



THE HISTORY

Founding of the Club

In 2008, two WW2 Navy veteran's, Virgil Horton, and Ron Garretson, created a weekly breakfast gathering of local veterans at a McDonalds in Loveland, CO. From a handful of these stalwarts, the numbers have outgrown the locations twice so far. We currently meet at the Golden Corral at 1360 Sculptor Drive in east Loveland, just off of Colorado Highway 34 at 0730 every Saturday morning.

Over the years word has spread of the weekly meeting's and now veterans from several northern Colorado cities and towns regularly attend, as do visitors from other areas and states. We also have a member of the Australian Army (Digger) who served with us in Viet Nam with a unit that received high recognition for combat achievement and this veterans name is Eamon Tansey

Breakfast club member Tony DuMosch, who served in the U.S. Navy says, "What I like about it is it's a non-organization, it's just a gathering of veterans."

The name **PAMVET (Proud American Military Veteran)** was selected to identify the weekly event. A member came along with the idea of our needing name tags to help us recognize new members as they were accumulating rapidly Saturday to Saturday. Walt Hayward, US Army (1942 - 1946), introduced the logo and PAMVET name to us at a Widow McCoy breakfast after our size had reached the point where the veteran who owned the restaurant, moved us into the lounge to afford us more space and also make more space available to the regular folks.

A year or so later Walt decided we needed a banner and Golden Corral management agreed to have mounted. Walt's PAMVET banner remains in place and only comes down to be in the Loveland Veterans Day Parade each year. Walt has never asked or accepted any payment for his faithful and fruitful efforts. The PAMVET logo also adorns the business cards made available for members to take and give to others so they'll know we are here and when to show up.

The informal structure of **PAMVET** has proven to be a major calling card. There are no elected positions, no dues, or requirements, other than simply enjoying the camaraderie of other veterans. Badges have been provided for the veterans, to help identify them to others who attend.

How The Breakfast Goes

A bell is rung to get everyone's attention at which time they stand at attention, salute the flag, and recite the Pledge of Allegiance which is followed by a prayer. After everyone sits down again, the program begins.

New people to the group, or visitors -- are asked to introduce themselves and talk for a few minutes about their background and service history.

The meeting continues with announcements about members or veteran-related events and activities and there could be a speaker for about 5 minutes.



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Then, starting with WWII the attendees are encouraged to get some of the all-you-can-eat breakfast, followed by Korea, then Vietnam, then everyone else.

We see from 85 to 100 members at breakfast, ranging in age from the twenties to the nineties, having served in World War II to present day.

"It's just a great group," said Ken Curry, a captain in the U.S. Air Force who said he flew the first B-52 to be hit by a surface-to-air missile in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. "I enjoy it because I get to meet people of all generations. ... We all have this common bond."

Phyllis Minch, a third-class yeoman for the Navy during the Vietnam War, has been coming to meetings for many years. "They make me feel like one of them," Minch said. The veterans who may not be able to share their stories with family and friends find they can talk about their military experiences at the club. Likewise, "some have not been through as much as others, but they're compassionate about what they hear".

Advertising

A long-time member said, "If we see somebody with a hat on, we say 'hello' to them, because they're veterans, we tell them about our club."

PAMVET members can bring guests to the meetings and "every member is a recruiter," the fellow said. "Most of us wear hats. ... Veterans are very proud. They wear hats wherever they go."

The same long-time member said, "Anybody who's been in the service is familiar with the camaraderie, it's like adding to your family when you join the service. They become almost an extension of family, because during war and during training, you're not with your family, you're with service people."

We believe that the **PAMVET** concept could be instituted in other towns, cities and states, with similar success. We invite Veterans from those areas to establish **PAMVET** groups. The low profile informal structure has made Loveland successful, and we would suggest that any others follow suit.

Though they're not necessarily sports fans, the members of the **PAMVET** Breakfast Club tend to notice baseball hats.

They greet the wearers of the hats -- stitched with the name and insignia of a branch of the military -- out of respect for their fellow comrades, as well as to employ the power of word of mouth.

The **PAMVET**, or the Proud American Military Veteran group exceeds 750.