

**VETERANS DAY 2012**

## WWII veteran's service spanned Pacific to Europe

Colorado native arrived at Camp Campbell nearly 70 years ago, came back to stay

**By Philip Grey**  
Leaf-Chronicle

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. — Max Ernst's World War II service literally spanned half a world, from the Pacific to the European Theaters, but in all his experiences, he was pretty sure there was one place he didn't want to come back to — Clarksville, Tenn.

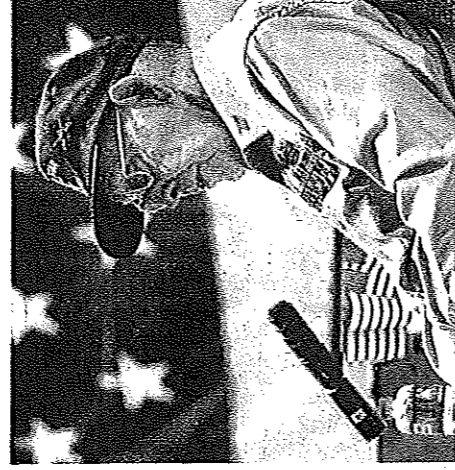
"I didn't like it worth a toot," he says of his first visit, court-

esy of the Army, in 1943. So how did the 90-year-old Colorado native, who loved the mountains of his home state, end up back here to spend the next 65 years of his life, and what was it that gave him a bad impression to begin with?

It's quite a story, and the former Army staff sergeant tells it well.

On Saturday, he was honored

See **VETERAN**, Page A3



War World II veteran Max Ernst speaks during a special ceremony honoring area veterans at the Customs House Museum Saturday in downtown Clarksville. THE LEAF-CHRONICLE/ROBERT SMITH

**ONLINE**

For a video, go to this story online at TheLeafChronicle.com.

## Parade, sunshine bring out crowd

**By Philip Grey**  
Leaf-Chronicle

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. — Clarksville's annual Veterans Day Parade went off on Saturday under a beautiful clear sky and bright sunshine, highlighting a parade route that made the most of scenic downtown.

A large and appreciative crowd cheered on the marchers and vehicles that presented as stunning a display of red, white and blue as anyone could have asked for.

With fire engine horns blaring and bands playing, the large contingent of children lining the route energetically waved flags seemingly non-stop, getting as close to the action as parents would allow.

Leading the parade, just behind the Clarksville Police Department, was Erwin Greene, a veteran of the Burma Campaign of 1944, who was celebrating his 89th birthday in style riding in a car at the head of the line.

He was followed by an hour's worth of bands and marching units, floats, military vehicles, civilian first-responders, veterans and civic organizations.

**Out-of-towner**

One parade watcher in the crowd had come a long way to see exactly this. Sitting in the

See **PARADE**, Page A4



Korean War Veteran Herman Schoonover saluted as every American flag passed during the Clarksville-Montgomery County Veterans Day Parade in downtown Saturday. THE LEAF-CHRONICLE/ROBERT SMITH

Members of the Clarksville High marching band play in front of the courthouse during the Clarksville-Montgomery County Veterans Day Parade in downtown Saturday. THE LEAF-CHRONICLE/ROBERT SMITH

**MORE COVERAGE**  
Essays: 'Why Wesner served and how it changed his life' by Samuel Newell and 'The strong, iron will of a soldier' by Ashley Chilcort, Page A4  
Ceremony: Veterans Day ceremony/program highlights close ties, Page A5

**ONLINE**

For a gallery of photos and a video, go to this story online at TheLeafChronicle.com.

## Electorate points to changing America

Candidates must look beyond whites

**By Nancy Benac**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's not just the economy. It's the demographics — the changing face of America.

The 2012 elections drove home trends that have been embedded in the fine print of birth and death rates, immigration statistics and census charts for years.

America is rapidly getting more diverse, and, more gradually, so is its electorate. Nonwhites made up 28 percent of the electorate this year, compared with 20 percent in 2000. Much of that growth is coming from Hispanics.

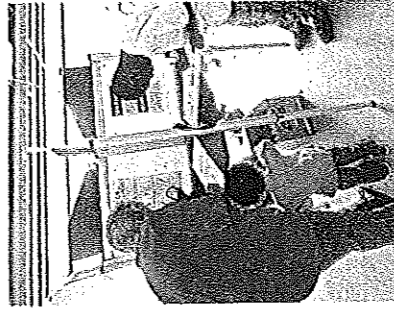
The trend has worked to the advantage of President Barack Obama two elections in a row now and is not lost on Republicans poring over the details of Tuesday's results. Obama captured a commanding 80 percent of the growing ranks of nonwhite voters in 2012, just as he did in 2008.

Republican Mitt Romney couldn't win even though he dominated among white men and outperformed 2008 nominee John McCain with that group. It's an ever-shrinking slice of the electorate and of America writ large.

**White men**

White men made up 34 percent of the electorate this year, down from 46 percent in 1972.

See **CHANGING**, Page A5



Voters complete ballots Nov. 6 in the Weston Ranch area of Stockton, Calif. MARCIO JOSE SANCHE/AP

ADVICE D2  
BUSINESS C9  
LIVING D1

SPORTS C1  
OBITUARIES B2  
OPINION A8

WEATHER  
72 • 51  
MILD



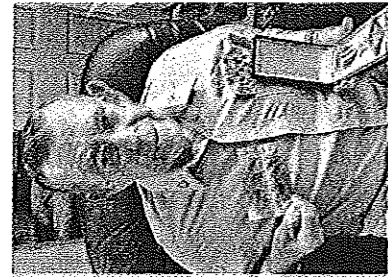
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## Providing Mental Health

Stephen White, MD



Max Ernst of Clarksville holds his Silver Star Medal and a picture of the German bridge that he captured as a young staff sergeant tank commander in World War II.

LEAF-CHRONICLE/PHILIP GREY



A young Max Ernst poses with his M-3 "grease-gun" next to his M24 light tank somewhere in Germany about March 1945.

BY MAX ERNST



Staff Sgt. Max Ernst, D Company, 9th Tank Battalion, 20th Armored Division, atop his tank on a late April day in Germany when it was "spitting snow." Ernst remembers it was so cold that the men made milkshakes out of half-frozen canned milk and some cocoa powder.

BY MAX ERNST

J. Ennis - who he met when she was a hostess at the Liberty Cafe on Legion Street. She was someone else's date to a carnival one night, but he ended up taking her home with him for 64 years and eight months until her death in 2008.

He didn't like Clarksville, but she did. He had fought a war, but couldn't fight her.

Ernst ended up returning. He and Marion raised two sons. He joined the Tennessee National Guard in April 1949 as a 2nd lieutenant and retired in 1973 as a major. He then helped organize the Tennessee State Guard - which augments the state mission of the Tennessee National Guard - finally retiring from the military for good, as a colonel, in 1982.

For all of his extensive military background, people who know him talk about his work with the Boy Scouts and his long years of ringing bells for the Salvation Army.

As for Clarksville, Ernst has found that it grows on you, and he admits to liking it well enough. And after 65 years, he almost considers himself a native - almost.

Philip Grey, 245-0719  
Military affairs reporter  
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Twitter: @PhilipGrey\_Leaf

Continued from Page A1

during a Veterans Day celebration at the Columbus House Museum, but on the day before, he sat in his comfortable apartment at Fieldstone Place and reminisced about the war, his place in it and his first impression of a small town called Clarksville.

**A few extra dollars**

When Ernst joined the Colorado National Guard in 1939, the U.S. Army and National Guard combined amounted to about 200,000 men total. They made Ernst a tanker in an armored unit that was still using World War I-issue light tanks that were laughable by European standards.

The Great Depression was nearly over, but the National Guard put a few extra bucks in his pocket, which was a big deal for him. However, as President Franklin Roosevelt assessed the possibility of a war to come, Ernst's part-time job turned full time in December 1940 when his unit, the 4th Tank Group, was activated for a year of training.

He was supposed to get out on Dec. 10, 1941. Unfortunately, the Imperial Japanese Fleet changed his plans and the course of history three days earlier on Dec. 7, 1941.

**War of the Worlds**

"I remember exactly where I was," Ernst says of the Day That Shall Live In Infamy. "We had just got back to Fort Benning (Ga.) on a Thursday after six weeks of maneuvers in the Carolinas. We did first-echelon maintenance on our tanks, and then the company commander gave us a week-end pass.

"I was a corporal back then, and I would drive the NCO's who were married into Columbus. I stayed with one of them, and on that Sunday night, there were three of us - two guys, their wives and myself - playing Rummy, drinking beer and eating popcorn.

"A thing came on the radio that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. We said, 'Pearl Harbor? Where the hell is that? Never heard of it.'"

Three years earlier, a guy named Orson Welles had scared a lot of Americans to death on Halloween 1938 with a radio production of H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds". Ernst and his buddies figured that this was the same thing. They continued to play cards as news updates broke into the programming repeatedly.

Then, they heard something that made it real. A newspaper boy was outside in the street yelling, "Extra! Extra! Pearl Harbor bombed! War declared!"

"We were lost as to what to do," Ernst remem-

bered. Finally, he suggested that they head back to the post to see what was happening.

On the day he was supposed to get out, Dec. 10, Ernst was drawing new equipment and getting ready to head to the West Coast. Six days later they were still nailing down the chock blocks that held their tanks on the flatcars of the train as it was pulling out. On Christmas Day of 1941, at two in the afternoon, they were setting sail from San Francisco to the Pacific to try to save the Philippines.

They were too late. Midway across the Pacific, Ernst and his fellow tankers found out the Philippines had surrendered. While the Japanese were marching off long lines of captured Americans through 80 miles of hell called the Bataan Death March, the ship turned around and Ernst's unit took up the job of securing and defending the Hawaiian Islands, which they did for the next year.

**Welcome to Clarksville**

Ernst and another 294 men were ordered to a place called Camp Campbell in Feb. 1943, where they would be a cadre around which a new tank battalion would form to go back to the Pacific. The Army, in its infinite wisdom, forgot to tell Camp Ernst and several others of his unit arrived at the Clarksville train station on 10th and Commerce Streets at about two in the morning in early March 1943. They received a welcome that grated on Ernst right off the bat.

"There were five of us in this group, and we started walking to town," Ernst remembers. "We didn't know anything about it."

The group was stopped by the military police, told they were out after curfew and that they were under arrest. Ernst explained that they couldn't help being out late since they had just arrived. Undaunted, one of the MP's found something else to pick on. The group, which had already done more than a year of wartime service, was wearing service ribbons, which the

MP told them they were not authorized and that they would have to take them off.

Ernst had enough and remembered saying, "There's two of you and five of us. I don't believe we'll take them off."

Unable to contend with such impeccable reasoning, the MP's told the group to find someplace to wait until 5 a.m. at their bus. The group found a diner with the lights on at Commerce and Third Streets and got the proprietor to open up.

Later that morning, dog-tired, the group rode the bus down the only road to Camp Campbell, a two-lane gravel track now called Fort Campbell Boulevard, and upon their arrival found out that Camp Campbell had no idea they were supposed to be there.

After a period of chaos, Ernst's group, which was supposed to form the core of a new battalion, was farmed out throughout the 20th Armored Division to serve as trainers for the new division. And they weren't going back to the Pacific. They were headed to Europe.

**European Tour**

In the winter and early spring of 1945, Ernst commanded a tank on the final

**CORRECTION**

A story on Page C1 Saturday should have said the Stompfest for Christ will be held Saturday, Nov. 10.

**LOTTERIES**

**TENNESSEE**

**Saturday midday:**  
Cash 3: 4-9-9  
Cash 4: 8-0-8-4  
**Saturday evening:**  
Cash 3: 2-9-9  
Cash 4: 8-3-8-1  
**Friday evening:**  
Tennessee Cash:  
01-05-09-25-31-5  
Mega Millions:  
28-22-33-35-40-11-4

**KENTUCKY**

**Saturday midday:**  
Pick 3: 8-2-8  
Pick 4: 8-1-0-4

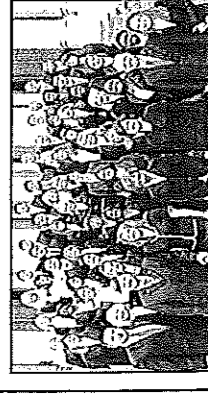
Saturday evening Kentucky Lottery numbers not available by press time.

**POWER BALL**

Results not available by press time.

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  - Wrongful Death
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# Why Wesner served and how it changed his life

By Samuel Newell

8th Grade, West Creek Middle School

When I met with former 1st Lieutenant David Wesner, the first thing he did was lead me to his display case. In it were six military decorations that included the Bronze Star, the Cross of Gallantry, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Service Ribbon, the Sharpshooter Medal (rifle and grenade) and the MACV patch. A weathered U.S. flag from Vietnam also hung in a display case. He said these were what represented him as a soldier.

David Wesner was a 22-year-old 1st Lieutenant who served in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1972. He attended Officer Candidate School (OCS) in 1969, where he learned to speak Vietnamese and prepared to serve in Vietnam. He said, "When you go into combat, you aren't sure of anything."

The Vietnam conflict



Samuel Newell

occurred during the Cold War Era and took place in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The war began Nov. 1, 1955, roughly 14 years before Lieutenant Wesner went into combat. The conflict was between the North and South Vietnam and caused by North Vietnam trying to expand their communist border. Soldiers in North Vietnam were called Vietcong and fought much like today's terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. joined the war in an attempt to contain communism.

Pastor Dave, as I know him, told me about the

Vietcong. "It was a confusing war. You didn't know who they were or when they were watching you. You could never walk the same path because you didn't know if a trap would be waiting for you."

The Vietcong were a formidable fighting force. They used traps to kill unsuspecting enemies and blended in with civilians. The terrain and climate aided the Vietnamese in battle because foreign soldiers were not used to fighting in dense tropical forests. It made warfare difficult and dangerous. Pastor Dave said, "It felt like a sauna all the time, except during the rainy season when you were always soaked."

Young Lieutenant Wesner was part of MACV, which stands for Military Assistance Command Vietnam, an organization that trained South Vietnamese troops. Lieutenant Wesner's job was to train South Vietnamese to

set traps, snares and mines. As he talked about his job in Vietnam, he was visibly troubled by the memories.

Pastor Dave told me, "The whole idea of freedom is about the individuals who died to protect our rights. If it weren't for them, we would not be in this church today." When I asked him about his rank, he told me he was a 2nd Lieutenant out of OCS in Fort Benning, Ga. He was promoted to 1st Lieutenant at only 22-years-old and responsible for the lives of soldiers.

He said, "I had to make decisions that forever changed my life." I asked him if he had any regrets. He paused awhile and said, "I saw what I did as a positive thing. I don't regret joining the Army. All our experiences prepare us for life, and you can use your experiences to your benefit. I have been able to use my experiences to help others."

# The strong, iron will of a soldier

By Ashley Chilcutt

10th Grade, Northwest High School

Every veteran has a story, each with its own purpose and direction. In the case of Katie Delane McCall, it all began with a prompting. Katie was a freshman at Southwestern Community College, majoring in general studies. Her desired path for the future was undetermined, and she felt as though she was stuck in a state of confusion and perplexity. The real world was still so ambiguous in its sense of urgency and expectations. She knew school was important for the future but felt it was not yet time for her to pursue her dreams of a higher education. That is what led her to the Army.

It was October in the year 1999. She had a driven fire about her urgent decision to become a part of the military. She went into the recruiting center and asked if it would be possible to receive a two-year contract. Generally, the lowest amount of time allotted to serve in the Army is four years. The recruiter must

thirst for excitement and adventure. She wished to travel the world and to fill her life with new experiences. Katie found joining the Army to be a refuge from the small town in which she grew up. She hoped to gain preparation for the real world and grow as a person. In the Army, she learned much about herself mentally and physically. She has never felt so real or more alive than she had while serving her country.

Katie received the gifts of discipline, courage, strength, determination and dedication. She worked hard to receive these life-changing attributes which were a direct result of her decision to join the Army. She took schooling at Central Texas College through the military, which provided her with many financial benefits. Some of the military training she received while in the service actually qualified for college credit. The most profound gift Katie received was a name change. It all started when she was stationed in Alaska. She, being the lowest man on the totem pole, was always being smoked just for the sake of others having the au-



Ashley Chilcutt

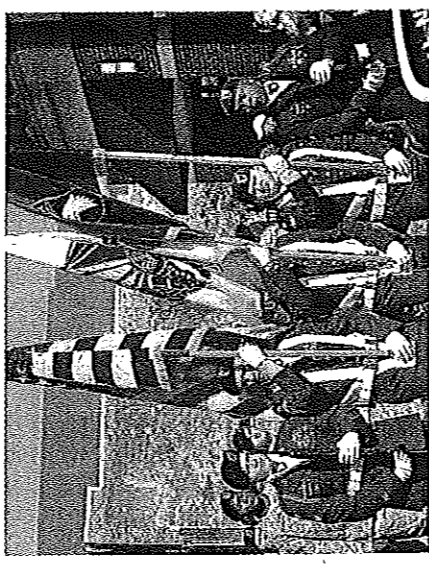
He said the worst part was being separated from his wife. He mentioned that he and his wife were hippies, and she tried to convince him to run to Canada. Instead, David Wesner made the decision to volunteer because he felt it was the honorable thing to do for his country. Pastor Dave and his wife Barbara have been married 44 years and are just as in love as the day they married. He told me his wife was his inspiration and kept him going during the war.

When Lieutenant Wesner came home from war, he was treated badly and harassed by the American people. Upon arriving in San Francisco, a mob surrounded him and called him names like "baby killer." He recalled that 1972 to 1980 was a dark period in his life. "War is a horrible creation of humans," said Pastor Dave. He said his wife brought him out of

that dark period, helped put his life back together and brought him to Christ. He told me he was grateful that people now embrace and welcome soldiers returning home.

Today, Pastor Dave is 65-years-old and helps soldiers come to know Christ. He has a ministry at Fort Campbell with soldiers and their families. I asked him how his war experiences help him minister to troops today. He said, "When I speak to soldiers and we look each other in the eyes, they know they can trust me because I know some of the things they've been through."

David Wesner is a brave and honorable person who chose to join the military solely to serve his country. He continues to serve our soldiers now in God's Army, helping people overcome their hardships and guiding them to the One who redeems souls.



The 101st Airborne Color Guard carries the colors during Parade in downtown Saturday. THE LEAF-CHRONICLE/ROBERT SMITH

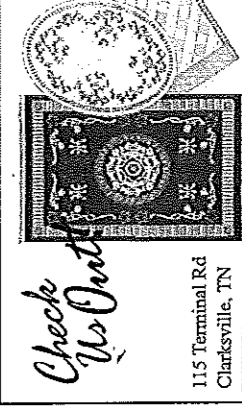
# Parade

Continued from Page A1

company of former Clarksville Mayor and 101st Airborne Division icon Col. Ted Crozier was Tom Timmermans, The Netherlands, which was amply represented in the parade.

"Every day we celebrate our Liberation Day, Sept. 18," Timmermans said. "The City of Eindhoven was liberated by the 101st Airborne, and we have never forgotten."

Philip Grey, 245-0719  
Military affairs reporter



Check Us Out

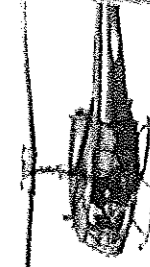
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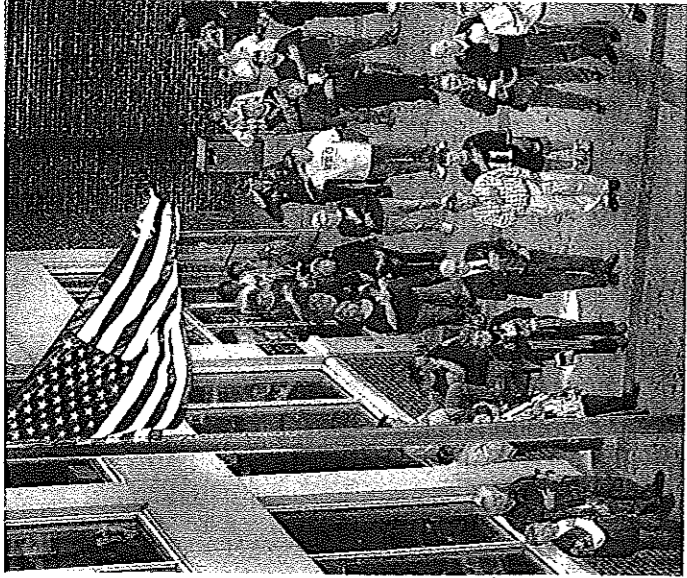
Oklahoma set foot in the

Central Highlands of Vietnam as

a raw, inexperienced Howling

IICT

11 DAYS til our BIGGEST



People salute as "Taps" is played after a flag-raising ceremony by the Marine Corps Color Guard during a special ceremony honoring area veterans at the Customs House museum Saturday. THE LEAF-CHRONICLE/ROBERT SMITH

## Veterans Day ceremony/program highlights close ties

By Philip Grey  
Leaf-Chronicle

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. — Outside the Customs House Museum on Saturday, the Marine Corps League raised the flag, fired a salute and played "Taps" to begin a ceremony and program that highlighted aspects of Veterans Day that go beyond simply waving the red, white and blue.

Following the Veterans Day Parade earlier, this was a more muted celebration of service and of the meaning of veterans to the community.

In contrast to the blare and thump of brass bands, the music was composed of a capella renditions of deeper patriotic themes, rendered by the Phi Mu Alpha Music Fraternity, under the direction of Tom King.

Dewey Browder, chair of Austin Peay State University's History and Philosophy Department, then presented a PowerPoint presentation and a speech on civil-military relations in the community.

"We are here to celebrate our nation's veterans," he said. "I want to do this while simultaneously highlighting the way we as a community reach out to each other in a spirit of mutual dependence."

### Inter-dependence

Browder spoke of the military leaders, like retired Col. Ted Crozier, who have contributed their lessons learned on the battlefield to the arena of political leadership. He highlighted how the Military Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Commerce has increased ties between post and the business community, how Citizens For Fort Campbell have stood up for the needs of the post in Washington, D.C., and how civic and business leaders have helped Ed Rufo to drive forward Operation Eagle's Nest's mission of helping the military at the soldier and family level.

Browder cited the participation of so many organizations that have helped to ensure returning soldiers get a welcome home that is so different

from just a few decades before, how innovative leaders in the legal profession have instituted a Veterans Treatment Court to help restore military members and veterans who get caught up in drugs and other problems, and how groups like Soldiers and Families Embraced (SAFE) assist the military mental health community in fighting the ravages of post-traumatic stress and military suicides.

While Veterans Day comes once a year, Browder made clear that civic projects like Faces Of Valor and the Interview A Veteran Contest ensure that citizens and students comprehend the role of veterans in the community. And Browder also cited Austin Peay State University's status — with 27 percent of students with some kind of military affiliation — as a military-friendly school, with a top-tier ROTC program, a veteran student organization, a graduate program in military history and much more.

### True community

It has been noted many times that Fort Campbell's relationship to the surrounding community is nearly unique in its scope and depth. But Browder made clear that the relationship was not a happy accident, but rather the product of hard work and an idea of service and commitment that cuts two ways, on both sides of the Fort Campbell line.

"We do not pretend that all is sweetness and light," he said toward the conclusion of his presentation, "because we all know that problems exist in every community. But this is a special military-civilian community. It is a community we should all be proud of."

On the streets of downtown Clarksville earlier in the day, the community showed that pride clearly and loudly.

"Ours is a community that sustains traditional values while simultaneously fostering a progressive spirit," Browder noted.

Continued from Page A1

"The new electorate is a lagging indicator of the next America," says Paul Taylor of the Pew Research Center. "We are mid-passage in a century-long journey from the middle of the last century, when we were nearly a 90 percent white nation, to the middle of this coming century, when we will be a majority minority nation."

Another trend that will be shaping the future electorate is the stronger influence of single women. They vote differently from men and from women who are married. Fifty-four percent of single Democrats; 36 percent of married women do.

### Single females

With women marrying later and divorcing more, single women made up 23 percent of voters in the 2012 election, com-

The changing electorate has huge implications for public policy and politics.

Suddenly, immigration overhaul seems a lot more important, for one thing.

Ask white voters about the proper role of government, for another, and 60 percent think it should do less. Ask Hispanics the same question, and 58 percent think the government should do more, as do 73 percent of blacks, exit polls show.

You can hear it in the voice of Alicia Perez, a 31-year-old immigration attorney who voted last week at a preschool in Ysleta, Texas.

"I trust the government to take care of us," she said. "I don't trust the Republican Party to take care of people."

Sure, the election's biggest issue, the economy, affects everyone. But the voters deciding who should tackle it were quite different from the makeup of the 1992 "it's

crat Bill Clinton as president.

### Hispanics

Look no further than the battleground states of Campaign 2012 for political ramifications flowing from the country's changing demographics.

New Western states have emerged as the Hispanic population there grows. In Nevada, for example, white voters made up 80 percent of the electorate in 2000; now they're at 64 percent. The share of Hispanics in the state electorate has grown to 19 percent; Obama won 70 percent of their votes.

Obama won most of the battlegrounds with a message that was more in sync than Romney's with minorities, women and younger voters, and by carefully targeting his grassroots mobilizing efforts to reach those groups.

Young voters in the state, two-thirds of whom backed Obama, also were more often the target of Obama's campaign than Romney's: 35 percent said they were contacted by Obama, 11 percent by Romney. Among senior citizens, two-thirds of whom voted Republican, 33 percent were contacted by Obama, 34 percent by Romney.

Howard University sociologist Roderick Harrison, former chief of the Census Bureau, said Obama's campaign strategists proved themselves to be "excellent demographers."

"They have put together a coalition of populations that will eventually become the majority or are marching toward majority status in the population, and populations without whom it will be very difficult to win national elections and some statewide elections."



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