



The Perimeter Guard

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 17



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2011, A New Beginning



VVA Chapter 17 *Perimeter Guard*

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CHAPTER 17

2nd. SATURDAY EACH MONTH
9:00 AM

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Newsletter
Policy

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Message From The Chapter President.



Happy New Year to all my VVA brothers and sisters. I trust you had a very merry Christmas! Chapter 17 has been quite busy these past two months with a few very rewarding projects.

Several of the local veterans service organizations decided at the last minute to put together a one day stand-down in October. Their intent was to provide necessities along with warm clothing and bedding for those homeless veterans in the Las Vegas valley. The stand-down was a great success with around 390 homeless veterans served.

November starts the holiday season and our participation with 97.1, "the Point" radio station on a few city wide projects to benefit less fortunate families. First was the turkey drive. In past years Chapter 17 has donated 40 turkeys. This year we raised the amount to 50 turkeys thereby helping 10 additional families celebrate a proper Thanksgiving. Then came the annual Thanksgiving Day homeless feed sponsored by the Hard Rock Cafe. Chapter 17 has been assisting the Hard Rock on this project for so many years that I have lost count. I believe it has been between 15 to 20 years now. While the Hard Rock Cafe serves a complete traditional Thanksgiving dinner (Turkey, Dressing, Mashed potatoes and Gravy, Vegetables, Rolls, and Pumpkin Pie), Chapter 17 provides hygiene kits and socks. We also provide security for the event and serve and clean up as well.

For Christmas's past, we had participated with "the Point" in a toy drive to benefit Toys for Tots, sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps. Thousands of dollars in toys had been donated by Chapter 17 and our supporters. However, due to restrictions on acceptable toys, this year we have pursued another project. This year we donated 30 Walmart gift cards to "the Point" for needy families.

Our December Chapter meeting was also our Holidays "pot luck" luncheon and gift exchange. The turn out this year was fantastic. Everyone had a wonderful time.

January's meeting is, as always, our Open House and Awards program. It is the Chapter's opportunity to acknowledge those individuals and businesses that have gone above and beyond in making Chapter 17

the great chapter it is today.

I hope 2011 is a prosperous year for all VVA members and their families and friends.

Tom George

Region 9 Director Report

By Dick Southern, Director



Happy New Year! Let's hope it will be a prosperous one for everyone as we continue to advocate for veterans through legislation and for improved health care from the VA. We need to reach out to the 75% of Vietnam Veterans that have never accessed the VA health care system and therefore do not whether or not they have service connected disabilities that they should be compensated for or, at the least, get health care from the VA.

I am planning ahead with the August 2011 VVA National convention coming to the Silver Legacy in Reno and so I have scheduled the Region 8/9 Pre-Convention Conference for June 11, 2011, at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino in Reno. This traditional event gives delegates to the convention and those interested in the convention activities a chance to hear the amendments and resolutions that will be presented at the convention and to speak with some of the candidates for the National Board of Directors that will be attending the conference. Mark your calendars now for the date and plan to attend the conference in preparation for the national convention.

In closing, I want to encourage you to keep up your recruiting and retention of members in VVA. It is the time for us to keep adding numbers to our membership totals.

As always, I am available on email at southern@lodelink.com or by phone at either 209-928-3848 or 209-768-9841 if needed for anything

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Council Works to End Life Insurance Compensation Confusion



By Army Sgt. 1st Class
Michael J. Carden
American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON, - A special advisory council has agreed to provide family members and survivors of fallen servicemembers and deceased veterans more options for how they receive life insurance compensation.

The agreement paved the way to end confusion for survivors and family members of fallen troops, John Gingrich, chief of staff for the Veterans Affairs Department, told reporters yesterday. Better communication of life insurance claims options and casualty assistance training also will result from the change, he added.

"The goal of these meetings is to make an outstanding program even better," Gingrich said. "I believe the dialogue between the participants aided us in understanding their issues and concerns, and we received good insight."

The VA currently uses claims forms with two payment options: one lump sum, or equal payments for 36 months. Choosing the lump sum or leaving the options unchecked on the form would automatically default the beneficiary's benefits in an alliance account handled by Prudential Financial Inc. Prudential then sends the beneficiary a checkbook for an interest-bearing account held by the insurance company.

The Prudential account is not guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, according to VA, leaving some survivors and families of fallen servicemembers dissatisfied with the option.

A new option on the form is expected to become available on VA's website in mid-December, Gingrich said. It will allow beneficiaries to choose to receive one lump sum by check, which they can deposit as they wish, he added.

Additional language on the new forms, he

noted, will explain to beneficiaries who choose the lump sum alliance account that they can write a check at any time for any amount, including the entire balance. The new forms also cite that alliance accounts are not FDIC guaranteed.

The three options on the new forms, according to VA, will read:

- Lump Sum – Alliance Account
- Lump Sum – Check
- 36 Equal Monthly Payments

Gingrich added that, eventually, beneficiaries also will have the option to receive a lump sum by electronic transfer.

"There's no confusion on the [new] form now," Gingrich said. "The new form makes it very clear. We want to make sure we are clear, and people understand how they are receiving their benefits."

Gingrich also noted that VA is working with the Defense Department to produce training videos that will help casualty assistance officers better inform survivors and family members of the new life insurance claim options.

Independent and free financial counseling will be available for survivors, as well as new packets that better explain their benefits, he added.

Jeri Busch, director of the Defense Department's military compensation program and DoD representative on the council, added that she was pleased with the decisions and VA's efforts.

"We're very pleased to find that the VA has undertaken to do some improvements to the program," Busch said. The training video and additional information, she said, will provide "greater transparency and more choices and more options for our families to make sure that our beneficiaries are treated with respect, are protected, and are quoted the upmost care."

Think About This.....

Confession is good for your soul, and bad for your career.

Dyslexics Have More Nuf.

Many Vets to be Helped by 2010 Veterans' Benefits Act.

It's unusual for Congress to pass a comprehensive bill to help thousands of veterans with a final legislative sprint that leaves veterans' service organizations wondering what just happened.

But that's what the Senate and House did last week. After a burst of closed-door compromises, they agreed to and separately passed the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010 (HR 3219), sent it on to the president.

The package has no clear blockbuster initiative. But it improves many veterans' benefits including some allowances for disabled veterans and various veterans' insurance options. Employment protections are toughened for those returning to civilian jobs.

Service members moving out of phone service areas will be able to sever cell phone contracts without penalty. And new federal grants will be authorized for job training and counseling, child-care services to homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.

"I think it's fantastic and I'm truly incredulous that it went through as fast as it did," said Tim Tetz, the American Legion's legislative director.

A week before passage Tetz said he and the Legion's national commander had visited with Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), chairman of the veterans' affairs committee. Knowing Congress would adjourn soon and not return until after the November election, the Legion had urged Akaka to clear an omnibus benefits bill at least during the post-election lame duck session.

Akaka said a bill was being worked. A week later, to Tetz's surprise, a bill chock full of initiatives had passed both the House and Senate.

"It's quite expansive," said Tetz. "It will be hard to find a veteran that in some way won't be touched by it."

"The package is excellent," said Joe Violante, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans. "There are new and expanded provisions for disabled veterans that should help them in a lot of different areas."

"We have about 20 to 25 separate bills in

there," said Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, in a phone interview. "It's an incredible move forward for all our veterans, whether talking about those on the street or those suffering from mental illness or women veterans facing sexual trauma. I mean it touches virtually every issue that we've been working on for several years."

The House passed an original HR 3219 in July last year with a contentious provision to establish a \$1000 a month-payment to former World War II merchant marines regardless of need or disability. Senators and even many vet groups refused to support it, arguing it created a benefit not available to other vets. WWII-era merchant marines, they argued, already have full veteran status and can apply for VA benefits including a needs-based pension for the elderly.

When House negotiators agreed to remove the merchant marine language, the benefit package came together, expanded by a final packet of Senate amendments, many of them bills already passed by the House.

Here are highlights to take effect when the bill is signed:

— An automobile assistance allowance for veterans who have lost limbs or have other qualifying disabilities will increase from \$11,000 to \$18,900. It also will be adjusted for inflation on Oct. 1 each year.

— The funeral or burial payment for veterans who die in a VA facility or who are eligible to be buried in a VA cemetery will increase from \$300 to \$700. This payment too will increase annually for inflation but after 2011.

— Supplemental insurance for totally disabled veterans will increase from \$20,000 up to \$30,000.

— Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage for totally disabled veterans will be permanently extended to two years, from 18 months, after they leave service. This change will be applied retroactively to persons separated from service on or after June 15, 2005.

— The maximum loan guarantee amount under

the Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance program will increase from \$90,000 to \$150,000. It will increase again, to \$200,000, on Jan. 1, 2012.

— Individuals who qualify for retroactive traumatic injury protection coverage under SGLI (called TSGLI) will be expanded to include veterans who incurred qualifying traumatic injuries on or after Oct. 7, 2001, but before December 1, 2005, regardless of where the injuries occurred.

— Veterans will be able to increase Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) coverage by \$25,000 every five years until reaching age 60.

— The Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act (SCRA) will be modified to allow service members to terminate cellular telephone contracts when ordered to relocate for a period of 90 days or more to an area not supported by the contract.

— The SCRA also will give service members a "private right of action" to file their own lawsuits against those who violate their legal rights. They no longer will have to wait for enforcement action by a federal agency.

The SCRA is strengthened in two other ways, said retired Navy Capt. Samuel F. Wright, a legal expert with the Reserve Officers Association. It now will allow for the Department of Justice to bring a civil action against SCRA violators and those found guilty will have to pay court costs and service members' attorney fees.

"That's very valuable," Wright explained, because SCRA claimants will find it so much easier to find a lawyer. Architects of the bill found a way to pay for these improvements and many more by extending a reduction in VA pensions for veterans who have no spouse or children and who are covered by a Medicaid plan while residing in a nursing home. This allows the bill actually to save the VA \$394 million over five years and a total of \$8 million over the next decade.

New Medical Forms Will Streamline Veterans Claims Process.

Physician Questionnaires to Boost Disability Exam Efficiency

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has released three new disability benefits questionnaires for physicians of Veterans applying for VA disability compensation benefits. This initiative marks the beginning of a major reform of the physicians' guides and automated routines that will streamline the claims process for injured or ill Veterans.

"This is a major step in the transformation of VA's business processes that is yielding improvements for Veterans as we move to eliminate the disability claims backlog by 2015," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

These new questionnaires are the first of 79 disability benefits questionnaires that will guide Veterans' personal physicians, as well as VA physicians, in the evaluation of the most frequent medical conditions affecting Veterans.

Accurate and timely medical evaluations are a critical element of VA's continued commitment to high-quality and prompt decisions about the nature and degree of conditions afflicting Veterans. Streamlining this process by directly involving Veterans' treating physicians in providing specific information needed to evaluate their claims will lead to completeness in the examination and faster compensation decisions.

VA's goal is to process all claims in fewer than 125 days with a decision quality rate no lower than 98 percent, a mark Secretary Shinseki has mandated by 2015. The physician questionnaire project is one of more than three dozen initiatives actively underway at VA, including a major technology modernization that will lead to paperless claims processing.

The disability benefits questionnaires are part of VA's automated health records system which prompts VA physicians conducting disability examinations to include precise information in a standardized way to assist claims adjudicators in ensuring veterans receive the benefits they



deserve as quickly as possible. These VA examination results are electronically available to claims adjudicators in VA regional offices.

For Veterans who receive their care from private physicians, VA has placed the disability benefits questionnaires on its Internet site (<http://www.vba.va.gov/disabilityexams>) with instructions for physicians to submit examination results on Veterans' behalf.

The first three questionnaires cover B-cell leukemia (such as hairy-cell leukemia), Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease. VA recently published a final regulation to be implemented Oct. 30 that will establish the presumption of eligibility to VA disability compensation benefits for Veterans with one of these three conditions who were exposed to Agent Orange, a herbicide agent used extensively in Vietnam.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war who have a "presumed" illness do not have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" establishes eligibility to VA compensation if their condition is disabling to a compensable level.

For additional information on the VA disability compensation program or additional presumptive disabilities for Veterans exposed to herbicide agents, contact VA at 800-827-1000 or visit <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>.

VA Begins Paying Benefits for New Agent Orange Claims - VA Encourages Affected Vietnam Veterans to File Claims.

VA Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs

WASHINGTON The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun distributing disability benefits to Vietnam Veterans who qualify for compensation under recently liberalized rules for Agent Orange exposure.

The joint efforts of Congress and VA demonstrate a commitment to provide Vietnam Veterans with treatment and compensation for the long-term health effects of herbicide exposure, said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

Up to 200,000 Vietnam Veterans are potentially eligible to receive VA disability compensation for medical conditions recently associated with Agent Orange. The expansion of coverage involves B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease.

Shinseki said VA has launched a variety of initiatives both technological and involving better business practices to tackle an anticipated upsurge in Agent Orange-related claims.

These initiatives show VA's ongoing resolve to modernize its processes for handling claims through automation and improvements in doing business, providing Veterans with faster and more accurate decisions on their applications for benefits, Shinseki said.

Providing initial payments or increases to existing payments to the 200,000 Veterans who now qualify for disability compensation for these three conditions is expected to take several months, but VA officials encourage all Vietnam Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and suffer from one of the three diseases to make sure their applications have been submitted.

VA has offered Veterans exposed to Agent Orange special access to health care since 1978, and priority medical care since 1981. VA has been providing disability compensation to Veterans with medical problems related to Agent Orange since



1985.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a presumed illness do not have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This presumption simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

The three new illnesses B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinsons disease and ischemic heart disease are added to the list of presumed illnesses previously recognized by VA.

Other recognized illnesses under VA s presumption rule for Agent Orange are:

Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy

Chloracne

Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)

Hodgkin s Disease

Multiple Myeloma

Non-Hodgkin s Lymphoma

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

Prostate Cancer

Respiratory Cancers

Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposissarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

AL Amyloidosis

Veterans interested in applying for disability compensation under one of the three new Agent Orange presumptives should go to www.fast-track.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

Army Details Agent Orange Use at Md. Post



By Associated Press

The Army is revealing details of Agent Orange testing at Fort Detrick in Frederick decades ago.

The Army Corps of Engineers made a preliminary report of its search for information about open-air testing of the herbicide known for its toxic

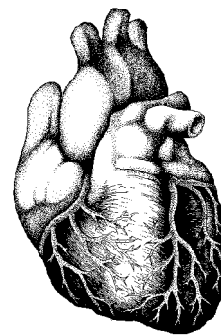
effects on U.S. troops exposed to it in Vietnam.

The report says 17 pounds of the compound's main ingredient - the dioxin 2,4,5-T - were sprayed at the Army post from 1944 through 1968. Some was dispersed from a sprayer driven through a crop field.

The review was prompted by public concerns that nearby residents may have been exposed. The Army says it will check the soil for dioxins in an off-post area near the most intense testing.

A full report is expected in the spring.

Post-traumatic stress ups heart disease risk in vets.



CHICAGO (Reuters) - U.S. military veterans who have post-traumatic stress disorder — a condition marked by severe anxiety, sleep disruptions, hyperarousal and impaired concentration — have double the risk of dying and a greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease, researchers said.

Study results, presented at the scientific sessions of the American Heart Association meeting held in Chicago, suggest that doctors should provide early and aggressive evaluation and treatment of cardiovascular risk factors in patients with the disorder.

“This study for the first time appears to point to the mechanism for the cardiovascular part of that excess mortality risk: accelerated atherosclerosis,” said Dr. Naser Ahmadi, a researcher at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Atherosclerosis is a condition in which fatty material collects along the artery walls and when the material thickens, forming calcium deposits, it can eventually block blood flow through the arteries.

This is the first trial to make a direct association between post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and atherosclerosis.

Researchers studied the medical records of 286,194 veterans. During an average follow-up of

almost a decade and after adjusting for age, gender and cardiovascular risk factors, they found that veterans diagnosed with PTSD had 2.4 times the rate of death from all causes compared with non-PTSD veterans.

Of that group, 637 veterans were studied using a noninvasive technique to measure the amount of coronary artery calcium. Researchers found that more than three-quarters of the veterans with PTSD had more severe disease of their arteries than non-PTSD veterans.

The findings are important because they show that PTSD predicts death independently of known cardiovascular risk factors.

“If we focus on early detection and management of cardiovascular risk factors in veterans with PTSD, we might be able to delay the onset of cardiovascular disease,” said Ahmadi.

Three Veterans Appointed to Veterans Services Commission.

Governor Jim Gibbons recently appointed Robert (Bob) Garlow, Charles Harton and Frank A. Partlow, Jr., to serve a two-year term on the Nevada Veterans Services Commission.

Bob Garlow

Bob Garlow was born and raised in Glendale, California. He and his family have made Boulder City their home since 1983. Mr. Garlow obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Architectural Engineering from California State Polytechnic University and his Master of Science in Engineering Facilities from the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. He is a retired US Air Force Major with twenty years of service and is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War. He also served in Thailand, Japan, Germany and Spain.

Mr. Garlow is chairman of the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Advisory Committee as well as the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Volunteer Group. He also chairs the Nevada Veterans Assistance League. Mr. Garlow is a member of the Veterans

of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the Cootie, Vietnam Veterans of America-Chapter 17 and the Scottish American Military Society. He volunteers with the VA Volunteer Services and the Nevada State Veterans Home. He and his wife, Susan, have a daughter, Cynthia, and two grandchildren, Clint and Joy.

Mr. Garlow was appointed to the Nevada Veterans Services Commission as a representative of the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Advisory Committee. His goals while serving on the commission are, “...to ensure all state veterans receive their entitled benefits on a timely basis and the honor and respect they are due....”

Charles (Chuck) Harton

Charles (Chuck) Harton was born in Oakland, Calif., and has made his home in Reno, Nev., for thirty-eight years. He retired from the US Marine Corps as a First Sergeant with twenty-three years of service. He has served as national director of the Navy League of the United States and also president and director of the Reno Council of NLUS. He is a member of the Marine Corps League and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

While serving on the commission, he hopes to help maintain and improve on the present level of veteran’s benefits.

Mr. Harton and his wife, Donna, have three children: son, Greg (a retired Marine) and two daughters, Tracy and Leslie. They have six grandchildren.

Frank A. Partlow Jr.

Frank A. Partlow Jr. was born in San Francisco, California. He’s made Nevada his home for forty-six years, the last nineteen of those in Reno. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the US Military Academy at West Point and later received his Master of Arts degree in Modern European History from Stanford.

Mr. Partlow retired from the US Army as a Brigadier General with thirty years of service. Since retirement, he founded a business, taught at the University of Reno as an adjunct professor and held Presidential appointments within the

Government Printing Office. He is a member of the Marines Memorial Association of San Francisco, Association of the US Army and West Point Society of Northern Nevada. He has been active with AMVETS and several community organizations in Reno. He is appointed to the commission as a member of the general public. Mr. Partlow is passionate about his service to veterans and plans to place, "... special emphasis on insuring that recent Nevada veterans take full advantage of their new GI Bill education opportunities at one of our Nevada Higher Education institutions."

Mr. Partlow and his wife, Kay, have been married for fifty years. They have two daughters, Tammy and Michele, and four grandchildren.

The Commission & The Agency

The Nevada Veterans Services Commission is composed of nine members who advise the governor, legislature, and directors of the Nevada Office of Veterans Services regarding aid or benefits to veterans. They each serve a two-year term. Five are appointed by the governor, three as representatives from nationally recognized veterans' organizations and two from the general public. The senate majority leader and the speaker of the assembly each appoint one member. In addition, the chairs of both the Northern and Southern Veterans Cemetery Advisory Committee each appoint one member from their respective committee. The nine members of the Nevada Veterans Services Commission are Assemblywoman Kathy McClain, Senator Terry Care, Ronald Gutzman, William Baumann, Michael Musgrove, Frank Partlow, Jr., Sally Wiley, Charles Harton, and Robert Garlow.

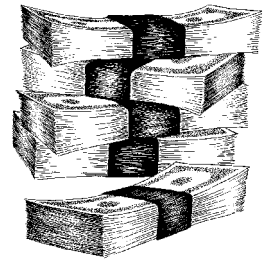
About The Nevada Office of Veterans Services

NOVS was created in 1943 to provide assistance and services to veterans, their family members, and residents of Nevada serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The Agency has three programs: Veterans Benefit Assistance, Veterans Cemeteries (Boulder City and Fernley), and a Veterans Nursing Home (Boulder City). There are approximately 339,000 veterans residing in Nevada eligible for these services. For

more information, call NOVS toll free at 1-866-630-VETS (8387) or visit our website at www.veterans.nv.gov.

Nevada Office of Veteran Services
Caleb S. Cage
Executive Director

VA Pilots Expedite Payments to Disabled Veterans.



'Quick Pay' and 'Express Lane' Initiatives Work to Cut Processing Time

WASHINGTON (Nov. 16, 2010)- VA has launched two pilot programs to test new procedures that will speed the payment of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation benefits to Veterans with disabilities connected to their military service. These new programs are part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to "break the back" of the disability claims backlog.

"A fundamental goal in the transformation of VA's claims processing is to make sure that Veterans receive in a timely manner the benefits they earned through their service to our Nation," Shinseki said. "VA's ambitious tests of numerous innovations reflect our commitment to constantly improving how we meet our mission of responsiveness to Veterans, their families and survivors."

The "Quick Pay" Disability Program at the St. Petersburg, Fla., Regional Office and the "Express Lane" Pilot, based at the Seattle, Wash., Regional Office, are among a number of new initiatives using reengineered and streamlined claims processes to provide Veterans with faster claims decisions and benefit payments.

Secretary Shinseki established as one of VA's highest priority goals the elimination of the disability claims backlog by 2015, so that all Veterans receive a quality decision on their claim in no more than 125 days.

The “Quick Pay” Disability initiative is designed to speed disability compensation to Veterans who provide sufficient evidence at the time of claim submission to decide all or part of their claim. Since program launch, “Quick Pay” has paid more than \$2 million in benefits to 1,656 Florida Veterans. These payments averaged \$1,236 monthly and were made three months faster than the department’s 125-day goal.

Under the “Express Lane” Pilot program based in the Seattle Regional Office, staff members are realigned to address disability claims based on claim complexity.

Like a supermarket check-out “express lane,” small employee teams focus on rapidly processing numerous less complex claims that typically involve only one disability, thus freeing their co-workers to process the more complex and multiple-disability claims that demand the greatest level of unilateral effort.

The “Express Lane” Pilot, while managed from Seattle, is also being tested at three additional VA regional offices: Nashville, Tenn.; St. Paul, Minn.; and Muskogee, Okla.

The St. Petersburg and Seattle pilots are among more than three dozen VA initiatives exploring optimal ways to organize and deliver benefits and improve service to Veterans.

Immigrant veterans facing deportation fight to stay in the US, and try to change the law.

Associated Press

When Rohan Coombs joined the U.S. Marine Corps, he never thought one day he would be locked up in an immigration detention center and facing deportation from the country he had vowed to defend.

Coombs, 43, born in Jamaica, immigrated to the United States legally as a child with his family. He signed up to serve his adopted nation for six years _ first in Japan and the Philippines, then in the Persian Gulf during the first war with Iraq.

Up to 8,000 non-citizens enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces every year and serve alongside

American troops. As of May 2010, there were 16,966 non-citizens on active duty.

If they die while serving, they are given citizenship and a military funeral. If they live and get in trouble with the law, as Coombs did, they can get caught in the net of a 1996 immigration law that greatly expanded the list of crimes for which non-citizens can be deported.

“As far as I was concerned, I was a citizen,” said Coombs, whose soft-spoken, introspective nature contrast with his physical presence. Coombs stands 6 foot 5 and weighs more than 260 pounds _ a gentle giant, according to his fiancée, Robyn Sword.

Now advocates of non-citizen servicemen and women are trying to change that. Attorneys are taking cases like Coombs’ to court, arguing that an immigrant who serves in the Armed Forces should be considered a U.S. national and protected from deportation.

“These are people who served us _ whether they are model human beings or not,” said Coombs’ attorney, Craig Shagin of Harrisburg, Pa. “They served in our uniforms, in our wars. If they were POWs, they’d be considered American prisoners.”

Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, is looking into potential changes to the law so immigrants who serve in the military can avoid deportation.

“You come back from Iraq or Afghanistan today, you have put yourself on the line for this country,” said Filner. “An incredible number of kids come back with an injury or illness that puts them in trouble with the law. To simply have these people deported is not a good way to thank them for their service.”

Advocates estimate that thousands of veterans have been deported or are in detention. Government officials say they have no tally but plan to begin tracking the numbers.

The push comes as criminal courts are increasingly listening to arguments for leniency for veterans.

So-called veterans courts, which give them specialized treatment, now number more than 30, with a dozen more planned.

New U.S. Sentencing Commission rules will make it possible for federal judges to consider a criminal defendant’s military service and mental

and emotional condition to issue a lesser prison sentence. The rules, however, would not apply to immigration judges.

Most immigrants serve with distinction. The Center for Naval Analyses, a federally funded research and development center for the Navy and the Marine Corps, found that non-citizens are far more likely to complete their enlistment obligations successfully than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Coombs was one who did not make the grade.

He spent 10 months in the Persian Gulf and lost friends to combat, he said. After the war, he felt depressed and anxious. His family was far away in New York, and he said “whining” to fellow Marines didn’t seem an option.

Instead, he got involved with drugs, and he got caught.

In 1992, he was court-martialed for possession of cocaine and marijuana with the intent to distribute, and was given 18 months of confinement and a dishonorable discharge.

He continued to struggle with drugs.

“Things would be going well, then something would happen,” he said.

He got married, and that helped. When his wife died in 2001 of diabetes-related complications, he started smoking marijuana again.

In 2008, he was busted for selling marijuana to an undercover officer while working as a bouncer in an Orange County bar. He spent eight months in state prison.

“I don’t want to make excuses. I made mistakes. I thought I knew the consequences _ I served my time,” he said in a telephone interview.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement found that his criminal convictions made him eligible for deportation, and he was turned over to ICE after serving his sentence. He has been held in a San Diego immigration detention center for 22 months and is appealing to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court.

Coombs was stunned to realize he could be forced to leave the country for his crimes.

“This is the only life I’ve known,” he said. “The only time I left this country was when I was deployed overseas. This is my home.”

On the other side of the country, Dardar Paye is appealing his deportation case to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of

Pennsylvania.

Paye came to the U.S. from war torn Liberia as a 13-year-old. He joined the Army in 1998, serving in Kuwait as part of Operation Desert Fox and then in a NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. He returned to New Jersey, where his family lives, to spend another year and a half with the Army National Guard.

In 2008, he was convicted of six weapons-related offenses, including two involving firearms dealing, and served time in federal prison. Now, like Coombs, he is facing deportation and is feeling betrayed.

“When I was in Kuwait, in Kosovo, I was like everyone else who was there, putting their lives on the line,” said Paye, who in the Army was an armored vehicle crewman. “Now I feel like they just used me for what they wanted, and now they’re throwing me away.”

Advocates and immigration attorneys say that before the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, few immigrant veterans were deported, because immigration authorities could take their service into consideration.

The law added crimes such as drug possession for sale to the list of serious crimes that could lead to deportation of a legal immigrant.

“Drugs, anger management, weapons charges, that’s what a lot of vets are getting caught for, and there is no relief,” said Margaret Stock, a recently retired Army reservist and immigration attorney who taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point. “The 1996 law really put the nails in their coffin.”

Coombs’ attorneys, Shagin and Heather Boxeth of San Diego, Calif., who have represented or advised immigrant veterans in similar straits, estimate up to 4,000 veterans who served as long ago as World War II are now in immigration detention or have been deported, but acknowledge that there are no hard numbers.

ICE spokeswoman Lori Haley said identifying and removing dangerous criminals from the country is an agency priority _ and that the cases of people with prior military service are carefully reviewed.

Meantime, the military has started to offer a fast-track to citizenship to immigrants currently serving. Now, most joining the Army can expect to

be citizens by the end of basic training, said Stock. Other branches are expected to join the effort by the end of the year.

That help doesn't extend to those who have already served such as Paye and Coombs.

"If I had died," said Coombs, they would have made me a citizen, given me a military funeral, and given the flag to my mom. But I didn't die. Here I am. I just want another chance."

Missing Vietnam War Soldiers Identified.

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of three servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Army Staff Sgt. Robert S. Griffith, of Hapeville, Ga., was buried on Oct. 23 in Fairburn, Ga. The group remains of the other two soldiers which could not be individually identified — Army Staff Sgt. Melvin C. Dye, of Carleton, Mich., and Sgt. 1st Class Douglas J. Glover, of Cortland, N.Y., will be buried at a later date. The men were aboard a UH-1H Iroquois helicopter on Feb. 19, 1968, when it was shot down by enemy fire in Laos. They were involved in an attempt to extract a long-range reconnaissance patrol in the mountains of Attapu Province. Three other American service members survived the crash and were rescued, but three Vietnamese Montagnards did not survive.

Several hours after the crash, a team was dispatched to survey the location and reported seeing remains of at least five people. Enemy activity prevented remains recovery at that time. The following month a second team was sent to the crash site but found no remains.

In 1995, a joint U.S.-Lao People's Democratic Republic team traveled to the recorded grid coordinates for the crash site but found no evidence of a helicopter crash. The team then surveyed a second location in the area where they found helicopter wreckage and human remains. In 2006, a follow-on team was not able to resurvey the same site due to severe overgrowth and time constraints. Another team excavated the location in

late 2007 recovering human remains, wreckage and military-related equipment.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental x-rays in the identification of Griffith's remains.

Since late 1973, the remains of 938 Americans killed in the Vietnam War have been accounted for and returned to their families with 1,708 service members still missing.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, call 703-699-1169 or visit the DPMO Web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo>.

Motorcycle Group Supports Military Funerals.

**By Donna Miles
American Forces
Press Service**

WASHINGTON, - As the U.S. Supreme Court contemplates whether protestors at military funerals are protected under First Amendment free-speech rights, a motorcycle group that travels the country attending those funerals as a show of support and respect rides on, undeterred by the political fray.

The riders take part in these events only at the family's request, Richart said, and regardless of whether protestors are expected.

"What we do is never about the protestors," he said. "We are not a counterprotest group. We don't go anywhere because of them, and we don't not go anywhere because they are not there. ... It's about being there for the families, recognizing their loss and ensuring they know that people care."

Richart emphasized that the riders have no political agenda and take no official position on the pending Supreme Court decision.

In that case, Albert Snyder, father of Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder, who was killed in Iraq in 2006, sued the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., for emotional distress after church members demonstrated and carried offensive signs at his son's funeral in Westminster, Md.

A lower court ruled in Snyder's favor. However, the church appealed the decision, arguing to the Supreme Court earlier this month that the protests are protected speech under the First Amendment.

As the issue plays out in the courts, the Patriot Guard Riders continue their missions around the country.

On Oct. 26, about 50 Patriot Guard Riders led a procession escorting Brenda Pallares as she returned home to Ontario, Calif., after the body of her son, Army Spc. Ronnie Pallares, arrived at Dover from Afghanistan.

Pallares, who would have turned 20 yesterday, was killed Oct. 23 in Ghazni, Afghanistan, when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 27th Engineer Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Earlier this week, about 100 riders gathered in Waynesboro, Miss., for the funeral of 30-year-old Army Sgt. Eric Newman. Newman, who served with the 1st Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade at Fort Bragg, died following an Oct. 14 IED attack in Akatzai Kalay, Afghanistan.

On Oct. 23, another Patriot Guard Riders group joined friends and family of 22-year-old Marine Corps Cpl. Justin J. Cain to carry Cain's casket from a funeral home in Manitowoc, Wis., to the local high school, where mourners bid their final goodbyes.

Cain, assigned to 1st Marine Division's 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., was among four Marines killed Oct. 13 while conducting combat operations in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

The Patriot Guard Riders paid tribute last week to another Marine killed in that attack, 21-year-old Lance Cpl. Joseph Rodewald. The riders, with American flags streaming from their motorcycles, waited with friends and family members at the airport in Eugene, Oregon, as Rodewald's body arrived home for burial.

"There must have been 50 to 100 bikers, I don't know," John Rodewald, his father, told a reporter from ABC's KEZI News in Eugene. "It's overwhelming for us, and it's proper for Joe."

Observing the reception the Patriot Guard Riders, along with other veterans and community members, paid his nephew in Ontario yesterday, Ricky Pallares expressed the family's apprecia-

tion. "Ronnie deserves all this," he told the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin in Ontario. "He deserves the best."

The families of two fallen soldiers expressed their appreciation to the Patriot Guard Riders who supported their loved ones' funerals during an Oct. 21 tribute in Reinbeck, Iowa.

Lori Laborde, wife of Army Sgt. Command Maj. John Keith Laborde, and Kandie Vaughn, step-mother of Army Spc. Travis Vaughn, hosted a lunch for the riders at the local American Legion post. Vaughn, 26, was killed in a 2007 helicopter crash in southeastern Afghanistan, and Laborde, a 53-year-old Army reservist, died of a heart attack in April after physical training in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

"We were very honored they were there," Lori Laborde told the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier of Waterloo, Iowa, of the Patriot Guard Rider's role in her husband's funeral. "It meant a lot to our family."

The Laborde family announced at the luncheon that it was donating part of Laborde's memorial fund to the Patriot Guard Riders to help defray their operational costs. When she and her children discussed the plan to make a donation in their husband's and father's memory, Lori told the reporter the decision was "unanimous."

Richart, an Air Force veteran who deployed to Dharan, Saudi Arabia, during Operation Desert Storm, said he and his fellow riders feel a special connection to the grieving families they support.

"If you go out there and you give a couple hours of your time and show families that people care and share their loss, it's very touching to them and to us," he said.

"We want them to know their son not only meant a lot to the family, he meant a lot to the nation," Candy Rodriguez, a Vietnam veteran, said during her Inland Valley Daily Bulletin interview while escorting the Pallares family yesterday.

Ron Emrich, a retired Coast Guardsman from Mobile, Ala., said he felt honored to play a role in Newman's funeral. "Even though I didn't know him, he's like a brother to me," Emrich told a Hattiesburg American reporter. "We all experience it."

At Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., retired airman Dominick Gezzi said he's shared that connection since joining the

Patriot Guard Riders more than five years ago.

“The Patriot Guard Riders gives me a way to show my appreciation to the other branches of the service and to the servicemen and women that have served before me,” he told Kimberly Wright of the Air University public affairs office. “It also allows me to continue to show how proud I am to have been in the military.”

Harry Potter's Grave Draws Tourists to Israel Town.

By TIA GOLDENBERG -
Associated Press



Not the bespectacled teenage wizard created by author J.K. Rowling. This deceased Potter was a British soldier killed in 1939, and his grave is helping draw tourists to the backwater Israeli town of Ramle.

Ramle does not keep numbers on how many tourists flock to the grave in the town's British military cemetery, but tour guides and the municipality say the tombstone has become a popular attraction, largely for domestic travelers.

“There is no connection with the Harry Potter we know from literature, but the name sells, the name is marketable,” said Ron Peled, a tour guide who said he has brought dozens of groups to the grave.

Pvt. Harry Potter was born near Birmingham, England, and joined the British military in 1938. According to his regiment's website, he arrived to British mandate Palestine later that year, where he was killed in battle with an armed band in 1939. He was 18.

The tombstone says, incorrectly, that he died at 19 - a result of him having lied about his age so he could enlist.

The municipality said people began inquiring about the grave about five years ago, and the city listed it on its tourism website at the start of the year.

On a recent afternoon, a group of Israeli visitors, led by a microphone-wielding tour guide, scoured the manicured cemetery, looking for

Potter's tombstone. Once they found it among the 4,500 graves, they huddled behind it and snapped photos.

“It's a type of pilgrimage for some man whose name stands out. If you didn't say that Harry Potter was buried here, no one would come here,” said Josef Peretz, 76, from Tel Aviv.

Thousands of tourists visit Ramle, a drab, working-class town in central Israel, every year, in large part because of its many archaeological ruins and convenient location, according to the municipality.

“Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1,” the second-to-last of the big-screen adventures about the young wizard, opened Friday, November 19th.

Finding history: Web, vets help unearth war wrecks.

HYDE PARK, N.Y. – Justin Taylan boots up his laptop computer in the climate-controlled comfort of a cafe and clicks on photographs of a World War II airplane lying in pieces amid a steamy jungle on the other side of the world.

He browses through a series of digital images of the vine-entangled wreckage of the American C-47B Dakota, which slammed into a mountain in Malaysia during a supply mission in November 1945. The cockpit, believed to still contain the remains of the three-member crew, lies embedded in the mountainside.

Taylan's computer file with the C-47 photographs, e-mailed to him last fall, is just one of thousands he has compiled for his website, the key component of his effort to document World War II airplane crash sites in the Pacific.

“Things are being found all the time. With the advent of the Internet, the next day we can find out about it,” Taylan said.

His Pacific Wrecks project has a dual mission: locate undiscovered U.S. airplane wreckage and determine the fates of the thousands of American airmen still listed as missing in the Second World War's Pacific Theater.

“I hate a mystery,” Taylan says inside the cafe at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in his hometown of Hyde Park, 60 miles south of Albany.

Each year the 33-year-old son of school teachers heads to the Pacific to search remote jungles for wartime relics long forgotten by everyone except fellow wreck hunters, U.S. military officials and the dwindling number of veterans who fought in the Pacific.

He latched onto the quest for crash sites when he was 16 and visited South Pacific battlefields with his grandfather, Carl Thien, an Army combat photographer who served in New Guinea and the Philippines.

“To this day, these countries have wrecks and relics and bomb craters and bullets all over from the war,” he said. “This idea of history in situ, or history that is untouched from the war, cocooned by time, cocooned by the jungle growing around it, just really intrigued me.”

Pacific Wrecks Inc., Taylan’s nonprofit organization, is a one-man operation. Taylan, who earns a living as a freelance website designer, said he has visited more than 250 aircraft wrecks, plus dozens of shipwrecks, around the Pacific. He has hacked his way across dense jungles, slogged through crocodile-infested swamps and spent a few weeks in custody when his interest in a U.S. warplane being removed by a salvage company put him on the wrong side of authorities in the Solomon Islands, northeast of Australia.

As his website became more well known among wreck-hunting circles, veterans and relatives of MIAs started sending him e-mails seeking any information on their missing comrades and loved-ones, Taylan said.

Of the approximately 74,000 Americans still listed as missing in action in World War II, about 48,000 were lost in the Pacific Theater, according to the U.S. Department of Defense’s Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command, or JPAC. The Air Force alone reported approximately 22,000 airmen missing or captured during the Pacific campaign.

The C-47B Dakota crash site in Malaysia is a recent example of how Taylan’s website serves as a clearing house for information that could lead to the recovery and identification of American MIAs.

The site was reported to Pacific Wrecks last fall by a retired Malaysian army officer who sent Taylan an e-mail with photos of the wreckage. Taylan then forwarded the information to JPAC, which recently said the C-47 crash site has been

approved for an excavation to search for remains. The mission has yet to be scheduled.

Taylan recently tracked down some relatives of the three U.S. airmen listed as MIAs in the C-47 crash, including a nephew who was named for the plane’s co-pilot, 1st Lt. William H. Myers of Elizabethtown, Pa.

Bill Myers of Knoxville, Tenn., said his family was “stunned” to receive Taylan’s e-mail containing pictures of the wrecked plane.

“This was like a bolt out of the blue,” Myers told the AP.

Pat Scannon, founder of the BentProp Project, a California-based group that hunts for wartime wrecks in Palau in the western Pacific, said Taylan deserves praise for his dedication and thoroughness.

“The guy’s phenomenal,” Scannon said. “What he’s basically doing is cataloging the entire air-power history of the Pacific during World War Two. It’s a phenomenal piece of work.”

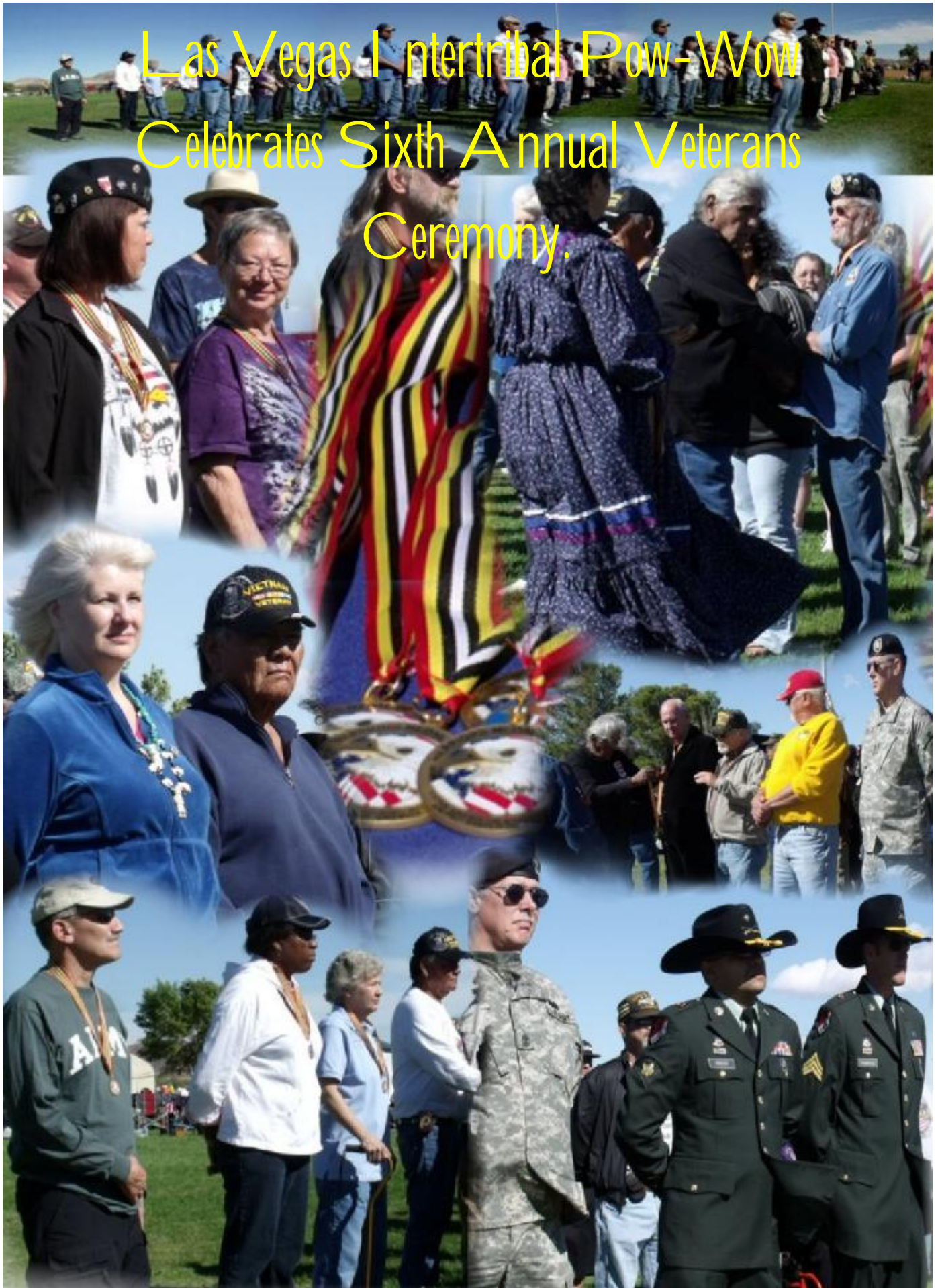
“I stand in admiration of Justin,” added former fighter pilot Richard DeBaugh, 88, one of the many Pacific veterans who’ve provided Taylan with information on long-ago missions. The retired English teacher from Knoxville, Ill., said fellow veterans appreciate Taylan’s effort to locate their lost comrades.

“There’s a kind of nobility in his search,” DeBaugh said. “We’re not forgotten, and Justin is a prime example of that.”



The Four Stages of Life

Las Vegas Intertribal Pow-Wow Celebrates Sixth Annual Veterans Ceremony.











Chapter 17 Holds First Ever Craft & Bake Sale

Chapter 17 hosted our 1st Holiday Open House Craft and Bake Sale on Saturday December 4, 2010.

A great thanks goes out to all our Chapter 17 members and friends who brought wonderful homemade goodies to sell and to all of the members who dropped in and bought them. Rick was there to sample and buy and encourage others to do the same. Mike had decorated the Hall with Christmas decorations and got the tables set up for the vendors who brought their lovely handcrafted and gift items to sell.

We had Patti with the wonderful Scentsy products, which we use to keep the building smelling wonderful; Kaye was there with her creative clothing and decorative items that all have beautiful Peace symbols on them; Christy brought her gorgeous cake and cookie plate stands she makes; Terry had some craft items that included a wine bottle with lights inside that's beautiful; we had another talented crafter, Mary, with lovely Christmas table decorations; Shirley brought a wonderful selection of crochet items and handmade cards; and Joni had her patriotic craft items and lots of Christmas items she sewed, plus a display of the AtHome America decorative Homewares she sells. Joni had volunteered the help from her 2 daughters Brianna and Shaylah, who ran the cash register.

It was a perfect day and plans are in the works for a Spring Fling Festival of Crafts for 2011 so watch the Newsletter for announcement of the date. If you know of a talented craftsperson who may be interested in participating in a future event have them contact secvvanvsc@hotmail.com to receive information on upcoming events.



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Photos by Mike Giancola

No Grenades on Commercial Flights, TSA Tells Troops.

**By Lisa Daniel
American Forces
Press Service**



WASHINGTON, - The Transportation Security Administration is reminding military members that explosives are not allowed on commercial flights.

TSA spokesman Lauren Gaches said agency workers occasionally encounter servicemembers who have packed inert grenades or other prohibited items in their luggage, often as a keepsake from the battlefield.

“The problem is, when you’re looking at that through an X-ray machine, you can’t tell the difference” as to whether it could explode, she said.

Servicemembers traveling with prohibited items is not a common problem, but it can be disruptive, Gaches said.

“From time to time, we see folks traveling with this type of material, and it has to be surrendered,” she said, adding that such items are not returned.

If security officers find prohibited items, they may have to close checkpoints or baggage areas temporarily, or call in bomb squads, Gaches said.

Prohibited items include blasting caps, dynamite, fireworks, flares, hand grenades and explosives, either real or replicated. TSA permits other items such as firearms and ammunition in checked luggage – not carry-on baggage – but airlines may be stricter, according to the TSA website. A full list of TSA-prohibited items is available at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm#content>.

“At TSA, we salute the men and women of our armed forces and thank them for their service to our country,” Gaches said in a prepared statement. “We always look forward to partnering with our servicemembers during the security screening process as we strive to achieve our mutual mission of protecting our homeland.”

More Remains Misplaced at Arlington.

by: Justin Fishel

WASHINGTON — The Army has opened a criminal investigation after revelations that eight sets of cremated remains were buried under a single headstone labeled “unknown” at Arlington National Cemetery.

The discovery was a result of an investigation of suspicious practices following a series of stories on misplaced graves by WTOP radio this summer, according to Army spokesman Gary Tallman.

It also follows a critical report by the Army’s Inspector General that found widespread problems at the cemetery and resulted in the dismissal of the cemetery’s superintendent, Jack Metzler and his deputy Thurman Higginbotham.

The Army has identified three of the remains and notified those families. One set of remains cannot be identified, and four others are still being investigated.

Christopher Grey, a spokesman for Army Criminal Investigation Command, said “this is not likely a mistake” and that the situation “demanded an investigation to determine if there’s any criminality involved in the burials.”

Kaitlin Horst, a spokesman for Arlington National Cemetery released the following statement:

“In late October, the Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program, Kathryn Condon, became aware of questionable practices that took place at Arlington National Cemetery and requested that the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command open an investigation into allegations involving multiple burials of cremated remains in a single location.

Upon further investigation, eight sets of cremated remains were discovered to be buried in a single gravesite marked with an ‘unknown’ headstone. Cemetery records reflected there was only one set of cremated remains interred in that location.

At this time, three sets of cremated remains have been identified through the work of Army CID Special Agents and cemetery officials.



Officials from Arlington National Cemetery are in the process of notifying the families. plot.

One set of cremated remains was unable to be positively identified and was re-interred in the original grave site marked with an 'unknown' headstone. A forensic anthropologist was brought in to assist in that determination.

CID Special Agents are continuing to work to identify the other sets of cremated remains.

This is an ongoing investigation and all information and evidence concerning improper or illegal burials will be considered by the CID. The leadership of Arlington National Cemetery and the Army take these matters seriously and are fully committed to taking the necessary actions to restore the integrity of Arlington National Cemetery."

Information you Should Know About Southern and Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemeteries -

Southern Cemetery

Eligible veterans and their spouse, may be buried at either the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley or the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City.

There is no charge for the plot or for opening and closing of the grave site of a veteran. A \$450.00 fee is charged for the burial of a family member. Headstones are provided at no cost by the federal government. Military honors are provided by military units, however, a cemetery staff member can assist in making these arrangements.

Both cemeteries are located in quiet, peaceful surroundings, and provide an atmosphere of respect and dignity to those who have served. The cemeteries were established in 1990 and have become the final resting place for over 10,000 veterans and their family members. One plot is allowed for the interment of each eligible veteran and for each member of their immediate family, except wheresoil conditions or the number of decedents of the family require more than one

Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Specific plots may not be reserved as plots are assigned by the cemetery superintendent. Casket and cremation burials can be accommodated at both cemeteries.

Veterans and spouses can now be buried side by side at National Cemeteries.

National Veteran Cemeteries now allow for married veterans to have separate burial entitlements — meaning that women veterans can now be buried side by side with their veteran husbands. The Nevada Veterans Cemetery does have an established procedure allowing the space next to an interred veteran to be reserved for the veteran's spouse if they choose separate interment.

This is a great change in procedure to honor our women veterans! If you have any questions, would like to pre-register, or make any pre-registration changes, you can contact the Northern or Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery directly.

To determine if you are eligible, to make advanced reservations, or if you have any questions, please call either cemetery office at:

Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery:
(775) 575-4441

Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery:
(702) 486-5920



Patti Metz
INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT
(702) 274-3430
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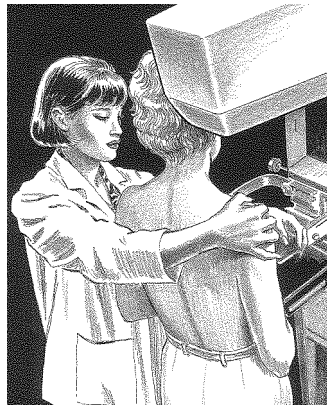
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DOD Chosen to Manage Breast Cancer Research

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces
Press Service



WASHINGTON, - Taxpayers with a stake in breast cancer research chose the Army to manage federal funds that are awarded to some of the best breast cancer researchers in the world.

The Breast Cancer Research Program is just one of the congressionally directed medical research programs that have managed \$6 billion in appropriations through fiscal 2010. Funding covers such afflictions as Gulf War illness, prostate cancer, spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries, autism and genetic studies of food allergies. But the largest share of money — and the first research to be funded by the program — goes to scientists whose work targets breast cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment.

“We don’t invest any funds into raising breast cancer awareness or educational outreach,” oncologist and Army Capt. (Dr.) E. Melissa Caime told American Forces Press Service. “That isn’t the mission given to us by Congress. All of our funds go toward research and management of that research. And we really do try to complement other funding agencies and not compete, and so move the field forward in a unique way.”

In 1992, breast cancer patients and survivors marched on Congress with a compelling request for more research, Caime said.

“They wanted research that was innovative, that was willing to take a risk and that was going to have an impact and leapfrog the field forward,” she said. To manage the program, the advocates had a choice among the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command and other research institutions.

“When the advocates met with our commanding general at the time, they found a very welcoming organization,” Caime said. “This command has done biomedical research for many

decades specifically focused on the needs of warfighters, ... [including] military operational medicine, combat casualty care and military infectious disease focus areas.”

AMRMC’S commanding general also was enthusiastic about the advocates’ desire to have a larger voice in research, Caime said, “so we’ve had a very happy partnership since that time.”

The Army brings to the program “a very organized and efficient way of managing the research,” she added.

Any scientist around the world can submit a research proposal for funding, and scientists and consumers work together in a two-tier process to decide which projects receive funding, she said.

“We listen to consumers, who we call the survivor-advocates, because they are the ones living with the disease,” Caime said. “They are the acid test for every research project. We ask: ‘How is [the research] going to make a difference for them or future generations, and incorporate their viewpoints and passions in all of our programs?’”

The National Cancer Institute estimates that 207,090 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and nearly 40,000 will die. Also this year, an estimated 2,000 men will be diagnosed, and 390 will die.

The Breast Cancer Research Program tries to focus on leading-edge kinds of research, program manager Dr. Gayle Vaday told American Forces Press Service.

“The bulk of our awards are made in the early stages, where it’s harder for researchers to get funding through other federal agencies,” she said. “We try to give a new idea that opportunity. It’s high-risk, but the potential for gain is there.”

For example, Dr. Lance Liotta of George Mason University and Virginia surgeon Dr. Kirsten Edmiston received an early award for research that evolved into an ongoing clinical trial to test the ability of the antimalarial drug chloroquine to reduce the long-term survival and spread of a kind of breast cancer called ductal carcinoma in situ, Vaday said. A standard treatment is to remove a tumor surgically from the breast, but it can take several days after surgery to find out if all the tumor cells are gone, she added.

Dr. Sarah Blair and colleagues at the University of California-San Diego received an award to develop an automated system that examines

thousands of cells while a woman is still under anesthesia during surgery and separates cancer from noncancer cells based on the proteins they produce.

In 1993, the program funded an application from Dr. Dennis Slamon, then chief of hematology and oncology division at the University of California-Los Angeles, to develop antibodies against breast cancer -- an idea that was unheard-of at the time, Caime said.

Slamon's genetic studies ultimately led to the development of a drug called Herceptin that helps some of the women who have a fast-growing and deadly form of the disease.

"We don't restrict proposals to specific topics," Caime said. "For this program we allow the good science to come forward. We don't try to tell the scientific field that we must have studies on [specific topics]. We let very excellent science with innovation come to the top."

Apologize

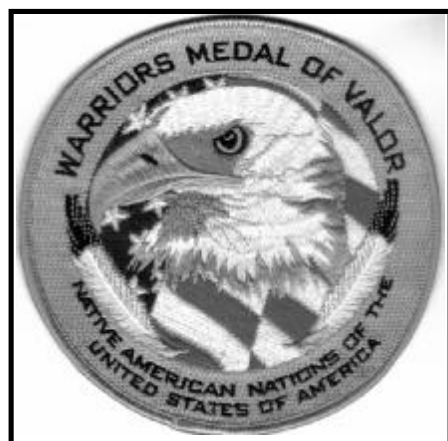
At a time when our president and other politicians tend to apologize for our country's prior actions, here's a refresher on how some of our former patriots handled negative comments about our country.

This is good.

JFK'S Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was in France in the early 60's when DeGaulle decided to pull out of NATO. DeGaulle said he wanted all US military out of France as soon as possible. Rusk responded, "Does that include those who are buried here?"

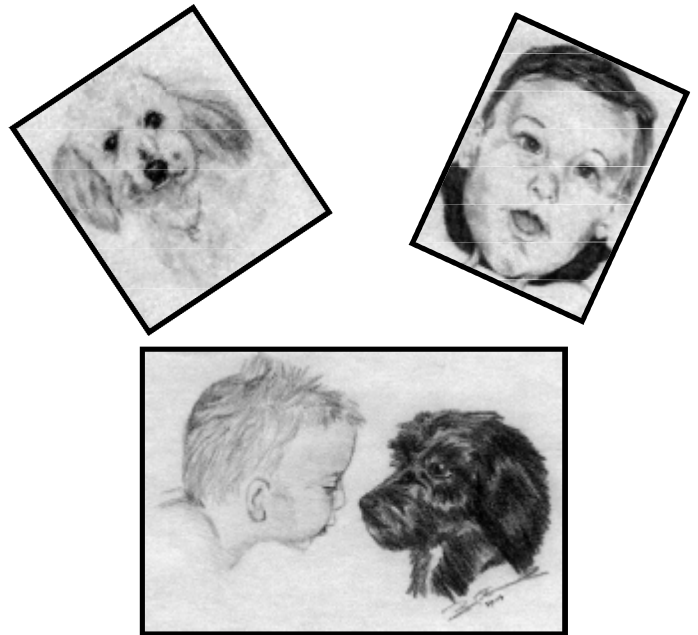
DeGaulle did not respond.

You could have heard a pin drop.



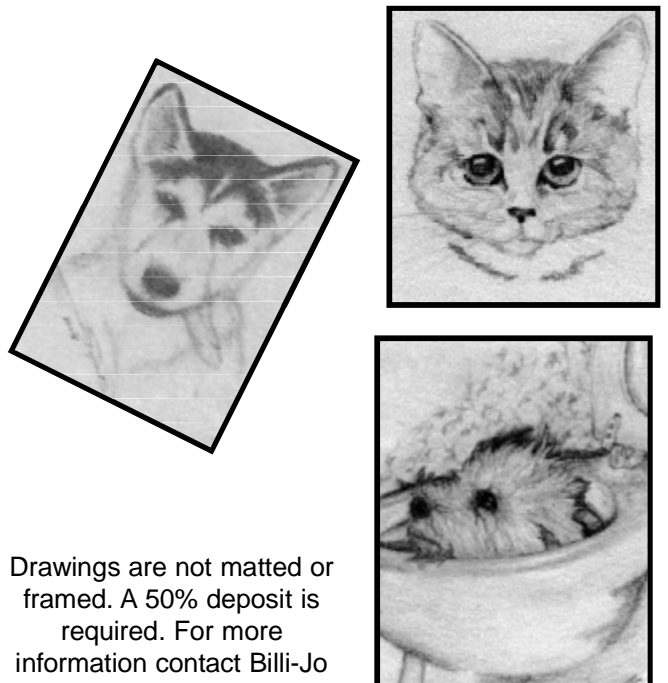
The Warriors Medal of Valor patch is now available for purchase from chapter 17. They come in two sizes, 5 " and 10". The 5" will sell for \$10 and the 10" will sell for \$20. These patches will be available in the company store during the regular chapter meetings

Hands in Motion



Hands in Motion offers pencil drawings of your baby's and pets as well as single and wedding portraits of bride and groom.

Prices range according to size from \$60.00 to \$275.00.



Drawings are not matted or framed. A 50% deposit is required. For more information contact Billi-Jo at (603) 978-8079

Attention All 1ST CAV Members!!!!!!!



“The Nevada chapter of the 1st Cavalry Division Association meets at 10:00 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month at American Legion Post 8 located at 733 Veterans Memorial Drive, Las Vegas 89101.

The chapter officers are;

President Maraya Evans
(maraya.evans@gmail.com),

Vice president Ken Gallagher
(abnrngnam71@hotmail.com),

Treasurer is Bill Anton
(polar_bear_01@fastmail.fm),

Secretary is George Hitzman
(the-hitman@outdrs.net).

Troopers from all eras are welcome.
FIRST TEAM! “

Veteran Receives High School Diploma 49 Years Later



Heather Minore
Nevada Office of
Veterans Services

On December 2, 2010, NOVS Executive Director Caleb Cage and Vice Principal Charlie Walsh from Sparks High School were privileged to present John Crabtree with his high school diploma. John should have received his diploma in 1961 but instead enlisted in the Navy to help his family financially.

John served on a few different ships during his years in the Navy but the one he called home was the USS Washoe County. After returning back to Nevada, he raised his own family but always felt he was missing something. That “something” was his high school diploma.

Through Operation Recognition our office was able to help John make his dream come true!

In 2003, during the 72nd Session of the Nevada Legislature, Assembly Bill 52, Operation Recognition was passed. This bill provides for Nevada School Districts to issue a standard high school diploma to certain veterans. To receive this high school diploma, a veterans must have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during WW II through the Vietnam Era, between the dates of September 16, 1940 and May 7, 1975. A veterans, a guardian or a disabled veterans, or a member of a deceased veteran’s family, on behalf of the deceased veteran, may submit an application.

For an application or further information on Operation Recognition, please call our office at 775-688-1653.

We hope to see each and every one of you at one of the many events around the state. Remember our office is always here for you. We are just a phone call or email away.

Serving America’s Heroes,



In the early chilly hours of Thanksgiving Day, Chapter 17 members Rick Pike, Mary Weymouth and Virginia Sawchuk set up the chapter table outside the Hard Rock Cafe loaded with personal care items to be handed out the the many homeless that show up for a warm Thanksgiving meal. Chapter 17 has been providing the care items to the homeless for the past 12+ years, and will continue as long as the Hard Rock Cafe continues the tradition of feeding the homeless..

In Loving Memory

Michael J. Culotta



February 16, 1962 - November 2, 2010

Michael J. Culotta, 48, born in Wilkesburg, Pa., went to be with the Lord Nov. 2, 2010. Mike was preceded in death by his beloved mother, Jackie; and his faithful companion, Steeler. He is survived by his father, Alexander; brother Barry former wife, Trish Forman; best and lifelong friend, Vinni Alicino; and beloved dogs, Ben and Bean. Mike graduated from Las Vegas High School. His dream of becoming a DJ started to take shape as he played music during lunchtime. He even took requests. Mike "the Outlaw" Culotta rocked Las Vegas' airwaves for almost 30 years. Everyone will remember some story about his time here and how he touched their lives. Mike loved his family, friends and of course, The Steelers. Mike was honest to fault. Those who interacted with him knew they were always going to get what he really thought. Mike lived a great life and was able to meet some of his idols, such as Ritchie Blackmore, Roger Glover and Ian Gillan of Deep Purple, Mark Slaughter and comedian Sam Kinison. Mike promoted and loved local bands. He managed Little Sister back in the day, as well as Euphoria. Per the family's request, arrangements and services were private. The family asks you make a donation to Lied Animal Foundation, 655 N. Mojave Road, Las Vegas, NV 89101, Attn: Andy Bischel, in Mike's memory. Mike always tried to find the "dogs" a home. Mike will be greatly missed by all.

Female Vets Much More Likely to Commit Suicide, Study Finds Those aged 18 to 34 were about 3 times more likely than civilian women to do so.

HealthDay News) — The suicide rate among young female U.S. military veterans is nearly three times higher than among civilian women, a new study has found.

Researchers analyzed data on 5,948 female suicides in 16 states between 2004 and 2007. In the 18-to-34 age group, there were 56 suicides among 418,132 veterans and 1,461 suicides among 33,257,362 nonveterans.

That suicide rate amounted to one out of 7,465 young female veterans compared with one out of 22,763 young female civilians, the researchers explained in a news release from Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).

"The rate was lower in the next oldest group [of female veterans] we studied, aged 35 to 44, and the rate was lower still among [veterans] aged 45 to 64. However, even within this age group, the rate was higher than civilian women's suicide rates," study co-author Dr. Bentson McFarland, a professor of psychiatry at the OHSU School of Medicine, said in the news release.

The study, which is the first general population study of suicide risk among U.S. female veterans, is published in the December issue of *Psychiatric Services*.

"This study shows that young women veterans have nearly triple the suicide rate of young women who never served in the military," study co-author Mark Kaplan, of Portland State University, said in the news release. "The elevated rates of suicide among women veterans should be a call to action, especially for clinicians and caregivers to be aware of warning signs and helpful prevention resources such as the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline."

The hotline phone number is 1-800-273-8255.



Police say that a Pa. homeless man is robbed, gets it all back after telling thief he lives in shelter

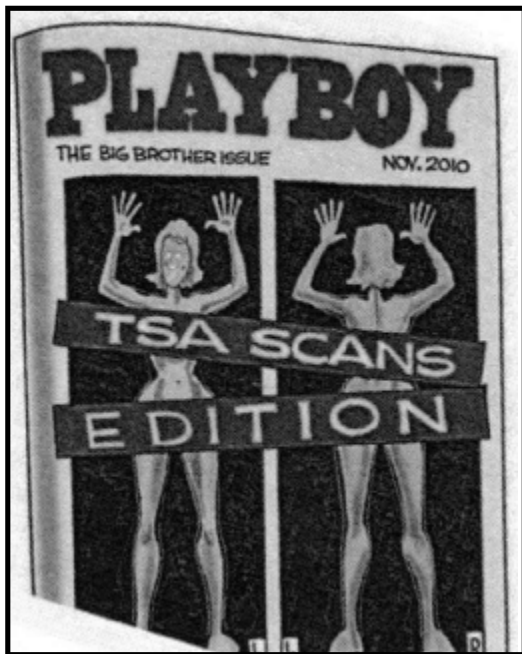
**YORK, Pa.
(Associated Press) —**

Police say an armed robber gave back everything he stole from a homeless man after learning he lives at a shelter. The York Dispatch reported Thursday that 22-year-old Larry Sanderson was outside the York Rescue Mission on Wednesday night when a man displayed the handle of a revolver and told him to empty his pockets.

The paper said Sanderson turned over his wallet, cell phone, MP3 player and cigarettes.

When the armed man asked Sanderson if that was all he had, Sanderson explained he lives at the shelter.

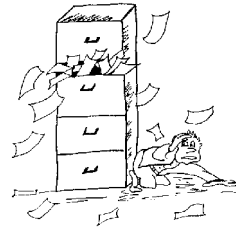
Police say the robber replied, "I can respect that," returned the man's property and walked away.



Now on sale at all airports nationwide.



Update on New National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis



St. Louis, MO. . . The National Archives and Records Administration's National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) will relocate more than 100 million records to a new \$112 million modernized facility. Crews broke ground on the 474,000 square-foot facility on November 16, 2009. According to the St. Louis County Economic Council, the project is expected to pump \$435 million into the local economy and involve more than 300 construction jobs. NARA will lease the facility for twenty years from The Molasky Group of Companies through the General Services Administration (GSA). Located in North St. Louis County, the facility will open its doors in May 2011, which is also when the workforce of 800 will start moving in. The entire move of personnel and records will take about seventeen months.

The new location will store approximately 2.3 million cubic feet of records currently housed at three different St. Louis area facilities. The building will be certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) program and will also be compliant with the stringent Federal standards for archival and non-archival records.

Records will be housed in climate-controlled stack areas designed for long-term preservation. As well, archival storage bays will have particulate and ultraviolet filtration. Paint, sealants, caulking and the powder-coated finishes for the shelving will be certified for minimal off-gassing of volatile organic compounds. The facility will also offer new research rooms, meeting rooms equipped with the latest video-conferencing technology and tenant office space for other area federal agencies.

Several move teams are working to ensure that each and every record is accounted for when moved and that NPRC's important services to veterans continue with little delay. Many of the records are currently stored on 10-high shelving units in an old 1950s facility at 9700 Page Avenue

in Overland, Missouri. This location was ravaged by a 1973 fire that was one of the worst in U.S. history. The fire destroyed the building's sixth floor and an estimated 16 - 18 million individual military personnel records. The records lost include those of Army personnel discharged between November 1, 1912 and December 31, 1959, and Air Force personnel discharged between September 25, 1947 and December 31, 1963 with names alphabetically following Hubbard, James. Some records were salvaged from the disaster; these fire-damaged records have been stored in a climate-controlled area where specially trained preservation technicians treat the records for mold and delicately piece together whatever they can save. Despite the very fragile state of the burned records, preservationists have been able to retrieve valuable information in an effort to reconstruct portions of a service member's personnel file. At the current Page facility the Preservation Branch also treats several thousand records that have been exposed to the harmful rays of the sun and to other contaminants that shorten a record's life span. In the new building, all of the records will be housed in climate-controlled record storage bays.

NPRC is comprised of three organizational divisions: Civilian Records, Military Records and Archival Programs. Visiting researchers are encouraged to schedule an appointment prior to making a research visit. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., the National Archives at St. Louis' NPRC is one of 44 NARA facilities located throughout the United States. Unlike other collections, however, the records held in St. Louis impact nearly every family in the United States. These holdings represent a priceless piece of history and are a critical source of information for genealogists, family members, scholars, veterans and researchers in many fields of knowledge.

For more information or questions please contact:

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VA Launching New Personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is piloting new, personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbooks. The handbooks are tailored to provide enrolled Veterans with the most relevant health benefits information based on their own specific eligibility. In essence, each handbook will be written for the individual Veteran.

"These handbooks will give Veterans everything they need to know and leave out everything that doesn't apply to them," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Our Veterans will now have a comprehensive, easy to understand roadmap to the medical benefits they earned with their service."

In addition to highlighting each Veteran's specific health benefits, the handbook also provides contact information for the Veteran's preferred local facility, ways to schedule personal appointments, guidelines for communicating treatment needs and an explanation of the Veteran's responsibilities, such as copayments when applicable.

"Enhancing access isn't just about expanding the kinds of services VA provides. It also includes making sure we do everything we can to ensure Veterans have a clear understanding of the benefits available to them so they can make full use of the services they have earned," Shinseki said.

The new handbooks will initially be available only to certain Veterans in Cleveland and Washington, D.C., areas. Following the pilot phase, full implementation is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2011 for across the county.

For additional information, go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility or call VA's toll-free number at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).



Phony veteran pleads guilty to scamming hundreds from good Samaritans in central Indiana

FRANKLIN, Ind.
(Associated Press)

A man has pleaded guilty to charges that he posed as a down-on-his-luck soldier to scam hundreds of dollars from seven good Samaritans in central Indiana.

The prosecutor's office says 43-year-old James Schuder (SHOO'-der) pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of deception and panhandling.

A judge sentenced him to 180 days in jail, but he was released from jail based on time served since his arrest. A prosecutor says Schuder agreed to pay \$388 in restitution.

Authorities say Schuder wore Army combat fatigues when he approached people seeking money for travel expenses. Authorities said there was no record he ever served in the military.



Contractors Parking Problem

These contractors are installing the steel pillars in concrete to stop vehicles from parking on the pavement outside a Sports Bar downtown. They are now in the process of cleaning up at the end of the day and anxious to go home.

How long do you think it'll be before they realize where they parked their truck?

No laps for hot laptops; medical reports link them



to "toasted skin syndrome," possible harm

By LINDSEY TANNER,
AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (Associated Press) —Have you ever worked on your laptop computer with it sitting on your lap, heating up your legs? If so, you might want to rethink that habit.

Doing it a lot can lead to "toasted skin syndrome," an unusual-looking mottled skin condition caused by long-term heat exposure, according to medical reports.

In one recent case, a 12-year-old boy developed a sponge-patterned skin discoloration on his left thigh after playing computer games a few hours every day for several months.

"He recognized that the laptop got hot on the left side; however, regardless of that, he did not change its position," Swiss researchers reported in an article published Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Another case involved a Virginia law student who sought treatment for the mottled discoloration on her leg.

Dr. Kimberley Salkey, who treated the young woman, was stumped until she learned the student spent about six hours a day working with her computer propped on her lap. The temperature underneath registered 125 degrees.

That case, from 2007, is one of 10 laptop-related cases reported in medical journals in the past six years.

The condition also can be caused by overuse of heating pads and other heat sources that usually aren't hot enough to cause burns. It's generally harmless but can cause permanent skin darkening. In very rare cases, it can cause damage leading to skin cancers, said the Swiss

researchers, Drs. Andreas Arnold and Peter Itin from University Hospital Basel. They do not cite any skin cancer cases linked to laptop use, but suggest, to be safe, placing a carrying case or other heat shield under the laptop if you have to hold it in your lap.

Salkey, an assistant dermatology professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School, said that under the microscope, the affected skin resembles skin damaged by long-term sun exposure.

Major manufacturers including Apple, Hewlett Packard and Dell warn in user manuals against placing laptops on laps or exposed skin for extended periods of time because of the risk for burns.

A medical report several years ago found that men who used laptops on their laps had elevated scrotum temperatures. If prolonged, that kind of heat can decrease sperm production, which can potentially lead to infertility. Whether laptop use itself can cause that kind of harm hasn't been confirmed.

In the past, "toasted skin syndrome" has occurred in workers whose jobs require being close to a heat source, including bakers and glass blowers, and, before central heating, in people who huddled near potbellied stoves to stay warm.

Dr. Anthony J. Mancini, dermatology chief at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, said he'd treated a boy who developed the condition from using a heating pad "hours at a time" to soothe a thigh injured in soccer. Mancini said he'd also seen a case caused by a hot water bottle.

He noted that chronic, prolonged skin inflammation can potentially increase chances for squamous cell skin cancer, which is more aggressive than the most common skin cancer. But Mancini said it's unlikely computer use would lead to cancer since it's so easy to avoid prolonged close skin contact with laptops.

EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE OVER 50



Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax. Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags. Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (I'm at this level.) After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

90# on your telephone

I dialed '0', to check this out, asked the operator, who confirmed that this was correct so please pass it on. I also checked out Snopes.com. This is true, and also applies to cell phones!

PASS ON TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW

I received a telephone call last evening from an individual identifying himself as an AT&T Service Technician who was conducting a test on the telephone lines. He stated that to complete the test I should touch nine(9), zero(0), the pound sign (#), and then hang up. Luckily, I was suspicious and refused.

Upon contacting the telephone company, I was informed that by pushing 90#, you give the requesting individual full access to your telephone line, which enables them to place long distance calls billed to your home phone number.

I was further informed that this scam has been originating from many local jails/prison; DO NOT press 90# for ANYONE.

The GTE Security Department requested that I share this information with EVERYONE I KNOW.

After checking with Verizon they also said it was true, so do not dial 90# for anyone !!!!! PLEASE.

Something To Think

The statement below is true.

The statement above is false.

Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch.

