

Camp Howze MVPA: Restoring vehicles, building lives



One of the vintage military vehicles from Camp Howze MVPA in the Branson Veterans Parade (Photo by Cynthia J. Thomas)

By CYNTHIA J. THOMAS,
Staff Writer

Anyone attending Branson's Veterans Day parade on November 11, or visiting Veterans Village and events during Veterans Homecoming Week, likely noticed several vintage military vehicles on display. Military Ve-

hicle Preservation Association affiliate groups across the nation and around the world enjoy taking their projects to parades and other special events to keep history alive and educate new generations of young people.

One such group, Camp Howze MVPA from Whitesboro, Texas,

drives to Branson for Veterans Week each year. Members spend the week attending various reunions and setting up vehicles for display, where veterans enjoy reminiscing about the equipment used during their service years. Camp Howze members also volunteer wherever and however they are needed; the entire team attended the World War II and Korean War reunion to chat with veterans, help serve refreshments, and assist veterans with photo ops on a MVPA member's vintage military motorcycle. The group of 25-plus brought nine vehicles/pieces of equipment. Vehicles are individually owned and restored; currently, group members have 45 restored pieces.

Camp Howze MVPA gets its name from the World War II Army base near Gainesville, Texas, activated in 1942 as one of the Army's largest training centers. One of the divisions training

there was the Army's 103rd "Cactus" division, inspiring the MVPA group's cactus logo.

"We started as an MVPA affiliate group, but we've evolved into historians," said public relations manager Brad Meeks. "Our goals are to honor veterans and educate

youth." The restored vehicles are a way to engage youth in aspects of history that, sadly, often get little time in school curriculum; and the hands-on visual helps encourage youth considering a career in mechanics or engineering to look

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One of the vintage military vehicles from Camp Howze MVPA in the Branson Veterans Parade (Photo by Cynthia J. Thomas)

THE DUTTONS

Join The Duttons for their Re-Opening at

The Duttons would like to thank Mr. Yakov Smirnoff for opening his theater to host their show starting September 26 while their theater is under repair due to a fire on July 13. We expect the Dutton Family Theater to re-open in Spring 2023. In the meantime, see the Duttons at Yakov's and while you are there, be sure to see Yakov, too!

YAKOV'S

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• HUNTER

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“Otis Williams of the Temptations used to say when he’d look at the other guys in the group, he knew that each one made him feel very confident that every time they went on stage, it was going to be a great show. Kirk and I would do shows together, just the two of us. He’d say we were a great One, Two punch!”

Said entertainer **Eddie**

Nationally known comedian with ties to Branson, passes away

By K.D. MICHAELS, Staff Writer

A comedian with ties to Branson has passed away.

Nationally known comedian Gallagher passed away on November 11. Widely known for smashing watermelons on stage, Gallagher was one of the most recognized comedians in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 2006, Gallagher had a lim-

Stovall, “We go way back. We had a lot in common, both being from the South. We talked about the way we were raised and our family values. He was just an overall good guy, and he’ll truly be missed.”

Fellow performer **Louis Clark** said, “I’ve had the pleasure to have shared the stage with Kirk from September 2020 to October 23 of 2022, here in Branson, Missouri. Never a dull moment with Kirk. He was a realist. Top-

ited engagement of shows at the Moe Bandy Theater, located across the street from Walmart and the Branson Mall on Branson’s famous 76 Country Boulevard.

Gallagher could often be seen standing along the Branson strip, in front of the theater, smashing watermelons as a way of promoting his shows.

notch singer and entertainer. Would give you or anyone the shirt off his back. What I admired most about my friend was he told it like it was. I’ll miss my friend and brother. Get some sleep now, bro!”

The Branson Hot Hits Theatre will hold a special memorial show in honor of Kirk Hunter on November 21. Show time is 7:30

pm, with pre-show refreshments served at 7 p.m. The show will be a compilation of all of the shows at the Branson Hot Hits Theatre—Motown Downtown, Doo Wop and More, Golden Sounds of The Platters, Patsy to Patsy, Dean Martin and More, and Soft Rock/James Taylor Tribute.

Tickets are only \$15, and all

ticket sales from the evening as well as donations collected will go to Hunter’s family to pay for his final expenses. Reservations are suggested but are not required. To reserve your tickets, call the box office at 417-337-7426. Branson’s Hot Hits Theatre is located at 206 S. Commercial Street in downtown Branson.

The Branson Area Christian Women’s Connection invites you to:

Christmas Joy Luncheon

December 14
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Pointe Royale Clubhouse

Speaker: Jeanie Waters: Times of Refreshing

Plus: Music by Elaine Robinson
Door prizes • Non-denominational
No membership or dues

\$15 Men are welcome!
Reserve your spot by December 12 by calling
417-294-1287

Christian Women’s Connection is affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries

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at possibilities in the military.

In addition to History Alive programs at schools, Camp Howze MVPA volunteers display pieces and interact with guests at Wings Over Dallas and other airshows. “You might say we’re the ‘ground force’ for the Commemorative Air Force,” said Meeks. At CAF events, visitors can spend time between takeoffs and landings, or waiting their turn for a flight, browsing historical materials, hearing a presentation, and viewing ground vehicles of the same era as the historic aircraft.

Learn more about Military Vehicle Preservation and Camp Howze MVPA, or arrange for a historical presentation for a school or other group, at www.camphowzemvpa.com.



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