

Volunteers

Volunteer Profile Brian Barden, Dublin

An ongoing display of honor

For nearly 40 years, Vietnam veteran has quietly paid a tribute on Memorial Day

Brian Barden of Dublin is grateful for all he has. His wife of 42 years, Jean, two children and three grandchildren. A job and a community he loves. So many of the other young soldiers who went to Vietnam weren't so lucky. Their names are engraved on the towering black walls of the Vietnam Memorial. Others came back home with physical

GIVING BACK



Annie Card

and psychological wounds that robbed them of their dreams. Barden pledged to remember all who served.

Every May since 1972, Barden has placed flags on the graves of Dublin veterans. On the Friday evening before Memorial Day, he will drive up to the greening hillside cemetery to meet Cless Staples and Louis Hanson, the other Dublin Memorial Day Committee members. Staples' wife, Didi, Ann Walsh, and Hank and Nancy Campbell will join them. With Dublin Lake shimmering below them and Mount Monadnock rising beyond, the friends will do what they do every year.

Each will grab a bundle of flags and fan out across the rolling hill, covering the same section they tended last year and the year before. This will be Barden's 38th year. After the nearly 300 flags are placed, the friends will cross paths to check and double-check each others' work, stone by stone. Row by row, they'll walk all six acres that cradle soldiers from the nation's first battles as well as neighbors who until recent years marched beside Barden and Staples in the town's Memorial Day parade.

They are careful not to miss anyone. Barden knows family members check to make sure their loved one's grave has received the proper tribute. "The Revolutionary War. Civil War. The War of 1812. Both World Wars. Korea. Vietnam." Barden ticks off all the wars veterans who are buried here have served. When the committee and its helpers are satisfied they've done their job, they depart before night blankets the cemetery.

If he's lucky, it will be an early night and Barden won't have any more meetings or be called out on an emergency. He's served on Dublin's volunteer fire department for 40 years. And he's issued fire permits and performed his other Forest Fire Warden duties for more than 38 years.

Normally after finishing at the cemetery, Barden would drive back to the center of town and lower the flag that stands between the town hall and Yankee Publishing. But a year or so ago a spotlight was installed and pointed at the flag making it respectable to fly old glory 24/7. Barden had faithfully raised and lowered the stars and stripes every single day since early 1973. Every morning at 6:30 he ran the flag up the pole. At night he took it down and stored it in his truck.

Barden closes his Memorial Day tributes with two parades. Every year since 1968, Barden has marched in the Dublin and Peterborough Memorial Day parades. By 7 a.m. on Memorial Day, he will be shining his brass buttons, and polishing his belt buckle and shoes. He will take his uniform from the closet, where it has hung since the last parade.

Barden served in the Army 87th Engineer Battalion (Construction) from 1963-1966. He spent those last two years building airstrips and bridges and roads in the jungles of Vietnam.

He chose the 87th Engineer Battalion because he knew and loved machines. As a young boy growing up in Keene he sought out construction sites where he'd spend hours watching men dig cellar holes with heavy equipment.



PHOTO BY ANNIE CARD

Brian Barden of Dublin has placed thousands of flags on veterans' graves at the Dublin Cemetery since joining the town's Memorial Day efforts in 1972.

His father was a factory machinist for decades and helped foster his son's interest in mechanics. Barden treasures his father's old tools, including gauges and wrenches he uses today to restore and maintain his collection of Model T Fords.

The boy learned a great deal from his father, but he didn't want to be a machinist, spending his life in a factory. He would simply work with machines outdoors.

At 10 years old, he was taking apart lawn mowers and putting them back together. By 12, he was running a bulldozer at work sites and running farm equipment at a dairy farm. There he worked from the age of 12 until he graduated from Keene High School. He milked the cows every day after school, and sweated his way through many hay seasons — cutting, baling and stacking the hay in the barn.

After Vietnam, Barden returned to Keene where he worked construction for a year. In 1968 he went to work as a mechanic at Worcester's Garage in the center of Dublin, where AVA Restoration Services is now located. Barden was good. He and Dan Walsh, who owned Worcester's, took care of the whole town and beyond it seemed. Employees at Yankee Publishing and the town offices could drop their cars off in the morning, walk to work and then back at the end of the day.

It was the kind of place you could get a tire plugged for \$2, or a free jumpstart. Barden would do a \$100 repair if it'd serve you as well as the \$350 replacement part. When I first moved to Dublin after college in 1984, Barden taught me about my first car, a 1976 Ford. He made sure I knew when the oil need-

ed changing, and chided me when he saw the nearly smooth tires I'd promised to replace.

When cars became more electronic, and less mechanical, Barden made his exit. The Town of Dublin offered him the position of Road Agent and he took it. Since 1988 he and his crew have maintained the roads all year long, clearing snow, repairing washouts and damaged culverts, filling potholes. He loves his work, though he says it's never done. "The winters are toughest. We stay out there as long as we need, sometimes up to 100 hours a week. Barden is still doing what he loved doing as a 10-year old.

When we met at the cemetery last Friday, we walked past the graves of men he had marched with in Memorial Day parades not so long ago. General James Cuddihee. General White. Albert Rajaniemi. "When I first started, there were about 60 of us who marched every year. But a lot of them aren't here any more. We're down to about 30."

Barden wants all veterans to know they are welcome to march in the Dublin parade.

"We want you to join us whether your uniform fits or not. It's your day. Come out and be proud of it."

Annie Card, owner of Annie Card Creative Services, developed her love for stories during her 16 years at Yankee Magazine. As executive director of a nonprofit she founded in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina, she used her photography and storytelling skills to attract money and volunteers. She continues to help nonprofits tell their stories. Have a favorite volunteer in your town? Tell Annie at annie@anniecard.com.

Help Out

CVTC Drivers

Bring a little sunshine into someone's life: Give a ride. Volunteer drivers provide rides to residents in the 13 eastern Monadnock region towns for medical appointments, to go shopping or run other errands. To find out how to participate, call 1-877-428-2882.

Jaffrey: Meals on Wheels

Drivers needed. Drive twice a month; 1 1/2 hours each time. Barbara: 532-6118 or Sally: 532-7263.

Peterborough: Community Clothing Closet

Clean and not torn men's clothing, kids clothing all ages, girls clothing all sizes needed most right now, jeans of all sizes and types — kids, women's and men's. No "clothing" donation is rejected. We accept clothing only — no bedding, pillows, toys, household items. Cash donations accepted, and it goes to shelving and racks for clothing and other items needed. Please RSVP by email to Kelly at irishgaelic@comcast.net.

Peterborough: Lions Club

Volunteers for special projects, events, and committees are always welcome at the Peterborough Lions Club. They are currently seeking volunteers for the upcoming Lucky Duck Race to assist in selling tickets, helping with mailings, and distributing posters. If you would like to help, please call Jack Nieskens at 924-9869.

Samaritans Hotline

Samaritans of the Monadnock Region are seeking volunteers to help staff their 24-hour hotline in both the Keene and Peterborough areas, offering telephone support to individuals who are in need of someone to talk to about their feeling depressed, lonely, anxious or suicidal. Monadnock region. 357-5510.

Tutors/Students Needed

For Project LIFT. Adult Ed. program assisting with study for GED exam, math, English, etc. Monadnock region. 464-5285.

Jaffrey: Cat/Kitten Care

Volunteers needed to help care for cats/kittens; also clerical, transportation, fostering, fundraising, publicity help needed. No offer of help too small. Kitty Rescue & Adoption. 532-9444.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Send us an e-mail with your organization's needs and upcoming volunteer opportunities at volunteers@ledgertranscript.com

LOOKING TO HELP?

If you want to volunteer, but are unsure where you fit in, you can call the Monadnock Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and the Monadnock Volunteer Center at 924-7350.



COURTESY PHOTO

Sabrina de Bem of Hancock folds clothes inside the science lab at the Well School in Peterborough.

417.5 pounds of inspiration

Well School student collects clothing and shoes for African foundation

By JOSH BOND
Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

At the conclusion of what started as a school project to collect donated goods, Well School ninth-grader Sabrina de Bem of Hancock more than doubled her initial goal of 200 pounds of shoes and clothes for an African foundation.

Sabrina set out to collect 100 pounds of clothes and 100 pounds of shoes for ASPIR, the Association of Sports for the Improvement of Refugees/Returnees. The New Boston-based non-profit was founded by Senegal-born Noel Sagna and provides support to West African refugees and displaced persons both in New Hampshire and in the West African

countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

On April 27, Sabrina presented the results of her clothing drive to Sagna at The Well School in Peterborough, where Sagna was surprised to find 417.5 pounds of clothes and shoes in 27 large plastic bags. The final tally was 360.5 pounds of clothing, 49 pounds of shoes, and eight pounds of miscellaneous items, from ties and belts to bibs and blankets.

According to Audrey Carrel, Sabrina's teacher at the Well School who connected her with ASPIR and suggested the project, the donations ranged from infant goods to dress outfits suitable for job interviews.

"The Well School and Sabrina de Bem, who is a future leader, have done a great job showing how to make a difference," Sagna was quoted in a press release.

"As Sabrina's teacher, I am extremely proud of the dedication and hard work, and especially of the enthusiasm and positive attitude, that she showed in undertaking and completing her project on behalf of ASPIR," said Carrel, who said generous donations have come from The Well School community, as well as the staffs at Harlow's Pub and The Magic Flute consignment shop, both in Peterborough.

"Sabrina is an amazing young woman," she said.



Volunteer to Host an Educational Session in your home or agency!

Did you know 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually assaulted before their 18th birthday? And only one out of 10 child victims come forward to disclose their abuse, leaving 9 others suffering in silence.

Education and early identification can help stop this violence and protect children in our communities. Schedule a free education session in your neighborhood, church or agency by calling us today. We will tailor a program to meet your needs.



Call Maria Gagnon, LISCW at the Hillsborough County Child Advocacy Center today at (603) 889-0321

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