

Veteran's Stories Preserved as Historical Accounts Through Partnership with Raleigh Custom Home Builder Stanton Homes

Memories collected go to the National Archives, the National Veterans History Archival Institute, and educational forums, as well as to the veteran's personal collections

Stanton Homes is pleased to announce a partnership with the **National Veterans History Archival Institute, Inc** to capture historical accounts as recalled by Triangle area Veterans.

"We want to make sure Americans know the real stories from the battlefields and beyond, as experienced by the men and women who are giving so much – yet so rarely have the opportunity to talk about what they have seen and done," said Stan Williams, CEO of Stanton Homes.

"Even many family members are unaware of what their fathers and mothers did to make the history we live in today," said Dave Milidonis, Director and founder of the National Veterans History Archival Institute, as well as a third-generation Veteran. **"Our WWII veterans are passing away at a rate of 1600 per day and their stories are going to the grave with them."**

In an effort to help capture as many first-person stories as possible, Stanton Homes and the National Veterans History Archival Institute are working together to further the Veterans History Project initiated by Congress in 2000.

"We're hoping that others will join us in taking up this cause, both in relaying memories as well as recording them" said Williams. "We are pleased to be able to partner with such an important project, and look forward to doing all we can to help make these stories a part of American history."

In the eight years since its inception, **only 55,000 historical accounts have reached the Library of Congress**. This represents less than 0.3% of the total veteran population. Milidonis founded the National Veterans History Archival Institute, a volunteer organization based in Cary, NC, to help work to preserve records and memories of former Armed Forces members in the Raleigh area. The group is dedicated to recording the stories of wartime Veterans as well as those who have served in peacetime, **at no cost to any Veteran or their family**.

"Veterans want to be interviewed because they have a sense of duty that goes beyond self. Most veterans will gladly tell their story, if they would just be asked. We have not asked, but we are asking now," said Milidonis. "If we wait any longer, many of our WWII and Korean War veterans will pass away in a short time and their stories will be forever buried and unrecorded. We do not want to wait another sixty years to gather the stories of our new veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq, so we are actively collecting those now."

“One of the ways we are supporting this project is by providing a comfortable forum in which interviews can take place,” said Williams. “We’ll set up interview sessions, let the community know about them, and help with recording information and collecting documents.”

The need to collect first-hand impressions will also help to fill a gap in current records caused by a tragic fire in 1973, which destroyed millions of military records for service members discharged between 1912 and 1960. There were no copies of the records, and it’s not clear how many were destroyed.

The National Veterans History Archival Institute is working to help piece those records back together.

“No government program exists to restore those records, except on a case-by-case, individual veteran request,” said Milidonis. “Many veterans who have their own copies of records also contain records with other veteran’s names in them...in essence, sitting in attics, file drawers and basements of individual homes is the proof of service of millions of veterans. No organization, until we came along, has ever taken on the task of finding, preserving and placing copies of those records in an archive that will insure a veteran’s bereaved family does not have the dishonor at the graveside of being refused deserved military honors.”

“The stories these men and women share give us a personal glimpse into our history – and we want to help make sure those stories live on,” said Williams. “All of us at Stanton Homes will help make this as easy as possible. It’s free of charge, and the Veteran will receive a complete copy of the recorded session that they can keep as part of their family history.”

“I, like many of my comrades, left the service thinking that I would simply leave that portion of my life behind me as nothing more than a memory. But, raising two daughters I realized they were not being taught the history as it happened,” said Milidonis. “I also got involved because I had begun to attend funerals of veterans whom I knew and whose service I lived with, only to find out that their closest relatives, wives and children included, had no idea of what they had accomplished, simply because they never asked. Every veteran has a story and there are 20 million veterans alive today.”

Since only about 55,000 recordings have been made to date, this means that there are well over 19,000,000 Veterans who have stories to tell. When they talk about their experiences, these oral histories will then be stored in the National Archives (for any war-time Veteran), and with the National Veterans History Archival Institute. Presentations will be prepared for education purposes, and a copy will be given to the Veteran.

“If you or someone you know is a Veteran, think about helping to share these stories,” said Williams. “We never know how much time we have, and these memories are an incredible part of our American history. Whether you were active during peace or war, you have a close-up view, a unique perspective on the events that have shaped our nation.”

The first joint Stanton Homes/Archival Institute Veterans Interview event will be held in the Pittsboro/Chapel Hill area at Cattail Creek from 12-4pm on Saturday, June 14th. This service is free of charge for Veterans and their families, and refreshments will be offered. Ask Stanton Homes for more information, directions, or an appointment time by emailing us at info@StantonHomes.com or calling 919-278-8070.

About Stanton Homes

Stanton Homes builds exceptional living experiences, with renowned, spacious, inviting custom homes in the Raleigh/Triangle area. Stanton Homes builds about 15-20 custom homes a year in the Triangle region of North Carolina, with unparalleled attention to details including signature elliptical and radius archways that set our homes apart. We build in Lee County, Wake County, Johnston County, Granville County, and beyond, on our lot or yours or choose from one of our custom homes at Cattail Creek in the \$250-\$350K range in beautiful Chatham County. We strongly support our military families, and offer "Stanton Homes for Heroes", a special program through which a Veteran, retired, or active duty servicemember can purchase a new home with up to a 4% discount. Ask for details.

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About the National Veterans History Archival Institute

There are over 20 million veterans living in the United States today, and every day we lose 1,600 of them. Motivated by the urgent need to collect the stories and experiences of veterans while they are still among us, the United States Congress created the Veterans History Project. As a collecting partner, the NVHAI is serving under Public Law 106-380 to collect and preserve audio- and video-oral histories, along with documentary materials such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs, and home movies of America's veterans and those who served in support of them. Find out more at <http://veteranshistoryinstitute.org/>, or email Dave Milidonis at info@veteranshistoryinstitute.org.

