

PROSPECTAAGAZINE

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On the cover:

A rider competes in the 28th annual Bike around the Buttes in Sutter in April 2013.

Features

Our Special Place

Explore the Sutter Buttes on foot or on bicycle.

The Art of Quilting

How a new generation is embracing an old pastime.

Outdoors

Scenic views abound at Shingle Falls.

Road Trip

Bridgeport's covered bridge is steeped in history.

Not Forgotten

One man's passion became the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors.



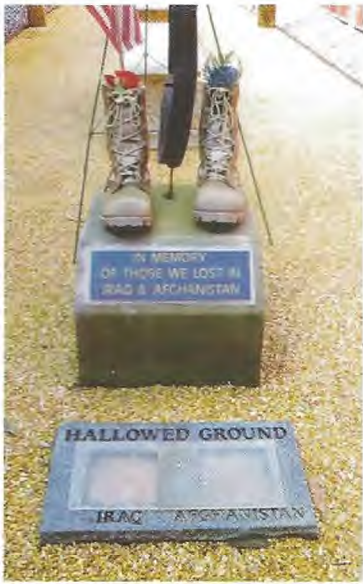
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Museum of the Forgotten Warriors Curator Dann Spear talks about his new display of dog tags, representing American service members who lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A place where they're NEVER FORGOTTEN

By Brynn Twait
For Prospect Magazine

Dann Spear, curator of the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors, started collecting military items when he was 10 years old.

He attended a reunion of the American Volunteer Group, the Flying Tigers, who served in World War II.

"I got to meet such people as Tex Hill and Jimmy Doolittle, who led the raid on Tokyo," Spear said.

Spear had a lot of friends who were in the Vietnam War, and he would write to them. He said they started sending him things from their tours over there, such as pictures, patches and insignias.

Spear continued to add to his collection as an adult. He would go to yard sales and flea markets. When he and his wife moved to Marysville in 1977, he started taking a mobile display in a horse trailer to gun shows.

In 1983, work began on his museum's first building, which opened in 1985.

"It was dedicated at that point solely to the Vietnam War veterans," he said. "That was my generation, the forgotten ones."

Vietnam veterans did not receive the warm welcome previous soldiers had, Spear said.

"Everybody should be honored whether you believed in the war or not. That's not the point. Without our people who went and served and fought for our freedoms ... we wouldn't have those freedoms that we enjoy today."

Spear said it was his way of thanking the veterans for their service.

"It became a real nucleus for the Vietnam War vets and for their experiences because they felt like they could talk about it. They could discuss things that they couldn't discuss with their families," he said. "They felt like they were finally getting the welcome home."

After a while, the veterans came to Spear and said they all had a dad or an uncle or a grandfather who served in World War II, the Korean War or the Cold War. They suggested opening it up to all wars.

Spear added a second building, and then the Gulf War occurred.

"The country had a real reversal, as far as honoring our young men and women who were fighting," Spear said. "I had a lot of friends who were out here at Beale, and in the Army and in the National Guard, who started sending things from over there."

Spear obtained 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit to

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About the museum

Where: 5865 A Road, Linda.

Admission: Free.

Phone: 742-3090.

Email: cws21779@aol.com.

Website: museumoftheforgottenwarriors.org.

ABOVE: Exhibits at the museum highlighting the service of the military in Afghanistan and Iraq. Brynn Twait photos

PROFILE

- The museum is in Yuba County at 5865 A Road, Linda.

"Everybody should be honored. Whether you believed in the war or not."

Dann Spear, curator

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expand the museum once more. The groundbreaking was held in 2007 for the newest addition, which included a library center. The library holds more than 5,000 books, which are catalogued by war.

Many of the displays are centered around a person, with their picture and personal items dis-

played.

"This museum is not about war; it's about people," Spear said. "Each display that we do, I try extremely hard to make it as a personal tribute to that person's service. It's not a glorification of war; it's not a political statement."

The museum also houses several large items, such as a



restored landing craft, a tank and a helicopter. There is a Humvee door with 200 signatures of those who have served in the desert.

One of the newer displays focuses on the Hmong who fought in Vietnam. There are also displays from recent tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is a dog tag memorial, where each one represents someone who

gave his or her life in Afghanistan or Iraq. Soil from Iraq and Afghanistan is part of the memorial.

Spear said the museum sometimes brings veterans together.

"We've had the strangest experiences out here, where guys run into each other and maybe were on the same boat together," he said.