

# G.A.R. Cemetery

*Family \* Heritage \* Legacy*

**On the Cover**  
**Walking for a Better Me**  
**Pg. 2**

**Genealogy**  
**Searching the Web**  
**Pg. 3**

**Community**  
**Pgs. 4-5**

**48 States in 48 Days**  
**Jonathan Appell's Gravestone**  
**Restoration Tour**  
**Pg. 6-7**

**From the Staff**  
**"Work in Progress"**  
**By Fred Billups**  
**Pg. 8**  
**"Covid Context"**  
**By Kim Horn**  
**Pg. 9**

**The Cadet Chronicle**  
**Pg. 11**





# On the Cover

## Walking for A Better Me



**Nancy Bro**  
G.A.R. Cemetery, Office Manager



We see people walking here at the cemetery almost every day. Some are very diligent concerning the time they come for their walks, and even the path they take, where others are more carefree. But whatever their routine they all seem to enjoy their time spent here at G.A.R.

Recently, we had the privilege of speaking with one of our walkers, Carin Cherry. Carin stated that she has been walking here at G.A.R. for 2 years or longer and had some very enlightening words that she graciously shared.

Nancy: What was your inspiration to start walking?

*Carin: I wanted to take control of my diabetes. And I do it for stress. I get great stress relief and I'm able to walk and focus on myself.*

Nancy: Why did you choose GAR?

*Carin: Because I don't feel that I have to watch out for dogs, cats or people... I feel safe out here.*

Nancy: How many times a week do you try to walk?

*Carin: My goal is at least four times a week, but, I'm lucky if I get that. Especially When it's hot it's hard for me to get out a lot and I am OK and feel like I have achieved something if I make it just one night. But, during cooler weather my goal is four days a week.*

Nancy: Have you seen any improvement in your overall health?

*Carin: When I first started walking out here yes, I lost weight. In fact, I had gotten to where I didn't know what size jeans that I wore. I don't remember how much I actually lost I know I'm down two jean sizes. It has affected my diabetes as well. I still have to maintain it, but I definitely saw an improvement in my A1C.*

Nancy: What would you say to the person thinking about beginning a walking routine here at the cemetery?

*Carin: Let the cemetery be genuine to you. Take advantage of the beauty out here and to listen to nature. There are quite a few different birds and even watching the squirrels can be therapeutic. You know... it's just so tranquil.*

I must say, Carin is very inspiring! And now I too want to walk for a better me! How about you?!

# Genealogy

## Searching the Web

*Websites, Tips and more...*



**Barbara Becker**  
City of Miami Public Library  
Genealogist

**W**ebsites are an important part of genealogy research, and there are many sites that have no fee attached to them. One of the most important sites is [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). It has many avenues to search in genealogy, such as through their records, images, books, Wiki and more. They also offer free online consultation, volunteer opportunities, and to keep you on task they even generate a recommended task list for you.

Another one that has great value is [www.heritagequest.com](http://www.heritagequest.com). If you have a library card to a library that has Heritage Quest available for their customers, then it can be of great help to you because you can access it at your home on your own computer. You may need to contact your local library for specific log-in directions. Once you are logged in the searching begins. From obituaries, books, the year, US Census records and Indian Census Rolls and you can even search the Revolutionary War!

Always check out the nearest public library for more help in doing your research. Our library in Miami has a wonderful section on genealogy. They also have Heritage Quest. They have a genealogist available Monday through Thursday that will be glad to help you in your research.

One of the avenues in genealogy research is visiting cemeteries. Always go prepared when visiting a cemetery. Take care to use bug spray to fight many bugs and take a flashlight, moist towels, jugs of water, a clip board to make notes about a stone or location in the cemetery, a camera for taking pictures and also always pay attention to others buried close to the one you are interested in because they also could be a relative.

Never use items like shaving cream or other abrasive items to clean a stone as this can be harmful to the material the stone is made of. The best thing to clean a stone with is water and a soft brush. When a stone has much soil on it let the water stand on the stone and then gently scrub with a soft brush. Always be careful to not damage the area around the stone or the stone itself. And remember, all the soil on the stone didn't happen overnight.

Lastly, there are many sites to search about cemeteries, and at times the cemetery office can help you with locating a grave and give you the information that they have on file for the burial.

**Watch for future articles from Barbara for more tips!**



# Community Loss



"[Edith "Ann" Miller](#), lifetime Miamian and owner of Ann's Flowers and Gifts, unexpectedly passed from this life into a glorious eternity Sunday morning, August 9, 2020 surrounded by her family at home in Miami, she was 71." <sup>1</sup>

The City of Miami has lost not only an upstanding businesswoman and mother, but, she was also a friend of G.A.R. Cemetery. We have had a business relationship with Ann, her husband Kem, and son Jason for many years. Not only have we ordered many flowers and plants from them for our events, but we joined into a contract with them to plant and maintain the 15 Royal Air Force British cadet's graves. This was and still is more than a contractual obligation between us. It is truly a heartfelt collaboration that will continue to carry on.

"Ann, you will certainly be greatly missed, and you will always hold a special place in our hearts." *The Cemetery Staff*



<sup>1</sup>Obituary excerpt from [paulthomasfuneralhomes.com](http://paulthomasfuneralhomes.com). Click the link to read the obituary in its entirety [Edith "Ann" Miller](#)

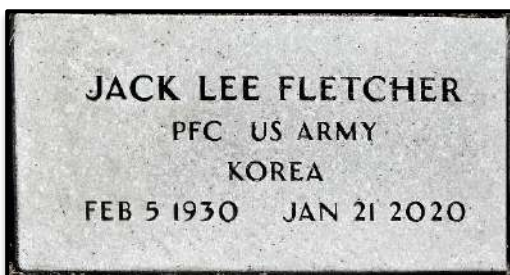


# With Great Appreciation

Recently the City of Miami received a donation from the late Jack Fletcher of Miami, Oklahoma. Mr. Fletcher was a Veteran of the United States Army, having served during the Korean War and attaining the rank of PFC(T). He was awarded the Korean Service Medal with two Bronze Stars and a United Nations Service Medal. Mr. Fletcher chose to donate to the Miami Police Department, Miami Fire Department, and the Miami Public Library. At his graveside service, he was given Military Honors. Mr. Fletcher's burial flag was flown over City Hall and has been retired to be displayed within the Civic Center. We want to extend our condolences to all who knew Mr. Fletcher, and our utmost gratitude to Mr. Fletcher for thinking of his community and giving back to all of us.

You can view Jack Fletcher's obituary here:

<https://www.brown-winters.com/obituaries/Jack-Fletcher-5/...>





# 48 States in 48 Days

<https://48statetour.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/48statetour>

## Jonathan Appell's Gravestone Restoration Tour

On Thursday, September 24, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. G.A.R. Cemetery hosted Jonathan Appell of Atlas Preservation during his trek across America to visit 48 cemeteries, in 48 States, in 48 days on his Gravestone Restoration Tour.

Jonathan has worked with numerous people and organizations for the past 20 years, sharing his experience and techniques on how to clean and restore gravestones and monuments. "We are embarking on a mission to preserve America's graveyards," Jonathan Appel states on his website.

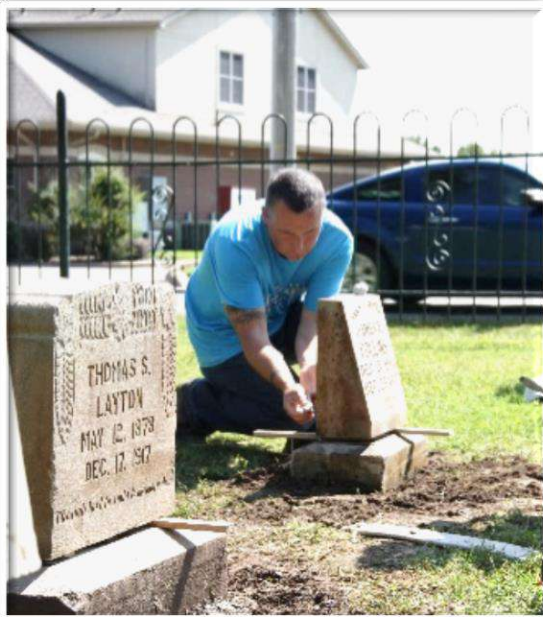
We learned so many techniques. From cleaning tips and what to use for the best results to what products to use to repair broken and knocked over monuments. One of the most impressive things was that we found was a base that had sunk so deep into the soil that the upright monument looked as though it was sitting on top of the ground.

One of the participants wrote... "This was the second workshop of his (Jon's) that I have attended. The previous workshop was in Tahlequah last year and was sponsored by the Cherokee Nation and the Oklahoma Historical Society. I volunteer cleaning and repair services at cemeteries near where I live in Locust Grove, Oklahoma and I normally concentrate on military and historical gravestones and markers. I like doing this because it is good for the soul. It reminds me of where we have collectively been, and where we all must go. That give me a greater appreciation for life." ~ Robert Dollarhide

"We are very happy with the turn-out we had for this event and are eager to host another gravestone restoration workshop in the future." ~ Fred Billups







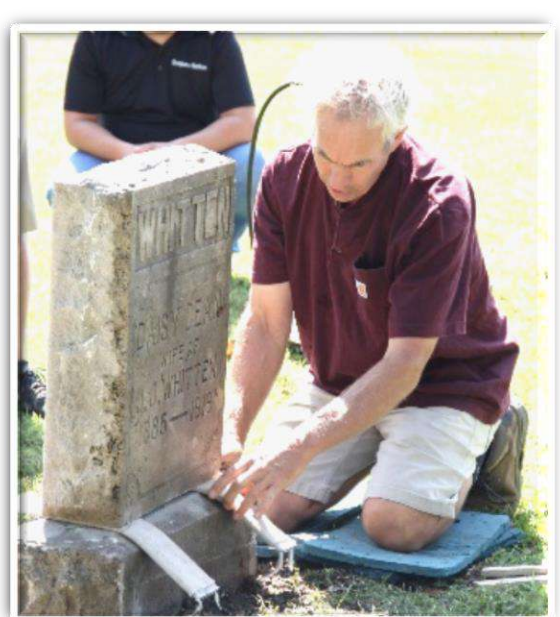
Robert Dollarhide



## [48 State Tour](#)



Click here to go to Jonathan Appell  
Appell's facebook page!



Jonathan Appell  
Atlas Preservation  
48 States in 48 Days





# On the Grounds



**Fred Billups**  
G.A.R. Cemetery Manager

## Harley Rake?....And This Has Nothing to Do With Motorcycles <sup>1</sup>

At the end of last year, we were fortunate to receive a grant that enabled us to purchase a new tractor and a [Harley rake](#), or a power box rake as it is also called. Which is a fancy tiller that works best in dry conditions. It will level the dirt, feather it out and push the rocks off to the side for easier removal.

Now that we have the equipment we have gotten some extra topsoil and have kicked-off a project to tackle one of the blocks in slumberland to start a rehab project.

When we laid a string line out, we realized that the elevation of the block needed to be raised about 6 inches in some areas. We also quickly figured out that we must pull the flat markers so that we can do the work and then we reset them.

Our intentions are to re-work areas, while also keeping up with our other daily duties like setting markers, pouring foundations, mowing, maintaining the trees and roadways, genealogy research, and of course assisting our families and funerals.

So, if you are out in the cemetery and see our signs, string lines, a lot of fresh dirt and flat markers out of the ground, you can know that we are trying to repair areas of need. With a little good luck, and good weather, we hope to improve the beauty of the cemetery grounds for all to enjoy.

<sup>1</sup> [www.theturfsurfer.wordpress.com](http://www.theturfsurfer.wordpress.com)







**Kim Horn**  
Human Resources/G.A.R.  
Cemetery Director

# COVID CONTEXT

Our team has coined a new phrase called “COVID Context”. So, what does that mean? Essentially, 2020 has been turned upside down by COVID-19, and we are trying to keep it all in “COVID Context” by making smart decisions to ensure that we are keeping families first while taking everyone’s safety seriously.

People are anxious, sad, scared... so many emotions during this time of the unknown, and grieving, in itself, is the toughest emotion that we as humans must inevitably deal with. The feeling of being alienated from family and friends and finding it harder to get together to have a conventional funeral because you must worry about social distancing, masks, and how many people can gather for a memorial service makes it especially difficult.

Keeping things in “COVID Context” is our priority. We at G.A.R. want to be a resource for our families. By giving people a little more grace and understanding and trying to become better listeners and letting families know we empathize with them for the difficult choices they are having to make. We are available to answer questions, listen to your concerns, and work with you to make sure we are meeting your expectations to the best of our ability. When things seem so troubled, we want your interactions with us to be positive ones.

Grace is defined as a Noun- “courteous goodwill” and a Verb-“Do honor or credit to (someone or something) by one’s presence”. As we keep things in “COVID Context”, we strive to serve families with goodwill, and honor their requests keeping with our motto of “Families First”.

“Wherever life plants you, bloom with grace.”--Unknown



# BRITISH FLYERS REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

David Tennant, this year's Guest of Honor spoke on behalf of his father, Royal Air Force cadet, Vincent Tennant. Vincent was a British Flying Training School No. 3 graduate of the 25<sup>TH</sup> course in 1944. He emigrated to the United States in the 1950's and became an American citizen in 1963. He spent his life in the aviation industry and 20 years after finishing at Miami would still travel to Oklahoma and Kansas to continue the friendships made during his time training at the B.F.T.S. No. 3 in 1944-45.



Vincent Tennant  
B.F.T.S. No. 3 1944



Entrance March  
Tulsa Pipes and Drums  
Royal British Legion



Derek Ferrell  
Royal British Legion



Sqld Ldr RC Jemmett  
Foreign Liaison Officer



CJ & Jaxon Barfell  
Sons of Whitney Barfell



David Tennant  
Oldest Son of Vincent Tennant



Wreath laid on behalf of our  
16<sup>th</sup> Cadet  
LAC Ronald Dennis Harrison  
by the Royal British Legion



Marsh Mauersberger  
Vocalist



American Legion Post #147



# THE CADET CHRONICLE

In this issue we are introducing our new column, *The Cadet Chronicle*. Periodically, we will be sharing information from our archives and any new information we have acquired recently. Quite often we hear from someone that we haven't previously had contact with. Whether it be a B.F.T.S. No.3 cadet themselves, a family member or even an historian we are always eager to share what's new with you.



Vincent Tennant  
Retired in Florida 2019



David Tennant visiting the original  
hangar where his father trained.



L.A.C. Ronald 'Dennis' Harrison's  
grave with a note from his niece.  
Photograph taken by Gloria Spitler



L.A.C. Ronald 'Dennis' Harrison  
1922-1941

In May of this year, we received a phone call from John, one of Vincent Tennant's sons. He stated that he was asked by his father to come and take pictures of the 15 British Cadet graves. While visiting, he told me about his father being one of the graduates from the B.F.T.S. No. 3 during WWII and that he was then 95 years old and retired in Florida!

A few days later Vincent himself called the office (the first of three times) and we were able to speak to him at great lengths. He was very happy that we accommodated his son and told us of some of his time while here in Miami and that our community was very nice to him while he was so far from home.

Soon after we spoke to David as well. We put together a nice packet of information and photographs from our archive and sent it off to Vincent in Florida. David expressed to us that he looked through the packet many times and enjoyed it immensely.

Sadly, Vincent passed away just 6 weeks prior to our British Flyers Remembrance Ceremony. But, we at G.A.R. Cemetery feel very blessed and privileged that we were able to speak to Vincent and get to know him, even if it was for just a few short months.

*Lest We Forget*



John Tennant visiting the British graves at his father's request

This cadet is who we consider to be our 16<sup>th</sup> cadet. We were able to obtain this picture because of the dedicated act of kindness from Gloria Spitler, who decorates his grave every Memorial Day. This year she found a note with this photo on it from his niece that had visited from England to decorate his grave in honor of her mother, Dennis' sister. The following is what we could read from her note.

*"My uncle, Dennis Harrison, was killed when his plane crashed on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1941 near Collinsville, Oklahoma. He is buried in the Tulsa Memorial Park cemetery and was, I believe, the first British RAF cadet to lose his life. He was being trained at the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa.*

*My grandparents were never able to visit his grave. After the war it was difficult and expensive to travel. They were broken-hearted and my grandmother always said if she had travelled to America she could never return to England leaving him behind. But now, at last my husband and I can honour the promise I made to my mother, Dennis' sister, before she died, and visit his grave.*

*Many lovely, kind families in Tulsa befriended and looked after the young British boys who arrived to be trained as RAF cadets. I would like to say a belated but heartfelt thank you to them all. My grandmother received letters and newspaper cuttings after Dennis died, they gave her so much comfort and helped her in her grief. All these documents are now held at the RAF museum in Hendon, London, England. In particular Mrs. Dickinson, she stood in for my grandmother at Dennis' funeral and continued to correspond with her for several years. She sent some dried flowers from his grave on his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday."*

Although the final paragraph is partially illegible, we can make out that she and her family from England send their warmest regards and heartfelt thanks to all the families that "embraced" the young "British lads" when they were so far from home.

*Lest We Forget*



# Bulletin Board

## Upcoming Events

- [Angel of Hope Candlelight Remembrance Ceremony](#)
  - Sunday, December 6, 2020  
7:00 p.m.
- **Decoration Removal**
  - 1st Monday in February  
02/01/2021 – Will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m.
- [Memorial Day Ceremony](#)
  - Monday, May 31, 2021  
9:30 a.m.

## LEARN MORE

[ADOPT-A-FLAG](#)

[ASSISTANCE WITH GENEALOGY  
RESEARCH](#)

[MAINTENANCE REQUESTS](#)

[MARKER & VASE SETTING](#)

[MONUMENT FOUNDATION  
INSTALLATION](#)

[OPENING & CLOSING OF GRAVES](#)

[DISINTERMENTS](#)

[OVERTIME](#)

[REPLACEMENT CEMETERY CERTIFICATE](#)

[CHANGING OF OWNERSHIP/TRANSFER  
OF CEMETERY CERTIFICATE](#)

[RE-SELLING CEMETERY PROPERTY](#)

[FREE GAZEBO USE](#)



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## Contact Us



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## Up Next

[Angel of Hope Candlelight  
Remembrance Ceremony](#)

Join us on December 6<sup>th</sup> at  
7:00 p.m. as we remember  
our lost children.

White carnations and  
candles will be provided.

For more information click  
the link above or call the  
G.A.R. Cemetery office at  
(918) 541-2288.





**G.A.R. Cemetery**  
Remember My Journey On-Line Burial Records

**A Place to Build Their  
Lasting Legacy**

[www.garcemeterymiamiok.com](http://www.garcemeterymiamiok.com)  
For More Information call: (918) 541-2288

## Visit our Gallery



*Today's Quote*

**Every accomplishment starts  
with a decision to try.**

{Unknown}