



## Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Department of Montana

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To: Veteran Affairs Committee  
From: The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of Montana

Dear Veteran Affairs Committee:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Montana is proud of our veterans and urges Congress to name VA facilities here in Montana after a few of our more notable heroes.

David J. Thatcher was a member of the U.S. Army Air Corps where he volunteered for a secret mission that would help change the course of the war. Along with 78 other volunteers led by Jimmy Doolittle, a raid took place on selected military and industrial targets in Japanese cities. This was ordered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in retaliation for Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor. Thatcher was the tail gunner on "The Ruptured Duck" which crashed and seriously injured all the crew members except Thatcher. Thatcher saved the lives of the crew by gathering them on the beach. For this bravery, he was awarded the Silver Star along with the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was not only a hero but a man of integrity and honor.

Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, met all four military requirements through the Crow Native American Tribe in order to become chief. 1) To touch or strike the first enemy fallen, whether alive or dead, 2) To wrestle a weapon away from an enemy warrior, 3) To enter an enemy camp at night and steal a horse, and 4) To command a war party successfully. One he accomplished when he served his country in WWII when he knocked the enemy's rifle out of his hand. Dr. Medicine Crow received the Bronze Star, the French Legion of Honor award, the Gold Congressional Medal of Honor, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. These deeds, among many others, met the requirements for Joe to be honored as War Chief of his tribe.

Benjamin Charles Steele enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1941. When the invasion of the Philippines began in 1941, Ben fought on Bataan, made the Bataan Death March, and was a prisoner of the Japanese for three and a half years. As an artist after his release, he illustrated the book Tears In The Darkness and over 20 other books and several documentaries. This brave POW's work has been exhibited in one-man and group shows throughout the country. Ben Steele was a man honor, strength and true grit.

Again we urge Congress to name Montana VA facilities after these brave men.

Sincerely

JACK A. HAWLEY  
State Commander

**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**  
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