



FROM THE ACL TEAM

Honoring Our Veterans during Older Americans Month

This Older Americans Month, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is celebrating the strength of older Americans. The lived experiences of older adults, including their contributions and sacrifices, have helped them to build resilience and skills that they now share with their friends, families, and communities.

There is perhaps no greater example of this than our older American veterans. Here, we share a few veterans' stories and honor their service, commitment, and dedication to their country and communities. ACL staff who submitted these stories would like to thank the family and friends that provided write-ups so that we could honor their loved ones.

Allen Reynolds

Submitted by Keri Lipperini, Director, Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Programs



Allen Reynolds was 18 years old when he enlisted in the Army in 1969 during the Vietnam War. He served as a clerk SP5 (today's equivalent of Sergeant) until his honorable discharge in 1972. He often said that those three years made him into the disciplined, fearless, humble, and compassionate person he would become.

After leaving the Army, Allen returned to his community in Maryland and earned degrees in sociology and clinical psychology, and eventually his PhD in psychology. He became a licensed clinical professional counselor and used his skills to serve his community as an advocate for its most vulnerable members – children, adults with disabilities, older adults, and those suffering from severe mental illness. He took special interest in his fellow veterans, particularly those experiencing PTSD and other disabilities, often volunteering his personal

assistance when individuals had difficulty finding help.

In his later years, he continued to find ways to help his community. He became the director of a public mental health clinic, a consultant for a medical community-based day program for adults, and a court-appointed family mediator, a role he continued even after retirement.

Dedicated to helping others throughout his life, Allen continually asked himself, "How can I show love today? How can I serve?"

Lucy Conklin

Submitted by Andrea Callow, Program Analyst



Lucy Conklin was 21 years old when she enlisted as an Army nurse in 1943 during World War II. After completing her nursing training in Fort Custer, Michigan, she shipped off to the South Pacific Islands as a member of the 49th Hospital Unit. She served in Manila and Leyte in the Philippines.

Lucy joined the Army committed to helping in whatever way she could. Going wherever they were most needed, Lucy and her unit found themselves serving patients out of a makeshift station in a convent and even a horseracing club. They worked tirelessly to keep their hospital clean and prepared for any situation.

Later in life, Lucy shared that despite all her training, she often felt frustrated that she couldn't do more, especially for the injured soldiers that she treated as best she could with what was available to her. Still there were sleepless nights worrying over her patients' comfort and well-being.

After the war, Lucy returned to Michigan and continued to work as a nurse in a local doctor's office, once again supporting her community by doing whatever she could for those in need. She found her wartime nursing training especially useful in treating many of the childhood illnesses and ailments of her 8 children and 17 grandchildren.

Garrick R. Hendricks

Submitted by Donna Bethge, Aging Services Program Specialist



Garrick R. Hendricks served with honor in the Army for 15 years as a Staff Sergeant. He was stationed all over the world, including, Germany, Alaska, Colorado, and Maryland. His dedication to his country was unwavering. After retiring from the Army, he turned that dedication and a lifelong passion for helping others toward serving his community.

Garrick began his second career as a public servant as a County Tech with the Calvert County Election Board in Maryland in 2004. A year later, he was appointed as Elections Systems Automation Coordinator. In this role, he oversaw the implementation of touchscreen voting machines and electronic pollbooks for the entire county, ensuring that voters had their voices heard – another passion he carried with him throughout his career.

Garrick's love for his community shone through with everything he did. His willingness to go above and beyond for his family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers was continually recognized by those around him.

He also understood the importance of joy and laughter and his sense of humor was famous for making all smile, even during the most stressful of times. In this way, he served his community through good times and bad, and taught resilience to those around him by his example.