

A SERVICE OF ODD PITTSBURGH

Honor a Veteran

Commissioned biographical monographs for veterans, their families, and the units they served

RESEARCHED, WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY JOHN SCHALCOSKY

"Every veteran carries a story the family knows in fragments — a discharge paper in a drawer, a unit patch in a shoebox, a name on a stone. This is the work of gathering those fragments into something whole."

THE PREMISE

A life of service, *properly told.*

Most military records, when families finally request them, arrive as photocopied forms in a manila envelope — accurate, official, and silent on the human story behind them. The discharge paper says where a soldier went. It does not say what he saw, who he fought beside, what his regiment did at the river crossing, or why his name belongs in the family record beside his children's birth certificates.

I produce the document that does. Each commission is an original biographical monograph — researched from service files, pension records, unit histories, period newspapers, and family archives, then written in narrative prose and presented as a publication-quality digital manuscript that families print, frame, share, and keep.

WHAT EACH COMMISSION INCLUDES

— I —

The Narrative

A long-form biographical essay tracing the veteran's service from enlistment to discharge — written with the texture of period detail, not the dryness of dossier prose.

— III —

The Context

Regimental history, campaign maps, period photography, and operational context — so the family understands where their veteran's service fit in the war's larger arc.

— II —

The Records

Service files, pension applications, muster rolls, draft cards, and unit documents — obtained from NARA, NPRC, and state archives, then transcribed and contextualized.

— IV —

The Manuscript

A custom-designed digital publication — typeset, illustrated, and hosted as its own page — that reads and looks like something worth printing, framing, and sharing.

Commissions begin *with a single name.*

This service exists for the members, families, and ancestors your organization already honors. Each commission begins with a conversation and a brief intake questionnaire — and proceeds through a documented research process to a finished monograph the family can keep, print, and pass down.

- ✦ A living veteran the family wishes to honor in his or her lifetime
- ✦ A parent, grandparent, or spouse whose service deserves a fuller record
- ✦ An ancestor traced through pension files or regimental rosters
- ✦ A founding member, namesake, or notable figure of your organization

*The methodology is the same whether the subject served in **the Revolution, the Civil War, the World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, or the present generation.** Only the archives change.*

THE PROCESS

I. The Intake

A detailed questionnaire captures the family's existing knowledge, photographs, letters, and what they most want the monograph to honor.

II. The Research

Service records from NPRC, unit histories, pension files, period newspapers, regimental rosters. Typically four to twelve weeks depending on conflict.

III. The Writing

Narrative chapters interwoven with primary documents and period imagery. A full draft is reviewed with the family before final design.

IV. The Delivery

A custom-designed digital publication, plus a print-ready PDF companion suitable for binding or framing.

WHO COMMISSIONS THIS WORK

- ✦ Veterans honoring their own service
- ✦ Families preserving a parent's record
- ✦ Spouses commissioning a memorial work
- ✦ Hereditary societies (DAR, SAR, UDC)
- ✦ Regimental & reenactor associations
- ✦ VFW & American Legion posts
- ✦ Museums & historical societies
- ✦ Genealogists & family historians

ABOUT THE HISTORIAN

John Schalcosky

John Schalcosky is a public historian, genealogist, and narrative researcher specializing in military service history, family legacy preservation, and historical storytelling. As the founder of Odd Pittsburgh, one of Pennsylvania's most widely followed independent history platforms, he has spent more than a decade uncovering forgotten stories, reconstructing overlooked lives, and transforming archival research into compelling public history.

His work combines military records, pension files, unit histories, newspapers, photography, genealogy, and family archives into deeply researched narrative monographs designed to preserve a veteran's life not simply as a record of service, but as a human story connected to family, place, and history.

Each commission is researched, written, and designed personally by John, with the goal of creating something families can preserve, share, and pass down for generations.