



THE AMERICAN LEGION OF MONTANA ★ P.O. Box 6075 ★ Helena, Montana 59604
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To: Veteran Affairs Committee

Dear Veteran Affairs Committee:

The American Legion of Montana believes it is vitally important to recognize the sacrifices of our Montana citizens who served in the Armed Forces, therefore we ask for consideration of the following Veterans to be honored.

Benjamin Charles Steele was born on November 17, 1917 in Roundup, Montana. He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1940 and was assigned to the 7th Material Squadron, 19th Bomb Group as an aircraft dispatcher. In September of 1941 he was stationed at Clark Field in the Philippines, and in December of that same year after the Pearl Harbor attack, Clark Field was bombed. Ben Steele was captured by Japanese and was forced to make the Bataan Death March, which lasted for six days before the exhausted men were loaded into box cars and taken to Camp O'Donnell. POW Ben Steele was a great man of strength and influence for his accomplishments in his service to our country and in his community.

David J. Thatcher was born on July 31, 1921 in Bridger, Montana and enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps on December 3, 1940. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, David volunteered for a mission named the Doolittle Raid. Corporal Thatcher, who was a flight engineer and gunner, received the Silver Star for helping wounded crew members. The Doolittle Raiders also received the Congressional Gold Medal. David Thatcher was admired by his family and friends and kept in contact with the surviving members of the Doolittle Raid.

Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow was born on October 27, 1913 near Lodge Grass, Montana. During WWII he served in Europe. During a raid his unit hit a small town. His commanding officer sent him down an alley and Joseph bumped heads with a German. Joe gave the German a butt stroke with his rifle and knocked the enemy's rifle out of his hand. Medicine Crow led his squad through land mines, avoiding enemy fire to reach U.S. lines. He was honored as Chief of his tribe for his deeds as well as receiving the Bronze Star and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

These three Veterans contributed to our state and nation in ways many others have not, it is time they be recognized for their service and sacrifice. The American Legion of Montana implores you to give that recognition by naming these buildings after them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary A White", written over a horizontal line.

Gary A White
Department Adjutant