

History Matters is based on three principles: **Discover, Learn, and Share**. It's the emphasis on sharing that sets History Matters apart from other local history programs. In order to maximize our impact, we must share what we've discovered and learned about our local history. And, we must encourage others to share their knowledge, experiences, and questions so that history is important, relevant, and inclusive. In other words, show that history matters.

This week's Update theme is "Honoring Veterans of Otsego County". Numerous veteran organizations, publications, web sites, and historical archives make it easy to **learn** about local people who served in the military. A few examples are presented here.

◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

Craig Summerland of Livingston Township has deep roots in Otsego County and comes from a multi-generational family of military service. Craig was the last recipient from Otsego County to receive the Purple Heart during the Vietnam War era. His father, Melvin, served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Craig's mother, Elma (Putnam) Summerland – photo to the right – was a sergeant in the Army Air Force during World War II.



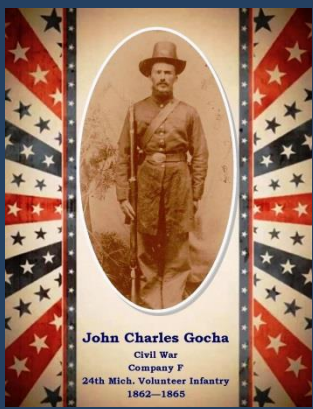
Elma Putnam Summerland

Craig's great grandfather, John Summerland, lived in Kansas. While serving in the Civil War, he met a person from Michigan with a connection to the church in Hetherton. That encounter brought the Summerland family to Otsego County. John is buried in the Meridian Line Cemetery in Charlton Township.

◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

The Civil War took place prior to the establishment of Otsego County. However, after the war, veterans were given land here. Many of our pioneers were Civil War veterans who received 160 acres from the federal government. So, the Civil War played an important role in our early history

John Gocha served in the Civil War and was seriously wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg. He later moved to Otsego County and died on the 4th of July 1904. The Gocha family played an important role in our county. This includes selling the Sugar Bowl to the Doumas brothers, building the A&P – now Isabella's Copper Pot, owning the Rendezvous – now Timothy's Pub and owning Gocha's Motel – now the Downtown Motel. For many years, H. Ben Gocha was engaged in a well drilling business and owned the car dealership that is now Wagar's.



◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

Evidence of respect and gratitude for our military veterans can be seen all around Otsego County. Veteran memorials are located throughout Otsego County as shown here in downtown Johannesburg. Waters has the D.A.V. memorial at the entrance to the township park. Vanderbilt honors its military sons and daughters in the village park. Several tributes are also found on the courthouse lawn in Gaylord.



We'll celebrate military service with an exhibit (September through Veterans Day) at the southwest corner of Main and Otsego in Gaylord. Hogan's Jewelers lets us use their vacant storefront for History Matter displays. You are invited to share your photos, stories, and memorabilia related to veterans of Otsego County. ***Without their brave service, we wouldn't have any history to discover, learn, or share.***