

# Strong-willed woman visits AHEC exhibit

By Tom Conning

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Imagine wearing the same item day after day that isn't a wedding ring for almost four decades - a task that takes a strong will.

In 1972, 12-year-old **Kathy Strong** asked "Santa" for a simple, shiny stainless steel POW/MIA bracelet for Christmas. The bracelets were a fad at the time and popular with students, said Strong. "I remember that every single student in my 7th grade English class had one," she said.

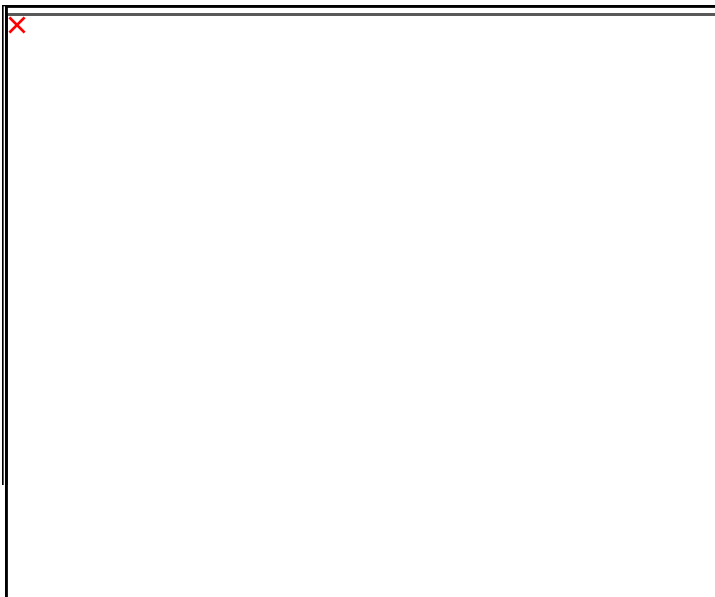
The difference between Strong and others in her English class was that she swore to wear that metal band every day and then did so for the next 39 years. The Soldier, **Spc. James Moreland**, was on her mind every day, said Strong. "I just wanted "my" Soldier to come home and be reunited with his family," said Strong. "It was that simple."

Spc. James Leslie Moreland was a medic in an Army Special Forces unit during the Vietnam War. On Feb. 7, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army attacked Moreland's Special Forces camp in Lang Vei. After the battle, the Army listed Moreland as missing in action.

More than 40 years after the battle, the Army positively identified Moreland's remains in 2011 and he was buried in a family plot later that year.

Strong attended the funeral, wrapped the bracelet she had been wearing for so many years around the sleeve of Moreland's uniform and watched the burial.

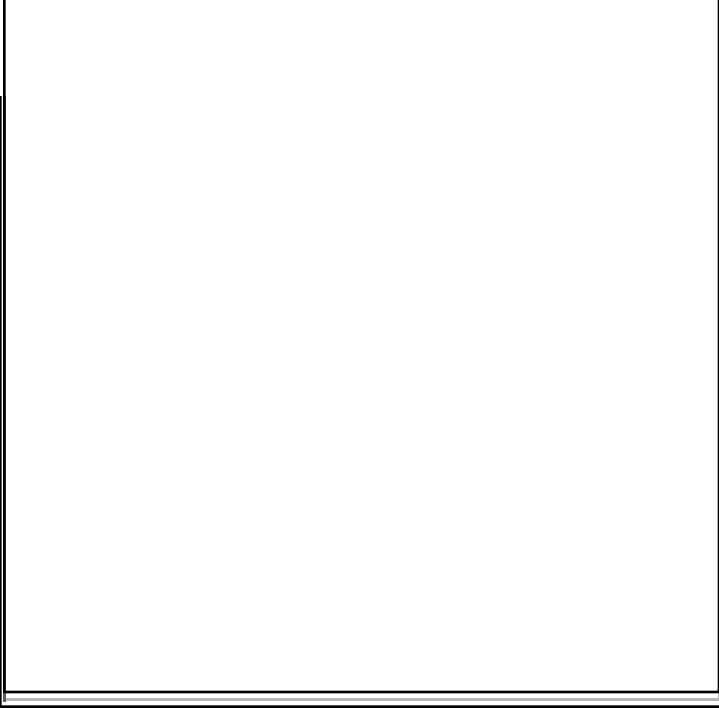
This story found its way into the Soldier Experience exhibit at the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pa. by coincidence, said **Jack Leighow**, Army Heritage Museum director. Our collections provided 99 percent of the material in the exhibit but the organization that put together the exhibit brought it to our attention and it was the civilian-to-Soldier connection we were looking for, said Leighow.



***Kathy Strong visits an Army Heritage and Education Center exhibit featuring her and the POW/KIA bracelet that she wore for nearly 40 years May 11. "Santa" gave her a bracelet for Christmas in 1972 that was inscribed with the name Spc. James Moreland who served in Vietnam.***

"It met the aim of the exhibit in terms of educating and inspiring Soldiers and members of the public."

Another coincidence was that a staff member at the Army



Heritage and Education Center knew Strong personally and contacted her about the exhibit, said Leighow.

Last Saturday, May 11, Strong visited the Soldier Experience exhibit and saw her and Moreland's story. "I feel very honored that James and I are included in the AHEC exhibit," said Strong.

"Part of my promise to James is to make sure he is never forgotten, so I'm thrilled each and every time that someone takes interest in his story. Even though we never met, he is with me every day."

The exhibit features a photo of Strong and a simple, shiny stainless steel POW/MIA band with the name James Moreland inscribed on it.

The Army Heritage and Education Center, located at 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, Pa., is free and open, Tuesday-Saturday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Sunday, 11:00am-5:00pm. Visit <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/index.cfm> for more information.

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