

Old Men Forget

by John Alan Arnold, PhD



“Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot, / But he’ll remember with advantages / What feats he did that day.” So says King Henry V in Shakespeare’s famous play of the name as the king exhorts his men to fight valiantly regardless of the “fearful odds” that face them. Henry knows what all men who have been through war know: that there is justifiable pride in the valor demonstrated on the field of battle. And the pride is not limited to those who fought but also family members that come after them and *remember*. All feel pride in “what feats he did that day.” And while it is not uncommon to occasionally recall those feats with “advantages,” i.e., pardonable exaggerations, what all of us want to remember most is what really happened on those battlefields. This is particularly the case when thanks, recognition, or, perhaps, financial benefits and remuneration are past due. Frequently, though, the questions about those feats come too late—after the veteran has died (sadly, 1,100 World War II veterans die every day) or when memories have faded. Or, other times, the memories have not faded but those who have been through the fires of conflict do not choose to talk about the events until it is too late. Too often fact, the case is that the memory falls short, not that it is exaggerated. Old men, indeed, can forget, or pass on without telling others what occurred, and without documentary evidence, the events can themselves pass into the mists of time, though those left want very much to capture them. Unfortunate, indeed.

This is where NICOM, Inc. comes in. Strategically located in the Washington, DC area in close proximity to the National Archives and the Library of Congress and with researchers and archivists at research facilities across the country, we can provide the essential information about military units and organizations, individual contributions to military efforts, awards, honors, and benefits due from loyal service, and other documents so you have the record straight on your service and the sacrifices and contributions of your family. Whether it is filling in gaps in what you know about your ancestors in the Revolutionary War or Civil War for genealogical purposes, your family’s role in World War II, receiving disability benefits for actions you yourself received during the Vietnam War or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—whatever military documents and information you are in need of, NICOM, Inc. can help you. This blog is a starting point for you. Please respond here with any questions or comments you have about your own military service or those about whom you are interested in learning more.

We take our research very seriously. It is more than work for us; it is also a case of moral imperative, to make sure proper remembrance is given to those who have given so much to God, family, and country. Doing so fulfills the sacred role all of us have been tasked to by those who have given so much so that we could have all:

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*



Archival research is our way, at NICOM, to ensure that we do not “break faith.” Let us hear from you and let us help.