

Find Your Family Farm In Old Aerial Photo Archive

With more than 25 million black and white negatives in their archives, odds are good that Vintage Aerial can find an old aerial photo of your farm or maybe a farm you grew up on. For three years, Ken Krieg and his staff of computer techies have been scanning negatives taken by Krieg's family's business started back in 1952. More than 1.5 million photos are already online, but all the photos in the archive can be searched.

"We figure every photo of a farmstead is connected to about 30 people," Krieg says. "We are trying to reach the second, third and fourth generations." With many of the farms gone, descendants are often interested in preserving that part of their family history.

Nearly 60 years ago, Krieg's family started the business, taking photos from a two-seater prop plane in the heartland of Ohio. They expanded to 44 states and gathered 16 million images, with some farms being photographed several times. Recently Krieg acquired another 9 million images from another company.

Since door-to-door salesmen sold the photos, and residents often weren't home, Krieg estimates about 80 percent of the

photos were never purchased.

Go to the company's website, and type in your county and state to find out how many photos were taken and in what years. Fill out a form with a current address and researchers will layer current maps over old maps to find the farm.

"If the farm is gone, we just need an address of anything on that road," Krieg says.

An archive librarian will call and go through a slideshow of photos (via the internet) to find the right one. Often several photos were taken through the years, and customers like to purchase all of them for a collection to hang on the wall, Krieg says.

"People get excited when they can see the farm at a time when it was still active," he explains. "About 40 percent of the farms in the images are gone today. So to find these images is really cool."

Vintage Aerial sells the photos with various sizes, options and frames, starting at \$149 up to \$449 for a framed 20 by 30-in. print.

Krieg emphasizes that he knows not everyone will buy, but he hopes they check out the website.

"I'd like to see this site become a place



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where people share stories - like a social network," Krieg says.

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Injured Mideast War Vets Heal At Florida Berry Farm

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Veterans Farm near Jacksonville, Fla., offers a type of therapy to injured or recovering military personnel that farmers and people who live in rural areas understand.

Rather than a couch in a psychiatrist's office, there are two lawn chairs under a shady oak. And instead of a physical therapy workroom, there are fruit bushes and garden plots to tend to.

Adam Burke grew up on a blueberry farm. His plan was to be the first Burke *not* to follow that path. That changed in 2004 after he was wounded by shrapnel in Iraq. He came home with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Despite treatment by the VA, he didn't feel he could handle a "normal" job. He realized he needed something he was passionate about so he fell back into farming.

"It's in your blood. It's a sustainable way of life, you don't burn out from it," Burke says. He recalled the promise he'd made when he was wounded, that if he survived he would spend his life serving others. He decided to put the two ideas together and try to help other wounded vets recover in a rural setting.

Burke started contacting people, and his first break came from a Minnesota woman named Joy Westenberg from Project Evergreen. She helped Adam recruit local farmers. With his own money, volunteers and donations, he set up his first blueberry farm in Central Florida in 2009, where six veterans now raise and sell blueberries.

"I see noticeable changes in the men right away," he says. "I see light in their eyes and smiles on their faces. I also see physical changes, and I wanted to do it on a larger scale."

Jacksonville, Fla., has a large military presence and no VA hospital so he set up his farm near there. He found support through Work Vessels for Veterans, which provides business equipment such as fishing boats and tractors to veterans. Once they became Burke's fiscal sponsor, he started raising money to buy land.

The Veterans Farm has 8 acres and will serve 20 to 25 post-911 veterans at a time.

About the same number of volunteers — including Vietnam veterans — help out. Everyone at the farm — including Burke — is 100 percent volunteer, so all donations and profits go into the farm.

"We choose not to have the finer things in life so that we can help more vets," Burkes says, noting that he and his wife live frugally off her salary.

The Mission Continues, an organization that promotes veteran rehabilitation programs, was so impressed with Burke's farm that they offered to support it with fellowships for an average of 14 weeks. Veterans who are part of the program and working on the farm receive monthly stipends for housing. That has allowed veterans from as far away as Indiana and California to participate. As part of the program, volunteer professionals — therapists, entomologists, and blueberry specialists — offer classes. The goal is to teach participants so they can go on to start their own horticultural operations, if desired.

Burke wants to make his Veterans Farm sustainable and grow to serve more people. The operation has attracted interest regarding its growing methods. Water-saving techniques are used and blueberry bushes are planted in 30-gal. containers so that people in wheelchairs can work on them. Burke hopes to add handicap accessible golf carts in the future. He also wants to set up an acre of land under high tunnels to extend the season. Besides blueberries, Veterans Farm grows blackberries and organic vegetables.

"There is a good market here, especially with us growing them organically," Burke says. "We sell through commercial buyers and farmers markets."

The veterans are challenged to do everything from working in the field to selling and marketing — which can be stressful for people with brain injuries.

As the Veterans Farm works toward self-sufficiency, Burke says he welcomes all kinds of support, from service (digging a well), to equipment (high tunnels, 30-gal. pots, tractors, pvc pipe for irrigation, golf carts) and cash.

Eventually, Burke would love to have housing for the participants, as it's difficult



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to find reasonably priced housing in the area.

The longer he works at the farm, the more Burke realizes the power of farm work to heal. Picking berries improves dexterity, which can be an issue with some disabilities. In general, the work helps recovering vets get into better overall shape.

And then there's that oak tree with the chairs. Some veterans who are paralyzed enjoy hanging out there and joking with

the working veterans. For others it's the perfect place to talk, work through issues and dream about the future — better than any therapist's office.

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