Brookings, SD 57006 • (605) 692-4222
Bringing a Taste of South Dakota to the World.

Proud to employ **11** Veterans

Thank You
for your service

BATABUS.com

692-2222 LOCAL
855-962-9120 TOLL FREE

MEMBER OF PECO GROUP

Honoring Those Who Honorably Serve

Brian J. Hildebrant, CPA, PC
Certified Public Accountant

P.O. Box 438 • 417 8th Street S. • Brookings, SD • 697 6404
info@hildebrantcpa.com (email) • www.hildebrantcpa.com

Cal State, 'Nam, Brookings

■ War, PTSD follow Jeff West

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – “You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.”

Seems a bit ironic that those words of Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky would impact the lives of so many young American men coming of draft-age in the 1960s.

Jeff West, was one of them. He was on one of those steps on the road of the American dream – but things happen.

Born in the San Francisco Bay area, Vallejo, West grew up in Orange County, Southern California, “in a conservative enclave.”

Brea was small, about 2,900 people, and an oil town: the school’s football team was the Wildcats. Brea was also “a citrus town, with a lot of lemons

and oranges grown in the area.”

In 1966, he graduated in a high school class of about 100. His next stop was a track (hurdler) scholarship to California State University (Fullerton).

It didn’t last. In May 1967, before the season started, West was injured while working out in a physical conditioning class

“I tore my knee up while vaulting a side-horse,” he explained. “That ended my scholarship. I was just an angry young guy at that point. And at the end of that year I waived my student deferment and volunteered for the draft and went into the army.”

While he was not good enough for the hurdles, he had rehabed his knee to where it was good enough to run on again.

Living, fighting, surviving

“I kind of always wanted to be in the Army,” West said. “My dad was in the Army; all my uncles were in the military. Growing up, he and his buddies



Courtesy photo

See WEST, page 4

Pvt. Jeff West takes a break during basic training – “boot camp” – in December 1967.



America’s veterans have done everything asked of them in their mission to serve our country and we believe it is never too late to give them a hero’s welcome home.

That’s why our hospice is taking part in the *We Honor Veterans* program. Our staff understands the unique needs of veterans and are prepared to meet the specific challenges that veterans and their families may face at the end of life.

Help us thank our local veterans by becoming a hospice volunteer.
Call (605) 696-8089 to learn more.



WE HONOR VETERANS



Brookings
HEALTH SYSTEM

Hospice



WEST: The Army didn't leave him

Continued from page 3

“played army, instead of cowboys and Indians.” He called it “serious playtime, with fox-holes, flags, the whole thing.”

He admits that he was unhappy with college, and part of that was due to the loss of his scholarship. And with no direction of what he wanted to be, he decided to “go into the Army and see what happens.”

As a volunteer, West had a two-year active duty commitment: one year in Vietnam, one year in the United States. He found out that he liked the Army and considered reenlistment; however, he was advised by a seasoned non-commissioned officer that if he reenlisted, he would likely rotate through Vietnam again.

Did he consider himself lucky enough to make it through a second year in ‘Nam? West didn’t and left the Army. But the Army didn’t leave him.

In 2020, he put it all together in a book: “Welcome Home: The Army and My Vietnam.” He calls it “a Vietnam veteran’s stories,” and talks about “ow we lived, how we fought, and

how we survived.”

West’s book is a well-illustrated sort of grunt go-to war story, one-man history of a piece of the Vietnam War; it’s also a training manual and textbook.

At 350 pages, it’s a long story, with a chronological flow; but it’s sectioned off in readable chunks, some of only a few pages. Those who served in Vietnam can revisit the language of their days before returning to the world. Part of that language addresses a topic that is thankfully more openly faced today: post-traumatic stress disorder.

War that keeps on giving

Many of the men and women who returned from Vietnam brought with them PTSD; in many instances it would be years, maybe decades, before it was diagnosed in some veterans. It wouldn’t be recognized as an official diagnosis until 1980.

“In 1970, a few months after my return from Vietnam, I experienced my first mysterious anxiety attack,” West writes in his book. “I suddenly started

sweating, my heart raced, I got lighthearted and passed out.” Over the years, PTSD would be there, chipping away at his life – one of those gifts of the war that keeps on giving.

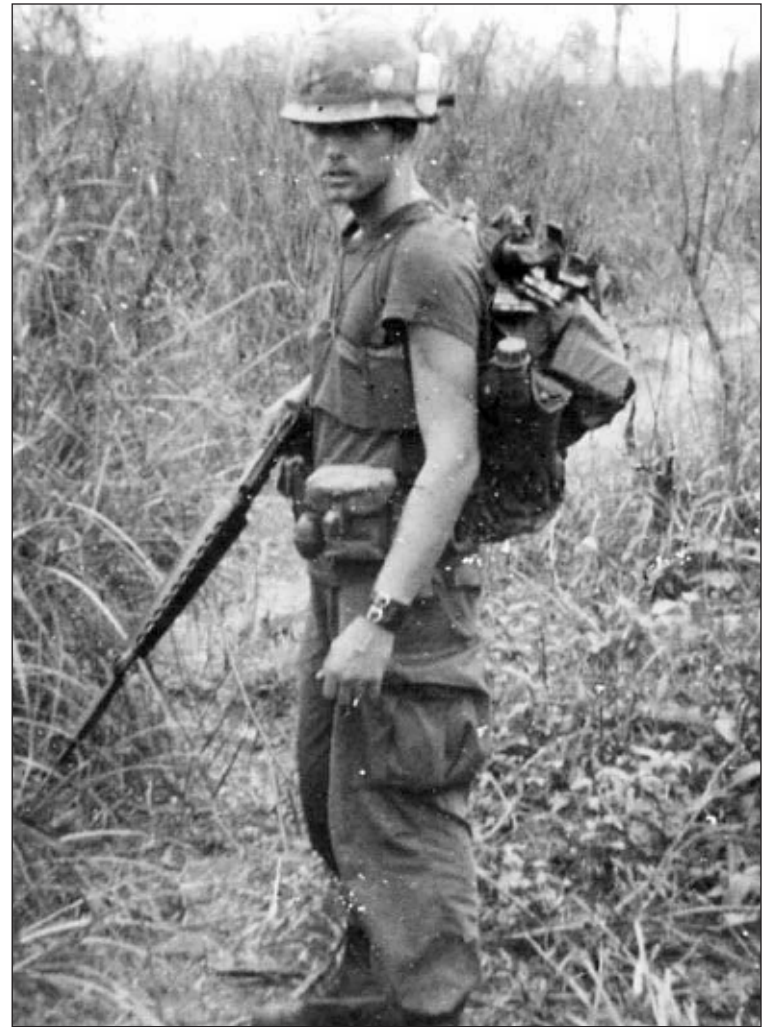
“I went through a lot of disastrous relationships because of my PTSD,” West says. “And I didn’t know it, didn’t realize it. It was a tough life dealing with it and not knowing why I was angry and unresponsive to managers. The worst thing in the world was having a micro-manager a couple of times and that doesn’t work out. That doesn’t last long.”

His PTSD openly surfaced in a session with a VA primary care provider at the Sioux Falls Veterans Administration. That led to one-on-one counseling sessions for 16 months.

A second gift for West – and for many Vietnam veterans – that keeps on giving is Agent Orange, which his book addresses as “Sprayed and Betrayed.”

He runs down a litany of 14 medical diagnoses, many of them cancerous, tied to

See **WEST**, page 5



Courtesy photo

In February 1969, “grunt” Jeff West takes part in a two-week operation west of Chu Lai, South Vietnam.

Saluting Our Veterans

PRUSSMAN CONTRACTING

(605) 692-5421
BROOKINGS, SD

The American Legion is the nation's largest organization of veterans.

THAT'S VETERANS
“Still Serving America”

THROUGH
Youth Programs • American Legion Baseball • Boys State • Scholarships
Veteran Programs • Veteran Services • Community Involvement

Brookings American Legion
Hoffman-Townsend Post #74
1229 Western Avenue
Brookings

MEETINGS: First Thursday of month at 7:00pm

The Post Home is available for rent: 692.5741 (leave message)

★ Honoring ★
OUR NATION'S HEROES

3M Science. Applied to Life.
www.3m.com

Thank you to all veterans and current service men and women!

Paul Kruse
I would like to help you with your insurance and financial service needs.

Auto • Life • Home • Health
Farm • Business • Financial Services

State FarmTM
Get to a better State.[®]
Get State Farm.

602.5200 • 1024 Sixth Street, Brookings
www.paulkruseinsurance.com • paul@paulkruseinsurance.com

WEST: Wrote book for himself

Continued from page 5

Orange. In his case, he has Type 2 diabetes for which he is being compensated. Additionally, but not related to Orange, West has received hearing aids to help with his hearing loss due to a rocket or mortar exploding close to his head.

The world after the war

While the Vietnam War will always be with the men and women who served there, there was always a civilian world to which they returned and went to work in. For West, much of his working world was in computers and what would become information technology.

Initially he went into the grocery industry and managed a store for a major chain in California.

But he wanted to learn computers, so he went to work for a friend who ran a manufacturing plant. He worked on a Honeywell mainframe, but that was not to his liking.

Other companies he worked for included Minolta, Wang Laboratories, and Computer Associates. Overall, he spent about 35 years in information technology.

But when he finally retired at 66 in February 2014, it was after 10 years "working for a guy that I had known for some time. He started a stone business emporium: granite, marble, things like

that from all over the world."

Eventually he and his wife, Gayle, found their way to Brookings, where they live with four Spinone hunting dogs. Four years before he retired, he and Gayle bought a piece of property here. Her daughter was married to a South Dakota State University graduate who worked there, so Jeff and Gayle got to know Brookings.

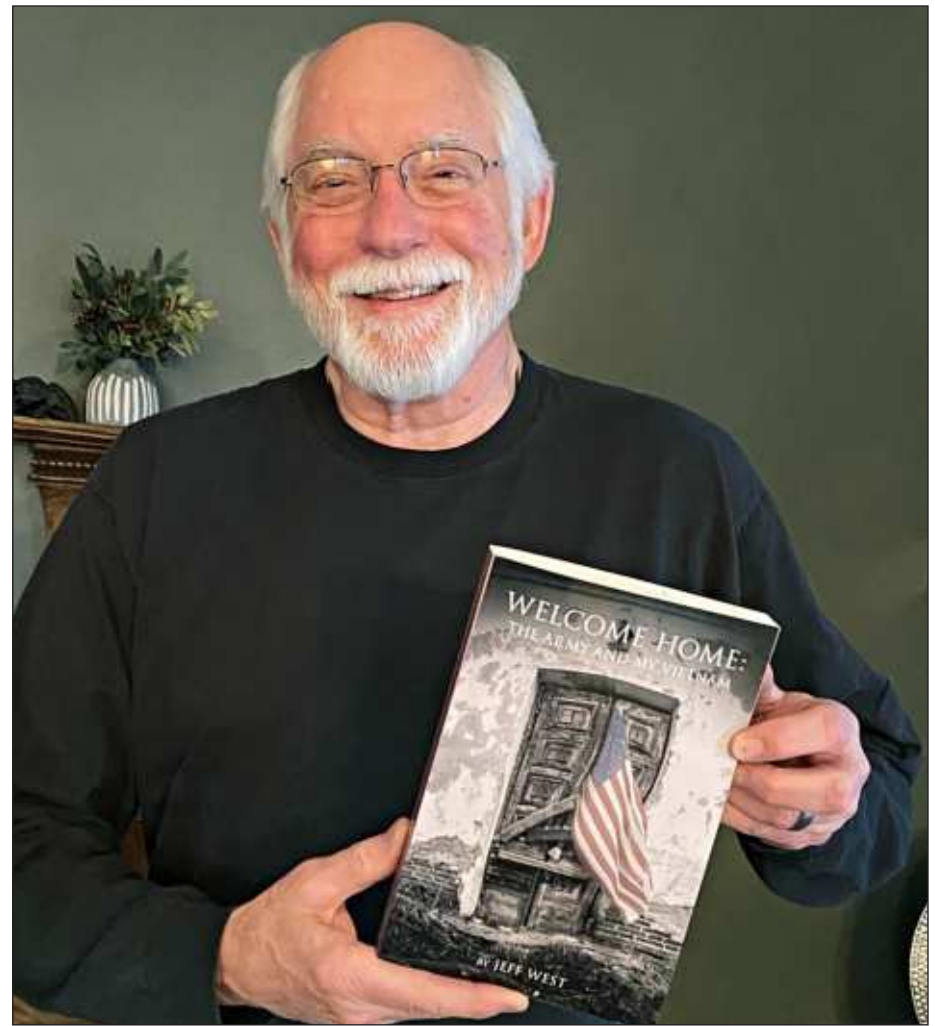
"We were coming up for the Jackrabbit games and things like that," he said. "We met a lot of people. We liked the town. We both like small towns."

Both Wests have lucrative hobbies: Gayle was juried into the 2021 Brookings Summer Arts Festival for her "G Designs Bears and Hares and Furry Friends," that include stuffed Spinone hunting dogs; Jeff is noted for his award-winning photography.

His book is available on Amazon in e-book or print and soon as an audio book; at Brookings Book Company, on Main Avenue; and at The Exchange, also on Main Avenue.

"I wrote this book for me – just to get all this stuff out of my head," West explained. "I've had such excellent response from people who have read it."

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.



Courtesy photo

Jeff West shows off a copy of his 2020 book: "Welcome Home: The Army and My Vietnam," which chronicles "how we lived, how we fought, and how we survived."

VETERANS
★ DAY ★
Honoring all who served
BROOKINGS FURNITURE CO.
Jim Langland, Manager/Co-Owner
409 MAIN AVENUE, BROOKINGS • 605.692.1399 • BROOKINGSFURNITURECO.COM
Monday-Wednesday & Friday 9am–6pm • Thursday 9am–8pm
Saturday 9am–5pm • Sunday 12pm–4pm

Saluting All
Fellow Veterans
Dave's COLLISION
1019 Main Avenue South • 692-4024
www.daves-collision.com
You're Driving Home Our Reputation™

Benefits: Use 'em or lose 'em

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – “I check all the boxes,” said Courtney VanZanten, fairly new to the job of Brookings County veterans service officer.

She came on board July 26. She’s also the American Legion services officer for the state of South Dakota.

Being a veteran is a pre-requisite for both jobs. She’s more than well-qualified for the VSO job here. The boxes she checked are for membership in Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW); American Legion (AL); and Disabled American Veterans (DAV). Add to those qualifications five years as the VSO in Madison in Lake County.

By way of background, VanZanten, 38, is a native of Chester, where she graduated from high school in 2001. Next came South Dakota State University, where she graduated in 2005, having earned a degree in history and political science.

Additionally, she was enrolled in the Air Force ROTC program and was commissioned a second lieutenant. She calls herself an alumna of Det 780.

Finally, while attending SDSU, she took four semesters of Arabic. She admits to not being fluent. But she knew “enough to get by, enough to be conversational.” Her language skills would prove to be especially valuable in a future assignment.



Courtesy photo

As an Air Force officer in 2007, Courtney VanZanten “hangs out” with some of the children she got to know during a tour of duty in Iraq, where she worked with Iraqi Special Operations Forces.

VanZanten’s first assignment as a newly minted “butter bar” second lieutenant was to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska, as a logistics readiness officer. She spent three years there before being assigned to Iraq in 2007 for an “in lieu” tour of 10 1/2 months with the Army.

Serving with ‘survivalists’

The Army was short of positions in some units, so the Navy and Air Force

were sending personnel in lieu of soldiers to fill those Army billets. VanZanten was assigned to an Iraqi base training Iraqi soldiers who were fighting against ISIS.

“I was with Iraqi Special Operations Forces, where I was training an Iraqi logistics officer on how to do his job,” she explained. When the Iraqis went into the field, she went with them. “Whatever the Iraqi Special Operations forces were doing, we were right alongside them. It was a

really unique mission. There were 150 U.S. forces and 1,500 Iraqis and their families.

“It was actually really neat. I just did a post about it with 9/11 on my Facebook page. We got to hang out with the kids a lot. It was actually one of my favorite things to do. I got to go hang out with the families. The cultural interaction with the kids was a big part of what we did over there. It was expected of us.”

She ordered kids’ books on Amazon and read them to the kids in Arabic. She got to interact with the families a lot: “It was a really rewarding experience in that regard. Just absolutely adored it.”

In a nutshell overview, she saw the Iraqi Special Forces she served with, most of them Kurds, as “survivalists.” Many had lived most of their lives with the nation on a wartime footing.

‘Scarlet letter’ less of a stigma

“When I cut ties, I just got out and came back home,” VanZanten said of her leaving the Air Force in 2010. “I spent a few years just staying at home with the kids and then decided to get back into work as a veterans service officer.”

As a VSO, she sees her mission in simple terms: “Tying veterans into their benefits with the VA is my primary role.”

She’s the go-to for questions regarding

See VANZANTEN, page 7

Thank You

BOWES CONSTRUCTION INC.

2915 22nd Ave South, Brookings, SD 57006
693.3557 • www.bowesconstruction.com

All of our caregivers have passed background checks, are bonded, insured, drug tested, and supervised.

Services Are Available in the Brookings Area!

- Free In-Home Assessment
- Companion & Housemaker Services
- Personal Care Aides

We are here to help with shopping, light housekeeping, cooking, laundry, bathing and grooming and medication reminders.

THANK YOU! VETERANS

Big Firm Services, Small Firm Attention.

Chad Villkauer Heidi Bergquist

VRS CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS & CONSULTANTS
Professional Corporation

726 22nd Avenue S. • Brookings • 692.8425 • BrookingsCPA.com

They probably weren’t thinking about home health care fifty years ago.

At Interim, we were already providing it.

Veteran Owned. Women Owned. Family Owned. Since 1991.

Interim HEALTHCARE

310 Main Avenue, Suites 1 & 2
Brookings, SD 57006
Call Abby today!
605.695.0623

www.interimhealthcare.com/sxfallssd

VANZANTEN: PTSD has less stigma now, progress made

Continued from page 6

health benefits, disabilities, pensions, housing loans, and educational benefits. One benefit she specifically cited was mental health.

“The VA has made leaps and bounds in terms of mental health,” VanZanten said. “The Sioux Falls VA, as a matter of fact, has a new mental health building being built upon the campus right now, looking to be opened in 2022. That’s going to be phenomenal – and deservedly so.”

Drilling down a bit on mental health, she focused on post-traumatic stress disorder.

“We had five people go back in a C-17, with the unit I was with.” And she goes to therapy through the VA in Sioux Falls.

“I’m glad that the scarlet letter (PTSD) is less of a stigma,” she said. “I don’t think we’ve gotten to where it (PTSD) needs to be yet. I do think there has been significant progress made. I’m a huge proponent of therapy,” she said. Laughing, she added, “I think everybody could use it.”

“I like to think I give a really good Memorial Day speech,” she said, again laughing. She continued in a more serious and philosophical tone.

“Look at what veterans go through and what they’re exposed to, through the exposures of combat, whether it be the traumatic events or just even the moral injury,” VanZanten explained. “You’re raised with



John Kubal/Register

Courtney VanZanten, Brookings County Veterans Service officer, is the go-to point of contact for Veterans Administration benefits.

‘thou shalt not kill,’ and then you’re given the direct orders to do so. You’re faced with this moral injury that’s hard to overcome.” She tied that aspect of “moral injury” being closer to this geographic part of America.

“Especially where we are,” she explained. “The upper Midwest tends to

be a fairly conservative, church-going population, rural America. You see it a lot around here. People struggle with that moral injury.

“They don’t necessarily recognize it as such, because it isn’t a common term people throw around. And once, I think, they

recognize that that is what they’re struggling with, it’s a lot easier to tackle.”

Get into the VSO

VanZanten is pretty sure she’s the first woman to fill the VSO post here in Brookings and was also the first to fill the Lake County post back in Madison.

Her message to Brookings County veterans is a simple one.

“Get into the Veterans Service Office. The best thing any veteran can do is get into the VA and really get their service documented.

“The VA is like any government system: If you don’t use it, you lose it. The more people use the VA system, the better funded it is.”

VanZanten says that veterans don’t use their VA benefits enough. She noted that many veterans don’t because they believe that if they do, they’re taking benefits away from a veteran who needs them more – such as an amputee.

“I’ve heard multiple excuses, but the most common of which is other people need them more than I do,” she explained. “They’re thinking of people who are missing an arm.

“But, again, if you aren’t using (the VA), you’re not providing the funding for the person who is missing the arm.”

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

SALUTING
Our Veterans
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

HARMS OIL
“the friendly people”
337 22nd Avenue South • Brookings • 696-5000

THANK YOU!

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED



Martin
Oil Company
Diesel • Gasoline • Lube Oil

106 First Street S Brookings
605.692.2424



Mix Dry Cleaners
In House Dry Cleaning
Since 1982

414 4th Street, Brookings
692-4132

PPE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE
FACEMASKS • SANITIZER • DISPOSABLE GLOVES



308 6th Street
605.692.2801
foersterdistributing.com



JACKRABBIT
TIRE & SERVICE

When Experience Matters . . .
EJ Bassett (Owner) | 605.692.2012
225 3rd Ave S. | Brookings, SD



Farmer Owned & Proud
AGFIRST
FARMERS
COOPERATIVE

One AgFirst Place • Aurora
605-693-5548

NEW & USED
TRAILER SALES



TRAILER PARTS & ACCESSORIES
WINDOW TINTING

AUTO PRO
212 Main Ave. S., Brookings | autoptrobrookings.com
605.695.4515 | 605.695.3336 (TINT)



Courtesy
PLUMBING

206 Main Avenue South
Brookings, SD
692-6076



BROOKINGS
LIQUOR STORE

780 22nd Avenue South • Next to Hy-Vee
692.5613
www.cityofbrookings.org



CARQUEST
AUTO PARTS

820 22nd Avenue
692.6298

Committed to Your Success.



Citizens
State Bank
and Arlington Insurance Agency

Arlington (605) 983-5564
Sinai (605) 826-4151
Castlewood (605) 793-9500

Member FDIC

New Holland • Valley
Kinze • Westfield • Kubota
Grasshopper • Kuhn
Wil-Rich • Vermeer



Farmers
Implement & Irrigation
3023 Hwy. 14 Bypass, Brookings
692.6153 • farmersil.com
914 43rd Street SE, Watertown



ARC FIT
SHRED AT THE SHED

STEVE & KARI BACHAR
OWNERS

605) 695-0508 | 107 W. Falcon Street
arcfitbrookings.com



VALLEYMART
C-STORE • FUEL

GRAB AND GO DELI
"FRESH BAKED"
PIZZA TO GO

Across from the Skydome Plaza, Next to
627-9422



Richland State Bank

602 1st Street • Bruce
(800) 339-1474
(605) 627-5671
www.richlandstate.org Member FDIC



Fishback Insurance Agency

Located at First Bank & Trust
520 6th Street
Brookings, SD 57006
605-696-2236

PRODUCING 1.6 MILLION BABYBELS A DAY RIGHT HERE IN BROOKINGS, SD



Home Owners • Farm & Ranch Auto • Liability • High Risk Auto

Dan Hansen Insurance Agency
DeSmet Farm Mutual Insurance Company of SD
Dan Hansen, Agent • Kassie Olson, Agent

P.O Box 7 • Nunda, SD 57050
586.4180 (office) • 480.2718 (cell)



BROOKINGS MONUMENT

605.692.4224
507 Main Avenue South, Brookings SD
brookingsmonumentcompany.com

Sports Injury & Family Wellness Center



BACK in MOTION CHIROPRACTIC

Dr. Rod Brandenburger
1453 6th Street, Brookings
692-BACK (2225)
www.brandenburgerchiro.com

BANNER
engineering a better community

409 22nd Avenue South
Brookings
692-6342
www.bannerassociates.com



PERKINS STORAGE & TRANSFER CO., INC.

416 3rd Avenue • Brookings
692-2041
DOT #000969

Ron's Auto



312 3rd Avenue • Brookings
692-4931

BACHAR
LAWNCARE & LANDSCAPING

Steve Bachar, Owner



6930 Sunset Road • Brookings, SD 57006
605-693-2997 • bachar@itctel.com

EXHAUST PROS AUTO CARE

302 4th Street
Brookings
692-6200

H M R
HELSPER, MCCARTY & RASMUSSEN, P.C.
LAW FIRM

RICHARD J. HELSPER, DONALD M. MCCARTY
ERIC N. RASMUSSEN, REED T. MAHLKE
JENNIFER GOLDAMMER, TERE A. NESVOLD
STACIA JACKSON

605-692-7775
1441 6TH STREET, SUITE #208, BROOKINGS
WWW.LAWINSO.COM

J & T's Exhaust World

Jodi and Tregg Hillestad, owners
224 Main Avenue South
605-692-7970

NorthWestern Energy
Delivering a Bright Future

800-245-6977
1232 22nd Ave. S, Brookings
northwesternenergy.com



KIBBLE EQUIPMENT

KibbleEq.com
Brookings | 693-3514
 **JOHN DEERE**



Cavalry scout, veteran, non-trad student

■ 'Follow where Jesus leads me'

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – Content with living his recently found Catholic faith and his job at 3M in Brookings, Wade Wantoch lives quietly in Brookings with two shelter-rescue pets – Gavin the cat and Char the dog.

Life has been an interesting journey for a kid who grew up in Pierre and liked to watch "The Rat Patrol," a TV desert drama about three Yanks and a Brit who harassed Rommel's Afrika Corps.

"I thought that was the coolest thing," Wantoch said. "Ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to do that." In a fashion, he did.

Following graduation from T.F. Riggs High School in 1982, he "kind of bounced around for about a year-and-a-half, like a lot of kids do. And then I joined the Army in April '84." He would serve until October 1993.

His Army journey began with about 16 weeks of "one unit station training" at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Following basic training and advanced individual training during a "very hot, very humid summer," he was christened a 19 Alpha – cavalry scout.

Guaranteed service in Germany for his first tour of duty, Wantoch was assigned to First Squadron, First Cavalry Regiment: "The 'First of the First Cav.' It's a great unit," Wantoch said, explaining that a "troop" in the cavalry, is about the same as a standard army "company," about 150 to 200 people. "We were a full-time border patrol unit. Every third month we were up on our border camp, patrolling the Czechoslovakian border.

"So it was real world; it wasn't training. It could be very stressful, but it was very exciting. I was there for 2 1/2 years. It was really great duty, because what we did really mattered."

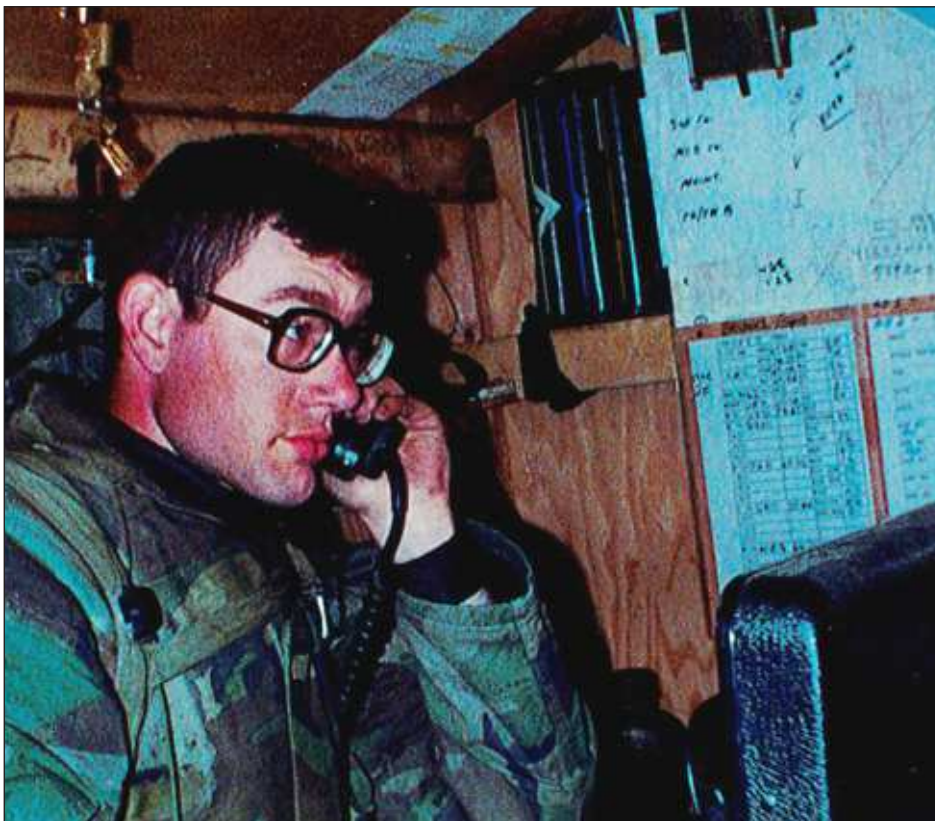
He did have enough off-duty time to allow some time for traveling in Spain, France and all over Germany.

'Not really a salesman'

After Germany, Wantoch rotated back to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he spent a year, following that with two years at Fort Stewart, Georgia. Then came Minnesota, where a year as an Army recruiter brought some mixed emotions.

"It could be very frustrating," he explained. "I didn't care for it too much. I'm not really a salesman. If you're a salesperson, if you enjoy that kind of work, it would be great. But I wasn't. I was very happy to return back to the regular Army."

His final three years of service were



Courtesy photo

Cavalry scout Wade Wantoch takes part in a three-week training exercise in 1992 at the National Training Center. By virtue of his deployed military service during Desert Storm, he's a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and Disabled American Veterans.

spent at Fort Riley, Kansas – "except for a few months (four or five) when we were deployed over to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait for the First Gulf War (Desert Storm)." Wantoch served in a scout platoon of the 3rd Battalion, 37th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division.

"It didn't last long," he said of the war. "We used artillery, missiles and air strikes. We pounded them so long and so badly that when we did go in on the ground, we had very little resistance. They were in no condition to fight."

His unit then "slowly moved back to Saudi Arabia and sat around waiting for a place to open for a plane to fly back to the States. It seemed to take forever."

Now a sergeant, he returned to Fort Riley to finish his service.

A completely different direction

In late 1993, Wantoch "decided he was going to get out and go to college."

He had planned to stay in Kansas. His parents, noting how long he had been gone, wanted him to come back closer to home.

"I let them talk me into coming back to South Dakota, and I'm glad I did," he said. "I ended up going to school down at USD (Vermillion). Good school. A lot of great professors down there."

He graduated in spring 1998 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and psychology and a minor in history. He needed an extra semester to get it done.

"I was very much a non-trad," Wantoch joked, since he was into his

30s when he graduated. "I was one who sat in the front of the classroom; asked questions. Oh, yeah, that's not popular."

With his degree in hand, he was hoping to find work in the juvenile justice system, but he found it hard to break into. Meanwhile, to pay the bills, he went to work on the production line of a Brookings manufacturing company. He stayed for eight years and left as a "minor supervisor who helped run a line."

About 2006, he began working for 3M. Again, he started "on the floor, running machines." Four years later, he interviewed for a post in the "quality labs" and worked there for about seven years. Following additional advancements, and a total of 15 years there he's still with the company. "It's a pleasure to work there."

'The big three': VFW, Legion, DAV

By virtue of his deployed wartime military service, Wantoch is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans.

"I got all of the big three," he explained.

"My official disabilities are my left knee, no ACL anymore. I had to have my thyroid removed," he explained.

He admits that he experiences some PTSD (post-traumatic stress-disorder), "nothing that I think requires treatment."

"Nightmares," he said. "I mean, you go through any sort of extreme experiences, it's going to have a lasting effect.



Wade Wantoch

I have very little tolerance for fireworks; they make me very uneasy. I avoid Fourth of July celebrations as much as I can.

"We need people to be aware of PTSD. When I started at USD, I had a lot of problems. I had a lot of nightmares, I had a lot of aggression. I was right out of the military and in an extreme specialty.

"They don't teach you how to be a civilian, so I did not know how to deal with civilians, especially on a liberal college campus, like USD. I could not fit in. I was having a great deal of trouble."

He found help via a campus counselor who was a Vietnam veteran.

"I don't know how, but I bumped into him and he had me come in and start talking. He worked with me for a few months; it made a world of difference. He could understand what I had to say. We kind of spoke the same language."

That experience has made him an advocate for counseling for young service members.

"If you have any issues at all, talk to somebody. It can make so much difference. The VA has so many services; use them."

Wantoch's conversion to Catholicism has made a major impact on his life, and he's an active member of St. Thomas More Catholic Parish in Brookings.

"The focus of my life right now is to learn about our faith and follow where Jesus leads me," he said. "If he intends for me to have a wife, then when I'm ready I'll meet her. If God's plan is for me not to be married, then I'll serve the Lord as a single man; because that's good, too."

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

Knew he'd spend a year in 'Nam

■ Opted for two-year enlistment

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – David Bruce “Dave” Johnson was living in Duluth, Minnesota, – born there in 1946 and spent his whole life there – and had attended the University of Minnesota there for two years and followed that with a year-and-a-half at Duluth Business University when Uncle Sam came calling.

“I got done with that in March 1968,” he said. “The draft was very active at that time. Within 30 days, I had a draft notice in the mail.” He looked at his options and took a two-year enlistment, knowing that one of those years would be spent in Vietnam.

He went into the Army April 30, 1968. First came eight weeks of basic training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Then to eight weeks of MP (Military Police) School at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He married his wife Sharon on Sept. 7, before deploying to Vietnam at the end of the month.

Johnson served at two areas in Vietnam: first at Kantum, “right where the Ho Chi Minh Trail came down.” He was based on “a really nice compound,

with two-man rooms. Both Army and Air Force served there.”

He was part of a clerical detachment for his first six months and worked in the provost marshal’s office, typing up a variety of reports that included enemy activity, such as mortar and rocket attacks.

“It was good duty,” he explained. “It was relatively safe, other than mortar and rocket attacks periodically, once every week or couple of weeks. Leaving your bed in the middle of the night with your flak jacket and all of that and running a couple of blocks for a bunker was always a little nerve-wracking.”

He was next moved to Nha Trang, a coast city, with the 16th Military Police Group under the 18th Military Police Brigade. He added that duty in Nha Trang was “even much safer” than Kantum.

Decorations tell the story

Johnson’s yearlong tour of duty in Vietnam is succinctly noted in the citation that accompanied his Bronze Star Medal, which he was awarded for his “outstandingly meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam,” from September 1968 to September 1969.

For that same period, he also received

the 18th Military Police Brigade Vietnam Combat Certificate. It noted that he “faithfully served his country with the 16th Military Police Group.” The Group was a unit in the Brigade, which fielded a “force of over 5,500 men stationed throughout the Republic from the Mekong Delta to the First Corps Zone in the North.”

Other decorations tied to his service in Vietnam are the Vietnam Service Medal; the Vietnam Campaign Medal; and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. For his overall military service he would receive the National Defense Service Medal.

Looking back to Vietnam, Johnson

summed up what the war there meant for him: “Initially it was a scary experience, going to war. My experience worked out very, very well. I was relatively safe in the places I was stationed. I had good, enjoyable work that I was able to do in both the group headquarters and working in the provost marshal’s office in Kontum.”

Walgreen Drug, 100-hour weeks

Following his combat tour in ‘Nam, Johnson would return to the continental United States, “the world”: Fort Carson, Colorado. He would spend his final

See **JOHNSON**, page 12



Courtesy photo

Dave Johnson joined the Army for two years, knowing one of those years would be spent in Vietnam.

SALUTING ALL VETERANS
Thank you for your service.

Stoney Brook
SUITES
Assisted Living

1906 12th Street S. • 692.1013 • stoneybrooksuites.com

DAV Brookings Chapter 22

INFORMATION
Don/Joanne at 605-692-2829
Bob at 605-690-5041

DAVA Brookings Unit 22

BUILDING BETTER LIVES FOR DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE BROOKINGS AREA FOR OVER 35 YEARS.

Transportation Network: Provides rides to and from the Sioux Falls Regional VA Hospital at no cost to the veteran.

Voluntary Service Program. Facilitates volunteers at VA hospitals, clinics and nursing homes through the VA Voluntary Service Program.

Thanks!

United Living Community honors the Veterans of our nation.

UNITED Living COMMUNITY

406 FIRST AVENUE • BROOKINGS • 692.5351 • WWW.ULCBROOKINGS.COM

JOHNSON: Stayed in Brookings, with hospital 28 years

Continued from page 11

months in the Army there.

That brief tour of duty would earn him the Army Commendation Medal “for meritorious service as the NCOIC of Battalion S-2, which included processing security clearances for battalion MP personnel, of the 14th MP Company, 502nd MP Battalion, at Fort Carson, Colorado. The award covered the period of November 1969 until he left the Army in April 1970.

Before his Army days, Johnson had been working for Walgreen Drug Company in Duluth, while he was attending the University of Minnesota (Duluth). When he returned, he took a position as assistant manager of a Walgreen Drug Store in South Minneapolis. Following about a year, he took over as manag-



Courtesy photo

Dave Johnson practices his skills with an M-16, the standard-issue weapon for American troops in Vietnam.

er of a Walgreen store in downtown Minneapolis.

After a year or two there, Johnson was “working 80 to 100 hours a week. ... It was 4:30 or 5 in the morning until 8 or 9 every night, six or seven days a week. It got to be more than I wanted.”

He and Sharon had a daughter around this time. So he sought employment elsewhere.

Finding, liking Brookings

He hired on with White Drug Company as an assistant manager in Yankton. After about six months he moved to Mitchell and managed a White Drug downtown there. He moved to Brookings in summer 1974 and opened the White Drug in the mall, where Hy-Vee now stands. After a couple years there, it looked like the time to move had again come. However ...

“We decided we really liked Brookings; our daughter had started kindergarten,” Johnson explained. “We were really happy with the city, and we decided to stay and see what we could find. I was supposed to go up to North Dakota then; and I just didn’t want to make another move. I could just see it: the writing on the wall; there was going to be constant moving in retail management.”

He secured a position at the Brookings Hospital as business office manager in 1976.

“That led to 28 years with the hospital and nursing home.”

He became administrator in 1988 and stayed until he retired in July 2004. During these years, he completed his schooling.

“I finally finished my education, getting my bachelor’s in business administration from Upper Iowa University (Fayette) and then my master’s in health services administration from St. Joseph’s College in (Standish) Maine.”

Additionally, he served part-time as administrator of what was then United Retirement Center (now United Living Community). And he served six months as executive director, on an interim basis, of the East Central Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Center, while



John Kubal/Register

Dave Johnson shows off some of the military decorations he earned for his Army service during the Vietnam War.

a full-time director was sought.

Since retirement, he has been “enjoying life.”

One thing he likes is the “wonderful, wonderful bike trail system in Brookings. I so enjoy it. In the winter they even plow it and keep it clean.”

He regularly walks about 4 miles and tries to do it in an hour, “15- to 16-minute miles.” He alternates his walking with 10-mile bike rides.

He’s a golfer – now and then – but he doesn’t take it very seriously. “I’m more of a driving range junkie. I kind of played at the game, but I have never kept score. It’s just a hobby that I do by myself to stay active and give me things to do.”

Finally, Johnson admits to being “a closet drummer, going back to teenage years; never took lessons, never really learned. But that got a little more serious when our son and his wife who are involved in a ‘praise band’ at Ascension Lutheran (Church) in town said ... ‘why don’t you join us?’ So I have now joined as the praise band drummer ... in my 75-year-old stage. I’ve enjoyed doing that when we’re in town.”

Dave and Sharon have two married children and five grandchildren. Their son is a Marine Corps veteran who served in Iraq.

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

Saluting Our Veterans

Rude's
FUNERAL HOME & Cremation Services

105 W. 8th Street South • P.O. Box 424
692-6221 • www.rudesfuneralhome.com

We salute all veterans.

Clites electric

COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL • RESIDENTIAL • DIRECTIONAL BORING
400 32nd Avenue, Brookings • 697-6838

Your LOCAL Electrical Contractor Serving the Region for Over 40 Years.

Farmer, soldier, citizen

■ Mason Wheeler: 30-plus years of military service

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – Col. Mason Wheeler, United States Army Reserve (Ret.), began and ended his military service right here in Brookings. And except for a tour of active duty in the Regular Army, he spent his entire life in Brookings.

On June 6, 1960, Wheeler, now 83, graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in history and political science. Additionally, having completed then mandatory training and been honored as Distinguished Military Graduate from Army ROTC, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Regular Army and “fully expected to be a full-time, lifetime military man.”

On June 9, he reported for active duty at Fort Hood, Texas, where he served as an armor officer. As an additional and secondary duty, he served as a battalion mess officer. He enjoyed what he did at Fort Hood and found military service rewarding. He was there for 2 1/2 years, through the armor units wartime-readiness mission. During that time came the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. In late 1962, Wheeler received orders to Korea.

I Corps, Reserve, the Guard

He would serve in Korea from December 1962 to December 1963. Initially, Wheeler was assigned to I Corps Headquarters, commanded by a lieutenant general (three stars), as the motor officer. One day a call from the general’s chief of staff (a colonel) would change his status.

“Hell, I didn’t even know what a chief of staff was,” Wheeler said, laughing heartily. He found out “the CG had his own dining facility; it was a beautiful place.” It was overseen and operated by a warrant officer who had “a problem with wine, women and song” and was being relieved.

The chief noted that Wheeler had been a battalion mess officer at Fort Hood and asked him if he’d take the job “for no more than six weeks.” He did. It would be six months before a replacement for him was found.

“When I look back at it now, it was a good time,” Wheeler said, smiling. “We ate like kings. When you feed a three-star general and his staff – they ate very, very well.” Additionally, visiting “high mucky mucks,” such as the Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC, a Navy four-star admiral), also received the royal treatment if they came for an official



Courtesy photo

Mason Wheeler began his military career as a second lieutenant in the United States Army and “fully expected to be a full-time, lifetime military man.”

visit.

Add to the above: “movies after the evening meal, a nice big bar with all the liquor you wanted.”

But not to be forgotten is that during Wheeler’s tour in Korea, I Corps was the tip of the spear. Had the North Korean hordes, possibly reinforced by the Red Chinese Army, come swarming across the 38th parallel and the DMZ, I Corps would have come in harm’s way.

“If something had happened, it wouldn’t have been a good spot,” Wheeler said, succinctly summing up the whole military situation.

While he had considered a 30-plus years career as a regular, for a variety of reasons he decided to leave the Army and return to South Dakota and farm with his father and brother.

The farm, the Guard, the Reserve

In 1963, Wheeler resigned his Regular Army commission; however, he owed Uncle Sam a total of six years of military service. He checked with the Army Reserve and found a unit that drilled in Sioux Falls.

Instead, he opted to join the South

Dakota Army National Guard in August 1964, after finding a unit closer to home. His first assignment was as a platoon leader in a transportation company, drilling in De Smet.

He continued to work his way through the ranks. He next assignment was as a company commander in a unit in Brookings. In time he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and served as commanding officer of the 139th Transportation Battalion for seven years.

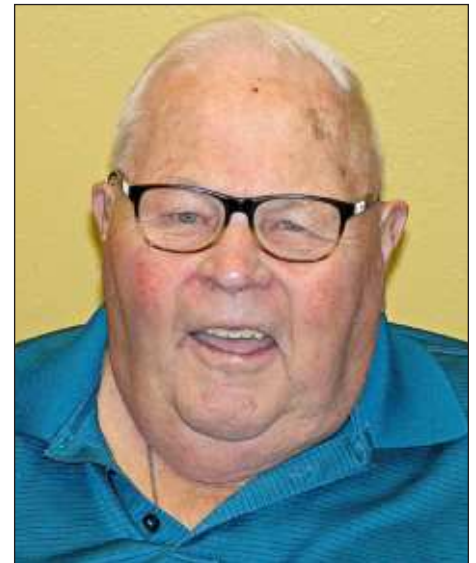
Wheeler next transferred to the Army Reserve, so he could be promoted to colonel.

“I had to get out of the Guard and join the Reserve again, to get a colonel’s slot. I was the 6th Army liaison to the Guard and Reserve units; there was one in Sioux Falls and one in Aberdeen. I stayed in that and retired in August 1992. I had 28 years of Guard and Reserve time and 3 1/2 years active duty.”

Meanwhile, he continued to farm.

“I was farming with my dad and my brother since I came home from Korea in late 1963. We had a pretty sizeable operation out northeast of Brookings.”

He and his wife Janie, a retired



Mason Wheeler

English teacher in the Brookings School District, retired 20 years ago and moved into Brookings. They stayed active and were busy, traveling a lot. And Mason worked, with much of what he did tied to agriculture.

“I drove truck for the farmers co-op, spring and fall, hauling fertilizer, which was a fun job for me,” he said. “I enjoyed it because I got out in the country and wandered around.”

Additionally, he drove truck for Mark Jensen Produce. Someone was needed to go to Watertown and Aberdeen twice a week.

“I said I can do that,” Wheeler explained. “So for seven years I drove truck hauling seed corn, green beans and whatever other produce to stores in Watertown and Aberdeen and occasionally I’d go as far as Miller and once in awhile Huron. Once in awhile they’d send me on a route to Vermillion, Yankton and Sioux Falls. That was a fun job, too.” In time the work took a toll on his health. He had to unload corn bins with a pallet fork.

“But that got to the point where that was more work than I could do. I had a heart attack, and I quit.”

Looking to the future, Wheeler sees the Guard continuing to improve over the years as it contributes to the concept of a “total force.”

“We’ve been used to supplement the active component on a regular basis,” Wheeler explained. “And the level of training in the Guard has increased considerably since when I joined.”

“The Guard has been able to function and shown over time that we can step right in and work and serve side-by-side with the active component. We might need a little beefing up, a little refresher because we only train a weekend a month and two weeks a year. We’ve proven that we can do the job, whether it’s the Army Guard or the Air Guard.”

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

Citizen soldier, citizen solon

■ Brookings guardsman served state and nation

By JOHN KUBAL
The Brookings Register

BROOKINGS – “Back when we started, it wasn’t Vietnam; it was the Cold War era; we trained for Germany, the Fulda Gap. That was the big key then, that if something happened, we’d be deployed over there. That was all of our training scenarios.”

When Col. Spencer “Spence” Hawley, South Dakota Army National Guard (Retired), was commissioned a “butter bar” second lieutenant and field artillery specialist back in 1975, that was the way he saw the threat to America and the NATO nations of Western Europe: it would come from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations of Eastern Europe. Add to that the potential threat to South Korea by North Korea; the potential arenas for a hot war (or wars) were in Europe and Korea. When he retired 30 years later, the “big key” for the Guard had shifted to the Middle East and the war on terrorism.

Hawley, 68, was born in Armour. His family moved to Brookings when he was 5 years old. He grew up here, graduating from Brookings High School in 1971. He went on to South Dakota State University, studying political science and economics. He enrolled in Army ROTC; at that time the first year was mandatory. However, he stayed enrolled and as noted above got his commission and began his military career.

Hawley attended the officer basic course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He still had a Reserve commitment, so he returned to Brookings and joined an artillery brigade in eastern South Dakota; it had a headquarters and two battalions of artillery. His first assignment was with B Battery in Watertown, where one of those battalions was based.

Three command opportunities

“You work as a forward observer,” Hawley explained



Courtesy photo

Spencer Hawley served his country and state in uniform and also as an elected lawmaker.

of his first assignment. “Then you go a couple years as a fire direction officer, then you go as executive officer.

“We were special weapons qualified. They had an 8-inch tactical nuclear round. We had a special weapons team and we trained on how to assemble that for the correct yield they would need. We practiced all that. It was a different time back then.”

He commanded Alpha Battery, an 8-inch firing battery in Sisseton, for three years. He came back to command the service battery and then went to the battalion staff. With time came regular promotions.

“I had the opportunity to be a battalion commander for three separate weapons systems, which is kind of neat,” Hawley said. He was then lieutenant colonel. One battalion was outfitted with 1.55-mm howitzers; another with an MLRS (multiple-launch rocket system); and one with 1.55-mm self-propelled howitzers.

He would also fill an assignment at STARC (state area command) at SDANG Headquarters in Camp Rapid, Rapid City. Following that he would serve as the artillery brigade com-

mander in 2001.

All these assignments kept Hawley training for potential wars in Korea or Europe.

Working with ROK units

“It was kind of interesting, the Cold War training,” Hawley recalled. “We trained with I Corps staff, 9th Infantry Division, at Fort Lewis, Washington. We would have actually trained for Korea.

“I went over to Korea at different times for exercises. In 1989, we loaded up all of our equipment just as if we were being mobilized and shipped it down to a Texas port and shipped all of our equipment to Pusan, Korea.

“We flew into Pusan, got all our equipment loaded up on rail and went up to Camp Humphries, which is just south of the border. We did an exercise. We fell in under the command of the ROK (Republic of Korea) units that at the phase of the war where they thought we would probably be.”

“I was a major and an assistant S-3,” he explained. The S-3 officer is responsible for training and operations and the writing of orders for field



John Kubal/Register

Spencer Hawley in his Brookings office.

training operations. In this instance, his assignment was for a three weeks long operation, the unit’s annual training duty. Hawley had been to Korea two times prior to that on individual assignments. He had served on other occasions as an individual participated in annual REFORGER (Return of Forces to Germany) exercises. They were the largest exercises undertaken by American and NATO forces. The last one was conducted in 1993.

Citizen, soldier, lawmaker

“Totally.” That one word summed up the major changes that Hawley saw during his 30 years in the Guard.

He referenced Gen. William Westmoreland’s noting, after Vietnam, that the United States would “never again go to war without the Guard and Reserve; because with the Guard and Reserve go the heart of America.”

For both operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, the South Dakota Army National Guard deployed in units.

And when it came to equipping Guard units, they no longer received the Army’s hand-me-down equipment or inadequate funding.

“When we got our MLRS, we worked hard to get our funding through (U.S. Sen. Tom) Daschle (D-SD), add-on funding to buy the rockets,” Hawley explained. “That was the same thing active-duty units had at that time. It was start-of-the-art.”

While better funding, better equipment, and better training have put the Guard on a par with the regulars, it has one additional element that Hawley

takes pride in: “the example of our forefathers; they served and then went back to their farms.”

For his part, Hawley comes from a family that served: His father served in the Air Force; an uncle was in the Army and a POW during the Korean War; and his son Ryan joined the National Guard.

For his part, Hawley has taken the concept of service one step further: He served in the South Dakota House of Representatives, as a Democrat, for eight years (2010 to 2018), the last four years as House minority leader. He was term-limited to four two-year terms.

Hawley’s service as a lawmaker and as a guardsman have kept him away from home on a regular basis. As a representative, he spent time in Pierre each spring. As a soldier, he never drilled in or belonged to a Guard unit home-based in Brookings; he always had to travel to his assigned unit in Webster or Sisseton. He estimates that he spent seven years away from Brookings.

Meanwhile, he was in business for 43 years, as an account executive for American Trust Insurance. He credited “a great staff in the office” for helping him while he was away on Guard duty.

Finally, looking back, Hawley sees the Guard as a “true family” and he misses the “quality of people that are around you all the time. We’re all of one mind; we’re there to serve.”

Spence and Barb Hawley have four grown children and six grandchildren.

Contact John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

KUBAL: Thank you

Continued from page 2

in Afghanistan, will American forces continue with as-needed, over-the-horizon drone strikes against whatever terrorist groups in the area are deemed to be a present or future threat?

Finally, factor in the still underway coronavirus pandemic, where warriors of a different ilk continue to go in harm's way on a daily basis to defend the health and wellbeing of their fellow Americans.

The stories of the six veterans presented in this Veterans Day special edition have me asking if we here in America are ever free from war. Or do we live in times of war with intermittent outbreaks of peace?

Between them, retired Col. Mason Wheeler, United States Army Reserve, and retired Col. Spencer Hawley, South Dakota Army National Guard, have more than half a century of service, with many of those years helping ensure that the Cold War never went hot.

Army veterans David B. Johnson and Jeff West both served combat tours in Vietnam. Like so many of our Vietnam veterans, West would later do battle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Courtney VanZanten and Wade Wantoch are combat veterans of our nation's wars in the Middle East. They also had their bouts with PTSD.

This Veterans Day 2021, let us thank the veterans cited above and let us pray that God will bless all the men and women who stepped forward to serve our nation in uniform. They also have their stories to tell.

And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Continue John Kubal at jkubal@brookingsregister.com.

Chamber hosts annual Veterans Day program

BROOKINGS – The Brookings Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee is proud to host the community's annual Veterans Day program at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 11, at the Swiftel Center.

All are welcome to attend this free event and honor this country's veterans.

Master of Ceremonies Scott Kwasniewski will lead a program including the Brookings High School Orchestra, a welcome by the mayor, Veterans Address by 114th Squadron Commander

Riley Hestermann, and awards by Military Affairs Committee Chairman and SFC Retired Russel Chavez.

"I'm proud to lead a committee that gets to do great work like this all year round," Chavez said. "We are appreciative to the Chamber of Commerce for taking this program over back in 2019 and to all committee members who contribute to make the program as special as it is."

The Military Affairs Committee will present four awards:

- Officer of the Year

- Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year

- Soldier of the Year
- Civilian of the Year

Contact Kaitlyn Luebbert, director of programming and special events at the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce, 692-8922 or kaitlyn@brookings-chamber.org, or Russ Chavez, the Military Affairs Committee chair, at russel.chavez@sdstate.edu for additional details.

– From the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce

Your community newspaper.

THE Brookings Register

692.6271 • 800.568.5032
www.brookingsregister.com



General Dentistry • Implant Dentistry



Geoffrey B. Johnson, DDS • Anne Harris, DDS
Christopher Harris, DDS • Erin Krogman, DDS

brookings dental clinic
Quality Care

2215 Derdall Drive, Brookings, SD
692-1222 • 1-866-516-0570



HAPPY VETERANS DAY


Thank you for your service.



605.690.0286 | browerconstructionsd.com



4th St. & Main Ave.

 Find us on Facebook.

*I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one Nation under God, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.*