

**STAGE
RIGHT**

SALUTES OUR VETERANS



Mackenzie Goode as Ben Whitledge and Katt Gilcrease as Will Stockdale

This month we are opening our third season with *No Time for Sergeants*. The hero is a husky and good-natured hillbilly who finally gets into the Air Force despite his father's tendency to tear up his draft papers. His determination to be transferred to the infantry soon spells trouble among generals, sergeants and his fellow service men. Our hero is soon sent off on what becomes a comic voyage in an airplane manned by some weary flying officers - most suffering from hangovers. Come and see how our hero survives an atomic explosion in Yucca Flats! Performances are September 10-26, 2010 at the historic Crighton Theatre in Conroe, Texas.

Katt Gilcrease, who plays Will Stockdale in *No Time for Sergeants*, did some research for his part by visiting the Commemorative Air Force in San Marcos. While there he was able to get a feel for a true B-25 dubbed the "Yellow Rose". Space was definitely at a premium! The Commemorative Air Force has also loaned STAGE RIGHT parts of a B-25 for use during the run of the show.

During *No Time for Sergeants* we will be collecting items for the local chapter of the US Troop Support Founda-



tion which provides care packages for our troops. The most highly requested items are pouched meats, protein bars, and batteries. Check the website at www.ustroop-support.org for a more complete list.

Lone Star Honor Flight

In addition to the collection of items to benefit our troops overseas, we are holding a special performance for the members of the Lone Star Honor Flight. The organization, founded by Montgomery resident Brenda Beaven, has taken over 1500 World War II veterans to Washington D.C. to see the World War II memorial. Brenda founded Lone Star Honor Flight in 2008 after learning about a man out of North Carolina who was taking World War II vets to D.C.

Beaven, a retired Montgomery Junior High School history teacher, called the man she saw on TV. No one from Texas had contacted him. Beaven spoke about her vision at a rotary club meeting in January 2008. After that presentation Jack McClanahan opened his business - Storage 105 in Conroe - to veterans on Wednesday mornings so they could meet and socialize.

"What gets me is just listening to them

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BY IRA LEVIN



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SEPT. 10-26, 2010

At the historic Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe, TX.

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or www.stage-right.org

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Katt vs. a B-25



Katt inside a B-25

talk,” McClanahan said. “I heard two veterans who were Prisoners of War, and they had just found out they were in the same German POW camp. They didn’t know each other there, and now here they are talking about it like it was just yesterday.”

Craig Duff, Time multimedia journalist and filmmaker, has given us permission to reprint his blog on last year’s Honor Flight. It will give you a flavor of an Honor Flight and a glimpse of the many stories of our heroes and heroines from yesteryear.

Two weeks ago (May 2009), I flew to

Houston to join a charter flight that carried 111 WWII Vets from IAH to Washington to visit the WWII Memorial on the National Mall. They also went to Arlington National Cemetery and watched the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. I reported a video story that’s running today (Memorial Day) on TIME.com.

Among the veterans I met were decorated soldiers, bomber pilots, an Army nurse and a Navy WAVE. One soldier, Marco Barelmas, was one of Merrill’s Marauders, the long range penetration special

forces who fought against Japanese forces in northern Burma. The 86-year-old Barelmas told me his unit marched nearly a thousand miles in the Burmese jungles, and he walked the Burma Road for 16 miles barefoot. “My feet were all to pieces and bloody,” he said. Barelmas was lively, using a walker, and made his way around the Memorial and the Korean War memorial and got a front row view of the changing of the guard.

As an army nurse, Anne Watt trained in hopes of being stationed near one of her four brothers who were serving in various theaters



Marco Barelmas



Anne Watt



John Daro

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of battle around the globe. Dreaming of an assignment overseas, she was stationed, instead, in Arkansas, where she trained to attend soldiers in the event of an invasion of Japan. That, thankfully, never happened. The war ended, and all four of her brothers came home safely.

When John Daro was wheeled in by his guardian, son-in-law David Carr, he waved his arms like airplane wings. "Army



Iris and Dick Howes

Air Corps!" he hailed as he glided past a row of applauding visitors, standing in honor in the airport concourse to give the vets a proper send off. "Just like the old days," he said. I knew immediately this was someone I wanted to meet. "I was in a B-29!" he said with a jaunty inflection. He was a farm boy who always wanted to fly, and ultimately landed a spot in the pilot's seat of bombers in an elite squadron.

Iris and Richard Howes both served in the war, and met two years after in Japan. They married in 1948. Iris signed up for the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) in 1942 and served as a communication specialist. Mr. Howes was in the Army Air Corps and survived a crash landing during a paratrooper mission.

After a more-than-full day that began at 4:30 a.m. in Conroe, Texas and ended in the same Target parking lot at nearly 1 a.m. that night, I wasn't sure who had the greater honor: the vets, or the guardians and observers who were privileged to spend the day with them and help them witness the heroic memorials created in their honor.

Hats off to Montgomery Junior High school, their principal Duane McFadden, and the indefatigable Brenda Beaven, a history teacher who saw a story about the honor flights on TV and was determined to do it for the veterans in her community. She rallied the school and local volunteers to create an amazing event.

Each veteran's story is unique and special. So come to the Crighton on September 10-26, 2010 to enjoy a southern military comedy, bring some items to support our active duty troops, and thank the veterans for their service to our country! ♦

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