

RAO

BULLETIN

1 August 2013

PDF Edition

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Retiree Appreciation Days Update 10 ► Aug thru Nov 2013.

Retiree Appreciation Days (RADs) are designed with you in mind. They're a great source of the latest information for retirees and Family members in your area. RADs vary from installation to installation, but, in general, they provide an opportunity to renew acquaintances, listen to guest speakers, renew ID Cards, get medical checkups, and various other services. Some RADs include special events such as dinners or golf tournaments. Due to budget constraints, some RADs may be cancelled or rescheduled. Also, scheduled appearances of DFAS representatives may not be possible. If you plan to travel long distances to attend a RAD, before traveling, you should call the sponsoring RSO to ensure the RAD will held as scheduled and, if applicable, whether or not DFAS reps will be available. Below is the schedule as of 29 JUL. An up-to-date RAD list is always available online at www.hostmtb.org/RADLIST-2013.txt. For more information call the phone number indicated below of the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) sponsoring the RAD:

Location	Date	RSO Phone Number
=====	=====	=====
Northern NE (Concord, NH)	3 August	603-495-3042
Rosemount, MN (Twin Cities)	23 August	507-474-9297
Des Moines, IA	29 August	515-964-3782
Fort McCoy, WI	6 September	608-388-3716
Fort Leonard Wood, MO	6-7 September	573-596-0947
Idaho Air RAD Boise, ID	8 September	208-272-5755 (Note 10)
Duluth, MN	13 September	715-398-3152
Ellsworth AFB, SD	13 September	605-385-3600 (Note 8)
Camp Pendleton, CA	14 September	760-725-3400
Grand Forks AFB, ND	14 September	701-747-4295
Nellis AFB, NV	14 September	702-652-9978
Fort Sill, OK	19-21 September	580-442-2645
Fort Belvoir, VA	20 September	703-806-4551
Fort Drum, NY	21 September	315-772-6434
Fort Lee, VA	21 September	804-734-6555
NAS Lemoore, CA	21 September	559-998-4042\2977
Selfridge, MI	21 September	586-239-5580
Torii Station, JA	26 September	046-407-3940
Hill AFB, UT	27 September	801 777-5735

MOAA El Paso, TX	27 September	915-533-5111 (Note 13)
Scott AFB, IL	27-28 September	618-256-5092 (Note 11)
Camp LeJeune, NC	28 September	910-451-0287
Fort Bliss, TX	28 September	915-569-6233\568-5204
Fort Hamilton, NY	28 September	718-630-4552
Minneapolis, MN	28 September	800-231-3517
Mystic Lake, MN (JRAD)	28 September	612-713-4664 (Note 4)
Hurlburt Field, FL	3-4 October	850-884-5443
Fort Campbell, KY	5 October	270-798-5280
Misawa AB, JA	5 October	0176-77-4428
Schofield Barracks, HI	5 October	808-655-1514 (Note 1)
Whiteman AFB, MO	5 October	660-687-6457
WI National Guard - Ft McCoy, WI	4-5 October	608-388-3716 (Note 12)
WY National Guard-Cheyenne, WY	5 October	307-772-5421 (Note 7)
Fort Detrick, MD	10 October	301-619-9948
JB Myer-Henderson Hall, VA	11 October	703-696-5948
Carlisle Barracks, PA	12 October	717-245-4501
Fort Carson, CO	12 October	719-526-2840
JB Ellington Field-Houston	12 October	210-221-9004
Little Rock AFB, AR	12 October	501-987-6095
Travis AFB, CA	12 October	707-424-3904
Fort Riley, KS	18 October	785-239-3320
Vicenza, Italy	18 October	0444-71-7262
Redstone Arsenal, AL	18-19 October	256-876-2022
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD	19 October	410-306-2320
Fort Gordon, GA	19 October	706-791-2654
Fort Meade, MD	19 October	301-677-9603
Camp Humphreys, KOR	19 October	010-3176-1696
Fort Sam Houston, TX	19 October	210-221-9004
NAS Pensacola, FL	19 October	850-452-5990\5991
Redstone Arsenal, AL	19 October	256-876-2022
Offutt AFB, NE	20 October	402-294-4566\2590
USAG Benelux	21 October	0032-65-44-7267
Kaiserslautern/Ramstein, GER	22 October	0631-411-8838
Stuttgart, GER	23 October	07031-15-3442
Ansbach, GER	24 October	0981-183-3301
Fort Rucker, AL	25 October	334-255-9124
Grafenwoehr, GER	25 October	09641-83-8539
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH	25 October	937-257-3221
Fort Hood, TX	25-26 October	254-287-5210
Arizona ARNG - Phoenix, AZ	26 October	602-267-2545
Army in Europe/Wiesbaden, GER	26 October	0611-705-5338
Fort Leavenworth, KS	26 October	913-684-2425
Fort Polk, LA	26 October	337-531-0402
JB Anacostia-Bolling, DC	26 October	202-767-5244
JB Charleston, SC	26 October	843-963-2228
JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ	26 October	609-562-2666
Rock Island Arsenal, IL	26 October	563-322-4823
Moody AFB, GA (Retiree App Week)	27 Oct-2 Nov	229-257-3209

Fort Knox, KY	1-2 November	502-624-1765
Luke AFB, AZ	1-2 November	623-856-3923 (Note 2)
Fort Benning, GA	1 November	706-545-1805
JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK	2 November	907-384-3500
JEB Little Creek, VA	2 November	757-462-7563/8863
Moody AFB, GA	2 November	229-257-3209
Navy Region Southwest-San Diego, CA	2 November	619-556-8987 (Note 9)
Daegu, KOR	9 November	(DSN) 315-768-6052
Guam - Joint Region Marianas	9 November	671-366-2574 (Note 6)
Indianapolis, IN	16 November	502-624-1765 (Note 3)
Yongsan, KOR	16 November	02-7913-3735

NOTES

1. RAD will be held at Fort Shafter
2. Tentative schedule, date may change
3. RAD will be held at old Fort Ben Harrison
4. Mystic Lake Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD). The deadline for the "early bird" registration is 16 August 2013. The pre-registration deadline is 6 September 2013. For more info, to register online, etc., please visit <https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrads/home> or contact RSO at 612-713-4664.
5. Military Appreciation Day
6. Host for Guam - Joint Region Marianas RAD is Andersen AFB, GU
7. 10th annual Retiree Conference
8. Retiree Appreciation Day Luncheon September 13, 2013, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dakota's Club. The meal prices are \$7.50 for club members and \$9.50 for non-members. People interested in attending the luncheon should reserve their seats as soon as possible, by calling the RAO at (605) 385-3600 or e-mailing 28bwrao@ellsworth.af.mil.
9. Annual Military Retiree Seminar and Resource Fair. The event will start at 0800 and will end at 1330. This year the Seminar will be held at "Four Points Sheraton Hotel, located at 8110 Aero Drive, San Diego, CA 92123." You may contact the Retired Activities Office at E-Mail: rao@navylifesw.com and CNRSWRAO@navy.mil or Phone: (619)556 8987 for additional information.
10. Deadline for RSVP to attend Idaho Air RAD is 23 August 2013. RSVP online at http://nationalguard.idaho.gov/retirees/rsvp_form.aspx?service=Air
11. Retiree Appreciation Day Dinner will be held on Sept. 27, 2013. Evening activities will start at the Scott Club with a social hour at 5 p.m., and dinner at 6 p.m. (Club members price will be \$21 per person. Non-members price will be \$23 per person.) See newsletter at <http://www.raolibrary.org/documents/Summer2013Newsletter.pdf> for more information on pay-by-mail requirements, base access, etc. Also, with the increased security requirements at Scott AFB, it would be helpful in planning the RAD program if Scott personnel knew you were planning to attend; therefore, please complete and mail the information shown at <http://www.raolibrary.org/documents/Summer2013Newsletter.pdf> to Retiree Activities Office, 215 Heritage Drive, Scott AFB IL 62225-5009 before Sept. 18, 2013. Call 618-256-5092 or E-Mail scottrao@us.af.mil for more information.
12. The 25th Retiree Appreciation Day, sponsored by the Wisconsin National Guard Retiree Council will be held on Friday and Saturday, October 4-5, 2013, at the Wisconsin Military Academy, 90 South 10th Street, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Registration form and other information are available online at http://dma.wi.gov/dma/council/Retiree_Appreciation_Day.pdf. E-Mail widma.retiree@wisconsin.gov
13. MOAA El Paso 2013 Retiree Appreciation Day Reception & October Meeting. September 27, 2013. Time: 5:30 PM MST - 9:00 PM MST. Location: Underwood Golf Complex, 3200 Coe Ave, El Paso, TX 79904-4800. Please visit http://elpasomoaa.org/calendar_day.asp?date=9/27/2013 for registration, etc., information. E-Mail: info@elpasomoaa.org

[Source: www.hostmtb.org | Milton Bell | 29 Jul 2013 ++]

VRAP Update 08 ► Program Changes Discussed.

The House Veterans Affairs committee's subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing in JUL to consider changing the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) so that veterans can attend school on a part-time schedule. Currently the program requires participants to go to school full-time, but many licensure and certification courses only offer part-time classes. Over 105,000 veterans have applied to use VRAP, which provides a year of monthly GI Bill benefits for a veteran to attend a full-time training program to learn a new and marketable skill. But only 52,228 of those 105,000 are currently enrolled in school. The program is limited to veterans ages 35 to 60 who are unemployed when they apply, are not eligible for other veterans education benefits and are not receiving veterans disability benefits based on a determination of unemployability. Those attending training receive \$1,564 a month in Montgomery GI Bill benefits. Congressman Bill Johnson (R-OH), the author of H.R.1357, said the current program requires spending 18 to 22 hours a week in class to be considered a full-time student. His bill would reduce minimum class time to 16 hours a week since most technical schools only offer 16 hours of instruction a week. One of the biggest problems veterans face is finding an accredited school with a one-year program. Only two-year public colleges are eligible, eliminating private and for-profit schools, as well as one-year programs offered at four-year public schools, although Johnson's bill doesn't address this problem. [Source: TREA News for the enlisted 29 Jul 2013 ++]

Save Our Benefit Update 03 ► Commissary Update.

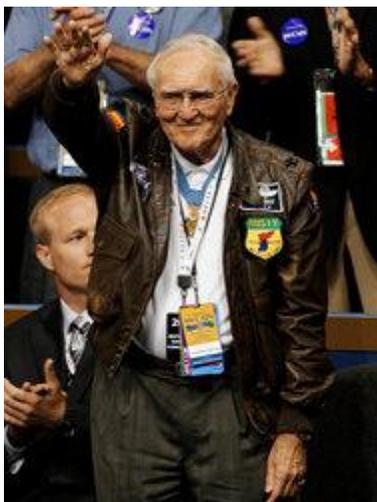
The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits (group of veteran and military organizations, together with associations of businesses that supply commissaries and exchanges) held a meeting 28 JUL. At their meeting it was noted that Congress' demands for cuts in government spending is having a major impact on the Department of Defense and as a result, almost ALL of the benefits promised to military people are under attack. In addition, there is a deliberate attempt to try and divide active duty from retirees from Guard/Reserve from veterans. The mandated furloughs for DoD employees have already resulted in a cutback in store hours in commissaries. But worse cuts could be coming. While the FY 2014 budget, which begins this 1 OCT appears to fully fund commissaries, the FY 2015 budget could be devastating. Among the options reported to be under consideration are:

1. A 30% cut in the number of commissaries;
2. Closing all commissaries;
3. Closing commissaries in major metropolitan areas;
4. Increasing the costs of products in commissaries;
5. Cutting overseas transportation for commissary products

The most important thing you can do is to shop at your commissary and then let your Senators and Representative know that the commissary benefit is important to you and you don't want to lose it. [Source: TREA News for the enlisted 29 Jul 2013 ++]

OBIT ~ Col. Bud Day ► 27 JUL 2013

Col. Bud Day, an Air Force fighter pilot who was shot down in the Vietnam War, imprisoned with John McCain in the notorious “Hanoi Hilton” and defiantly endured more than five years of brutality without divulging sensitive information to his captors, earning him the Medal of Honor, died on Saturday in Shalimar, Fla. He was 88. His death was announced by his wife, Doris. Colonel Day was among America’s most highly decorated servicemen, having received nearly 70 medals and awards, more than 50 for combat exploits. In addition to the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest award for valor, he was awarded the Air Force Cross, the highest combat award specifically for airmen. His death was announced by his wife, Doris. In a post on Twitter 28 JUL, Senator McCain called Colonel Day “my friend, my leader, my inspiration.”



Col. Bud Day waved to the crowd at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., in 2008.

Colonel Day’s life was defined by the defiance he showed in North Vietnamese prison camps, where besides Mr. McCain, the future senator and Republican presidential candidate, whose Navy fighter jet had been downed, his cellmates included James B. Stockdale, also a Navy pilot, who became Ross Perot’s running mate in his 1992 presidential campaign. When he volunteered for duty in Vietnam and was assigned to a fighter wing in April 1967, Colonel Day, then a major, had flown more than 4,500 hours in fighters. On Aug. 26, 1967, he was on a mission to knock out a surface-to-air missile site 20 miles inside North Vietnam when his F-100 was hit by antiaircraft fire. He suffered eye and back injuries and a broken arm when he ejected, and he was quickly captured. Major Day was strung upside-down by his captors, but after his bonds were loosened, he escaped after five days in enemy hands. He made it across a river, using a bamboo-log float for support, and crossed into South Vietnam. He wandered barefoot and delirious for about two weeks in search of rescuers, surviving on a few berries and frogs. At one point, he neared a Marine outpost, but members of a Communist patrol spotted him first, shot him in the leg and hand, and captured him.

This time, Major Day could not escape. He was shuttled among various camps, including the prison that became known as the Hanoi Hilton, and was beaten, starved and threatened with execution. His captors demanded information on escape plans and methods of communication among the prisoners of war, as well as on America’s air war. In February 1971, he joined with Admiral Stockdale, then a commander and the ranking American in the prison camp, and other prisoners in singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” while rifle muzzles were pointed at them by guards who had burst into a prisoners’ forbidden religious service. He was released on March 14, 1973, having supplied only false information to his interrogators. He was promoted to colonel during his captivity, and on March

4, 1976, President Gerald R. Ford presented him with the Medal of Honor at a ceremony in which Admiral Stockdale was also awarded the medal.

Colonel Day received the medal for his escape and evasion, brief though it was, and his refusal to yield to his tormentors. “Colonel Day was totally debilitated and unable to perform even the simplest task for himself,” the citation read. “Despite his many injuries, he continued to offer maximum resistance. His personal bravery in the face of deadly enemy pressure was significant in saving the lives of fellow aviators who were still flying against the enemy.” Mr. McCain recalled in his memoir, “Faith of My Fathers,” written with Mark Salter, that Colonel Day “was a tough man, a fierce resister, whose example was an inspiration to every man who served with him.” Telling how Colonel Day, in wretched condition himself, comforted him when he was near death from beatings, Senator McCain wrote that Colonel Day “had an indomitable will to survive with his reputation intact, and he strengthened my will to live.”



Retired Air Force Colonels Bob Gates, left, and Bud Day pose for a photograph Feb. 24, 2013 while celebrating Day's 88th birthday at the Magnolia Grill in Fort Walton Beach. Day died Saturday, July 27.

George Everette Day, known as Bud, was born on Feb. 24, 1925, in Sioux City, Iowa. He quit high school to join the Marines in 1942 and served with an anti-aircraft battery on Johnston Island in the Pacific during World War II. He graduated from Morningside College in Sioux City, obtained a law degree from the University of South Dakota and then received an officer's commission in the Iowa Army National Guard. After transferring to the Air Force Reserve, he was recalled to active duty in 1951 and received pilot training. He flew a fighter-bomber, tracking Soviet planes off the coast of Japan, during the Korean War and then remained in military service. After coming home from Vietnam, Colonel Day underwent physical rehabilitation, regained his flight status and served as vice commander of a flight wing at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He retired from the military in 1977 after being passed over for brigadier general and then practiced law in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Colonel Day represented military retirees in a federal court case aimed at securing what they said were health benefits once promised by their recruiters.

He campaigned for Mr. McCain when he challenged George W. Bush for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination. When President Bush sought re-election in 2004, Colonel Day worked with the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth organization in sharply attacking Mr. Bush's Democratic opponent, Senator John Kerry, a decorated Vietnam veteran, over his antiwar activities after coming home. Colonel Day backed Mr. McCain's presidential bid in 2008.

In addition to his wife, Colonel Day is survived by two sons, Steven and George Jr.; two daughters, Sandra Hearn and Sonja LaJeunesse; and 14 grandchildren. Admiral Stockdale, his fellow prisoner of war, died in 2005. Looking back on the torment he endured as a prisoner, Colonel Day expressed pride over the way he and his fellow prisoners of war had conducted themselves. “As awful as it sounds, no one could say we did not do well,” he told The Associated Press in 2008. Being held prisoner “was a major issue in my life, and one that I am extremely proud of,” he said. “I was just living day to day.” The funeral will be 1 AUG. He will be buried at Barrancas National Cemetery at Naval Air Station Pensacola. [Source: New York Times | [Richard Goldstein](#) | 28 Jul 2013 ++]

Agent Orange Okinawa Update 06 ► Test Inconclusive.

Japan’s Ministry of Defense says it has detected components of Agent Orange in old barrels unearthed on land that was once part of Kadena Air Base. Soil and water testing found dioxin and another harmful components of the notorious U.S. military defoliant around about two dozen rusted containers — some marked with Dow Chemical Co.’s logo — that were discovered by Japanese crews digging at what is now a local soccer field in Okinawa City. Dow was one of the manufacturers of dioxin-laden herbicides that were used to strip away jungle cover for enemy combatants during the Vietnam War and later linked to severe illnesses and birth defects. The Okinawa Defense Bureau of the Ministry of Defense said the testing proves the barrels contained some type of herbicide, but the bureau stopped short of saying it was Agent Orange because only two of three chemical markers of the defoliant were found at the site. The drums appeared to have been buried empty, meaning it is likely the contents had been used, according to the bureau.



A Japanese worker brushes away dirt from one of 16 barrels unearthed 13 JUN in Okinawa City

The discovery adds to growing fears among Okinawans that the military once used and stored the dangerous defoliants at its many bases on the island. Recently, some American veterans have publicly claimed to have sprayed and come into contact with the defoliants during deployments here decades ago. The United States has repeatedly denied the substances were ever present on Okinawa. The Department of Defense said earlier this year that an investigation found no basis for the claims. Japanese authorities took photos of the barrels recovered from the soccer field. Last month, Dow Chemical said they did not match the type of containers used for the herbicide. The Japanese defense bureau said it tested samples from inside the barrels as well as from the surrounding soil and water and found traces of dioxin. The highly toxic pollutant can cause cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, immune system damage and hormone imbalances, according to the World Health Organization.

A second chemical herbicide — 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid — was also found in and around the barrels, according to a report the bureau provided to Stars and Stripes. The chemical was an ingredient in U.S. defoliants and was discontinued due to health concerns. However, another key component of Agent Orange - 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetic, a common herbicide that is still widely used - was not found at the site. The bureau said the lack of that chemical leaves it unable say whether the defoliant was in the containers. The Air Force has said the soccer field land was once part of Kadena and was returned to local control in 1987. The Ministry of Defense and Okinawa City plan to search the rest of the soccer field where the barrels were discovered and conduct additional soil sampling to determine if more herbicide is present. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Tritten and Chiyomi Sumida | 26 Jul 2013 ++]

DoD 2014 Budget Update 02 ► H.R.2397 Clears House.

The FY 2014 Defense Appropriations bill, H.R.2397, cleared the House on 24 JUL by a vote of 315 to 109. The bill provides the Pentagon \$512.5 billion in their base budget for FY2014 – \$3.4 billion below DoD’s request, but \$28.1 billion above the sequestration budget level if it remains in place for the next fiscal year – providing yet another reason to avert sequestration in order to give the Pentagon some budget certainty and planning for next year. The bill also includes \$85.8 billion in overseas contingency operations; \$5 billion above the Pentagon’s request. Incorporated in the bill is funding for a 1.8% pay raise as authorized by law and an additional \$519 million for the Defense Health Program above the budget request. Several key personnel-related amendments were adopted to include:

- Additional Fisher House funding.
- Mental health research, treatment, education and outreach expansion.
- Suicide prevention awareness and outreach expansion.
- Pilot program for Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Stopping or slowing civilian and Dual Status Military Technician furloughs.
- Prevention of Tricare for Life enrollment fee
- Funding to identify individuals separated on the grounds of a disorder after reporting a sexual assault and correcting their military records if needed

The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to take up their version of the bill the week of 29 JUL, but it’s unlikely to clear the full Senate before the August recess setting up the need for yet another continuing resolution by 1 OCT. During the month of August, most elected officials will be in their home states/districts meeting with constituents. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 26 Jul 2013 ++]

SECDEF Update 04 ► Hagel to Vets - Give Us a Hand

In his address 22 JUL to the Veterans of Foreign Wars national convention, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called on the nation's 22 million veterans to become partners in helping the Defense Department work through "historic transition and change." Every major conflict in U.S. history has been followed by a period of "realignment and redefinition," with "enormous ramifications and consequences for our entire defense enterprise," the secretary noted at the convention, being held in Louisville, Ky. As the Defense Department undergoes the latest realignments and reshapes the military for the future, Hagel called on veterans "who helped build our military into the strongest,

most capable and most respected on Earth" to help ensure it remains that way. "All of us at the Pentagon, and across this administration, value your perspective and devotion to our military men and women," he told the group. "We will need your help and partnership as we manage through a period of historic transition and change. "As I look out across this audience, I see thousands of veterans whose lives have been committed to helping our service members, their families and our veterans succeed, and to ensuring this country honors their legacy with policies that are worthy of their sacrifices," Hagel continued. "All of you, and the roughly 22 million veterans across this nation, have an important role to play in the debate over our country's future national security priorities." [Source: NGAUS Washington Report 23 Jul 2013 ++]

Same Sex Spouse ID Card ► DoD Policy

In response to the Supreme Court rulings on 26 JUN that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) recently published this information on the milConnect website. The Department of Defense (DoD) will review the decision of the Supreme Court carefully, in consultation with the Department of Justice. DoD has formed a working group so that they can immediately begin the process of implementing the Supreme Court's decision. DoD will immediately begin to update the identification card issuance infrastructure and update the applicable implementing guidance. They estimate that this process will take about 6-12 weeks. For civilian employees, the Department will look to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for guidance. For civilian employees who are eligible for ID card-related benefits, DoD intends that ID cards will be made available to same-sex spouses of civilian employees at the same-time as same-sex spouses of military members.

Eligibility for DoD benefits such as TRICARE is based on the sponsor's status and the family member's relationship with the sponsor. A currently military ID card may act as proof of eligibility but does not cause eligibility. milConnect at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect> is a web application provided by the DMDC that offers sponsors, spouses, and their children (18 years and older) access to their personal information, health care eligibility, personnel records, and other information from a centralized location. For a good overview of benefits that same-sex military spouses will be eligible for read After DOMA: What It Means for You from the LGBT Organizations Fact Sheet Series at http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/fs_post-doma-military-spouses-2013.pdf. [Source: <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect> Jul 2013 ++]

Traumatic Brain Injury Update 28 ► Sports/Military Suicide Link

Traumatic brain injury prior to combat duty may be partially to blame for the rise of veteran suicides. The unusual number of sports players who experienced TBI (traumatic brain injury) and later committed suicide, and the number of military vets who experienced TBI while in combat and later committed suicide, may not be a coincidence, say brain injury researchers. "Research on traumatic brain injury is of utmost concern right now for veteran disability advocates," commented veterans disability lawyer James Fausone. A new study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry has proposed a link between multiple concussions or traumatic brain injuries and suicidal actions later. In addition, the study found that a significant number of the men who experienced military-related TBI had a sports-playing history, which indicates that they may have experienced TBI on the playing field years earlier.

The study, conducted by an Air Force psychologist, looked at 161 individuals sent to his clinic for suspected concussions. Those interviewed were asked about any history of head trauma, any battles with depression, PTSD or

struggling with suicidal thoughts. The study concluded that many of the head injuries referenced by the study participants, in some cases as many as 6 injuries by one individual, were sustained prior to military service. Approximately 20 percent of the study participants reported that they experienced concussion during their basic training, and some reported that they had sustained as many as 15 different head injuries during their tour of duty. Post-traumatic stress disorder and depression are both high-risk factors for suicide, and combat experience typically would only increase their severity, said the researchers. Individuals who already experience one or both of these conditions and then join the service would explain why there are such high levels of suicide in the Armed Forces.

The researchers suggest that head trauma may set up a pre-existing disposition towards suicidal ideation or action which is then exacerbated by additional head trauma during combat. Exposure to an IED (improvised explosive device) buffets the brain within the skull by concussive shock waves, which can cause bleeding in the brain at numerous, hard-to-detect sites, causing damage. Subtle traumatic brain injury can be impossible to detect by an average physical; it is possible that many military personnel entered the service well enough to serve, and then subsequent damage further made them more susceptible to suicidal thoughts than someone who had not sustained sports-related concussions or other head injuries. [Source: Northville MI Law Firm Newswire article 16 JUL 2013 ++]

SBP DIC Offset Update 40 ► Widows Storm Hill

On 17 JUL, nearly 100 surviving spouses – including members of the MOAA Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) – MOAA staff, and various surviving spouse groups “Stormed the Hill” to ask Congress to support legislation to repeal the SBP/DIC offset. Current law requires survivors of deceased military members to forfeit their Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity when they are awarded Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) by the VA. The surviving spouse of an active-duty or retired member, who dies of a service-connected cause, must forfeit \$1 of the military SBP annuity for each \$1 received in DIC. DIC is presently set at \$1,215 monthly and is paid only to survivors of veterans whose death is determined to have been caused by service. This dollar for dollar offset wipes out most of the SBP payment for the vast majority of survivors. Tasked by Congress to review the SBP/DIC offset (also known as the “widows tax”) in October 2007, the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) concurred with MOAA and other military and veterans associations that when military service causes the member’s death, the VA indemnity compensation should be paid in addition to the SBP annuity, not subtracted from it.

The July 17th event was sponsored by MOAA and was designed to educate members of Congress and their legislative staffs and raise awareness of the SBP/DIC offset issue. Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) – champion of the SBP/DIC repeal bill (H.R.32) in the House and Chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee in the House Armed Services Committee – opened the event and spoke of the unfairness of the offset at a MOAA-hosted congressional breakfast. Two surviving spouses, Mrs. Traci Voelke and Mrs. Suzanne Gerstner, spoke about the death of their spouses and gave very different but compelling testimonials of the struggles their families face as a result of the offset. MOAA’s government relations team outlined the issue for the congressional staffers who were present at the event. “In order to fully understand the importance of complete elimination of the SBP/DIC offset, it is vital that [members of Congress] understand the issue and its impact on surviving spouses and families,” said MOAA President Vice Adm. Norb Ryan, USN (Ret). “The ultimate goal is complete elimination of the SBP/DIC offset, and I am proud of this group of surviving spouses for their advocacy and determination.”

After the briefings MOAA’s “Hill-stormers” set out to visit nearly every member of Congress who had not yet cosponsored the legislation to end the SBP/DIC offset. They brought with them MOAA’s new “Vow of Honor”

brochure highlighting the inequities of the offset. The storming efforts and the associated grassroots advocacy from MOAA members are already showing dividends with cosponsorship levels for both the House and Senate bills increasing. At http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXmdV_Ntv7g&feature=youtu.be is a video recap of this important event. You can help this important cause by sending your legislators a MOAA-suggested message or a message of your own drafting in support of H.R.32 at <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=62338471> and S.734 at <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=62602196>. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 19 Jul 2013 ++]

National Museum of the Marine Corps Update 02 ► Molly Marine Statue

The National Museum of the Marine Corps near Quantico, VA, recently dedicated a replica of the Molly Marine statue at the Museum. The original statue erected in New Orleans in 1943 symbolizes different qualities to different people. Poise, professionalism, possibility, courage, commitment, faithfulness, sacrifice, honor and integrity were all terms invoked by speakers at the dedication of the replica of Molly now in place at the Museum. The original statue, depicting a young woman in uniform, head held high, holding a book and a pair of binoculars, was created to help recruit women during World War II. It was the country's first monument of a female in service uniform. Other replicas stand at Parris Island and in front of the Gray Research Center aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico. Betty Moseley-Brown, president of the Women Marines Association, which was a major donor to the statue project, said Molly represents the courage and commitment that every female Marine exhibits when she leaves home to volunteer her service. "We stand taller, we walk with a quicker step, we rest easier because of our service and the service of men and women today who are standing the watch," said Moseley-Brown, who is a Marine Corps veteran.



At the dedication, Retired Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman, president and CEO of Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, which supports the museum said "The revolutionary change in the role of women in our Marine Corps in the last 70 years is an important part of our history." When he joined the Corps in 1970, there still wasn't a female pilot in the entire service, and women only served at bases and stations, he said, noting that the military has now lifted a ban on women serving in combat. Currently, about 13,000 of the Corps' 203,000 Marines are women. Dedicating the new statue, which stands among representations of other Marine Corps legends in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park beside the museum, Cmdr. Laura Bender, regimental chaplain of the Wounded Warrior Regiment, said, "We dedicate ourselves anew to all for which [Molly] stands."The statue was sponsored by the Women Marines

Association, the Young Marines, the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, and Capt. John Cusack and his daughter Sgt. Kristen Cusack. The Museum is located at 18900 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Triangle, VA 22172 Tel:1(877) 635-1775 For more information about the museum, refer to the National Museum of the Marine Corps website <http://www.usmcmuseum.com/index.asp>. [Source: Quantico Sentry | Mike Diccico | 10 Jul 2013 ++]

Native American Veterans Memorial ► Authorized But Never Built

A Native American Veterans Memorial authorized by Congress nearly 20 years ago but never built got a little boost from northeastern Oklahoma neighbors 24 JUL. U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin and Cherokee Nation Deputy Chief Joe Crittenden, both natives of Adair County, spoke in favor of renewing efforts to erect the memorial in Washington. “This is a subject very close to my heart,” Crittenden said during a hearing before the House Committee on Natural Resources’ subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs. “I am a Vietnam veteran and a Navy veteran, and I am proud of all the contributions that Cherokees and all Native Americans have made.” Mullin said the memorial would demonstrate an important aspect of American Indian heritage. “Heritage may be something a lot of people don’t understand” about American Indians, he said. “This is one way we can show pride in that heritage.”

Mullin is the author of House Resolution 2319, which amends existing legislation to revitalize the memorial. Oklahoma U.S. Rep. Tom Cole is a co-author of the resolution. Mullin is a member of the Cherokee Nation, Cole of the Chickasaw Nation. Mullin and others contend that American Indians serve in the military in greater proportions than any other ethnic group. The Native American Veterans Memorial was authorized in 1994 as a fixture within what was then a proposed National Museum of the American Indian. That museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution, has since been completed on the National Mall. But the memorial never advanced past the authorization stage.

Funding was to come completely from private sources, and Jacqueline Pata, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, said fundraising efforts were concentrated on the museum. “Now we think the museum is in a good place,” she said. Kevin Gover, the museum’s director and a member of Oklahoma’s Pawnee Nation, said passage of Mullin’s legislation would allow the museum foundation’s fundraisers to “go to work immediately” on raising money for the memorial. He said a budget for the project has not been set. Gover estimated that it would take five to seven years to design, fund and build the memorial — now planned for the outside of the museum — once Congress acts. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) has introduced a similar bill in the Senate. A vote on Mullin’s bill has not been scheduled. [Source: Tulsa World | Randy Krehbiel | 24 Jul 2013 ++]

Social Security Fund Depletion Update 09 ► Okay for 21 Years

A recent announcement by the Social Security actuaries that the Social Security Retirement Trust Fund will run out of money in 2034 has once again given rise to a round of concerned citizens asking: Will Social Security be there for me? The answer to the question depends on what "be there" means. Will the benefits be there at their current levels of purchasing power? Not necessarily. Will there be some benefits for workers who will retire in the future? Almost certainly. Should you alter your decision about when to claim Social Security benefits based on the actuaries' announcement? No.

Forecasting what will happen to Social Security is a bit different from forecasting other elements of workers retirement plans, since, unlike 401(k)s and private pensions, the Social Security Trust Fund doesn't invest in the stock market. Uncertainty about the future of Social Security benefits is largely a political question. Balancing the system to guarantee full benefits beyond 2034 will require a reduction in benefits or an increase in taxes. In the worst case scenario, assuming Congress makes no changes, the trust fund will be exhausted in the early 2030s. At that point only, the only remaining revenue source will be the contributions of those then working. Under these circumstances the system will be unable to pay more than 75% of the promised benefits. Social Security will "be there," but the benefits, while higher in face value because of the inflation protection built into the system, won't be able to purchase the same goods and services that benefits do today.

This worst case scenario need not occur. The pain of either of these actions is lessened if they are implemented over a long period. Even in this politically charged environment, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Congress will make adjustments to rebalance the system, as it did in the 1980s on the recommendation of the Greenspan Commission. At that point changes were made in anticipation of the baby boomer retirements that are now hitting the system. Even if the worst case does occur, would it be prudent to adjust the timing and circumstances under which Social Security retirements benefits are claimed? Here the answer is a clear "no". The Social Security Guide which is published by the Center for Retirement Planning at Boston College, makes the following statement after evaluating the most widely discussed proposals for rebalancing the system: "None of these proposals give you more if you claim early. If you are affected, you'll get less no matter when you claim." This is followed by the statement: "Nearly all proposals to fix Social Security would also protect those age 55 and older," a notion supported by Paul Ryan, who has recommended radical changes to Medicare, but no change in Social Security for people over 55. The one exception is the Obama proposal to use a different measure of the cost-of-living to adjust benefits to inflation.

Since Social Security doesn't suffer from the uncertainty of stock market fluctuations, Social Security is still the strongest component of most financial plans for retirement. The future, by its nature, is uncertain. At this point there is no reason to alter a well thought out strategy for claiming Social Security benefits. Most individual's are betting that Social Security will be there for them at a substantial percentage of current purchasing power. [Source: Market Watch | Jeff Miller | 9 Jul 2013 ++]

Pledge of Allegiance ► Vet Hand Salute

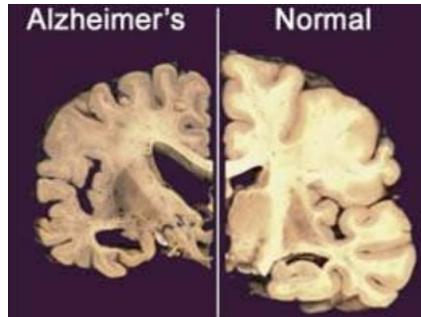
Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE-2) has reintroduced a bill to settle a debate about rendering hand salutes when not in uniform. Representative Terry, who never served in the military but whose congressional district includes Offutt Air Force Base, is sponsoring the Veterans Equality to Salute Act, or VETS Act (H.R.2284). The bill would allow service members and veterans who are not in uniform to render hand salutes during the Pledge of Allegiance, rather than putting their hands over their hearts. The bill was referred the House Judiciary Committee, the congressional panel responsible for all things related to the American flag and saluting. He introduced a similar bill in 2011, and the idea was passed by the House last year as a provision attached to 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill. But it was dropped during negotiations with the Senate. "This common-sense legislation creates parity for those veterans and active-duty military not in uniform who want to give a military-style salute when they are reciting the Pledge of Allegiance," Terry said in a statement, adding that a local VFW chapter suggested the change. The change would not be unprecedented. In 2008, Congress amended the flag code to allow veterans and service members not in uniform to issue hand salutes when the U.S. flag is raised or lowered. In 2009, the code was changed to allow a hand salute during the playing of the National Anthem. Terry's legislation includes no enforcement mechanism to

determine if the person giving a hand salute is or has served in the military. [Source: American Legion Leg Up 17 Jun 2013 ++]

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG, OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA , AND TO THE REPUBLIC, FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION UNDER GOD INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!

Alzheimer's Update 10 ► Cancer/Diabetes Impact Studies

Military veterans diagnosed with most forms of cancer were less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, and those treated with chemotherapy got even more protection, finds a study released 15 JUL at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. The study of 3.5 million veterans found an inverse relationship between Alzheimer's and most types of cancer — not prostate and melanoma, which are largely detected through screening rather than symptoms. Aggressive screening of veterans might find cancers that would not otherwise have caused problems, said researcher Jane Driver, in explaining why those cancers might not share the same relationship with Alzheimer's. More than 82,000 of the veterans developed Alzheimer's during the five years of the study, 24% of whom were previously diagnosed with cancer. When compared with projections for the general population, the risk of Alzheimer's was 51% lower than expected in liver cancer, 25% reduced in lung cancer and 13% lower in leukemia, according to the research. Other cancers' reduced risks seen in the study: pancreatic, 44%; esophageal, 33%; kidney, 22%; myeloma, 16%; lymphoma, 19%; head and neck, 15%.



Cross section of a normal brain and one damaged by advanced Alzheimer's disease.

There was no significant correlation between Alzheimer's and colorectal, bladder, stomach, genital, thyroid, sarcoma or brain cancer. Cancer patients who had chemotherapy lowered their Alzheimer's risk by 20%-45% for all cancers except prostate, the study showed. (Melanoma patients aren't typically treated with chemo. Other research also supports this inverse relationship, including an Italian study released late last week, that found that those diagnosed with Alzheimer's ran a 43% lower risk of developing cancer than those without the disease, and people with cancer had a 35% lower chance of developing Alzheimer's. That study, in the journal *Neurology*, did not look as closely at individual cancers or treatment differences, though it did find a weaker link with prostate cancer and melanoma. Driver said chemotherapy may offer extra protection because it reduces inflammation and may prevent brain cells from trying to divide. In Alzheimer's, brain cells often try to divide when they shouldn't, leading to the cells' death, she said. She said no one should take chemotherapy drugs, which are highly toxic, merely to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's, but the link suggests that it may be possible to develop medications to address both

diseases. Certain chemotherapy drugs may turn out to be more protective of the brain than others, she added, so it may make sense to prescribe them more often.

Although it doesn't suggest any immediate treatments for Alzheimer's, the apparent connection with cancer is "one more puzzle piece" in helping researchers understand the memory loss and behavior changes from Alzheimer's, a fatal disease that affects an estimated 5.2 million Americans and is expected to strike nearly three times more over the next generation. People with Alzheimer's suffer loss of memory, decreased thinking and language skills, and behavioral changes that can make caregiving challenging. Current treatments do not address underlying symptoms or stop progression of the fatal disease. "We're starting to really understand what are the different pieces of the puzzle that make someone at increased or decreased risk," said Heather Snyder, director of medical and scientific operations for the Alzheimer's Association, the advocacy and research group that runs the international conference. "Understanding the pieces will help unlock additional targets and therapies and identify people at increased risk."

Another study released this morning showed that diabetics who take the drug Metformin seem to be better protected against Alzheimer's than those taking other diabetes medications, including Sulfonylurea. Nearly 26 million Americans have type 2 diabetes, which is largely associated with lifestyle factors. Roughly half of those with diabetes develop Alzheimer's as they age, so finding a drug that is also protective against Alzheimer's is immensely important, said researcher Rachel Whitmer, an investigator with the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research. In her study of nearly 15,000 patients with type 2 diabetes, those who took Sulfonylurea had a 26% increased risk of developing Alzheimer's compared to those on Metformin. Not all patients can tolerate Metformin, but Whitmer said more research should certainly be done to see if that drug should be the first-line treatment for diabetes. Some of the other studies discussed at the conference were:

- Postponing retirement may protect against Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, likely because it keeps people intellectually engaged for longer, a study of French shopkeepers and crafts workers suggests;
- Socioeconomic differences such as education and income – not lifestyle factors or health status – may explain why African-Americans are more likely to develop Alzheimer's than whites, according to a study led by Kristine Yaffe of the University of California, San Francisco.
- An expert panel gathered by the University of British Columbia concluded that online tests for Alzheimer's are unreliable and unscientific as well as ethically questionable, because of likely conflicts of interest, lack of proper consent and privacy concerns.

[Source: USA TODAY | Karen Weintraub | 15 Jul 2013 ++]

Navy Ship Mail Policy ► 9 Digit Zip Codes

All mail sent to Navy ships, squadrons and mobile units must now use nine-digit zip codes or it will be returned to sender, according to a Navy statement 16 JUL. Mail without the nine-digit zip code that is currently en route will also be returned as undeliverable, according to both Tuesday's statement and a July 12 service memo from Navy Secretary Ray Mabus. The U.S. Post Office shuttered two of its coastal military mail operations and instead opened one processing center in Chicago, according to the statement. When they did so, they changed from manual sorting to an automated operation requiring the longer zip codes, which include the commonly known five digits, separated by a dash from the lesser known "plus-4" digits. Commanding officers have been directed to provide sailors with their nine-digit zip codes so they can, in turn, inform their correspondents. [Source: Stars & Stripes article 16 Jul 2013 ++]

Health Screening Update 03 ► Men Age 65 and Older

Over the past year, men were 24% less likely than women to see a doctor. This reluctance to seek medical care is dangerous. Many of the health risks that men face can be prevented or treated with early diagnosis. All adults should visit their health care provider from time to time, even if they are healthy. The purpose of these visits is to:

- Screen for diseases
- Assess risk of future medical problems
- Help develop a healthy lifestyle
- Update vaccinations
- Maintain a relationship with a doctor in case of an illness

Even if you feel fine, it is still important to see your health care provider regularly to check for potential problems. Most people who have high blood pressure don't even know it. The only way to find out is to have your blood pressure checked regularly. Likewise, high blood sugar and high cholesterol levels often do not produce any symptoms until the disease becomes advanced. There are specific times when you should see your health care provider. Age-specific guidelines for men age 65 and older are as follows:

- **Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening:**
 - Men between ages 65 - 75 who have smoked should have an ultrasound done once to screen for abdominal aortic aneurysms.
 - Other men should discuss such screening with their health care provider.
- **Blood pressure screening:**
 - Have your blood pressure checked every year.
 - If you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need to be watched more closely.
- **Cholesterol screening:**
 - If your cholesterol level is normal, have it rechecked every 5 years.
 - If you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need to be monitored more closely.
- **Colon cancer screening** for men age 50 - 75: One of the following screening tests should be done:
 - A stool test every year
 - Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years along with a stool occult blood test.
 - Colonoscopy every 10 years
 - After age 75, you should discuss colon cancer screening with your doctor
 - You may need screening earlier or more often if you have risk factors or a family history of colorectal cancer
- **Dental exam:**
 - Go to the dentist every year for an exam and cleaning.
- **Eye exam:**
 - Have an eye exam every 2 years, especially if you have vision problems or risk factors for glaucoma.
- **Immunizations:**
 - If you are over 65, get a pneumococcal vaccine if you have never had before, or if you received one more than 5 years before you turned 65.
 - Get a flu shot every year.
 - Get a tetanus-diphtheria booster every 10 years.
 - Get a Tdap vaccine if you have not had one.

- You may get a shingles or herpes zoster vaccination once after age 60. You can get it at any age if you never had the vaccination.
- **Osteoporosis screening:**
 - All men over age 65 should discuss osteoporosis screening with their health care provider.
- **Prostate cancer screening:**
 - All men should discuss prostate cancer screening with their health care provider.
 - During screening a PSA test is done.
- **Preventive health visit** each year should include:
 - Checking height and weight
 - Screening for alcohol and tobacco use
 - Screening for depression
 - Screening for the risk of falls
 - Discussing medication interactions
 - Screening for hearing loss

[Source: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007466.htm> Jun 2013 ++]



VA Claims Backlog Update 108 ► Bold Goal Drew Fire & Dollars

In setting an ambitious goal three years ago to end the Department of Veterans Affairs’ disability claims backlog in 2015, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki exposed himself to criticism, including calls to resign as the backlog rose. But that bold goal, Shinseki said, also helped VA get the funding it needed to modernize operations, including to phase out an inefficient, paper-driven claim processing system. “If I had written a plan that said we’re going to end the backlog in 2025, I wouldn’t have gotten any resources,” Shinseki said in an interview while he visited the VA regional claims processing office in Newark, N.J.

With extra billions of dollars appropriated for claims processing and other “transformative” initiatives, VA’s backlog finally is falling. It stood last week at 536,400, down from 608,000 in March. Shinseki said he remains confident it will be gone in 2015. He sounds a little less confident of ending homelessness among veterans by that year, another determined goal.

Regardless, the retired four-star general and former Army chief of staff doesn’t regret setting bold objectives. “I’ve been writing plans all my life. I never wrote a tentative plan. That’s not what you expect from a guy you want to solve a problem.” A VA claim is in “backlog” if not decided within 125 days. When Shinseki became secretary, early in 2009, VA tracked claim performance with a different yardstick: average time to decision. The average then was 191 days, Shinseki said. The average sought was 125 days. “So if I completed a claim in one day, and another claim in 249 days, that’s a 125-day average, and that would have ended the backlog,” Shinseki said. “It just seemed

to me a bad way to define the problem or try to solve it. So we said: No claims over 125 days.”As newly defined, the backlog was 180,000 by September 2009. Over the next three years it more than tripled, passing 600,000, even as VA hired thousands more claim processors. VA was deciding a million claims a year, yet the backlog grew with as many as 1.3 million claims pouring in.

Only part of the flood of claims is from veterans who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Shinseki explains to Congress and to his own claims staff, it was his decisions to aid more veterans, including from the generation he went to war with in Vietnam, that helped to create the backlog. Under Shinseki, VA simplified the process for filing post-traumatic stress disorder claims from veterans of all wars. He made compensable more illnesses for 1990-91 Gulf War veterans exposed to toxins and other health threats in that campaign. He also added ischemic heart disease, Parkinson’s disease and B-cell leukemia to the list of ailments for which Vietnam veterans can receive disability compensation, on presumption wartime exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange caused these conditions. This last decision alone resulted in 280,000 retroactive claims. As of last month, 166,000 veterans with at least one of these illnesses, or surviving spouses, received more than \$4.5 billion in VA pay. Thousands of additional Agent Orange claims are being filed monthly.

Shinseki stands by his Agent Orange decisions, citing scientific studies. But for two years, VA had to reassign 2300 of its most experienced claim processors – a third of the staff – to review old claims that qualified for special handling under a 1985 Nehmer court ruling. Shinseki said he could be faulted for not better understanding requirements that Nehmer imposed so VA was better prepared for the extra workload. “They had to go through every page of every claim. It wasn’t enough to say, ‘Vietnam, exposure to Agent Orange and therefore Parkinson’s disease [so] grant service connection.’ The Nehmer decision required them to see if there was anything else in the file...page by page by page. And, by the way, Nehmer goes to the head of the line. Everything else waits...I should have asked more questions.” Shinseki promised in 2010 not only to end the backlog in 2015 but also to raise the decision accuracy rate to 98 percent, up from the low 80s. These goals, Shinseki guessed while visiting the claims staff in Newark last month, must have made a few of them “suck wind through your teeth.” That was also the reaction by some at headquarters, he told me.

“Somebody said, ‘Is he crazy?’ ‘No, no, no,’ I said. ‘I’m just asking: Is this a good goal? If it is, then we will go figure out how to get there.’ ” First priority was to begin to replace paper claims with electronic ones. Last month, six months early, VA completed rollout of an electronic claims processing program, the Veterans Benefits Management System. VBMS allows the 56 VA regions to accept new claims electronically. It also allows VA to accelerate a massive process of scanning existing paper claims into computers to be processed and decided faster and more accurately. Earlier this year, as criticism of the rising backlog intensified, Shinseki set a two-month deadline to identify and complete 66,000 claims more than two years old. VA expedited the process for claims at least a year old using new provisional approval authority to start benefits based on evidence submitted to date. He ordered mandatory overtime of 20 hours a month for all claims processors. And VA established a partnership with the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans to have their claim experts certify claim packets they worked as “fully developed” and ready for decision.

To meet the 98 percent accuracy goal, Shinseki hopes for support from Congress and vet groups to redefine a term. VA now counts a completed claim as “accurate” if every medical condition identified is rated correctly. So if an individual claims 12 conditions, and one is rated wrong, the claim doesn’t qualify as accurate in tracking VA performance. The all-or-nothing approach ignores a lot of good staff work, Shinseki said. It would be more appropriate, he suggested, to base performance on percentage of conditions rated correctly, not claims flawlessly decided. Under such a change, VA would have an accuracy rate today of 95 percent, just shy of the 98 percent mark promised by 2015, officials said. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Tom Philpott | 18 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Claims Backlog Update 109 ► Pay Based on Productivity

The notably unproductive House wants to cut the pay of top Veterans Affairs officials if the department doesn't significantly reduce its disability claims backlog by next year. Legislation approved by the House would slice 25 percent from the pay of the agency's senior political leadership if a goal is not met. The portion of disability claims 125 days old could not exceed 40 percent by July 1 next year. As of 20 JUL 65 percent of the claims were more than 125 days old, according to VA. Wages — from the department's secretary through the assistant secretaries — would be cut for a three-month period from July 1 through Sept. 30, 2014. "The pace with which the VA is examining claims is unacceptable and must be fixed," Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA), the sponsor of the provision, said in a statement. "When a soldier puts his life on the line for this country, he shouldn't be left waiting a year for help when he gets home. . . . If the leadership at the VA cannot reduce the backlog, they should see their pay cut."

The department already has stopped giving bonuses to some of its senior executives. "Based on VBA's organizational performance goals, senior executives will not receive performance awards for FY 2012," said Victoria Dillon, acting press secretary. "Instead, the funds will be reinvested to accelerate elimination of the backlog." Across the agency, bonuses dropped from \$3.3 million in 2009 to \$2.3 million in 2012. Despite Kingston's contention, there has been progress on the backlog. "Today, VA has the lowest total claims inventory since August 2011," Secretary Eric K. Shinseki told a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Louisville on 22 JUL. "Barring any changes in entitlements, this number will continue to decline, and VA remains committed to eliminating the backlog in disability claims in 2015." During the past three months, "the backlog has dropped from 591,000 to 515,000," he said. "Claims over two years old have dropped from over 42,000 to about 1,700." If that's not enough for Kingston, fair enough. But perhaps his pay cut solution also should apply to Congress, particularly the House and especially the Republicans who control that chamber.

Sen. Bernard Sanders (I-VT), chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, criticized the House bill as politically motivated and said it ignored progress that the VA is making in reducing the backlog. At a 23 JUL afternoon news briefing on Capitol Hill, Sanders jokingly suggested that House members instead consider docking their own pay based on the legislation they pass. "Those guys would end up owing money," he said. But it's no joke. Citing a report (<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/07/vital-statistics-congress-mann-ornstein>) by Brookings and the American Enterprise Institute, my colleague Chris Cillizza wrote last week that "the 112th Congress (2011-2013) got less done than any Congress in more than six decades." A recent Huffington Post headline also tells the story: "113th Congress on Pace to be Least Productive in Modern History." The article, updated on 11 JUL, said that "the current Congress has had just 15 bills signed into law so far, the fewest in recent history."

That has real ramifications for the government and its staffers, but apparently it's fine with the top man in the House, Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio). "[W]e should not be judged on how many new laws we create," he said on CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "We ought to be judged on how many laws that we repeal." Republicans are even refusing to cooperate on a new budget, which directly affects federal agencies, their workplaces and employees. The Senate and the House have approved separate spending plans, but Republicans refuse to agree to a conference committee that would work out differences in the bills. "We have called upon the speaker of the House to appoint conferees to negotiate on the budget," Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) told his colleagues Tuesday. "He has refused." Michael Steel, a spokesman for Boehner, unconvincingly placed the blame for no House conferees on Senate Democrats. The usual practice, he said, is for "the House and Senate Budget committee leaders to come to an agreement on a framework before formally appointing conferees. . . . It is difficult, obviously, to reach such an agreement when the Senate Democrats' budget never, ever balances."

Federal employees, more than the average citizen, know from experience that is more than just another political gambit. No budget means uncertainty — uncertainty for employees and uncertainty for their ability to serve the public. “By not going to budget conference — let’s be clear,” Van Hollen said. Republicans “want to take us right up to the cliff of government shutdown in the beginning of October, next fiscal year. They’re talking about once again rolling the dice and playing a game of chicken as to whether or not the United States pays its bills on time. “That is no way for the federal government to conduct itself.” [Source: The Washington Post | The Federal Diary | Joe Davidson | 25 Jul 2013 ++]

VA VESO ► Overview

The Veteran employment service Office (VESO) was set up to fill open jobs with our nation's Veterans, support them while they work at VA, help them as they deploy to serve in the National Guard and Reserve and ease reintegration back into the VA workplace. VESO is a strategic program management office that oversees all VA Veteran employment initiatives and manages VA for Vets, its flagship initiative. VA for Vets is a comprehensive career support and management program for Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members and VA employees. VESO and VA for Vets play a vital role in leveraging high-touch services with the latest technology. If you are a Veteran interested in working at VA and have questions about updating your resume, using the Career Center, translating your military skills into the civilian workforce, or just need to talk to someone for guidance, you may contact a Career Coach. Career Coaches provide:

- Guidance for using the Career Center and other resources.
- Application, resume and cover letter reviews.
- Practice interviews.
- Assistance with selecting the appropriate application format.
- Follow-up support to keep you on track to reach your career goals.

To learn more about VESO and what it can do for you go to <http://vaforvets.va.gov/sites/veso/Pages/default.aspx>. To begin working with a coach, call 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387, TTY: 1-855-824-8833). You can also complete the Request a Coach Form to have a coach assigned to you. [Source: www.va.gov Jul 2013 ++]

VA VESO Update 01 ► IG Reports Excessive Acquisitions

The Veterans Affairs Department is spending millions on employment call centers where workers have handled as few as one or two calls a day ever since the facilities opened in October 2011, according to a recent inspector general report. The two centers are operated and staffed by a private contractor and were opened to increase the number of veterans working for the department. However, the 25 JUN report concluded the department acquired “excess services” toward its goal and in fact turned the centers into 24/7 operations despite the low volume. The centers handled an average of 180 calls a day -- equal to about 2.4 per operator – through December 2012. The highest daily-call average was in July 2012 when operators handled an average of 4.5 calls a day, according to the 21-page report. The average number dropped to 2.3 calls daily by September. But the department officials still decided the next month to expand hours of operation to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week based on contractor projections. The average number of calls per operator dropped to 1.4 by December 2012. And one call for every 12 projected was made over the next 13 months -- an overestimate of more than 1,000 percent, according to FierceGovernment.com.

The centers are overseen by the department's Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO), established in July 2011 to recruit and retain more veteran employees. They were established by the department expanding an agreement with the Office of Personnel Management. The report concluded the over-expansion was the result of the VESO failing to routinely request call data from the contractor. The department spent \$2.2 million in 2012 on the centers and is projected to spend at least \$13.1 million through fiscal 2015, which brings the total to an estimated \$15.3 million. The report is among the latest to find high costs and inefficiency within the department. In March, roughly 70 percent of veterans' claims took longer than 125 days to process while the department's budget has increased by about 40 percent over the past four years.

The IG report also found the employment services office awarded a one-year, \$4.4 million contract for human resources support services that in fact "duplicated VESO's own internal capacities." The agency's acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration Rafael Torres said in the report the agency will take corrective action and that it will likely spend less than the projected \$4.4 million on human resource efforts. The report said the excessive acquisitions occurred because the department's Office of Human Resources and Administration "did not conduct a thorough analysis to justify the need for the services." [Source: FoxNews.com article 15 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Hospice Care Update 03 ► Butterfly Wish Program

For the past year and a half, staff at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, MI have been enriching the lives of both terminally and chronically ill veterans through the Butterfly Wish program. The program allows hospice patients, who have a life expectancy of less than six months, and palliative care patients, who have chronic conditions, to have a wish fulfilled. "Wishes range from simple to significant," explained Brad Nelson, VA public affairs officer. "But we always try to make it a complete package." One veteran asked to visit his wife's grave in Bruce Crossing one last time. Thanks to the Butterfly Wish program, he received transportation from Iron Mountain to Bruce Crossing, flowers for the grave, and food for a picnic. Another veteran requested a recumbent bicycle that would be more comfortable than a regular bicycle for him to use.



Vietnam War veteran Steve Steeno received a recumbent bicycle

Other veterans have decided to visit grandchildren and great-grandchildren downstate, celebrate a special wedding anniversary, enjoy a catered meal with family, take a trip to the casino in a limousine, eat a lobster dinner

flown in from Maine, have a Christmas party, and receive Green Bay Packers or Detroit Lions footballs. Wishes are granted as often as the opportunity arises. Selena Okler, palliative care coordinator for the VA, pointed out that there is often only a small window of time to make wishes happen, due to the life expectancies of the veterans involved. "Many get their wishes just before they pass on," she said. Okler's goal is to offer wishes to 100 percent of hospice patients and up to 10 percent of palliative care patients. The VA has at least four hospice in-patients at a time. There are many more in home-based care, which is coordinated by Mary Bertucci. Okler and Bertucci said that they often have to give veterans ideas for their wishes. "Some don't want anything, they think they have it all already," Bertucci added. However, the process of discussing possible wishes may be therapeutic in itself.

"Conversations that occur between our healthcare team, veterans, and families while identifying the wish help develop and establish trusting relationships," said Okler. Families of the veterans also benefit from the program. "It changes the atmosphere at a difficult time in their lives and gives everyone something to look forward to," said Okler. "It leaves some positive memories." All funding for the Butterfly Wish program comes from outside sources like veteran service organizations and donations. "Volunteer Services is a huge key to our success," Okler noted. "Staff and other veterans are also essential." There is no cost to the veterans who receive wishes. For more information on the Butterfly Wish program, contact Okler at 906-774-3300, ext. 34504 or Bertucci at 906-774-3300, ext. 32561. [Source: The Daily News | Nikki Younk | 15 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Medical Foster Home Update 03 ► H.R.2726

On 18 JUL Chairman Jeff Miller, of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced H.R.2726, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, to enhance and improve VA's existing Medical Foster Home (MFH) program. Established in 2000, a VA-certified MFH is a private residence where a VA-approved caregiver provides 24-hour support to eligible veterans. A VA-participant home cannot accept more than three veterans, and veterans are eligible for these placements when their care would otherwise need to be met in institutional settings. The MFH program is a humane alternative to nursing home placements. Health care for these residents is supervised in the home by VA's Home-Based Primary Care program or VA spinal cord injury home care program. Currently, the MFH program requires participating veterans to pay approximately \$1,500 to \$4,000 per month for this 24-hour caregiver supervision, including room and board. Even a veteran who is otherwise entitled to VA nursing home care at no expense must pay to reside in a VA-approved MFH.

H.R.2726 would authorize VA to enter into a contract or other agreement with a VA-certified MFH and would pay the full cost of this residential care of service-connected veterans if they are eligible for VA-funded nursing home care. Under this bill, as a component of such care, eligible veterans would also receive VA home health services at no cost. This is an important bill that would give priority to service-connected disabled veterans, and would give them an important alternative to nursing home care. DAV strongly supports this bill based on a long-standing national resolution approved by their members. DAV is urging all those in veteran community concerned about elder vet care to join them. Towards this they have prepared an editable message available at <http://capwiz.com/dav/issues/alert/?alertid=62782956&PROCESS=Take+Action> to send to your Representative in Congress urging him/her to co-sponsor and support passage of this important bill, and to ask that it be brought to the House floor for a vote and enacted as soon as possible. [Source: DAV | Take Action | 25 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Records Update 01 ► 30% Claims Inventory Digitalized

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reached another milestone in its disability claims transformation process – over 30 percent of the current disability claims inventory is now digital and accessible to claim raters in VA’s electronic claims processing system, which has now been fielded ahead of schedule at all 56 Regional Offices across the country. This effort is a key part of transforming outdated paper processing into an electronic system that is delivering disability claims decisions for Veterans more quickly. In addition, all incoming paper claims are transformed into digital records for electronic processing using VA’s new claims processing software and electronic repository. “A key element that slows our process is the thousands of tons of paper documents we handle each year related to Veterans’ claims,” said Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. “While we continue to expand our ability to process claims electronically, we still have to handle those we receive in paper form— the Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) is our answer to this and helps us move into a fully digital environment.”

On Sep. 28, 2012, VA established the VCIP program to maximize the use of electronic intake for all claims, creating digital, searchable files. The document conversion service, part of VCIP, has now been implemented at all 56 VA regional claims processing offices across the country. VCIP is a capability that enables high-speed document scanning to help VA end its reliance on paper-based claims. With VCIP, a new paper claim that is received at a regional office is recorded in VA’s electronic claims processing system—called the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)—and shipped to one of three document conversion locations to be scanned and converted into digital images. The document images, which are made keyword searchable in the conversion, are placed into a VBMS electronic folder for use by the VA employees who work the Veteran’s claim. Digital conversion improves processing timeliness by eliminating paper folder transport, reducing manual data entry, streamlining the review of medical records, and standardizing correspondence with Veterans and beneficiaries. To date, VA has converted more than 165 million pages of claims documents to digital images, and continues to add over 1 million images into VBMS every day. “Finding a key piece of evidence in a thick paper file folder takes time,” said James Thomas, a claims specialist at the Salt Lake VA Regional Office. “With digital claims records, we can find all the key information related to the claim with a key stroke.”

At the same time, VA is working closely with the Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Service Organizations to urge Veterans and separating Servicemembers to file their disability claims electronically and, when possible, to file a Fully Developed Claim through the joint DoD/VA online portal, eBenefits (www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits). Registered eBenefits users with a Premium account can file a claim online, track the status, and access information on a variety of other benefits, including pension, education, health care, home loan, and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs. Additionally, eBenefits users can take advantage of 50 self-service features that both VA and DoD have made available. VA is continuing to implement several initiatives to meet Secretary Shinseki’s goal to eliminate the claims backlog in 2015. In May, VA announced that it was mandating overtime for claims processors in its 56 regional benefits offices to increase production of compensations claims decisions, which will continue through the end of FY 2013. In June, VA announced that under an initiative launched in April to expedite disability compensation claims decisions for Veterans who have waited a year or longer, more than 65,000 claims nationwide – or 97 percent of all claims over two years old in the inventory – had been eliminated from the backlog.

Today, VA’s total claims inventory remains at lower levels not seen since August 2011 and the number of claims in the VA backlog – claims pending over 125 days – has been reduced by nearly 12 percent since the “oldest claims first” initiative began. VA continues to prioritize disability claims for homeless Veterans, those experiencing extreme financial hardship, the terminally ill, former Prisoners of War, Medal of Honor recipients, and Veterans filing Fully Developed Claims, which is the quickest way for Veterans to receive a decision on their compensation claim (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/>). Claims for Wounded Warriors separating from the military for medical

reasons will continue to be handled separately and on a priority basis with DoD through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). Veterans can learn more about disability benefits, and register and/or upgrade to a free Premium account on the joint Department of Defense/VA web portal eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov. [Source: VA News Release 18 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Travel Allowance Update 14 ► Annual \$1.5B if All Vets Used

Over the past five years, the cost of reimbursing eligible veterans for travel expenses associated with getting medical care at Department of Veterans Affairs facilities has more than doubled, to nearly \$1 billion annually, the Government Accountability Office reports. Much of the growth in the Beneficiary Travel Program, the VA inspector general noted earlier this year, is due to an increase in mileage reimbursement. For 30 years, eligible veterans got 11 cents a mile to travel to the VA for health care. In February 2008, the VA boosted it – under orders from Congress — to 28.5 cents. Nine months later, the VA boosted it again – again, at congressional behest — to 41.5 cents per mile. “In December 2009, VHA [Veterans Health Administration] reported that since the November 2008 mileage rate increase, mileage claims increased 76 percent with a 30 percent increase in the number of veterans claiming travel reimbursements, the IG said. “VHA also estimated that if all veterans eligible for reimbursement sought reimbursement for their mileage, VA would incur expenses in excess of \$1.5 billion per year.” The VA has said the travel-payments program is “a program that is susceptible to significant improper payments,” and pegged them at \$71 million last year. Vets seeking reimbursements sometimes use false addresses, carpool or take public transit to VA facilities and file for such payments even though they are not entitled to them. [Source: Time U.S. | Mark Thompson | 16 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Pain Management Update 01 ► Painkiller Epidemic

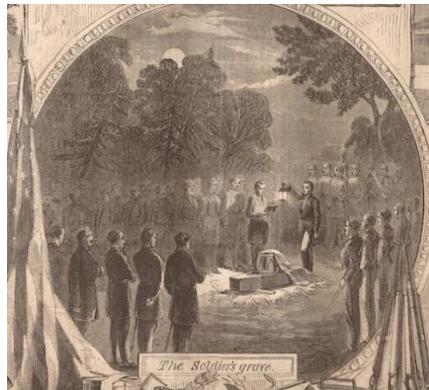
Dr. Robert Kerns spoke recently with North Carolina's Fayetteville Observer's staff writer John Ramsey about the painkiller epidemic and the Department of Veterans Affairs' position on prescription drugs and their use. Dr. Kerns is the Department of Veterans Affairs national program director for pain management. A professor of psychiatry, neurology and psychology at Yale University, Kerns also serves on the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Advancing Pain Research, Care, and Education. The interviewer opened with the question, *"The number of hydrocodone prescriptions at the Fayetteville VA went from about 1,100 in 2001 to more than 47,000 last year. That's a 4,100 percent increase when hydrocodone prescriptions have gone up nationally by about 56 percent. Do those number raise any red flags?"* To read Dr. Kerns response to this issue and a number of others the full interview is provided in the attachment to this Bulletin titled, "**DVA Pain Management Program**". [Source: Fayetteville Observer | John Ramsey | 17 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Burial Benefit Update 23 ► Applicant Policy Too Restrictive

Federal policy is preventing some veterans with unmarked graves from getting headstones and tombstones to mark their final resting places, and some supporters of historic cemeteries want that changed. Supporters in Ohio and Kentucky are among those who want to change a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs policy they say is too restrictive, The Cincinnati Enquirer reported. The federal regulation defines "applicant" as the veteran's next of kin,

a person authorized in writing by the next of kin or a representative authorized in writing by the veteran. But members of historical groups and those working to preserve Civil War-era cemeteries say the policy wasn't consistently enforced until last year. Some seeking to get markers for veterans' unmarked graves say they've been turned down because they weren't direct descendants, the newspaper said.

A national campaign to change the policy has launched an online petition at <http://www.marktheirgraves.org> asking that the VA make the regulation inapplicable to veterans who served more than 62 years ago. The petition collected 1,950 signatures as of 18 JUL, the newspaper reported. "This is having an impact all across America," said Jeff Richman, leader of a committee behind the petition. Richman is the historian for Green-Wood Cemetery in a Brooklyn, N.Y. It contains graves of 3,300 Civil War veterans. Richman said the policy creates an impossible and unnecessary burden for groups seeking to honor veterans who served generations ago. U.S. Rep. Steven Stivers (R-OH) introduced has introduced H.R.2018 (Honor Those Who Served) legislation to change the policy. His proposal would allow anyone to apply for a marker or headstone if no next of kin can be found for a veteran who served on active duty in the Armed Forces at least 62 years before the date on which the marker is requested. For more recent veterans, the legislation would allow an application to be filed by a state veterans service agency, military researchers, local historians, genealogists, or others familiar with research sources or methods needed to prove a veteran's identity. The Enquirer reported that the VA's National Cemetery Administration says the agency understands the concern that the definition of an applicant for a marker may be "too limiting" and is reviewing the regulation.



“A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces—but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.”

- President John Fitzgerald Kennedy

VA spokeswoman Jo Schuda said 19 JUL that there have been instances of well-meaning individuals and organizations taking action to mark graves or replace headstones without family members' knowledge. The current policy was intended to avoid the possibility of that happening, she said. Among those lobbying to change the policy are supporters of Wesleyan Cemetery in Cincinnati. Kathy Dahl, a retired naturalist with the Cincinnati Park Board, has been a leader in unsuccessful efforts by the city of Cincinnati and nearly a dozen historical groups and other organizations to get VA markers for six African-American Civil War veterans in unmarked graves at that cemetery. Genealogists and researchers looked for descendants, but could only find next of -kin for two, Dahl said. The Sons of the American Revolution also want a marker or gravestone to mark the Wesleyan Cemetery plot for a Revolutionary War soldier. Tom Honebrink, general manager of 142-year-old Highland Cemetery in Fort Mitchell, Ky., said there also are military graves there that remain unmarked. "Nobody wants to see veterans' graves unmarked," he said. [Source: Associated Press article

VA Burial Benefit Update 24 ► Honoring Confederate Dead

On 19 JUN, an array of top government officials gathered for the unveiling of a statue of Frederick Douglass, the 19th-century African-American man born a slave who rose to be a vice-presidential candidate. That politicians and the federal government continue to memorialize black leaders and abolitionists of that era surprises no one, but few are aware of the other side of that coin: how much Washington pays to memorialize the Confederate dead. The most visible commemoration comes every Memorial Day when the president places a wreath at the Confederate Monument in Arlington National Cemetery, the vast memorial built on an estate confiscated from Robert E. Lee. Lower down in public awareness is the fact that 10 military bases -including prominent installations like Fort Lee and Fort Bragg -- are named after Confederate leaders, a fact that Jamie Malanowski highlighted and criticized in a Memorial Day New York Times op-ed that stirred a heated debate.



Confederate graves, featuring the Southern Cross of Honor, at Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, S.C.

But even most Civil War experts don't realize the federal government has spent more than \$2 million in the past decade to produce and ship headstones honoring Confederate dead, often at the request of local Confederate heritage groups in the South, and overwhelmingly in Georgia. Going back to at least 2002, the government has provided more headstones for Confederate graves than for Union soldiers' graves. In that time, the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided approximately 33,000 headstones for veterans of the Civil War. Sixty percent of those have been for Confederate soldiers. The federal government provides headstones for Confederate dead all over the country: 18,593 of them in the last 10 years, and an average of more than 2,000 per year going back at least several years before that, according to the VA. At an average cost of around \$176 to manufacture each headstone, and an average shipping cost of \$75, that's more than half a million dollars every year. The total cost over the last 10 years is lower due to inflation: In 2003, the manufacturing cost was closer \$100 per headstone, and shipping was around \$10. By far the lion's share of these headstones are for graves in Southern states and for a number of years, Georgia had more than twice as many orders as any other state. [Source: The Atlantic | Steven I. Weiss | 19 Jul 2013 ++]

Thor's Hammer Symbol Approved

VA Burial Benefit Update 25: Marines who label themselves modern-day heathens and wish to mark their grave with Thor's hammer — their religion's version of a cross or Star of David — now have Veterans

Affairs approval to do so. While some only know of Thor as a comic book hero, he actually dates back to Norse mythology. Thor used his magical hammer to protect humans and other gods from giants. But today, that hammer means something special to those who practice Ásatrú and worship the Norse Gods. And as NPR's "The World" reported 18 JUL, those who identify as such and served in the military now have the option of marking their gravestone with Thor's hammer. Refer to <http://www.theworld.org/2013/07/thor-hammer-approved-symbol> to read NPR's article.



Hammer of Thor Symbol

NPR interviewed John Browlee, a Boston-based writer who reports on technology, about the tie between those who practice the religion and Thor's hammer. He estimates there are between 10,000 and 20,000 self-labeled modern-day heathens in the U.S. To them, Browlee said, Thor's hammer is their sort of crucifix — the symbol of their religion. It symbolizes what Thor stands for: honor, bravery, loyalty and virtue. Many of the same traits respected in the military, he added. But getting Thor's hammer recognized as a legitimate religious emblem by the VA wasn't easy, he said. Reason being that the VA had a problem with pagan symbols, and Thor's hammer got lumped into that debate. Now Thor's hammer is one of 56 symbols approved by the VA that those who served in the military can request to have added to their headstones. Go to <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hmm/embrms.asp> to view all 56 symbols. [Source: MarineTimes Battle Rattle | Gina Harkins | 23 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Sexual Trauma Program Update 06 ► Insufficient for Male Victims

Military sexual assault victims say the Department of Veterans Affairs isn't doing enough to provide care and treatment for their trauma, especially when it comes to men who have been sexually abused. VA officials insist they are working as quickly as possible to address those concerns, noting that they've seen sharp increases recently in the number of veterans receiving care for military sexual trauma. "But as much as we have done over the last few years, there are significant gaps ... that we need to address," said Dr. Rajiv Jain, VA's assistant deputy undersecretary for patient care services. More than 85,000 veterans received sexual trauma-related care from VA medical personnel in fiscal 2012, an increase of almost 11 percent from the year before. The number of appointments and care meetings increased more than 13 percent from fiscal 2011 to fiscal 2012. Nearly one in four women seeking any medical care from the VA have reported suffering sexual assault or abuse during their military careers. That has prompted department officials to bolster their services in recent years, expanding treatment programs, assigning military sexual assault specialists in all VA health facilities, and mandating screening for all veterans entering the system.

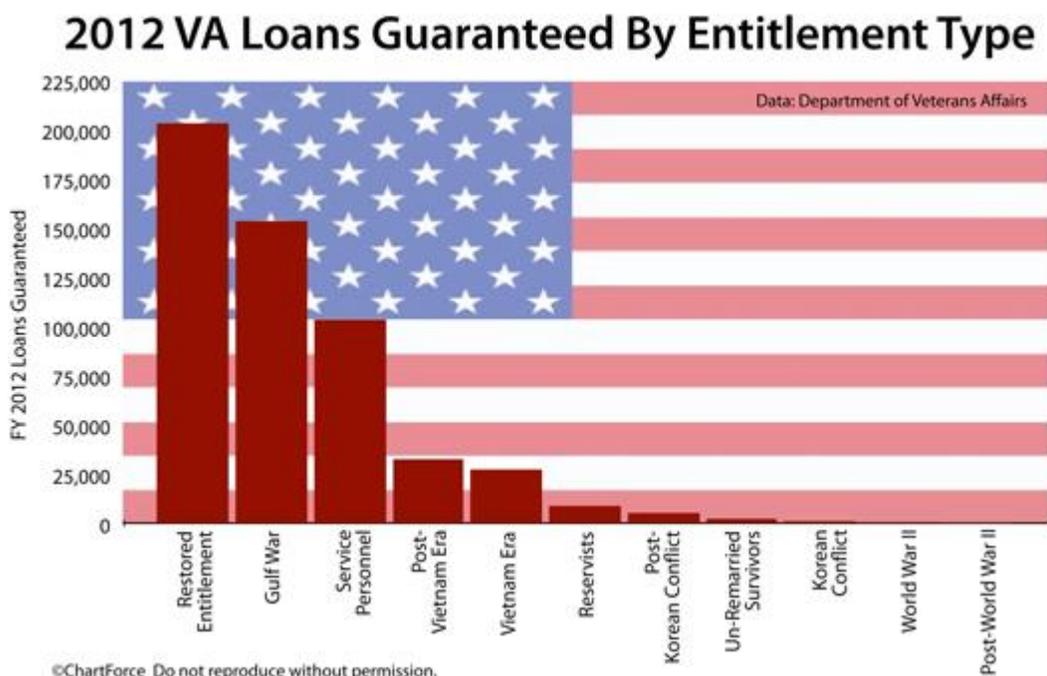
But the VA Inspector General and a panel of victims on 19 JUL told members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee that many of those efforts have fallen short, frustrating and possibly endangering vulnerable veterans. Brian Lewis, a Navy veteran who was raped by a fellow servicemember in 2000, said of the 12 VA post-traumatic stress disorder residential facilities nationwide that specialize in sexual assault counseling, only one accepts male patients. The department offers no men-only support groups. "Many people see this as only a women's issue," he said. "That is not the case. The VA is fundamentally failing male survivors of military sexual trauma every day." But Lisa Wilken, an Air Force veteran assaulted by peers in 1993, said many victims who are frustrated with a lack

of offerings by the VA find it impossible to seek care outside the system, because of the department’s reluctance to pay for non-VA counselors. Others said the department’s screening efforts leave too many victims out.

An inspector general investigation found that VA travel voucher policies also make getting care difficult for many victims, and that many of the staffers assigned as the sexual assault care liaison are assigned that role as a secondary responsibility, not a sole focus. Military sexual assault has become a major focus of lawmakers in recent weeks, albeit more on the prevention and prosecution side than the long-term treatment. Lawmakers are considering changes to how sex crimes in the ranks are investigated and handled by military legal officials, including the possibility of sending those cases to an outside, independent body. But committee members say they are worried about the treatment issues too, and have promised to offer more legislation and scrutiny on the topic in coming months. VA officials have already promised that any veteran who has experienced military sexual trauma can seek care within the system, regardless if they are eligible for other veterans benefits. Jain said VA has established a working group to address complaints outlined by the inspector general, and said officials are also searching for fixes to the problems brought up by victims at the hearing. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Leo Shane | 19 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Loans ► 2012 Overview

In 1944, the government passed the G.I. Bill, a law which provided a wide range of benefits to U.S. soldiers returning from World War II. One of the G.I. Bill's programs -- the VA Loan Guaranty -- awarded veterans with at least 90 days of active duty during the war years access to low-cost mortgages nationwide. Nearly 70 years later, the VA Loan Guaranty program has been used more than 20 million times. The Department of Veterans Affairs program continues to help eligible military borrowers purchase, refinance and renovate homes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2012, more than \$119 billion in VA loans were funded nationwide and World War II veterans continue to benefit from the program -- 684 VA loans were made to World War II vets, specifically, last year.



The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the VA Loan Guaranty program. The agency doesn't make VA loans directly -- the loans are made by banks. The VA simply guarantees a portion of the loan, which protects the bank from loss. Because of this guarantee, VA lenders can provide military borrowers with more favorable loan terms than for a non-guaranteed loan (e.g.; conventional mortgage). There are five VA loan guaranty programs :

1. Purchase Loans, for the purchase of a new home
2. Cash Out Refinance loans, for taking cash from your home
3. Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loans (IRRRL), for lowering your existing VA mortgage rate. Refer to <http://themortgagereports.com/10592/va-streamline-refinance> for more info on this.
4. Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program, for purchase, construction or improvement of homes
5. Adapted Housing Grants, for veterans with permanent and total service-connected disability

Each program can be used for the purchase of a single-family or multi-family home, including housing units in condominium buildings and co-ops. VA refinance loans can also be used for home renovation and energy-efficiency programs. There is [no official loan size limit](#) with the VA Loan Guaranty program, but limitations can apply based on your area. For more info on size limit refer to <http://themortgagereports.com/13174/the-va-loan-guaranty-program-no-specific-loan-limits-for-eligible-va-borrowers>. For example, VA borrowers in "high-cost" areas such as San Diego, California can borrow more via the VA loan program than borrowers buying or refinancing near Dayton, Ohio's Wright-Patterson AFB. When you get your VA mortgage rates, ask about your local loan size limits.

The VA loan program is available to eligible military borrowers and surviving spouses. During Fiscal Year 2012 the VA guaranteed 539,884 home loans, marking a 51% increase from the year prior and a three-fold increase as compared to Fiscal Year 2008. Ultra-low mortgage rates played a role. The number of rate-reducing IRRRL mortgages more than doubled between FY 2011 and FY 2012, climbing from one-hundred thirty-six thousand to two-hundred eighty-one thousand. "Other" refinances also climbed sharply, adding to last year's final tally. VA borrowers refinanced close to \$62 billion via the IRRRL program, which is sometimes referred to as the VA Streamline Refinance. Rate reductions accounted for more than half of the VA-backed loans made last year. Other interesting patterns emerge when we split the loan data by period of service entitlement.

- First, Restored Entitlement loans outnumber all other entitlement types. This is because "Restored Entitlement" describes when VA loan has been paid in full via home sale, or when the homeowner agrees to assume the outstanding VA loan balance. We should expect Restored Entitlement figures to be high in a recovering housing market. Veterans are move-up buyers, too, after all.
- Second, Gulf War veterans comprised 28.5% of all VA loans guaranteed in FY 2012. This was the largest uniform class of service entitlement. The group of Gulf War veterans includes military borrowers with service dates from August 2, 1990 to the present.
- Lastly, it's noteworthy that today's active military personnel accounted for 19% of last year's VA loan guarantees. Among all service classes, active personnel boasts the largest average loan size, registering \$230,802 per VA loan. Korean Conflict veterans showed the smallest average loan size at \$160,584 per VA loan.

[Source: Daily - The Mortgage Reports | Dan Green | 16 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Project Paperclip Lawsuit Update 01 ► Judge Rules

A federal judge has ruled the government must come clean about the hazards of drug experiments to which it subjected Vietnam veterans. Vietnam Veterans of America filed a class action suit against the Army and CIA in

2009 claiming that at least 7,800 soldiers had been used as guinea pigs in Project Paperclip. The soldiers say they were administered at least 250, and perhaps as many as 400, types of drugs, including Sarin, one of the most deadly drugs known, as well as amphetamines, barbiturates, mustard gas, phosgene gas and LSD. Using tactics it often attributed to the Soviet enemy, the U.S. government sought drugs that could control human behavior, cause confusion, promote weakness or temporary loss of hearing and vision, induce hypnosis and enhance a person's ability to withstand torture, according to the complaint. The veterans claimed that some soldiers died, and others suffered seizures and paranoia. They said the CIA knew it had to conceal the tests from "enemy forces" and the "American public in general" because revealing it "would have serious repercussions in political and diplomatic circles and would be detrimental to the accomplishment of its mission."

After two failed attempts to dismiss the action, the defendants succeeded last year in getting claims against Attorney General Eric Holder and the CIA dismissed (<http://www.courthousenews.com/2011/06/03/37084.htm>). U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken granted the plaintiffs class action status last September, which could make thousands of veterans eligible for relief. The crux of the veterans' argument has been that Administrative Procedure Act obligates the defendants to provide notice to test subjects and to provide them with medical care. In the years since the experiments, the government defendants say they have made efforts to contact test subjects and provide them with notice. For instance, the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs put some information about the tests on its public website, including a hotline for additional information. Both the veterans groups and the government defendants moved for summary judgment.

Judge Wilken partly granted the veterans' motion 25 JUL. "The court concludes that defendants' duty to warn test subjects of possible health effects is not limited to the time that these individuals provide consent to participate in the experiments," she wrote. "Instead, defendants have an ongoing duty to warn about newly acquired information that may affect the well-being of test subjects after they completed their participation in research." Veterans' organizations had argued that the VA health care system is overburdened and inadequate for the needs of those veterans, and that the government should pay their private medical bills. Wilken was not convinced, however, that the government owes the veterans additional medical care not already available to them from the Veterans' Administration. "Defendants are entitled to summary adjudication that sovereign immunity has not been waived with regard to this claim because plaintiffs and the class members can seek medical care through the DVA and challenge any denial of care through the statutory scheme prescribed by Congress," the 72-page opinion states.

The government defendants also moved for judgment on the plaintiffs' constitutional claims for notice and health care. The veterans did not move for judgment on those claims. "Plaintiffs rely on cases in which courts have held that agencies are bound to follow their own regulations and that failure to do so may violate the due process clause," Wilken wrote. "However, defendants are correct that such a failure does not always amount to a constitutional violation." The judge vacated a final pretrial conference and upcoming trial, and ordered the parties to submit a joint proposed injunction and judgment to comply with the court's order. Refer to <http://edgewoodtestvets.org/court-filed-documents/pdfs/20090724-First-Amended-Complaint.pdf>. [Source: Courthouse News Service 26 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Prosthetics Update 09 ► PSAS Mission & Services

The mission of the Veterans Affairs Prosthetic & Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) is to provide comprehensive support to optimize health and independence of the Veteran. Their vision is to be the premier source of prosthetic and orthotic services, sensory aids, medical equipment, and support services for Veterans. PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. Although the term "prosthetic device" may suggest images of artificial limbs, it actually refers to any device that supports or replaces a body part

or function. PSAS provides a full range of equipment and services to Veterans. These range from items worn by the Veteran, such as an artificial limb or hearing aid; those that improve accessibility, such as ramps and vehicle modifications; to devices surgically placed in the Veteran, such as hips and pacemakers. In support of PSAS the VA provides various allowances, grants, and equipage to veterans who utilize the services of PSAS.

Clothing Allowance. Under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1162, the VA must pay an annual clothing allowance to eligible Veterans. A Veteran is eligible if he/she has a service-connected condition, or a disability compensable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 that requires the Veteran to wear or use a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance that wears out or tears clothing (Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.810). The clothing allowance may also be paid if the Veteran uses a topical cream/ointment medication for a service-connected skin condition that is prescribed by a physician and causes irreparable damage to the Veteran's outer garments. NOTE: Irreparable damages do not include stains that are removable through regular laundering or dry cleaning. Beginning December 16, 2011, multiple clothing allowance payments were payable for Veterans who

- 1) Wears or uses more than one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including but not limited to a wheelchair) for a service-connected disability or disabilities;
- 2) Uses a physician-prescribed medication for more than one service-connected skin condition; or
- 3) Uses an appliance and a medication for a service-connected disability or disabilities.

To apply for one or more clothing allowances, complete VA Form 10-8678 and submit to the nearest Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service no later than 1 AUG of each year. The form be completed online and downloaded at can <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-8678-fill.pdf>. Effective December 1, 2011, the amount for each clothing allowance award is \$741. For more information about Clothing Allowance refer to http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/Clothing_Allowance.asp

Automobile Grant. VA can pay a one-time grant to help certain service-connected Veterans and service persons buy a motor vehicle. The grant is payable to the seller only. Veterans/Servicemembers who receive the automobile grant from VBA and has an approved VA Form 21-4502, is eligible to receive automobile adaptive equipment (AAE). AAE assists the eligible person into or out of the automobile or to safely operate the motor vehicle. To apply or learn more about the automobile adaptive equipment program click on the "Automobile Adaptive Equipment" tab on the right side of this page. The new automobile grant rate for FY 2013 is \$19,505. All automobile grants received on or after October 1, 2012 may be paid at the new rate. If the Veteran/Servicemember received any automobile grant requests on or after October 1, 2012 and paid the old rate of \$18,900, the Veteran/Servicemember may be entitled to an additional payment. VA can approve a grant for almost any kind of vehicle. Call VBA at 1-800-827-1000 if you have questions about a particular vehicle. For more information about Automobile Adaptive Equipment, please visit <http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/AAE.asp>.

Guide & Service Dog Benefits. VHA published comprehensive regulations effective October 5, 2012, to include guide, hearing and mobility dogs. The regulations provide for veterinary benefits to include prescriptions, medical care, equipment to perform specialized tasks, and handler training with new guide/service dog paid by the VA. VA is working to provide a "pet insurance" to cover the veterinary benefits to make it easier for Veterans to access medical care for their dogs. VHA does not purchase or in any way provide a dog. Veterans who have obtained dogs must have approval from a VA medical care provider stating that the dog is an essential part of the treatment plan for the veteran in order to be eligible for the veterinary benefits. For more information refer to <http://www.va.gov/health/ServiceAndGuideDogs.asp>

If you have a general question regarding artificial limbs/orthotics, automobile adaptive equipment, clothing allowance, durable medical equipment, eyeglasses, hearing aids, HISA, home oxygen, wheelchairs or any other PSAS related device/service contact PSAS via IRIS at <https://iris.va.gov>. [Source: http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/Clothing_Allowance.asp Jul 2013 ++]

DoD/VA Seamless Transition Update 19 ► S.1296 Goals

On 15 JUL, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) introduced a bill, S.1296, that sets specific goals for DoD and VA to accomplish while completing the electronic health record both departments are working on. Sharing medical records is important to separating service members, Nelson said. “For 15 years, we have tried to fix this problem ... they (veterans) should not have to worry about retaking medical tests or jumping through bureaucratic hoops to make sure their health records are complete.” The bill guidelines include:

- Within six months of enactment, DoD and VA physicians must use standardized forms for capturing health data.
- Within one year, the two departments must be able to exchange real-time data with a joint and common graphic interface.
- By June 30, 2015, service members must have the option of receiving an electronic copy of their health records.

“We need a modern health record system, and it needs to happen without further delay,” Nelson said as he introduced the bill. The Servicemembers’ Electronic Health Records Act was referred to the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee for consideration. Sen. Nelson may also try to get his measure added as an amendment to the 2014 defense authorization bill when the Senate works on its approval later in the year. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 19 Jul 2013 ++]

GI Bill Update 152 ► VA Opposes Academic Choice Bill

A bill that would pay more to student veterans pursuing math and science degrees than to English or political-science majors is drawing opposition from the Veterans Affairs Department. Although science, technology, engineering and math degrees can lead to employment in high-demand occupations, VA doesn’t like the idea of using GI Bill education benefits to steer academic choices. “The bill could create inequity of payments among veterans who have all earned the same benefit,” VA officials said in a written statement to the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. The committee had the bill on its June 12 agenda for discussion, but no public comments were made and no decision has been made about whether to bring the measure to a vote. Student veterans currently “are free to pursue programs and degrees that best fit their personal and professional goals, yet this bill could result in higher payments to certain veterans based on an individual’s decision to pursue a specific degree or career path,” VA said.

The inequity would be even greater if a student received extra benefits at the start of their college career by pursuing a highly technical field only to later switch to another degree path. “Two beneficiaries could conceivably complete the same degree yet have received different payment amounts over the course of their education,” VA said. However, the American Legion, the nation’s largest veterans’ group, supports the bill. “Degrees in these kinds of programs can often cost more or last longer than other programs of education, making them a less desirable option for transitioning service members who are concerned with starting new careers and supporting their families,” the Legion said in a statement to the committee. The bill, S.514, sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) does not specify how much more a student would receive, leaving that up to VA. Extra benefits would be authorized for veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, but not other veterans’ education benefits program. Spouses or children using transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits would not be eligible for the additional payments. Brown’s bill also would

give VA the opportunity to provide extra benefits for other academic pursuits that prepare students for high-demand jobs. Robert Norton, deputy government relations director for the Military Officers Association of America, said he “appreciates the intent” but does not think the bill is necessary, noting that the Post-9/11 GI Bill already pays the full cost of tuition and fees at public colleges and universities. The additional money might be more useful if it went toward increasing the government’s contribution to tuition and fees at private institutions by raising the percentage of matching funds under the Yellow Ribbon program, Norton said. [Source: ArmyTimes | Rick Maze | 12 Jul 2013 ++]

GI Bill Update 153 ► Michigan In-state Tuition

Student Veterans of America (SVA) applauded a recent move by the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan that will allow veterans to qualify for in-state tuition rates in Michigan. "In-state tuition is a down-payment on a veteran's future," said Michael Dakduk, executive director of SVA. "We applaud the Board of Regents for creating an obvious financial incentive for more student veterans to attend the University of Michigan. This is not only a strong step forward for student veterans, but a chance for the university to attract unique, tested talent to Michigan. The university and state will benefit from this decision." The approved measure will qualify all currently serving active duty, reservists, and honorably discharged veterans for in-state tuition rates beginning in January of next year. The Post-9/11 GI Bill only covers the cost of in-state tuition at a public university, forcing out-of-state veterans to secure other financial means to cover the remaining tuition balance or seek higher education elsewhere. Nationwide, 18 states have laws allowing veterans to qualify for in-state tuition, including the neighboring state of Ohio. Eleven states, including the state of Michigan, have pending legislation granting in-state tuition to student veterans. "I encourage the state of Michigan to follow the example of the University of Michigan by approving in-state tuition for veterans statewide," said Dakduk. Currently, SVA is working with The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars on both state and federal legislation that will extend in-state tuition to veterans. [Source: SVA News Release 19 Jul 2012 ++]

GI Bill Update 154 ► 1 Aug Transfer Rule Change

Beginning 1 AUG, all active duty personnel who may choose to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a family member will be required to serve in uniform an additional four years, regardless of the years already served. The current policy allows service members to transfer benefits if they have served at least six years and agree to four additional years on active duty. Those who had 10 or more years of service could transfer the benefits without further commitment, but now they must also agree to serve four more years. Transferability is only available to active duty members. If a service member transferred the benefit and voluntarily leaves the military prior to completing the four additional years of service, the individual may be required to pay back those benefits. However, the requirement may be waived, if the service member is involuntarily separated. To apply to transfer the benefit, service members should first contact the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish their eligibility and then submit a transferability application. For additional information on GI Bill benefits visit <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 19 Jul 2013++]

GI Bill Update 155 ► S.873 Would Eliminate Time Limit

According to an AP report, the Senate may soon have the chance to vote on whether or not to remove the time limit for GI Bill benefits. Currently veterans have 10 years to use their Montgomery GI Bill (or 15 years to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill). The so-called delimiting date is determined by the veterans last discharge date. Senator Richard Blumenthal announced his new bill the Veterans Back to School Act of 2013 (S.873) on 28 MAY, saying the new bill that would repeal the “unfair and arbitrary time limits.” Blumenthal said more than 2 million veterans who missed the 10-year expiration date have been denied the benefits despite paying the required Montgomery GI Bill enrollment fee of \$1,200. While the bill would not have an immediate effect on Post-9/11 vets, it would restore the GI Bill for many Vietnam, Cold-War, and Gulf-War era veterans who were unable to take advantage of their benefits within the 10 years after discharge. [Source: Military.com | Terry Howell | 30 May 2013 ++]

GI Bill Update 156 ► Post-9/11 GI Bill 4th Anniversary

1 AUG marks the fourth anniversary of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. VA has issued approximately \$30 billion in Post 9/11 GI-Bill benefit payments since its inception in August 2009 and helped nearly 1 million Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families pursue their education. “The Post-9/11 GI Bill has helped many of our Nation’s Veterans pursue their education and successfully transition to civilian life,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We’re proud that the Department of Veterans Affairs can administer this important benefit that makes such a big difference in the lives of nearly a million Veterans and their families.” The Post-9/11 GI Bill is the most extensive educational assistance program since the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill, was signed into law. Post-9/11 GI Bill provides comprehensive educational support through tuition, books and housing allowance to people with at least 90 days of total service after September 10, 2001, or people discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days.

Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, vocational and technical training, on-the-job training, flight training, correspondence training, licensing and national testing programs, entrepreneurship training, and tutorial assistance. VA is now processing benefit payments for currently enrolled students in an average of seven days, largely as a result of VA’s ongoing transformation to electronic claims processing. The delivery of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits has been automated and processing time cut in half through implementation of VA’s Long Term Solution, an end-to-end claims processing system that uses rules-based, industry-standard technologies. “Since the end of World War II, GI Bill programs have shaped and changed the lives of Veterans, Servicemembers, their families and their survivors by helping them reach their educational and employment goals,” said Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits. “That is still true today.”

In April 2012, President Obama signed Executive Order 13607 which established the Principles of Excellence, offering guidelines that promote student success under the program and ensure accurate information about institutions and their courses. Over 6,000 educational and training institutions have agreed to comply with these principles. “The Principles of Excellence, further strengthened by Public Law 112-249, provide future student Veterans with greater consumer education” said Michael Dakduk, executive director of Student Veterans of America. “It is extremely important to have the right tools and information before making a decision on a post-secondary credential, degree program, or institution of higher learning.” VA is working with schools, community organizations and other partners to ensure beneficiaries have all the information they need to use their education benefits, including:

- Education plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries;
- A designated point of contact for academic and financial advice at each school; and

- An end to fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentation.

This summer, VA is launching new tools to help beneficiaries learn more about their vocational aptitudes and select an education institution.

- The 'Factors to Consider When Choosing a School' guide offers future students steps to take when researching, choosing, and attending a school.
- CareerScope® is a free, new tool featured on <http://www.gibill.va.gov> that measures a student's aptitude and interests through a self-administered online test, identifying potential career paths.
- The new GI Bill® Comparison Tool allows students to research and compare schools, including key indicators like average student loan debt and graduation rates.

"We will continue to work hard to improve VA's benefits delivery process for Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and to ensure that Veterans and their families have the tools they need to choose the right education institution to help them build a foundation for the future," Hickey added. For more information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and other Veteran education programs, visit <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. [Source: VA News Release 29 Jul 2013 ++]

TRICARE Autism Care Update 05 ► No Loss of Benefits

A congressionally mandated pilot program set to launch 25 JUL will enhance an existing Defense Department program that provides care and treatment for military children with autism. Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and director of the TRICARE Management Activity met with reporters 18 JUL to explain the new program. An estimated 8,500 children of active-duty military families have a form of autism, Woodson said. He sought to dispel military parents' concerns about rumors of a potential loss in benefits for their children with autism and autism spectrum disorder. "We understand that there's a lot of anxiety in the community of interest around autism about suspected changes that would adversely affect care," he said. "Providing care to children who have autism spectrum disorder and making sure they get the full range of care they need is a priority to us." All care will be continued, Woodson added, noting that active-duty service members' children's autism care benefits in the applied behavior analysis administered through TRICARE would not change.

"Anyone who's receiving care under the [Enhanced Access to Autism Services Demonstration] -- there will be no change," he said. There's also no change in benefits to anyone enrolled in the basic medical program that began July 2012, Woodson said. An expansion of services through the autism pilot program, he added, will also allow retirees and their families to receive ASD benefits. Autism care and treatment is evolving, Woodson said. "In the future, we'll try to identify what the best practice is for the periodic assessments -- who should get it and over what period of time," he said, noting the pilot program is expected to yield "great insight" into evaluation protocols. The pilot program was developed by crafting requirements through consulting with experts in the field and advocacy groups to "try to find validated tests and the best strategy for focusing on what would be the right care at the right time for children [with autism]," Woodson said. The pilot program's overall focus is directed at families, and what is best for their child. Parents' input will be sought to ensure their issues are represented as the program is shaped, he added.

There is "an expanding need and recognition" of military families with children who have autism," Woodson said. Integral to increasing autism treatment capability, he said, is having a large network of providers that work with autistic children. "We continually try to improve ... [and] expand our network of providers," he said. "I think we have one of the most robust networks available." Woodson said it is "paramount" for children with autism to obtain professional reassessments to ensure they get the right care, at the right time, with updated care plans. "That's

what we're all about," he said. "Focusing on the child and what's best and providing the families with access to these services." [Source: AFPS | Terri Moon Cronk | 19 Jul 2013 ++]

TRICARE Prime Update 23 ► NGAUS Opposes TRICARE's Plan

Legislation in both chambers of Congress offers an alternative to a plan by TRICARE Management Activity at the Pentagon to remove tens of thousands of beneficiaries from the TRICARE Prime program. The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) supports the legislative efforts and made that known last week in a letter to Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) who authored the Keep Faith with TRICARE Prime Act, S.1078, in the Senate in May. The bill is similar to one in the House that was introduced the same month by Rep. John Kline (R-MN). That bill is H.R.1971. The legislation would give 170,000 beneficiaries who would lose TRICARE Prime under the agency's plan an opportunity to remain on TRICARE Prime if they prefer. The TRICARE plan would remove some people from PRIME on 1 OCT and enroll them in TRICARE Standard, which is more expensive and has a more limited network of providers. In the letter to Klobuchar, retired Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett Jr., the NGAUS president, said, "This will mean longer driving distances to obtain health care for those retirees in rural areas who cannot find providers nearby who accept Standard. This is not acceptable." In announcing his legislation, Kline said, "Promises made should be promises kept and the Pentagon should not break faith with our nation's heroes." TRICARE Management Activity offers information about its plan at <http://tricare.mil/psa>. [Source: NGAUS Washington Report 16 Jul 2013 ++]

TRICARE Vaccine Program Update 01 ► Available w/Zero Copayment

You may receive any of the vaccines listed below for zero copayment at participating retail network pharmacies.. To find a participating pharmacy, search online at <http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/pharmacy> or call 1-877-363-1303. Call the pharmacy first to:

- Verify the days and times you can come in for a vaccine.
- See if there are any restrictions.
- Make sure the pharmacy has the vaccine you need as some, such as shingles, may be in short supply.
- Make sure a pharmacist gives the vaccines and not a provider from an in-pharmacy clinic to avoid potential cost shares or copayments.

If there are restrictions or if the vaccine is not available, you may still go to your doctor for the vaccine. You may have to pay copayments or cost shares for the office visit or other services received during the office visit To learn more about any of the vaccines listed below, visit www.cdc.gov:

Covered Vaccine	Restricted To
Diphtheria & Tetanus (DT/TD)	No restrictions
Haemophilus Influenzae (Hib)	No restrictions
Hepatitis Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)	Age 1 and older

Hepatitis	Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)	No restrictions
Human Papillomavirus - HPV	Gardasil	Age 11-26 (females and males)
Human Papillomavirus - HPV	Cervarix	Age 11-26 (females only)
Flu Vaccine Influenza A - Flu Shot, inactivated		All ages (recommended for 6 months - 64 years)
Flu Vaccine	Fluzone High Dose	Age 65 and older
Flu Vaccine	Flu Mist	Age 2-49 who are not pregnant
Measles		Age 1 or older
Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR)		Age 1 or older
Measles, Mumps, Rubella & Varicella (MMRV)		Age 1 or older
Meningitis		Age 2 or older
Mumps		Age 1 or older
Pneumonia	Pneumovax-23 (PPSV23)	Age 2 or older
Pneumonia	Prevnar-13 (PCV13)	Birth to age 18
Polio		Birth to age 18
Rotavirus		Birth to 12 months
Rubella (German Measles)		Age 1 or older
Tetanus Booster		Age 7 or older
Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Whooping Cough)		
	DTaP	Age 6 and younger
	Tdap	Age 7 and older
Chickenpox		Age 1 or older
Shingles		Age 60 or older

[Source: Health.mil message 18 Jul 2013 ++]

TRICARE Pharmacy Policy Update 16 ► Compounded Prescriptions

TRICARE is evaluating the issue of pharmaceutical compounds. They are working to ensure both excellent and safe care for beneficiaries and clear communication with your providers and beneficiaries. To assure success in both of these efforts, TRICARE will delay the implementation of any change in practice on compounded prescriptions for 180 days. Compounded prescriptions are tailored for individuals by pharmacists. These prescriptions may contain both conventional medications and other ingredients. Many of the included ingredients are not FDA approved. Those compound prescriptions which contain ingredients that are not FDA approved are the ones that TRICARE is concerned about. [Source: TRICARE Communications 24 Jul 2013 ++]

Defense Health Agency Update 03 ► Blueprint For Mandated Reforms

The FY 2013 Defense Authorization Bill authorized the establishment of the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to oversee the integration of ten major functional areas of the military health care system across all services. DoD recently submitted its second of three reports to Congress outlining a blueprint for mandated reforms that will consolidate the military health care system. refer to <http://tricare.mil/tma/congressionalinformation/downloads/Plan%20for%20Reform%20of%20the%20Administration%20of%20Military%20Health.pdf> to read the entire report. The main goal of the DHA is to generate budget savings by consolidating redundant health care spending. The Army, Air Force, and Navy currently operate many duplicative health care programs. DHA will have oversight of all of the following military health care programs by the end of FY2015:

- Medical Logistics
- Facility Planning
- Health Information Technology
- TRICARE
- Pharmacy
- Acquisition
- Public Health
- Research & Development
- Education & Training
- Budget & Resource management

The most recent report outlined the purpose and goals to be achieved in consolidating medical logistics, facility planning, health information technology, and TRICARE. It also projected the expected budget savings associated with moving these programs under the auspices of DHA. Of particular interest in the report is the expectation that the DHA could generate \$787 billion in TRICARE savings over six years by consolidating call centers and streamlining coordination with Other Health Insurance (OHI) programs. The overall intent is to identify opportunities to realize systematic cost-savings through the adoption of common clinical and business processes, which will result in consolidation and standardization of the best practices - not more costly duplication of efforts. This will help save money without passing on the cost to beneficiaries. DoD estimates the implementation of this new agency will have generated savings in the range of \$1.46B - \$2.9B over six years. This only takes into account projections for 4 of the 10 shared services plans - future cost savings could be even greater. The final report is due this September. This transformation and subsequent savings have been long over-due. MOAA believes that this

effort, combined with last year's TRICARE and Pharmacy fee increases demonstrate that health care costs are not in fact "eating the [defense] department alive." [Source: MOAA Leg Up 26 Jul 2013 ++]

Clickjacking Scam ► Beware Seemingly Safe Links

Even savvy computer users can fall for clickjacking, the latest trick that hides a scam on a seemingly safe webpage. It works by making victims think they are clicking a harmless link, when they are really activating a scam. Here's how clickjacking works:

- It starts like most online phishing scams. You receive an email, social media message or text that directs you to a website. For example, scammers may claim to be from a major store chain, and they are giving away something cool like a free iPad. They instruct you to go to a website and enter to win.
- When you get to the site, everything looks normal. But scammers have hidden links and other content on the page using a web design trick. In addition to the content you can see, scammers have added an invisible layer. They set the opacity to zero, so the content is transparent but still active.
- You complete the form and hit the "Register Now!" button. But scammers have placed an invisible link on top of the register button. This is "clickjacking." You think your click is entering you for the free gift, but you are really activating some code. This code can do anything from ordering something on Amazon (using the "one click" purchase feature) to changing the settings on your computer. This technique is also used to trick you into "liking" something on Facebook that normally wouldn't. This is called "likejacking."

How to Spot a Clickjacking Scam

1. **If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.** Don't set yourself up for "clickjacking" by going to the website in the first place. Stay away from teasers for sensational videos (Click here to see shocking footage!) and offers that are too good to be real (Free Hawaiian vacations!).
2. **Update your web browser.** The newest versions of browsers have security updates that warn you of suspicious websites.
3. **Log out of websites.** Many clickjacking scams take advantage of web users' habit of staying logged into sites like Facebook or Amazon. This makes it easier for scammers to "like" or even purchase something in your name
4. **Don't believe what you see.** It's easy to steal the colors, logos and header of any other established organization. Just because a site looks real, it does not mean it is.

You can read more about how 'clickjacking' works on Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clickjacking>. To find out more about scams, check out BBB Scam Stopper at <http://www.bbb.org/scam-stopper> [Source: BBB Spam Alert 5 Jul 2013 ++]

Editors Note: I use Norton 360 (\$99 yearly) and have not experienced a virus, malware or Trojan in 15 years.

National Fraud Investigation Agency Scam ► Loan Collection Calls

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) wants to warn consumers about National Fraud Investigation Agency. Consumers tell BBB they are getting collection calls from National Fraud Investigation Agency for loans they never took out. National Fraud Investigation Agency representatives tell consumers that felony charges will be filed against them if they do not pay over the phone immediately. Some consumers told BBB the business had their old

addresses, social security numbers and other personal identifiable information. But when one consumer asked the business to provide proof of the debt, they refused. The business told another consumer that they had sent notices to the consumer's old address, but the consumer never received them. BBB has been unable to locate the business. Mail sent to the address at 943 Sycamore St #1215, Cincinnati, OH 45202 has been returned as undeliverable. According to Google Maps, 943 Sycamore St does not exist. BBB's phone calls to the business asking for another address have been ignored. If you get suspicious calls about a debt you allegedly owe, BBB offers the following advice:

- Ask the debt collector to provide official documentation to prove that you owe the debt.
- Do not provide or confirm any bank account, credit card or other personal information over the phone until you have verified the legitimacy of the call.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission and/or your state's Attorney General's office if the caller is abusive, uses threats or otherwise violates federal telemarketing laws.

[Source: BBB Alert 3 Jul 2013 ++]

Medal of Honor Citations ► Charles N. Deglopper, WWII



**The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to**

DEGLOPPER, CHARLES N.

Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army, Co. C, 325th Glider Infantry, 82d Airborne Division. *Place and date:* Merderet River at la Fiere, France, 9 June 1944. *Entered service at:* Grand Island, N.Y. *Birth:* Grand Island, N.Y. *G.O. No.:* 22, 28 February 1946.

Citation:

He was a member of Company C, 325th Glider Infantry, on 9 June 1944 advancing with the forward platoon to secure a bridgehead across the Merderet River at La Fiere, France. At dawn the platoon had penetrated an outer line of machineguns and riflemen, but in so doing had become cut off from the rest of

the company. Vastly superior forces began a decimation of the stricken unit and put in motion a flanking maneuver which would have completely exposed the American platoon in a shallow roadside ditch where it had taken cover. Detecting this danger, Pfc. DeGlopper volunteered to support his comrades by fire from his automatic rifle while they attempted a withdrawal through a break in a hedgerow 40 yards to the rear. Scorning a concentration of enemy automatic weapons and rifle fire, he walked from the ditch onto the road in full view of the Germans, and sprayed the hostile positions with assault fire. He was wounded, but he continued firing. Struck again, he started to fall; and yet his grim determination and valiant fighting spirit could not be broken. Kneeling in the roadway, weakened by his grievous wounds, he leveled his heavy weapon against the enemy and fired burst after burst until killed outright. He was successful in drawing the enemy action away from his fellow soldiers, who continued the fight from a more advantageous position and established the first bridgehead over the Merderet. In the area where he made his intrepid stand his comrades later found the ground strewn with dead Germans and many machineguns and automatic weapons which he had knocked out of action. Pfc. DeGlopper's gallant sacrifice and unflinching heroism while facing unsurmountable odds were in great measure responsible for a highly important tactical victory in the Normandy Campaign.



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Charles Neilans DeGlopper

(2) The Private's father, receiving Congressional Medal of Honor from Major General Leland S. Hobbs in Trinity EUB Church - Lillis and William Bell standing to the left, and Arlie DeGlopper in the rear.

(3) Digital painting by artist Jean-Pierre Roy (artist) specially commissioned for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. It depicts Charles DeGlopper in World War II.

DeGlopper was the only soldier from the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment to receive the Medal of Honor. He was also the only World War II soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army to receive the award for action during the Battle of Normandy campaign. In addition to the Medal of Honor, Private DeGlopper was awarded the Bronze Star for "meritorious achievements in ground operations against the enemy" during the Sicily Campaign. He was also awarded the Purple Heart for "military merit and wounds received in action resulting in his death." On 3 DEC 1947 the US Army Transport "Englin Victory" was renamed the "Pvt. Charles N. DeGlopper" at the Brooklyn Army Base at Brooklyn, New York. On November 1965 VFW Post #9249 was named for Charles N. DeGlopper. Subsequently, on 9 JUN 2002, on the island community of Grand Island, New York, VFW Post #9249 dedicated a new headstone on the grave of the island's native son. The new marker recognizes the fact that Charles DeGlopper was awarded the Medal of Honor after his death during the Normandy invasion.



Original and replacement markers in Grand Island New York Maple Grove Cemetery Plot: Row 5 left, plot

[Source: <http://www.history.army.mil/html/moh/wwII-a-f.html> Jul 2013 ++]

Mobilized Reserve 23 JUL 2013 ► Decrease of 1476

The Department of Defense announced the current number of reservists on active duty as of 23 JUL 2013. The net collective result is 1476 fewer reservists mobilized than last reported in the 15 JUL 2013 RAO Bulletin. At any given time, services may activate some units and individuals while deactivating others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. The total number currently on active duty from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 37,664; Navy Reserve 4,590; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve 7,763; Marine Corps Reserve 2,217; and the Coast Guard Reserve 553. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 52,687 including both units and individual augmentees. Since 911 there have been 878,970 reservists activated for duty. A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated may be found online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/MobilizationWeeklyReport072313.pdf> [Source: DoD News Release No. 532-13 dtd 24 JUL 2013 ++]

Vet Hiring Fairs ► 1 Aug thru 15 Sep 2013

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's (USCC) Hiring Our Heroes program employment workshops are available in conjunction with hundreds of their hiring fairs. These workshops are designed to help veterans and military spouses and include resume writing, interview skills, and one-on-one mentoring. For details of each click on the link next to the date in the below list. If it will not open refer to www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes/events. To participate, sign up for the workshop in addition to registering for the hiring fairs which are presently scheduled for: For more information about the USCC Hiring Our Heroes Program, Military Spouse Program, Transition Assistance, GE Employment Workshops, Resume Engine, etc. visit the USCC website at <http://www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes/events>

Veterans Hiring Fair

August 1, 2013 – Minneapolis, MN

August 2, 2013 – Silver Spring, MD
 August 6, 2013 – St. Louis, MO
 August 6, 2013 – Norfolk, VA
 August 7, 2013 – Jacksonville, FL
 August 8, 2013 – Garden City, KS
 August 8, 2013 – Charleston, SC
 August 8, 2013 – Nashua, NH
 August 14, 2013 – Farmingdale, NY
 August 16, 2013 – Helena, MT
 August 16, 2013 – Honolulu, HI
 August 20, 2013 – Cedar Rapids, IA
 August 20, 2013 – Nashville, TN
 August 21, 2013 – Fort Polk, LA Military Spouse Hiring Fair
 August 21, 2013 – Sioux Falls, SD
 August 22, 2013 – Devens, MA
 August 27, 2013 – Houston, TX
 August 27, 2013 – Lafayette, LA
 September 4, 2013 – Beaufort, SC
 September 5, 2013 – Quantico, VA Military Spouse Hiring Fair
 September 5, 2013 – Wichita, KS
 September 9, 2013 – West Point, NY Military Spouse Networking Event
 September 10, 2013 – Tucson, AZ
 September 10, 2013 – Peekskill (Camp Smith), NY
 September 10, 2013 – Charlotte, NC
 September 12, 2013 – Provo, UT
 September 12, 2013 – JBLM, WA Military Spouse Hiring Fair
 September 12, 2013 – Trenton, NJ
 September 12, 2013 – Boise, ID

Note: Here is a key tactic that most that most job-seekers overlook when attending a job or career fair: Stop at every table! One mistake we all make on occasion is to generalize. For example, people assume that health-care companies are only hiring health-care workers, or that insurance companies only need agents. So when they encounter these tables or displays, they typically say nothing and keep moving. Also, sell yourself! Be an extrovert and your own agent! Finally, your mission is fact-finding and networking. By spending time at each table, one learns to overcome stereotypes that lead to erroneous assumptions [Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce Assn 31 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Jobs Update 117 ► Free Suits for Veterans

The Gary Sinise Foundation is committed to supporting our nation’s defenders, especially as they enter the civilian work force. While this transition can sometimes be difficult, the foundation along with Joseph A. Banks are doing their best to ensure our defenders are adequately equipped to meet those challenges head-on. One essential component to confidence in the workplace is a professional wardrobe, which is why together they are proud to **provide a free suit** to qualifying veterans and service members through this national promotion. In order to qualify for a Jos. A. Bank free suit, you must provide the proper documentation. Fax or email a DD214 form if you are a retired service member, a statement of service if you are still active duty, and a copy of the front of your driver’s license. (All documentation provided will be destroyed immediately upon verification of military status.) Send email to: contact@garysinisefoundation.org or fax to (818) 432-8999. The suit vouchers will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, so submit your information in a timely fashion.

The suits will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, so please submit your information in a timely fashion. Keep in mind that the voucher MUST be redeemed at a Jos A. Bank location before the expiration date, Nov. 11, 2013. You will want to submit your documentation as soon as possible, so that you are eligible to participate in the program. Additionally, include your full name as it appears on your identification, your address, city, state, and zip code along with your best contact phone number and email address. That way, if they have any questions, they will be able to reach you. If you have any additional questions email them to contact@garysinisefoundation.org. On behalf of Gary and all the staff at the Gary Sinise Foundation, we thank you for your selfless service and dedication to our country. We wish you much success with your professional endeavors!! [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 19 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Jobs Update 118 ► Guard Hiring Preference Bills

National Guard and reserve members would receive preferential hiring credit for federal civilian jobs under bipartisan legislation introduced 18 JUL in the House and Senate. The Military Reserve Jobs Act would extend the already available veterans' hiring preference to reserve component members who may have only limited active-duty service. Where veterans receive a five-point boost on hiring preference under current law, National Guard and reserve members would get between three and five points, depending on their length of service. Three points would be awarded to those who complete basic training and have a six-year service obligation. Four points would be provided to those who have completed 10 years of reserve service as long as they earned a minimum of 50 retirement points each year and are still in a reserve component. Five points could be claimed by Guard and reserve members who have completed 20 or more years of service but who are not yet receiving military retired pay.

Sens. Joe Donnelly (D-IN), Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) are cosponsors of, the Senate version of the bill S.1320. Rep. Tim Walz (D-MN) is chief sponsor of the similar House measure. In a statement, Donnelly said the tiered point plan would give credit for a Guard or reserve member's commitment to public service without reducing the value of service for those who served on active duty. Leahy, co-chairman of the Senate National Guard Caucus, said he believes "if someone wears the uniform for our country, they should be given preference in federal hiring decisions." About 44 percent of Army National Guard members and 70 percent of Air National Guard members do not qualify for veterans' hiring preferences today because their only active-duty service was for training purposes and they have never deployed on a contingency operation, according to a statement from Donnelly's office. If accurate, that means about 131,000 Guard members would be eligible for preferential hiring points under the bill. No estimates were provided about the percentage of Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps reserve members who currently qualify for veterans' hiring preferences. [Source: American Legion Leg Up 22 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Jobs Update 119 ► Verizon Wireless

Verizon Wireless, a frequent exhibitor at American Legion job fairs, is continuing its push to hire veterans into its offices nationwide through its special military hiring website http://www22.verizon.com/jobs/workinghere_transitioningmilitary.html and a concentration on sponsoring and attending military hiring fairs around the country. Verizon will maintain a booth at the Legion's job fair in Houston at the organization's national convention on 27 AUG. The company has partnered with organizations like The American Legion to actively recruit and engage veteran job candidates in a grassroots manner. Veterans are a perfect fit for positions within the company's information technology, electronic engineering, communications,

project management, and automotive and mechanics departments, says Evan Guzman, head of Military Programs & Veteran Affairs for Verizon. "We have a military veteran engagement, and it's a business priority because we believe veterans add significant value to our company and also bring a cost reduction in recruitment," Guzman said. "Our goal is to make veteran recruiting a part of every day."

Specifically, Verizon reaches out to veterans through its Transitioning Military resource page on its national website http://www22.verizon.com/jobs/workinghere_transitioningmilitary.html. The page features a Military Skill Matchmaker that caters a company-wide job search according to military service branch and specialty. The search returns careers with Verizon that are ideal for the veteran's military background. Or, veterans can run a generic search of jobs and career opportunities with Verizon. "The Military Skills Matcher was created with the intent to make it easier for veterans to find careers based on their military experience," Guzman said. "Veterans can put in their military experience or buzzwords to find jobs based on skillset or preference" The company also maintains a significant presence at Hiring Our Heroes job fairs which are held throughout the country. Verizon co-sponsored a Hiring Our Heroes event in East Rutherford, NJ, which brought around 400 veterans to MetLife Stadium - home of the NFL's New York Giants. As part of its commitment to hiring veterans, Verizon has plans to attend numerous other job fairs throughout the year, including maintaining an exhibit at the Legion's military job fair during the organization's annual national convention.

Guzman says the Texas area is ripe with jobs and hiring opportunities for veterans who are interested in working at Verizon, including positions in human resources, information technology, customer service, finance, marketing, supply chain and various other areas. "We have a lot of jobs in the Texas area," Guzman says. "We're going to be recruiting out there toward almost every available skillset that we have open." Guzman says Verizon is focused on hiring military and veterans for two reasons: because they come ready to contribute to the company in ways that civilians often can't, and because hiring veterans who stay with and contribute to the company helps its bottom line. "From a business standpoint, we hire veterans because they bring a mission-oriented approach, have an accelerated learning curve, and they have advanced technical training because the military has such advanced technical training itself," Guzman says. "Over 83 percent of jobs in the military have a direct civilian counterpart. They are used to being trained for what they learn, then they go on the job and execute." Vets can register for the fair and employment workshop at <http://www.legion.org/convention/economic/register>. [Source: American Legion Online Update 25 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Job Security Clearance Decision ► Examples

You've scoured every website and contact and devoured each tip about obtaining a security clearance that you could hope to find, but maybe you're still worried that you did or might do something wrong. Aside from the fact that the majority of security clearance applicants are cleared, it can help to know why some people in special circumstances were denied. The Department of Defense publishes and updates a list of special cases with links to PDFs that outline each one; personal information isn't included. We've compiled a few of the cases for you below, but check out the full page at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/2013.html> if you'd like to see more:

Financial - Case Number: 12-04745.h1 at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/12-04745.h1.pdf>.
05/22/2013

Applicant is a 34-year-old employee of a defense contractor. She mitigated the security concerns arising under Guideline F, Financial Considerations. Clearance is granted.

Emotional - Personal Conduct - [Case Number: 10-11123.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/10-11123.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/10-11123.h1.pdf>.

05/10/2013

Applicant has mitigated the security concerns under the personal conduct guideline because she did not falsify her 2010 security clearance application or provide false or misleading information to the Government. Applicant did not mitigate the security concerns under Guideline I due to her guarded prognosis based on a 2012 psychological assessment. She has a long history of mental health issues. She is motivated to change, but has not met her burden in this case. Applicant did not present evidence to refute or update the 2012 clinical report describing her current diagnosis. Clearance is denied.

Drugs - [Case Number: 11-14460.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-14460.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-14460.h1.pdf>.

05/09/2013

Applicant used cocaine and marijuana from June 2007 to January 2008. At the time of his drug use, he held an active security clearance and was 49 years old. His drug use was identified after submitting to a random urinalysis. Applicant successfully completed his company's mandatory drug rehabilitation program. His mitigation was insufficient to overcome the security concerns raised as a result of his conduct. Clearance is denied.

Sexual Behavior; Personal Conduct - [Case Number: 11-13664.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-13664.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-13664.h1.pdf>.

05/03/2013

Applicant discontinued viewing nude and sexually explicit pictures of underage females on his home computer more than five years ago and stopped viewing adult pornography on his work computer in 2002. His rationalizations, recantations and denials do not mitigate the misconduct he admitted in 2005 and 2008. Eligibility for access to classified information is **denied**.

Foreign Influence, Personal Conduct - [Case Number: 11-13760.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-13760.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/11-13760.h1.pdf>.

04/25/2013

Applicant failed to mitigate the foreign influence concerns raised by his relationships with wife and her parents, all of whom are citizens of the People's Republic of China (China). Applicant also failed to mitigate the security concerns raised by his personal conduct. He did not report suspicious contacts with two women during his December 2009 trip to China. He also gave his wife, a Chinese national, access to sensitive work-related documents. Clearance denied.

Psychological Conditions - [Case Number: 09-04696.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/09-04696.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/09-04696.h1.pdf>

04/25/2013

Applicant's history of erratic compliance with the treatment protocol for his diagnosed bipolar disorder resulted in impairment of his judgment and in dysfunctional behavior requiring psychiatric hospitalization. A credentialed psychologist opined in October 2012 that Applicant will, in all likelihood, remain prone to periods of erratic behavior. While Applicant has been a valuable contributor to his defense contractor employer, psychological conditions security concerns persist. Clearance denied.

Foreign Influence; Foreign Preference - [Case Number: 12-07676.h1](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/12-07676.h1.pdf) at <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/doha/industrial/12-07676.h1.pdf>

04/19/2013

Applicant has worked overseas under dangerous conditions in support of the national defense. She mitigated any foreign influence concerns raised by her extended family members in Afghanistan. She surrendered her Afghan passport to the Afghanistan Embassy, thereby mitigating foreign preference security concerns. Clearance is granted.

[Source: Military.com | Security | Jun 2013]

Vet Benefits ~ Gay Couples ► House Drops Federal Lawsuit

House Republicans will no longer defend a law that bars married, same-sex couples from receiving veterans' benefits available to married heterosexual couples. On 19 JUL, BuzzFeed reported that the House, responding to a 19 JUL deadline in a federal lawsuit challenging the veterans' benefits provision, asked to "withdraw as a party defendant" from the case. The Title 38 definition of "spouse" in the U.S. Code that governs veterans' benefits specifies — twice — that the person in question must be of the "opposite" sex in order to qualify. For married veterans and their partners, that effectively limits spousal benefits to straight couples. It's very similar to the language of the DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) provision struck down in the Windsor decision, which is in part why the Department of Justice hasn't defended the law since 2012, after the administration's decision to stop defending DOMA itself. The Legal Advisory Group of the House of Representatives, controlled by the GOP, has been defending the provisions ever since.



Army Capt. Michael Potoczniak, left, and Todd Saunders are married by deputy marriage commissioner John Loschmann at San Francisco City Hall

The key passage from the motion filed by the Legal Advisory Group of the House of Representatives was: *The Windsor decision [of the Supreme Court] necessarily resolves the issue of DOMA Section 3's constitutionality in this case. While the question of whether [Title 38] is constitutional remains open, the House has determined, in light of the Supreme Court's opinion in Windsor, that it no longer will defend that statute. Accordingly, the House now seeks to leave to withdraw as a party defendant.* (Refer to <http://www.scribd.com/doc/154572105/DOMA-doc> to read the full motion)

The House's decision to step away from Title 38 will actually resolve two notable pending lawsuits, both challenging Section 3 of DOMA and Title 38 in the U.S. Code for legally married same-sex couples in the U.S. The plaintiffs in the Massachusetts case addressed here argued on 18 JUL in a court filing that the DOMA decision should resolve the case in their favor. It looks like they were right. The second suit, out of California, was filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center on behalf a disabled veteran and her wife, who sought additional benefits available to heterosexual couples, and the right to be buried together in a veterans' cemetery. [Source: The Atlantic Wire | Abby Ohlheiser | 18 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Cemetery New Jersey Update 03 ► Salem County Veterans

Serving as the final resting place for about 2,500 veterans, the Salem County Veterans Cemetery will now begin receiving federal funds to support veterans' burials thanks to local efforts. County officials announced that Salem County has started receiving "plot allowance" funds through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to help offset the costs of veterans burials, and to support the maintenance of the county cemetery. Salem County Veterans Affairs Coordinator Joseph J. Hannagan Jr. said he began seeking sources of funding to support veterans services in the county after he took over as the VA coordinator in December. After researching VA offices in other local counties, Hannagan said he found that other counties had been receiving plot allowances for veteran burials for years — but that Salem County had never applied for the funds. "Money is tough in the county, and when I started my job, I didn't have much money in my budget," Hannagan said. "I learned that we should be getting plot allowances, and that we can go through our regional office to get that. I called there and asked if Salem County had ever applied, and they said 'no.'"

Working with the state's Newark regional VA office, Hannagan gained approval to request retroactive allowances totaling \$29,432 for the past two years. He also obtained \$7,220 in plot allowances through February 2013, and approval for \$9,664 for March through June 2013. In total, Hannagan so far obtained more than \$46,000 in federal funds for the county cemetery. "[The county cemetery] is the final resting place for our brave heroes, as well as a memorial to all veterans from the county who have served our country through all the wars of our past and current generations," Hannagan said. The Salem County Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Park, located on state Route 45 in Pilesgrove Township, was established in 1967 and began accepting veterans for burial in 1969. County veterans are not charged for their burial plot at the veteran's cemetery, and the county currently budgets between \$10,000 and \$12,000 each year to support war veterans burials and grave decorations. In a private cemetery, a plot allowance may be used to reimburse the purchaser of a veteran's plot. However, in the case of the county cemetery, the allowance will be paid directly to the county. Going forward, annual budgets for the cemetery can be developed including an estimate of income from this program. Hannagan said the county typically buries around 35 veterans in the county cemetery each year, and will be able to request \$722 per burial in federal funds.



Salem County Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Park

County officials said they plan to filter the funds back into the cemetery to help support maintenance, upgrades and an eventual expansion of the site. Along with the increased funding, Hannagan said additional new programs and improvements have been made at the county cemetery this year. The Salem County Sheriff's Office Inmate Work Program has been utilized this year to help maintain the cemetery, including cutting grass, raising sunken grave stones, and painting the site's cannons, Hannagan said. "We're saving thousands of dollars thanks the inmate program," Hannagan said. "I'm so thankful for that program and for all the support the county has been providing." For additional information on veterans' services, contact the county VA office at 856-339-8603. [Source: South Jersey Times | Michael Williams | 14 Jul 2013 ++]

Vet Toxic Exposure ~ Ft Bliss ► Bunker Radiation

Army and federal investigators have detected radiation in a former nuclear weapons bunker at Fort Bliss and are trying to determine if anyone or other buildings on the West Texas post may have been contaminated, officials said 16 JUL. A group of investigators from the Army, experts on nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigations Weapons of Mass Destruction team arrived Tuesday to the desert area where the bunker is located. It sits along with other above-ground concrete storage facilities completely buried in dirt. A yellow and red sign warning of radiation danger could be seen on the steel doors of bunker 11507. Fort Bliss leaders said an investigation that began about two months ago revealed levels of radiation in the igloo-like bunker that was used by the Air Force for the assembly and storage of nuclear weapons at the height of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s. The Air Force transferred the area to the Army in 1966. It is not clear why the Air Force did not tell the Army about the risk.



Firefighters and other workers work on the site of a former nuclear weapons bunker where Army investigators have detected radiation

Fort Bliss spokesman Maj. Joe Buccino said epoxy paint was applied to the interior of the bunker years ago to contain the radioactivity, but that over the years the paint has become chipped, allowing the radioactive surface to become exposed. Although further tests will determine the nature of the radiation Buccino said it originated most likely from uranium of the “old unsealed nuclear weapons” that used to be handled in the bunker. Buccino said the levels of radiation are low and that the contamination is contained to the immediate area where the bunker is located. He said the closest residential neighborhood is about one mile away and that area residents are safe. The epoxy paint chips “could have come loose and if you ingest them that’s the concern,” he said. “They couldn’t have come loose and then gone into the El Paso community; they don’t travel that far.” However, he said, they will know more once the Army Environmental Command finishes its report. He did not offer an estimate as to when that report might be finished but hinted that “the investigation is in its infancy.”

Rifles and other weaponry have been stored in the bunker since 2003, but Buccino said it’s unlikely that soldiers who used the equipment are contaminated as a result. About 30 people who regularly work in the bunker taking inventory and conducting other tasks were being tested for radioactive contamination. All personnel that have been working in the bunker — including contractors, civilian employees and service members — have been notified of the risk. It was not immediately clear how many people over the past decade were exposed to the radiation. Based on tests done with Fort Bliss’ limited capabilities equipment, the post experts’ partial assessment showed that “there is some low level of contamination that could be transferred to personnel.” However, Buccino added, “there is no immediate health or safety risk to the soldiers that received the weapons for training.”

The investigation was triggered by a call from a man who worked at Fort Bliss in the 1950s when it was operated by the Air Force. He told post leaders that contaminated residue such as rags and other items had been buried in

sealed containers there and expressed concerns that any new housing at the sprawling military post could dig up the contamination. The residue is buried in the vicinity of the bunker complex, although officials said they do not know exactly where. Mark Cauthers, Fort Bliss' deputy to the garrison commander, said the Army will conduct tests to find the buried materials and determine whether there are other areas where radioactive residue was buried. Officials did not identify the former worker who contacted officials about two months ago. But they said he was likely exposed to the contaminated residue. The man, now in his 70s, is not showing symptoms of exposure, they said. [Source: Associated Press article 16 Jul 2013 ++]

Korean War 60th Anniversary Update 03 ► Reflections of a Wounded Vet

With plans to participate in ceremonies here tomorrow marking the 60th anniversary of the Korean War armistice agreement, a veteran who lost two limbs in the conflict said he's proud of what thousands who fought there accomplished -- and what those who followed in their footsteps have preserved. Retired Army Col. William Webber was a young lieutenant when he arrived in Korea with the 187th Airborne Regiment Combat Team in August 1950, joining U.S. Marines on the ground in the bloody Battle of Seoul. Five months after his deployment, Webber was severely wounded -- first by a strike that claimed his arm shortly before midnight on Feb. 15, 1951, and another attack several hours later that took his leg. He was evacuated to an Army hospital in Tokyo to be stabilized before his transfer to the Percy Jones Army Hospital in Battle Creek, Mich., one of three military facilities that specialized in amputee care.



Retired Army Col. William Webber, 87

Now approaching his 88th birthday, Webber still vividly recalls the frustration of prolonged ceasefire negotiations that started shortly after he medically evacuated from Korea dragged on for two years before the armistice was reached. Half of the casualties of the war -- in which 36,574 U.S. troops died and another 103,284 were wounded -- occurred as the talks languished, Webber noted. "It was a travesty of common sense on the part of the communists," he said. "They are the ones who delayed it because of demands they made and the hope that they could achieve politically what they couldn't achieve militarily." Even today, 60 years after the United Nations, North Korea and China signed the armistice agreement, Webber expressed disappointment that the final peace treaty that was to follow within 60 days never materialized. That has left the two Koreas still technically at war, and Webber expressed dismay over North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's public nullification of the armistice earlier this year.

Yet Webber is quick to note the significance of what he called "a significant benchmark of the 20th century." "It was a catalyst that began the downfall of the attempt of communism to dominate the world," he said. Webber, who served in World War II as well as Korea, sees a common thread. "I like to remind people that World War II saved the world for democracy. Korea saved it from communism," he said. "That is where we drew a line in the sand as a free world, and indicated that we would not allow armed aggression to conquer a free people. And since

that time, it never has. The world took a stance and it worked." Yet like many of his Korean War comrades, Webber said, he remains perplexed that it remains known as "the Forgotten War." "If you look at history books that teach children about American history, it is a three-paragraph war," he said. Most of what's written focuses not on the war itself, but on the controversy between then-President Harry S. Truman and Gen. Douglas MacArthur, he noted. Truman fired MacArthur as commander of U.N. military forces in South Korea in April 1951.

The United States was preoccupied during the Korean War, Webber said, still reveling as troops home from World War II went to school, re-entered the job market and settled down to start families. "It was la-la land," he said. The last thing most Americans wanted at the time was the distraction of another foreign war, particularly one that initially started as a "police action," he said. Yet that police action escalated. At the height of the war, about a half-million U.S., United Nations and South Korean forces found themselves arrayed against 1.5 million Chinese and North Korean forces. "Nowhere during World War II did American forces ever face as many enemies in such a short frontage as in Korea," Webber said. "It was the bloodiest foreign war in terms of the percentage of casualties we have ever fought." Webber rattled off statistics to back up his claim: The chance of those serving being killed or wounded during World War I was 1 in 22; during World War II, 1 in 12; in Vietnam, 1 in 17. "If you went to Korea, you stood one chance in nine of being killed or wounded," he said. "American [service members] died at the average rate of 1,000 a month and were wounded at the rate of 3,000 a month for 36 continuous months on a peninsula that was only 160 miles wide."

To help honor that sacrifice, Webber served nine years on the the presidentially appointed advisory board that led to the dedication of the Korean War Veterans Memorial on Washington's National Mall in 1995. The memorial features 19 seven-foot-tall stainless steel soldiers on patrol, the wind blowing their ponchos as they move across the landscape. But to Webber, who chairs the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation, the memorial honors those who served in Korea, but not who made the ultimate sacrifice. He and many other Korean War veterans hope to one day erect a glass remembrance wall that lists those who died in the conflict. "The American people have never been told the cost of that freedom [won in Korea]. Well, it is 36,574 dead and 103,284 wounded in 36 months of continuous, unbroken combat," Webber said. "You won't find anything like that anywhere in America's history of foreign wars."

Visiting South Korea for the first time since the war in 2002, Webber said he has no doubt that the sacrifices have paid off. "I saw firsthand the amazing things the [South] Koreans have done with the freedom that we have enabled them to have," he said. "A population and a nation that was decimated has become the 12th-largest economy in the world." Webber said he remains struck by the gratitude the South Korean people continue to show for those who came to their defense. He noted, for example, the ongoing Korea Revisit Program, paid for by the South Korean government, which provides Korean War veterans free hotel rooms, meals and tours of Korea. "It's an unbelievable thing, the respect and admiration they have for Americans and their U.N. counterparts because of what they did to save their country," he said. With the average Korean War veteran now 84 years old, and the population declining by about 700 a day, Webber said, America's memory of the Korean War is likely to fade as well. Even after tomorrow's commemoration, expected to draw thousands of the half-million living Korean veterans to the National Mall, Webber is pragmatic about what will follow. "I predict with certainty that right after the 27th of July, the Korean War will fall back into the cracks of history again," he said. What will keep it alive, he said, is the legacy left by those who fought in the Korean War and of the service of those who have continued to defend South Korea during the past six decades. Since the signing of the armistice, North Korean attacks have killed 100 U.S. and more than 450 South Korean troops.

Today, 28,500 U.S. forces continue to serve in South Korea, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with their South Korean counterparts to provide security on the peninsula. "They are trip wires," Webber said. Even with the South Korean Army now holding the demilitarized zone created by the armistice agreement, "the Americans are there, so the North Koreans know that if anything started, the United States would be involved," he said. Together, they

continue to demonstrate the commitment Webber and his fellow Korean War veterans made six decades ago, he said. "You can take a good, hard look at what Korea is today and realize that, at one part of our history, we were responsible for that happening. We saved a free people and kept them free and gave them an opportunity to take advantage of their innate ability to progress as a nation," Webber said. "One can't possibly look at the South Korea of today without accepting the fact that what we did there was justified and necessary," he said. "So you tell me: Why is it an unknown war in the id of American culture?" [Source: American Forces Press Service | Donna Miles | 26 Jul 2013 ++]

WWII Pre-war Events ► Second Sino-Japanese War Preparations



Buddhist priests of the Big Asakusa Temple prepare for the Second Sino-Japanese War as they wear gas masks during training against future aerial attacks in Tokyo, Japan, on May 30, 1936

WWII Vets [47] ► Leroy Myers

The years melted away as Leroy Myers stood at Soto Dam, revisiting the darkest period of his life. Saturday, 25 MAY marked the 93-year-old former military contractor's return since laboring on the dam in western Japan seven decades ago as an American prisoner of war. He recalled being wracked by starvation and dysentery at 21 as he carried 100-pound bags of cement under the orders of brutal Japanese guards. Fifty-three American POWs died of starvation, sickness and injuries in the wartime Japanese labor camp at Soto Dam, now part of an idyllic valley

outside the city of Sasebo where a monument marks their suffering. Navy personnel from Sasebo Naval Base and the local Japanese government held a memorial ceremony at the site on Memorial Day. Myers visited a day earlier to see the dam minus the fanfare.



Leroy Myers said that the key to staying alive at Sasebo's horrific Camp 18 was keeping a sense of humor. The experience taught him to laugh and enjoy life, lessons he carries with him to this day.

Myers and about two dozen other prisoners at Camp 18 were captured during the siege of Wake Island, a Japanese offensive that coincided with the attack on Pearl Harbor and signaled the start of the U.S. involvement in World War II. Myers is believed to be only one of two survivors of Camp 18 who are still alive. He was captured with his father, who was also a contractor on Wake Island, and imprisoned in the camp from January 1943 to June 1944. Both were eventually liberated from a prison camp farther north in Fukuoka at the end of the war. Though slowed by age and diminishing eyesight, Myers walked the entire length of the dam after traveling to Japan for the Memorial Day weekend ceremony with his three children. He paused every few feet as memories flooded back. There were 20 POW crews under Imperial Japanese Navy guard. Each crew worked for a civilian contractor called a “honcho,” hauling the heavy cement bags up and down the valley for 10-12 hours a day, Myers said. The grueling work required two men to hoist the bags onto a prisoner’s back and mix cement by hand. Prisoners were often starving and crowded into a bunkhouse when not working, he said.



Myers' son and daughter help him down the steps to the dam that Myers helped build 72 years ago as a Japanese POW. Though slowed somewhat by age, he was determined to walk the entire length of the dam by himself, telling stories of his captivity as he went

Myers choked up describing atrocities by guards and the deaths of fellow prisoners. The POWs endured mass beatings and flea infestations. When a prisoner's appendix burst, it was cut out on site. Another who pleaded for the Japanese to stop beating him while he worked disappeared after he was hit on the head with a shovel. One cold winter day, Myers climbed to the top of the dam and considered jumping to his death. "It was easy to die. The hard part was to live," he said. "I'm glad I didn't jump." Myers weighed less than 100 pounds when he was finally rescued. His flight home passed low over Nagasaki to survey the devastation from the atomic bomb. He went on to raise a family and work at food manufacturer Del Monte for 30 years. The Soto Dam valley is now covered with vegetation, the cement of the dam is aged and covered with vines, and the body of water that Myers helped create is peaceful. Myer's daughter, Nancy Booth, looked out over the valley in disbelief, recalling the stories of the wartime despair and suffering that she has heard from her father over the years. "It's beautiful," she said. "It's hard to imagine it's what I had heard about." [Source: Stars & Stripes | Matthew M. Burke | 28 May 2013 ++]

POW/MIA Update 48 ► Research Misconduct/Military Tourism

In 2010 a seven-member team from the Hawaii-based Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command investigated an anonymous lead that an American World War I soldier's remains were in an underground passageway in Connigis, France. According to an internal report by JPAC's Paul M. Cole, the accounting command had no authority to investigate a World War I case, but the team went anyway as part of three stops in France. What they found were a rubber skeleton, some nonhuman bones and some Champagne at the owner's chateau that apparently was to the team's liking, the report states. The J2 "intelligence" section of JPAC then proposed to send a recovery team to excavate — even though no human remains had been identified, and the chateau's owner thought someone might have mistakenly reported the Halloween rubber skeleton as remains, according to officials. It was "gross research misconduct," and it was among a series of JPAC trips to Europe that Cole characterized as "military tourism" boondoggles costing many thousands in taxpayer dollars.

The Star-Advertiser obtained a copy of the explosive and contentious 342-page draft JPAC study — which was disavowed and rejected by JPAC brass --after The Associated Press published a story on it earlier this month. The former two-star general who was in charge of JPAC until November said he instituted a series of reforms after the report's research was completed in late 2010, correcting many problems within the Hawaii command. Still, the allegations in the study have prompted a Pentagon re-examination of JPAC — and infuriated some POW/MIA groups that claim the government agency moves too slowly on remains cases. "The report raises issues about how DoD accounts for missing service members," said Lt. Col. Jim Gregory, a Pentagon spokesman. "While this report remains a draft work, DoD takes seriously the allegations and recommendations in it." The undersecretary of defense for policy has initiated a review of the issues raised, including allegations of fraud, waste and abuse, Gregory said in an email.

Headquartered at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, JPAC has a staff of about 500 and sends 70 teams a year on identification and recovery missions to a dozen countries in search of American service members missing from World War II, Korea and the Vietnam War. A sampling of the JPAC J2 section's "military tourism" visits to Europe showed that they did "not appear to be rigorous, demanding, or an imposition on anyone who enjoys luxury accommodations, fine hotels and top-tier cuisine," Cole said in the report, released in 2012. On another 2010 mission, this time to Italy, a JPAC team spent \$58,577, excluding airfare, to retrieve "additional portions" from a 1945 B-26 bomber crash when the crew had been "located, recovered, identified and removed from the roster of the missing 65 years ago," Cole said. Yet another 2010 mission to Italy saw four JPAC team members stay five nights at the Grand Hotel de la Minerva, where room rates started at \$500 a night, according to Cole. Now-retired Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, who ran JPAC from 2010 to November 2012, said he already had targeted for change some of the

shortcomings identified by Cole. Others, meanwhile, have sought to discredit Cole, pointing to inaccuracies in the report. "In a way, it's hard to double-check all the facts on that thing," said Tom. "I don't doubt that that type of stuff had gone on in 2010 (when Cole did his research), but he went overboard. ... It's like turning the knife in someone's back."

Tom said he doesn't dispute that a team noted in one of Cole's examples stayed at an expensive hotel in Italy. "It might have been a \$500-a-room hotel for some," Tom said, "but we were staying there for the government rate." Tom said he is not sure what that cheaper government rate was. After it was reported by The Associated Press, the Cole report touched a nerve with members of Congress and some of the families of the more than 83,000 missing Americans desperately seeking closure with loved ones who went off to war and never returned. A separate Government Accountability Office examination of the remains recovery effort is due out soon. "Allegations of mismanagement at any federal agency is a matter to be taken seriously," said U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I am working with military officials and will closely examine the upcoming GAO report in order get a more complete view of what is going on in the unit. "JPAC is tasked with a solemn mission of finding those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, and everyone can agree that this unit should carry out these duties with dignity and honor," she said. Adm. Samuel Locklear III, head of U.S. Pacific Command, JPAC's higher command, said 11 JUL, "I do think that there are areas where we need to take harder looks at how it (JPAC) is organized and how the mission steps are prioritized."

Tom said he improved the accounting command by instituting standard operating procedures and engaging in a "wholesale restructuring" in the summer of 2012. Overseas investigations had been run by civilians in the J2 section, while follow-up excavation and recovery missions were overseen with "stricter military command and control," Tom said. Tom said he put them both under military control. The military teams had to file daily reports and had responsibility for enforcing proper standards and conduct, Tom said. Asked whether there was previously not enough oversight of the overseas missions by the J2 section, Tom said, "Let me just say that it needed improvement." He also said he put in place a special board to review whether overseas missions were warranted. Tom said he asked for the report as the accounting command looked ahead to a congressional mandate that JPAC increase its identifications of American war dead to 200 per year by 2015 — more than double the 80 identifications in 2011. But the former commander said he also ultimately rejected Cole's report because it did not look at all sections of JPAC as requested, and because of personal attacks it made on JPAC personnel. "That's not what I wanted," Tom said.

The past European excursions are harshly criticized as extravagances, while their shortcomings — failing to produce enough new remains to be identified — threatened to undermine JPAC's mission of accounting for missing American service members, Cole said in the report. At the time that Cole gathered his information, he estimated that JPAC was wasting in excess of \$3.5 million per year on products and services that were "unwanted, unneeded, unused or defective." Cole revealed that it took 18 "site surveys" to produce one Southeast Asia identification and 36.75 site surveys to produce one World War II identification. Gregory, the Pentagon spokesman, said that unlike Vietnam War case files, with more than 40 years of research and investigative work, the case files for World War II are minimal. "JPAC has had to develop a reservoir of information to kick-start the nascent World War II recovery activity," he said. "This required increasing mission-essential travel and operations in Europe as well as the Pacific." Tom said JPAC is focusing on Europe because of the larger numbers of missing bomber crew members it can recover. Also under his command, teams working on recoveries from Vietnam began using Vietnamese to do the searches, reducing the number of Americans needed, he said.

Mark Sauter and John Zimmerlee obtained the report for their book, "American Trophies: How US POWs Were Surrendered to North Korea, China and Russia by Washington's 'Cynical Attitude.'" The Cole report affirms how America has failed to make accounting for its missing a top priority, Sauter said. The ebook will be available at <http://www.cynicalattitude.com>. "A tragic part of the behavior in this report is how it diminishes the service of the

many JPAC people who have suffered and even risked their lives to recover remains," Sauter said. Lynn O'Shea, director of research with the National Alliance of Families for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen, said JPAC has been allowed to do anything it wants and get away with anything it wants. "JPAC has become its own little kingdom, run by a group of people that never changes, no matter who the commanding general is," O'Shea said. The National League of POW/MIA Families, however, decried the Cole report, saying it pitted the Central Identification Laboratory against other JPAC entities. "Inaccuracies and manipulated data in his report, largely unfounded assertions and personal accusations reflect a lab-generated power-play seeking greater lab control within JPAC," the group said on its website. The Honolulu Star-Advertiser | William Cole | 15 Jul 2013 ++]

POW/MIA Update 49 ► 16-31 JUL 2013

"Keeping the Promise", "Fulfill their Trust" and "No one left behind" are several of many mottos that refer to the efforts of the Department of Defense to recover those who became missing while serving our nation. The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II (73,000+), Korean War (7,900+), Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,655), 1991 Gulf War (0), and OEF/OIF (6). Over 600 Defense Department men and women -- both military and civilian -- work in organizations around the world as part of DoD's personnel recovery and personnel accounting communities. They are all dedicated to the single mission of finding and bringing our missing personnel home. For a listing of all personnel accounted for since 2007 refer to http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/accounted_for. For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1420. The remains of the following MIA/POW's have been recovered, identified, and scheduled for burial since the publication of the last RAO Bulletin:



Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may call the following Service Casualty Offices: U.S. Air Force (800) 531-5501, U.S. Army (800) 892-2490, U.S. Marine Corps (800) 847-1597, U.S. Navy (800) 443-9298, or U.S. Department of State (202) 647-5470. The remains of the following MIA/POW's have been recovered, identified, and scheduled for burial since the publication of the last RAO Bulletin:

Vietnam

- The DPMO announced 8 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, has been have been identified and have been returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class **Michael B. Judd** of Cleveland was buried on July 15, in Arlington National Cemetery. On June 30, 1967, Judd was aboard a CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter that was attempting to insert a U.S. Marine Corps reconnaissance team into hostile territory in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam. As the helicopter approached the landing zone, it was struck by enemy fire from the

surrounding tree line, causing the aircraft to catch fire. The aircraft crashed landed. Although most of the reconnaissance team survived, Judd and four other crew members of the team, died in the crash. In 1993, joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams investigated the case in Thua Thien-Hue Province. The team interviewed local villagers who claimed to have discovered an aircraft crash site in the nearby forest while searching for firewood in 1991. The team surveyed the location finding aircraft wreckage that could not be associated with a CH-46A. During the 1990s, joint U.S./ S.R.V. teams continued to investigate the loss in Thua Thien-Hue Province. In 1999, the team interviewed the same local villagers who provided relevant case information and the joint team surveyed the crash site again, this time uncovering aircraft wreckage consistent with a U.S. military helicopter. In 2012, joint U.S./ S.R.V. recovery teams began excavating the crash site and recovered human remains and aircraft wreckage from the CH-46A helicopter that Judd was aboard. Scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, including dental comparisons in the identification of Judd remains.

Korea

- The DPMO announced 18 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and have been returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. **Bernard J. Fisher** of Wilkes Barre, Pa., was buried July 16, in Arlington National Cemetery. In January 1951, Fisher and elements of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment (IR), 24th Infantry Division (ID), were deployed northeast of Seoul, South Korea, where they were attacked by enemy forces. During the 19th IR attempt to delay the enemy forces from advancing, Fisher and his unit moved towards a more defensible position, when the unit suffered heavy losses. It was during this attack, that Fisher was reported missing. In July 1951, the U.S. Army Graves Registration recovered the remains of four men north of Shaha-dong, near Seoul, South Korea. The remains were buried in the United Nation Cemetery at Tanggok, South Korea, and were disinterred and transferred to the U.S. Army's Central Identification Unit in Kokura, Japan for laboratory analysis. During the analysis the remains of three men could not be positively identified. In March 1955, a military review board declared the remains of the fourth to be unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were transferred to Hawaii, where they were interred as "unknown" at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the "Punchbowl." In 2012, U.S. officials reevaluated Fisher's records and determined that with advances in technology, the unknown remains could likely be identified. Following the reevaluation, the decision was made to exhume the remains for scientific analysis identification. In the identification of the remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, such as dental comparison and chest radiograph – which matched Fisher's records.
- The DPMO announced 22 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Cpl. **Glyndon E. Moyer**, 18, of Luray, Va., will be buried July 25, in his hometown. In late November 1950, Moyer and elements of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) were deployed along the east of the Chosin Reservoir near Sinhung-ri, South Hamgyong Province, in North Korea. On Dec. 1, 1950 remnants of the 31st RCT, known historically as Task Force Faith, began a fighting withdrawal to a more defensible position near the Hagaru-ri, south of the reservoir when he was reported missing Dec. 2, 1950. Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea gave the United States 208 boxes of remains believed to contain the remains of 200-400 U.S. service members. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the human remains were recovered from the area where Moyer was last seen. In the identification of Moyer, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence, and forensic identification

tools such as dental comparisons, mitochondrial DNA – which matched Moyer’s sister and brother. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials.



Glyndon E. Moyer

- The DPMO announced 23 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, were recently identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. **Clement Thibodeaux Jr.**, 18, of Baton Rouge, La., will be buried July 26, in Church Point, La. In late Nov. 1950 elements of the 25th Infantry Division (ID) and 35th Infantry Regiment (IR) were fighting with units of the Chinese army north of the Ch’ongch’on River in North Korea. In the course of the fighting, and the subsequent withdrawal by U.S. forces, the 25th ID suffered extensive casualties, with numerous men being taken captive by the Chinese. It was during this withdrawal, Thibodeaux was captured by enemy forces. In 1953, returning U. S. personnel told debriefers that Thibodeaux had been captured and taken by enemy forces to a POW camp known as “Death Valley.” Soldiers also stated that in Jan. 1951 Thibodeaux died from malnutrition and pneumonia. His remains were not among those returned by communist forces in 1954. In 2005, a joint U.S. and Democratic People’s Republic Korea (D.P.R.K.) team excavated a site in Unsan County in North Korea and found multiple remains. The remains subsequently were repatriated to the U.S. and were sent for scientific identification. In the identification of Thibodeaux, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence, and forensic identification tools such as dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA – which matched Thibodeaux’s brother.
- The DPMO announced 26 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. 1st Class **Joseph D. Steinberg**, 31, of San Francisco, Calif. will be buried Aug. 1, in San Bruno, Calif. In Feb. 1951 Steinberg and Battery C, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, were a part of the Support Force 21 in a major offensive near Hoengsong, South Korea when they were overrun and suffered over 200 casualties. Steinberg and over 100 men were taken as prisoners. Following the war, Steinberg’s remains were not accounted for. Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea gave the United States 208 boxes of remains believed to contain the remains of 200-400 U.S. service members. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the human remains were recovered from the area where Steinberg was last seen. In the identification of Steinberg, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence, and forensic identification tools such as dental comparisons, bone samples, and mitochondrial DNA – which matched Steinberg’s sister, niece, and nephew. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials. Today, more than 7,900

Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Korean War. Identifications continue to be made from the remains that were returned to the United States, using forensic and DNA technology.

World War II

- The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced 16 JUL that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. **Jerome E. Kiger**, of Mannington, W.V., will be buried on July 21, in Fairmont, W.V. On July 21, 1944, a B-24H Liberator aircraft, which carried nine crew members, was shot down by enemy fire and crashed while on a bombing raid to Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany. Of the nine crew members, six were able to parachute to safety and a seventh crewman's remains were recovered near Hadorf. Kiger and another crewman were not recovered. Attempts to recover their remains after the war were unsuccessful. In 2009, a German national turned over human remains to a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) investigating team who was operating in southern Germany. The German national recovered the remains and aircraft wreckage from a crash site southwest of Munich. In 2012, a JPAC recovery team excavated the suspected crash site southwest of Munich, locating additional human remains and aircraft wreckage. To identify Kiger's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Kiger's sister and niece.

Note: POW/MIA Day Posters Now Available: Order your 2013 POW/MIA Recognition Day posters from the Defense POW/MIA Office before they run out. Each full-color poster measures 11x16-inches, and shipping is free. Limit is 20 posters per order. Place your order online at http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/pow_day.

[Source: http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/news/news_releases/ Jul 2013 ++]

USS Pueblo Update 02 ► Victory Day Display

If there was ever any doubt about what happened to the only U.S. Navy ship that is being held by a foreign government, North Korea has cleared it up. It's in Pyongyang. And it looks like it's here to stay. With a fresh coat of paint and a new home along the Pothong River, the USS Pueblo, a spy ship seized off North Korea's east coast in the late 1960s, is expected to be unveiled this week as the centerpiece of a renovated war museum to commemorate what North Korea calls "Victory Day," the 60th anniversary this Saturday of the signing of the armistice that ended hostilities in the Korean War. The ship is North Korea's greatest Cold War prize. Its government hopes the Pueblo will serve as a potent symbol of how the country has stood up to the great power of the United States, once in an all-out ground war and now with its push to develop the nuclear weapons and sophisticated missiles it needs to threaten the U.S. mainland. Many of the crew who served on the vessel, then spent 11 months in captivity in North Korea, want to bring the Pueblo home. Throughout its history, they argue, the Navy's motto has been "don't give up the ship." The Pueblo, in fact, is still listed as a commissioned U.S. Navy vessel, the only one being held by a foreign nation.

But with relations generally fluctuating in a narrow band between bad to dangerously bad, the United States has made little effort to get it back. At times, outsiders weren't even sure where North Korea was keeping the ship or what it planned to do with it. Requests for interviews with the captain of one of the North Korean ships involved in the attack were denied, and North Korean officials have been tight lipped about their plans before the formal unveiling. The Pueblo incident is a painful reminder of miscalculation and confusion, as well as the unresolved

hostilities that continue to keep the two countries in what seems to be a permanent state of distrust and preparation for another clash, despite the truce that ended the 1950-1953 war. Already more than 40 years old and only lightly armed so it wouldn't look conspicuous or threatening as it carried out its intelligence missions, the USS Pueblo was attacked and easily captured on Jan. 23, 1968. Surrounded by a half dozen enemy ships with MiG fighter jets providing air cover, the crew was unable to put up much of a fight. It scrambled to destroy intelligence materials, but soon discovered it wasn't well prepared for even that. A shredder aboard the Pueblo quickly became jammed with the piles of papers anxious crew members shoved into it. They tried burning the documents in waste baskets, but smoke quickly filled the cabins. And there were not enough weighted bags to toss all the secret material overboard



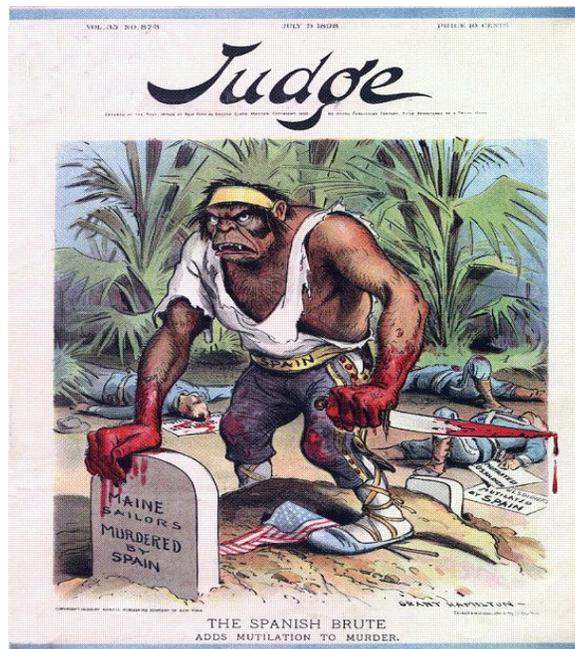
One U.S. sailor was killed when the ship was strafed by machine gun fire and boarded. The remaining 82, including three injured, were taken prisoner. The North Koreans sailed the Pueblo to the port of Wonsan. For the survivors, that's when the real ordeal began. "I got shot up in the original capture, so we were taken by bus and then train for an all-night journey to Pyongyang in North Korea, and then they put us in a place we called the barn," said Robert Chicca of Bonita, Calif., a Marine Corps sergeant who served as a Korean linguist on the Pueblo. "We had fried turnips for breakfast, turnip soup for lunch, and fried turnips for dinner. ... There was never enough to eat, and personally I lost about 60 pounds over there." Although the ship was conducting intelligence operations, crew members say that most of them had little useful information for the North Koreans. That, according to the crew, didn't stop them from being beaten severely during interrogations. "The Koreans basically told us, they put stuff in front of us, they said you were here, you were spying, you will be shot as spies," said Earl Phares from Ontario, Calif., who was cleaning up after the noon meal in the galley when the attack began. "Everybody got the same amount of beatings in the beginning."

North Korea said the ship had entered its territorial waters, though the U.S. maintained it was in international waters 15 miles off the nearest land. The incident quickly escalated. The U.S., already deeply embroiled in the Vietnam War, sent several aircraft carriers to the Sea of Japan and demanded the captives be released. Just days before the attack, North Korean commandos had launched an assassination attempt on South Korea's President Park Chung-hee at his residence. North Korea responded by putting members of the crew before cameras to confess publicly. The crew members planted defiant codes into forced letters of confession and extended their middle fingers in images sent around the world. That led to further beatings when the North Koreans figured out the gesture's meaning. On Dec. 21, 1968, Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, the chief U.S. negotiator, signed a statement acknowledging that the Pueblo had "illegally intruded into the territorial waters of North Korea" and apologizing for "the grave acts committed by the U.S. ship against" North Korea. Both before and after, he read into the record a statement disavowing the confession. The hostages were released across the Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas two days before Christmas - 335 days after their capture.

The Navy considered a court-martial for the ship's captain, Cmdr. Lloyd M. "Pete" Bucher, for letting the Pueblo fall into enemy hands without firing a shot and for failing to destroy much of the ship's classified material. But he was never brought to trial. John H. Chafee, secretary of the Navy at the time, said Bucher and the other crew members "had suffered enough." To this day, members of the Pueblo crew say Bucher made the right decision, though years later his second-in-command publicly questioned Bucher's decisions not to fight. "It would have been nice to take out some of the guys, some of them, and maybe go down fighting, but it would have been total suicide," said Phares. "We never thought anything would happen, and we weren't supposed to create an international incident." In 2002, former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Donald P. Gregg said a North Korean foreign ministry official hinted at a deal to return the Pueblo. But when he later visited Pyongyang, he said he was told the climate had changed and a return was no longer an option.

In January the next year, Colorado Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell reintroduced a resolution in Congress asking North Korea to return the ship. There has been no progress since, however, at least none that has been made public. "The ship was named after Pueblo, Colorado, and they would have loved to have the ship back," Chicca said. "It's very disappointing to have it still there, and still being used as anti-American propaganda." The planned display of the ship by North Korea hangs over the heads of the crew members who have long campaigned for its return. "I'll never give up, but I don't think it's ever coming back," Phares said. "It's just unfortunate that we got put in that situation, and that the top brass blamed us, or blamed Bucher, for everything." [Source: Associated Press] Eric Talmadge | 25 Jul 2013 ++]

Spanish American War Images 18 ► Yellow Journalism



Judge Magazine Spanish American War

Saving Money ► Lost Keys

If you have never lost your keys and been locked out of your car or house you are the exception. Most people have been confronted with this situation and it has cost them more than they needed to pay to rectify the situation. The following are some tips on how to deal with lost keys:

1. **Keep a spare.** The best locksmith is one you never need to call. Start by making a spare set of your keys and giving them to a nearby neighbor, friend or relative you trust with access to your house or car. For house keys, retailers like Wal-Mart now have a DIY key-making machine. You pay a nominal fee (less than \$5 depending on where you live) and the key pops out in about five minutes. You can also have keys made at home improvement stores, dry cleaners, and even at concession stands in the airport. Most car keys have a computer chip inside matched to your car, so you can't make copies in a key machine. You could have a dealership make your keys, but home improvement stores like Home Depot (\$65-\$75) will also make them at a considerable savings over what a car dealer will charge (Chevrolet \$120).

2. **Get referrals.** Next, identify a reliable, affordable locksmith before you need one. Ask friends and family for referrals. Create a list of locksmiths to check out. You can also look online for a locksmith. You'll still need to take a closer look yourself, but it can get you started:

- <http://www.findalocksmith.com>
- <http://www.locksmith.com>
- <http://www.findmylocksmith.com>

3. **Do your research.** The Federal Trade Commission warns that not all locksmiths claiming to be local actually are. In fact, some larger companies may have 30 or more listings in your local phone book all claiming to be based in your town. When you call the number, you're sent to a call center, which in turn sends out an untrained person to do the job. And since they're not local, you'll pay more mileage for the trip. Here's how to avoid that:

- Research the address. If an address is listed, look it up on Google Maps <https://maps.google.com> to make sure it matches a local locksmith shop, not an empty lot or unidentified building.
- Research the phone number. If no address is listed, use a site like White Pages http://www.whitepages.com/reverse_phone to do a reverse phone number search for the address. Then plug the address into Google Maps.
- Check for reviews. Review sites like Yelp <http://www.yelp.com> can help you decide if a locksmith is legitimate and good.

Note: Some locksmiths work out of their home and may not want to publicize an address. If you can't find an address, ask the locksmith why. Be wary of anyone who couldn't explain why they didn't list an address.

4. **Compare prices.** In 2011, the average service call for a locksmith was \$66. Commonly quoted prices were \$45, \$66 and \$85. For automobiles, locksmiths charged \$62 on average, according to a survey by Locksmith Ledger. At <http://www.locksmithledger.com/article/10457255/2011-national-average-price-survey> they broke down the averages for specific types of services. To find the best prices in your area, ask locksmiths for a quote on typical jobs like unlocking your house or getting your keys out of your car trunk. Ask for weekend and holiday rates.

5. **Handle an emergency.** What's the best course if you haven't done the research and you're locked out of your car in the middle of the night? Call your roadside assistance company. They've worked with locksmiths in the past and can probably recommend a reputable company in your area. Don't have roadside assistance? Your credit card company (i.e. Bank of America) may offer it free. You could also add a cheap roadside assistance policy to your auto insurance or your wireless plan. Progressive, Geico, and State Farm charge monthly fees of \$3.00, \$1.83, and

\$4.10 respectively. AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint charge monthly fees of \$2.99, \$3.00, and \$4.00 respectively. Cost can depending on your location and the type of car you drive

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Angela Colley | 29 May 2013 ++]

Notes of Interest ► 16-31 Jul 2013

- **COLA.** The June CPI of 230.002 is 1.4% above the FY2013 COLA baseline of 226.936.
- **Dog Tags.** Failed attempts to identify deceased soldiers during and after the Civil War eventually lead to a 1913 Army regulation mandating identification tags, what we know today as “Dog Tags.”
- **Aspirin.** If you take an aspirin or a baby aspirin once a day, take it at night. Aspirin has a 24-hour "half-life". Most heart attacks happen in the wee hours of the morning, it would be strongest in your system. Aspirin lasts a really long time in your medicine chest, for years, (when it gets old, it smells like vinegar).
- **Federal Debt.** On 18 JUL Moody’s upgraded its outlook on the US government’s AAA rating to “stable” from “negative”.
- **Surplus Government Property.** Taxpayers spend about \$1.7 billion a year maintaining the estimated 77,700 underutilized or vacant properties the Federal government owns but can’t sell.
- **Heart disease.** About 8.5% of all white men, 7.9% of black men, and 6.3% of Mexican American men have coronary heart disease.
- **Burn Pit Registry.** The VBA has extended the deadline for the public to comment on its planned registry for service members exposed to open-air burn pits through 20 AUG. To comment go to <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/06/05/2013-13224/proposed-information-collection-open-burn-pit-registry-airborne-hazard-self-assessment-questionnaire>.
- **HVAC Poll.** The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is inviting veterans to complete its new Facebook poll, which asks one simple question: Do you think the Department of Veterans Affairs is doing enough to hold poorly performing employees accountable? You can take the poll at https://www.facebook.com/questions/623281767696344/?qa_ref=ssp.

[Source: Various 1-15 Jul 2013 ++]



Medicare Fraud Update 126 ► Disclosures 16-31 Jul 2013

- **Cameron TX** — The owner of five Texas hospitals has been named in a federal indictment charging him with Medicare fraud. **Tariq Mahmood**, 61, from Cedar Hill, on 11 APR was named in the indictment by a federal grand jury in the court’s Eastern District of Texas, based in Tyler, and is charged with conspiracy to commit more than \$1 million in health care fraud in nine separate counts. Mahmood, who has denied the charges, appeared before U.S. Magistrate John D. Love in April and had a bond set at \$25,000. Mahmood

was released from custody after posting the bond and surrendering his U.S. Passport. The Tyler grand jury indicted Mahmood for reporting more than \$1.1 million in fraudulent health care charges to Medicare and Medicaid. Evidence shows Mahmood used Medicare and Medicaid provider numbers issued to hospitals he owns and operates. He could face up to 10 years in federal prison on each charge if convicted.

- **Miami FL** — A Miami doctor and six therapists have been charged with health care fraud that allegedly sought to bilk Medicare and Medicaid out of \$63 million. Federal prosecutors said 16 JUL that 71-year-old Dr. **Roger Rousseau** routinely signed faked or altered medical records at now-defunct Health Care Solutions Network, which claimed to provide mental health services. Prosecutors also say the company paid kickbacks to assisted living operators who provided patients for services that either weren't necessary or not provided. The therapists are also accused of fabricating medical records to support unnecessary or phantom Medicare and Medicaid claims. Out of the \$63 million in claims, authorities say the company received about \$28 million from 2004 to 2011. Rousseau attorney Sam Rabin says his client is not guilty and wants a trial.
- **Robinson IL** — Dr. **Mahmoud Yassin**, 61, was sentenced in federal district court for a Criminal Health Care Fraud Investigator, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, Stephen R. Wigginton, announced 22 JUL. Dr. Yassin was sentenced to serve 3 years of probation, a fine of \$10,000, a special assessment of \$100, and ordered to pay restitution to BCBS of Illinois in the amount of \$19,615.17. As a condition of probation, Dr. Yassin must also serve 30 days in prison. The felony obstruction occurred on March 2, 2012, when a FBI agent, having served a subpoena for patient records on Dr. Yassin, was given a patient progress note that had been altered by the doctor to show an in-office examination previously claimed to an insurance carrier, but which had not taken place. In a civil settlement with the United States Attorney's Office regarding false claims to Medicare, Dr. Yassin paid double damages in the amount of \$87,348.64. The restitution and civil false claims settlement were based on claims for in person office visits in which the patient either failed to show up for an appointment or only was spoken to by telephone.
- **Detroit MI** — The Justice Department says a Detroit-area physical therapist assistant has pleaded guilty for his role in a \$22 million home health care fraud scheme. **Syed Shah** made the plea 24 JUL in Detroit federal court to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud. Prosecutors say the 51-year-old from West Bloomfield Township acknowledged conspiring to bill Medicare for home health care services that weren't rendered and/or not medically necessary between 2008 and 2012. Shah also was the owner of a home health agency and a patient recruiter. At sentencing on 19 NOV, he faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.
- **Los Angeles CA** — The daughter of a church pastor and owner of a California-based durable medical equipment (DME) supply company was found guilty by a jury of Medicare fraud charges for her role in a Medicare fraud scheme that resulted in over \$11 million in fraudulent billings to Medicare. **Obiageli Agbu**, 26, of Carson, Calif., was found guilty on 19 JUL of one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and eight counts of health care fraud following a two-week trial. The evidence showed that Agbu owned Ibon Inc., a fraudulent DME supply company that she operated from a nondescript office building in Carson. Agbu's father and co-defendant, **Charles Agbu**, a church pastor who pleaded guilty to Medicare fraud and money laundering charges in December 2012, ran a fraudulent DME supply company called Bonfee Inc. from the same office building that housed Ibon. The trial evidence showed Agbu, her father and others working with them submitted more than \$11 million in fraudulent claims from Ibon and Bonfee to Medicare for expensive, high-end power wheelchairs, hospital beds, braces and other DME that customers either did not need or receive. Agbu and her father purchased the power wheelchairs wholesale

for approximately \$900 per wheelchair, but they billed the wheelchairs to Medicare at \$4,000 to \$5,000 per power wheelchair. These power wheelchairs were a type of medical equipment of last resort reserved for people with severe mobility limitations and could cause harm if the wheelchairs were supplied to people who did not have a legitimate medical need for them. Agbu and her father paid kickbacks to street-level patient recruiters or “marketers” who would find senior citizens with Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits and cajole the seniors into agreeing to accept power wheelchairs and other DME that the seniors did not need. The seniors were directed to doctors who received cash kickbacks of \$200 to \$1,000 to write fraudulent prescriptions and other Medicare-specific documents conspirators used at Bonfee and Ibon to submit fraudulent claims to Medicare. As a result of this scheme, between July 2005 and February 2011, Agbu, her father and those working with them submitted approximately \$11,094,918 million in fraudulent claims to Medicare and received approximately \$5,788,725 on those claims.

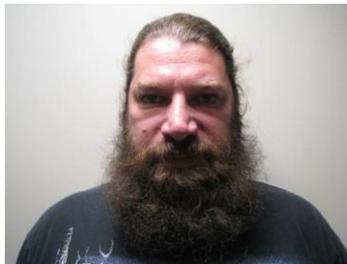
[Source: Various 16-31 Jul 2013 ++]

Medicaid Fraud Update 90 ► Disclosures 16-31 Jul 2013

- **Columbus OH** — An Ohio home health aide has been sentenced to two years in prison after being accused of swindling the state’s Medicaid program of more than \$234,000 for hours she billed but did not work. The Columbus Dispatch reports that 39-year-old **Ellanora Whiting** pleaded guilty last month to felony theft. She was paid for a total of 15,000 hours she never worked between 2006 and 2012. An investigation by the office of Attorney General Mike DeWine found Whiting had billed for hours she claimed to have worked when in fact she had been at casinos in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Mississippi and New York. Whiting also claimed to have been working simultaneously in different locations. Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Kim Brown ordered Whiting to repay to the state the money she stole.
- **Zachary LA** — Three people were arrested 18 JUL on Medicaid fraud charges. According to reports, **Terry Lee Turner**, 57, his wife **Connie Turner**, 43, and his daughter **Nicole Turner**, 40, were arrested after an investigation into a Zachary company, Empowering Care Services, LLC. All three are accused of presenting false claims to the Louisiana Medicaid program for payment for services that were never performed. Terry Lee Turner has been charged with one count of Medicaid fraud, Connie and Nicole Turner each face two counts of Medicaid fraud. If convicted, they face up to five years in prison and \$20,000 in fines for each count.
- **Reno NV** — Two women were sentenced 23 JUL for pleading guilty to federal health care fraud charges after they defrauded the Nevada Medicaid program of approximately \$1 million, announced Daniel G. Bogden, United States Attorney for the District of Nevada. **Cassandra Little**, 49, of Reno, was sentenced to 33 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$81,400 in restitution. Little pleaded guilty in March to 28 counts of health care fraud and 10 counts of money laundering. **Susan Hill**, 66, of Las Vegas, was sentenced to 18 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$81,400 in restitution. Hill pleaded guilty in March to one count of health care fraud and one count of money laundering. According to the court records, from about January 2007 to January 2011, Hill and Little defrauded the Nevada Medicaid program by fraudulently billing for expensive therapy-related services such as psychosocial rehabilitation and basic skills training which were never provided. To execute their scheme, Hill and Little formed a company, the Hill/Little LLC, and entered into a contract with Nevada Medicaid to provide health care services to children who were eligible for Medicaid. Hill was the president of the LLC. Little, a PhD and licensed social worker, was to provide the clinical services to the children. Bogden says Hill and Little then created a program to obtain aid for the parents of the children

who were eligible to receive the Medicaid funding; however, the program was not authorized or allowed under their Medicaid contract with the state. Hill recruited parents and guardians to provide services to their own children following minimal training provided by Hill/Little LLC. The services were nothing more than what parents normally do without reimbursement. Hill/Little LLC then billed Medicaid approximately \$8,000 per month for each child, using a billing code which was only authorized for services that could have been provided by Little, the licensed social worker. According to Bogden, Hill/Little kept \$5,000 per month for each child and paid each parent/guardian approximately \$3,000. The parents/guardians reported that their children received little or no services from Hill or Little, and none of the services billed by Hill/Little from January 2007 to January 2011 were ever properly provided or authorized under Medicaid rules. Using this scheme, Hill and Little unlawfully received approximately \$1 million from Medicaid for services they did not provide.

- **Plainville CT** — A 43-year-old man was arrested 26 JUL after he allegedly went to police to complain that a disabled woman who concocted a Medicaid fraud scheme wasn't giving him his fair share of the proceeds. **Brian Borry** told police he worked as a personal care assistant to the woman, according to a release from the state Division of Criminal Justice. He and the woman submitted 27 fraudulent billings to the state. They claimed that Borry worked more than twice as much as he actually worked, and he was paid \$15,065 for about \$6,600 worth of work, the release states. The woman allegedly deposited the checks and paid Borry. But Borry went to Plainville police because he wasn't getting as much money as he thought he should. The Personal Care Assistance program, which is funded by Medicaid, provides money so disabled adults can hire assistants to care for them at their homes. Borry was arrested by inspectors from the Medicaid fraud control unit of the Office of the Chief State's Attorney. He faces charges including first-degree larceny by defrauding a public community, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny and insurance fraud. He could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison if he is convicted. More arrests are expected, the release states



Brian Borry

[Source: Various 16-31 Jul 2013 ++]

State Veteran's Benefits ► Nebraska

The state of **Nebraska** provides several benefits to veterans as indicated below. To obtain information on these refer to the attachment to this Bulletin titled, “**Veteran State Benefits – NE**” for an overview of the below those benefits. Benefits are available to veterans who are residents of the state. For a more detailed explanation of each refer to <http://www.vets.state.ne.us>.

- Housing Benefits
- Financial Assistance Benefits
- Education Benefits

- Other State Veteran Benefits

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/north-dakota-state-veterans-benefits.html> Jul 2013
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Military Entitlements ► **Impact on Readiness**

The Pentagon and President Obama understand that military entitlements are killing readiness. So why doesn't Congress? Members of Congress rarely miss an opportunity to trumpet their support for the troops, and the 2014 Defense Appropriations bill passed 24 JUL by the House trumpeted away. Health coverage for life with minimal cost sharing? Check. Retiree pensions? Check. Generous housing allowances, grocery discounts, tuition assistance, tax breaks and more? Check. That's just a small recompense to the men and women who risk their lives for us, right? Not exactly. America has arrived at a moment when the honorable instinct to keep boosting military compensation risks harming the very men and women Congress claims to be helping. The reality is that the U.S. doesn't have one sacred contract with our troops: It has two. In addition to generous care and compensation, we owe them the best possible preparation for combat—weapons and other technologies that outmatch the enemy, excellent intelligence, training and logistics support. When they fight, our troops should prevail quickly and decisively.

These two noble promises are now in direct conflict. Defense entitlements are well on their way to crowding out military readiness and capacity, a fact even the Pentagon has acknowledged. But lawmakers refuse to address this challenge. Unless Congress reverses budget sequestration and restores three years' worth of additional cuts, the Pentagon is in for more belt tightening. The Navy will retire more ships over the next five years than it will build. The fleet now stands at about 285. (At the height of the post-Soviet "peace dividend" era, it was 375.) The Air Force is even worse off. The U.S. has fewer than one-third the number of bombers it had during the Vietnam era. Most of the Air Force's planes are B-1s and B-52s that predate modern stealth technology, and even the stealthy B-2s are nearly two decades old. Troop numbers are also declining. By the end of fiscal year 2014, active duty Army and Marine Corps personnel are set to decrease by about 13% and 10%, respectively, from 2010 levels. Some of these cuts may be acceptable, even necessary, but sequestration will soon make the situation much worse. Mandatory and arbitrary cuts are already forcing many service members to "take the summer off," forgoing crucial training time. Additional automatic cuts looming for 2014 will mean more downtime.

Now consider the realities of Defense Department entitlements: Between fiscal year 2001 and 2012, the inflation-adjusted compensation cost per active-duty service member grew by 56%. From 2000 to 2010, defense health-care costs skyrocketed nearly 180%, to \$49.8 billion from \$17.8 billion—more than double the rate of the national increase. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projects that military health-care costs will nearly double again by 2030. Some benefits should remain unassailable. Solid salaries, world-class health care for our service members and their families, educational benefits through the GI Bill for those returning to civilian life, and Veterans Administration services for the disabled (which are resourced outside the defense budget) must not be threatened. But it is time to reconsider other benefits. Doing so will not make sequestration a good idea, though it may lead to fewer cuts elsewhere that harm readiness.

The Tricare program, highly subsidized health care for military retirees, supposedly honors a promise made many years ago by some military recruiters to provide service members free health care for life. Setting aside that such a promise was never officially made, Tricare is incentivizing overuse of the health-care system. In 2004, for example, the rate at which Tricare recipients used outpatient services was 44% higher than in civilian plans; the inpatient rate was 60% higher. That is unsustainable, and it is the main reason President Obama has promised to veto the House appropriations bill unless Tricare fees for military retirees are raised. Military retirees receive an extremely generous

pension. For example, under the "High-3" retirement system—one option available for troops who entered the military after Sept. 8, 1980—retired active-duty forces receive 50% of an average of their three highest years of basic pay after 20 years of service, up to a maximum of 75% of their "High-3" pay after 30 years of service, along with an annual cost of living adjustment determined by the Consumer Price Index. Begun in an era when those leaving the military often struggled in the workforce, the military retirement system is long overdue for an overhaul. It cost the Pentagon nearly \$20 billion in 2011 and does nothing to address the fact that the vast majority of combat veterans (who are officially "veterans" but not "retirees") don't serve a full 20 years—and therefore get zero pension. In other words, those who deploy overseas and fight are often getting nothing while those who may well have stayed stateside for two decades before leaving the military get a very generous post-service pension.

Conveniences like commissaries also need rethinking in the era of Wal-Mart and Home Depot. So does military pay, which should generally track the rate of inflation but need not increase faster (as it often has of late), given the solid and generous compensation packages already provided to service members. There is plenty more to consider, including addressing the 20% excess capacity in military bases and the bloat in the roughly 760,000-strong civilian workforce, which has grown even as the uniformed military has shrunk. A 10% cut to that bureaucracy, implemented intelligently and without furloughs, is sensible and fair. This sort of prioritizing—something every American family does in hard times—apparently hasn't occurred to Congress. The fact that the two pacts with Americans in uniform are on a collision course has been shrugged off. Even the Pentagon's own requests for base closures, increases in health-care premiums, and a slowdown in the growth of military pay were ignored in the appropriations bill just passed by the House. It is important that the U.S. maintains its contract with those who serve by providing them generous pay and benefits. But it is unfair to those very same troops to undercut the other sacred contract we have with them, which demands they have access to the best weapons and training so they are ready for whatever the nation asks of them next.

Source: The above article published by the American Enterprise Institute (SEI) was picked up by the WSJ and published in their 25 JUL edition. The authors Ms. Eaglen is a resident fellow and defense analyst at the American Enterprise Institute. Mr. O'Hanlon, a scholar at the Brookings Institution, is the author of "Healing the Wounded Giant: Maintaining Military Preeminence While Cutting the Defense Budget" (Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

Military Food Stamps ► Stripped from 5K Military Families

The House action that stripped food stamp funding from a massive farm bill would threaten vital assistance for about 5,000 military families, mostly from the junior enlisted ranks, Pentagon officials said 12 JUL.. A Department of Agriculture report last year showed that more than 5,000 of the 48 million Americans receiving SNAP (Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program) food stamps listed their employment status as "active duty military," the Pentagon officials said. "Military members who receive SNAP tend to be made up of members in junior pay grades with larger than average household sizes," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a Defense Department spokesman. "Military members normally 'promote out' of the need for additional subsistence benefits, due to the corresponding statement. "It's a small population but it's a vulnerable population," Joye Raezer, executive director of the National Military Families Association, said of the active duty military families receiving food stamps. Older recruits who already have several children and join the military because of the poor job market tend to need SNAP, Raezer said. "If you're junior enlisted and you're single, fine," Raezer said, but if the servicemember has children and a non-working spouse, "you're going to be on food stamps." "It gets tough, even with a housing allowance," Raezer said.



The 5,000 military families receiving food stamps was a tiny percentage of the 48 million recipients nationwide, but it was a major increase over the previous year when the Department of Agriculture reported that only 1,000 recipients listed "active duty military" as their employment status. In addition, the Defense Commissary Agency reported that food stamps were being redeemed at base commissaries at a record pace. Last year, \$99 million in food stamps were cashed in at bases by military families, disabled vets and others with military identification, and more than \$53 million in food stamps were cashed in this year through June, according to Defense Commissary Agency data provided to the Huffington Post. The concerns over the threat of a food stamp funding cutoff were raised by the 218-208 vote in the House 11 JUL that passed a \$500 billion farm bill that stripped out \$80 billion in SNAP funding. It was the first time since 1973 that a farm bill failed to join farm subsidies and food stamp funding. Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), the House Agriculture Committee chairman, said he would introduce a separate food stamp bill "as soon as I can achieve a consensus," but consensus could be difficult to reach in the gridlocked Congress. Democrats charged that the bill would devastate poor families and the White House threatened a veto of the farm bill if the House and Senate failed to reach a compromise that would restore SNAP funding. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said that House Republicans were using poor children as pawns "in the name of deficit reduction. It smacks of hypocrisy to me." [Source: Military.com | Richard Sisk | 13 Jul 2013 ++]

Military History ► **Gulf of Tonkin Incident**

The Gulf of Tonkin incident was the name given to two separate confrontations involving North Vietnam and the United States in the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. On August 2, 1964, the destroyer USS Maddox, while performing a signals intelligence patrol as part of DESOTO operations, engaged three North Vietnamese Navy torpedo boats of the 135th Torpedo Squadron. A sea battle resulted, in which the Maddox expended over two hundred and eighty 3-inch and 5-inch shells, and in which four USN F-8 Crusader jet fighter bombers strafed the torpedo boats. One US aircraft was damaged, one 14.5 mm round hit the destroyer, three North Vietnamese torpedo boats were damaged, and four North Vietnamese sailors were killed and six were wounded; there were no U.S. casualties. The second Tonkin Gulf incident was originally claimed by the U.S. National Security Agency to have occurred on August 4, 1964, as another sea battle, but instead may have involved "Tonkin Ghosts" (false radar images) and not actual NVN torpedo boat attacks.

The outcome of these two incidents was the passage by Congress of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which granted President Lyndon B. Johnson the authority to assist any Southeast Asian country whose government was considered to be jeopardized by "communist aggression." The resolution served as Johnson's legal justification for deploying U.S. conventional forces and the commencement of open warfare against North Vietnam. In 2005, an internal National Security Agency historical study was declassified; it concluded that the Maddox had engaged the North Vietnamese Navy on August 2, but that there were no North Vietnamese Naval vessels present during the incident of August 4. To read more about the events that led up to the incident, the incident itself, and how distortion

played a role in the United States subsequent involvement in Vietnam, refer to the attachment to this Bulletin titled, “**Gulf of Tonkin Incident**”. [Source: Wikipedia Jul 2013 ++]

Military History Anniversaries ► Aug 1–15 Summary

Significant August events in U.S. Military History are:

- Aug 00 1943 – WW2: USS Pompano (SS-181). Date of sinking unknown. Most likely sunk by a Japanese mine or combined air and surface attack off northeastern Honshu, Japan. 77 killed
- Aug 01 1801 – Tripolitan War: The schooner USS Enterprise defeated the 14-gun Tripolitan corsair Tripoli after a fierce but one-sided battle.
- Aug 01 1907 – Air Force Day: The Aeronautical Division in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer of the Army was established.
- Aug 01 1942 – WW2: Ensign Henry C. White, while flying a J4F Widgeon plane, sinks U-166 as it approaches the Mississippi River, the first U-boat sunk by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Aug 01 1950 – Korean War: Lead elements of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division arrive in country from the U.S. in defense of Pusan/Naktong Perimeter.
- Aug 01 1957 – The United States and Canada form the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).
- Aug 02 1943 – WW2: Motor Torpedo Boat PT-109 is rammed by the Japanese destroyer and sinks. Lt. John F. Kennedy, future U.S. President, saves all but two of his crew.
- Aug 02 1964 – Vietnam War: Gulf of Tonkin incident – North Vietnamese gunboats allegedly fire on the U.S. destroyers USS Maddox and USS Turner Joy.
- Aug 02 1990 – Iraq: Iraq invades Kuwait initiating Operation Desert Shield which became Desert Storm on 17 JAN 91 when it became clear he would not leave.
- Aug 03 1958 – Cold War: The first nuclear submarine USS Nautilus passes under the North Pole.
- Aug 04 1790 – Coast Guard: The Revenue Cutter Service, forerunner of the COAST GUARD was established by Alexander Hamilton.
- Aug 04 1873 –Indian Wars: whilst protecting a railroad survey party in Montana, the United States 7th Cavalry, under Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer clashes for the first time with the Sioux near the Tongue River; only one man on each side is killed.
- Aug 04 1914 – WWI: Germany invades Belgium. In response, the United Kingdom declares war on Germany. The United States declare their neutrality.
- Aug 04 1952 – Korean War: Battle for Old Baldy (Hill 266) which commenced on 26 JUN ends.
- Aug 04 1964 – Vietnam: Gulf of Tonkin Incident .The U.S.S. Maddox and Turner Joy exchange fire with North Vietnamese patrol boats.
- Aug 04 1969 – Vietnam: At the apartment of French intermediary Jean Sainteny in Paris, American representative Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese representative Xuan Thuy begin secret peace negotiations. The negotiations will eventually fail.
- Aug 05 1861 – Civil War: Congress adopts the nation’s first income tax to finance the Civil War.
- Aug 05 1864 – Civil War: Admiral David Farragut, USN, exclaiming "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead," ran through a Confederate minefield at Mobile Bay, Alabama, and captured a defending group of Confederate ships.
- Aug 05 1951 – Korean War: The United Nations Command suspends armistice talks with the North Koreans when armed troops are spotted in neutral areas.
- Aug 05 1995 – Operation Storm begins in Croatia.

- Aug 06 1777 – American Revolution: The bloody Battle of Oriskany prevents American relief of the Siege of Fort Stanwix.
- Aug 06 1862 – Civil War: the Confederate ironclad CSS Arkansas is scuttled on the Mississippi River after sustaining damage in a battle with USS Essex near Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- Aug 06 1915 – WWI: Battle of Sari Bair – the Allies mount a diversionary attack timed to coincide with a major Allied landing of reinforcements at Suvla Bay.
- Aug 06 1945 – WW2: Hiroshima is devastated when the atomic bomb "Little Boy" is dropped by the United States B-29 Enola Gay. Around 70,000 people are killed instantly, and some tens of thousands die in subsequent years from burns and radiation poisoning.
- Aug 06 1945 – WW2: USS Bullhead (SS-332) missing. Most likely sunk by Japanese Army aircraft (73rd Chutai) off Bali in the Java Sea. 84 killed.
- Aug 06 1990 – Gulf War: The United Nations Security Council orders a global trade embargo against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.
- Aug 07 1782 – American Revolution: Purple Heart day. General George Washington authorizes the award of the Purple Heart for soldiers as an award for military merit. Only 3 were given. As we know it today it was reestablished in 1932 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington.
- Aug 07 1789 – The United States War Department is established.
- Aug 07 1791 – Northwest Indian War: United States troops destroy the Miami town of Kenapacomaqua near the site of present-day Logansport, Indiana.
- Aug 07 1794 – U.S. President George Washington invokes the Militia Law of 1792 to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania.
- Aug 07 1942 – WW2: The U.S. 1st Marine Division lands on the islands of Guadalcanal and Tulagi in the Solomon islands. First American amphibious landing of the war.
- Aug 07 1964 – Vietnam: Congress overwhelmingly passes the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, allowing the president to use unlimited military force to prevent attacks on U.S. forces.
- Aug 08 1918 – WWI: Hundred Days Offensive - Battle of Amiens begins a string of almost continuous victories with a push through the German front lines.
- Aug 08 1942 – WW2: U.S. Marines capture the Japanese airstrip on Guadalcanal.
- Aug 08 1944 – WW2: U.S. forces complete the capture of the Marianas Islands.
- Aug 08 1950 – Korean War: U.S. troops repel the first North Korean attempt to overrun them at the battle of Naktong Bulge, which continued for 10 days.
- Aug 08 1990 – Gulf War: Iraq occupies Kuwait and the state is annexed to Iraq. This would lead to the Gulf War shortly afterward.
- Aug 09 1862 – Civil War: Battle of Cedar Mountain – At Cedar Mountain, Virginia, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson narrowly defeats Union forces under General John Pope.
- Aug 09 1877 – Indian Wars: Battle of Big Hole - A small band of Nez Percé Indians clash with the United States Army
- Aug 09 1942 – WW2: Battle of Savo Island - Allied naval forces protecting their amphibious forces during the initial stages of the Battle of Guadalcanal are surprised and defeated by an Imperial Japanese Navy cruiser force.
- Aug 09 1945 – WW2: The B-29 bomber Bock's Car drops a second atomic bomb (Fat Man) on Nagasaki, Japan killing 39,000 people. It was the second atomic bomb that induced the Japanese to surrender.
- Aug 10 1861 – Civil War: Battle of Wilson's Creek – The war enters Missouri when a band of raw Confederate troops defeat Union forces in the southwestern part of the state.
- Aug 10 1944 – WW2: American forces defeat the last Japanese troops on Guam.
- Aug 10 1950 – Korean War: President Harry S. Truman calls the National Guard to active duty to fight in the War.

- Aug 10 1961 – Vietnam: First use of the Agent Orange by the U.S. Army.
- Aug 11 1972 – Vietnam: The last U.S. ground forces withdraw from Vietnam.
- Aug 12 1898 – Spanish American War: Conflict officially ends after three months and 22 days of hostilities.
- Aug 12 1952 – Korean War: The 4 day Battle of Bunker Hill (Hill 122) began.
- Aug 12 1969 – Vietnam: American installations at Quan-Loi come under Viet Cong attack.
- Aug 13 1898 – Spanish-American War: Spanish and American forces engaged in a mock battle for Manila, after which the Spanish commander surrendered in order to keep the city out of Filipino rebel hands.
- Aug 13 1906 – The all black infantrymen of the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Regiment are accused of killing a white bartender and wounding a white police officer in Brownsville, Texas, despite exculpatory evidence; all are later dishonorably discharged.
- Aug 13 1918 – Women enlist in the United States Marine Corps for the first time. Opha Mae Johnson is the first woman to enlist.
- Aug 13 1944 – WW2: USS Flier (SS-250) sunk by a Japanese mine south of Palawan in Balabac Strait. 78 killed, 8 survived and were rescued.
- Aug 14 1842 – Indian Wars: Second Seminole War ends, with the Seminoles forced from Florida to Oklahoma.
- Aug 14 1912 – United States Marines invade Nicaragua to support the U.S.-backed government installed there after José Santos Zelaya had resigned three years earlier.
- Aug 14 1945 – WW2: Japan accepts the Allied terms of surrender in WW2 and the Emperor records the Imperial Rescript on Surrender (August 15 in Japan standard time).
- Aug 14 1973 – Vietnam: The United States ends the "secret" bombing of Cambodia.
- Aug 14 2013 – National Navajo Code Talkers Day
- Aug 15 1812 – War of 1812: The Battle of Fort Dearborn is fought between United States troops and Potawatomi at what is now Chicago, Illinois.
- Aug 15 1942 – WW2: Operation Pedestal - The SS Ohio reaches the island of Malta barely afloat carrying vital fuel supplies for the island's defenses.
- Aug 15 1942 – WW2: The Japanese submarine I-25 departs Japan with a floatplane in its hold which will be assembled upon arriving off the West Coast and used to bomb U.S. forests.
- Aug 15 1944 – WW2: Operation Dragoon - Allied forces land in southern France.
- Aug 15 1945 – WW2: Japan surrenders to end the war.
- Aug 15 1950 – Korean War: Two U.S. divisions are badly mauled by the North Korean Army in the 5 day Battle of the Bowling Alley in South Korea.
- Aug 15 1973 – Vietnam: The United States bombing of Cambodia ends.

[Source: Various Jul 2013 ++]

Military Trivia 79 ► WWII Beer Runs

In the lighter moments of World War II, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy. During the war, the Heneger and Constable brewery donated free beer to the troops. After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments. Some men, often called "sourcers", were able to get wine or other niceties "from the land" or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea. The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs. According to

pictures that can be found, various sizes of kegs were used. Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival.



The Underbelly Of History



The Spitfire had very little ground clearance with the larger beer kegs.

The modification even received the official designation Mod. XXX. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the official designation. As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons were often sent back to Great Britain for maintenance or liaison duties.. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings. Typically, the British Revenue of Ministry and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks, most often done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons. In his book *Dancing in the Skies*, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelancer pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week.



A variation was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel.



A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.

[Source: http://427squadron.com/history/stories/beer_spitfire.html Jun 2013 ++]

Aviation Art (44) ► Battle of Kurst



Battle of Kurst **by Nicolas Trudgian**

On 5 July, 1943 over 6000 German and Russian tanks clashed near the town of Kursk, just 300 miles south of Moscow. It was the beginning of what became the greatest tank battle in history. In the skies above this conflagration, an air battle of monumental proportions raged, with the German and Russian air forces locked in combat. This was war on a scale hitherto never imagined. A full week later the Battle was still raging, reaching a crescendo on 12 July when Hoth's 4th Panzer Army met head-on with Rotmistrov's 5th Guards Tank Army near the village of Prokhorovka. With the Russian T34s electing to fight at close quarters, so desperate was the fighting that opposing tanks resorted to ramming each other. As the battle moved across the landscape all became utter confusion. Playing a major role in the air were the Luftwaffe's Ju-87 Stukas, equipped with massive 37mm cannons slung under their wings. Led by Hans-Ulrich Rudel, the legendary Stuka pilot, these formidable tank-busters made a significant contribution to the Battle of Kursk. Nicolas Trudgian's painting records the dramatic events at Kursk in a spectacular rendition that captures the very essence of this mighty land and air battle. Dominating the scene are a pair of Ju-87s. Having knocked out two T34s, they weave over the landscape as they try to avoid the attentions of Russian Yak 9s, the gunner of Rudel's aircraft - in the foreground - blazing away with his machine gun. A pair of Fw190s have entered the fray, and the air is filled with smoke and cordite. In a typically detailed Nicolas Trudgian landscape, below the aerial contest Russian and Panzer tanks are seen in close combat, desperately maneuvering to gain some

advantage. The old farm buildings show the ravages of war; tank tracks crisscross the fields, stretching into the distance where the battle extends to the horizon. A masterpiece in military art.

[Source: <http://www.military-art.com/mall/more.php?ProdID=14189> Jul 2013 ++]

Tax Burden for Minnesota Retirees ► As of Jul 2013

Many people planning to retire use the presence or absence of a state income tax as a litmus test for a retirement destination. This is a serious miscalculation since higher sales and property taxes can more than offset the lack of a state income tax. The lack of a state income tax doesn't necessarily ensure a low total tax burden. States raise revenue in many ways including sales taxes, excise taxes, license taxes, income taxes, intangible taxes, property taxes, estate taxes and inheritance taxes. Depending on where you live, you may end up paying all of them or just a few. Following are the taxes you can expect to pay if you retire in Minnesota.

Sales Taxes

State Sales Tax: 6.875% (food, clothing, prescription and non-prescription drugs exempt); Liquor and beer have a tax at 9.375%. The sales tax rate does not apply to motor vehicles that are subject to the state excise tax on motor vehicles. A few cities and counties also add a sales tax which can be as high as 9.0%.

Gasoline Tax: 47.0 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes)

Diesel Fuel Tax: 53.0 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes)

Cigarette Tax: \$1.60/pack of 20

Personal Income Taxes

Tax Rate Range: Low – 5.35%; High – 7.85%

Income Brackets: Three. Lowest – \$23,100; Highest – \$75,891. The tax brackets reported are for single taxpayers. For married taxpayers filing jointly, the same rates apply to income brackets ranging from \$33,770 to \$131,171 (2011). A 6.4% AMT rate is also applicable.

Personal Exemptions: Single – \$3,700; Married – \$7,400; Dependents – \$3,700. Minnesota allows personal exemption or standard deductions as provided in the Internal Revenue Code

Standard Deduction: Single – \$7,250; Married filing jointly – \$10,800

Medical/Dental Deduction: Federal amount

Federal Income Tax Deduction: None

Retirement Income Taxes: Social Security income is taxed by Minnesota to the same extent it is on your federal return. A married couple that receives the average Social Security benefit of \$22,800 and has total income from all sources of less than \$43,400 is not subject to tax on any Social Security benefits, while a couple with average benefits and total income over \$71,141 must include 85 percent of the Social Security, or \$19,380, in taxable income. If your only income is Social Security, you would not be required to file an income tax return. Pensions, including federal pensions, received while a Minnesota resident are taxable by Minnesota regardless of where your pension was earned. Railroad retirement benefits paid to you by the Railroad Retirement Board are not taxed by Minnesota. If these benefits are included in your federal taxable income, you may subtract them from your taxable income. Taxpayers 65 and older may subtract some income if federal adjusted gross income is under certain limits.

Retired Military Pay: Pensions are taxable.

Military Disability Retired Pay: Retirees who entered the military before Sept. 24, 1975, and members receiving disability retirements based on combat injuries or who could receive disability payments from the VA are covered by laws giving disability broad exemption from federal income tax. Most military retired pay based on service-related disabilities also is free from federal income tax, but there is no guarantee of total protection.

VA Disability Dependency and Indemnity Compensation: VA benefits are not taxable because they generally are for disabilities and are not subject to federal or state taxes.

Military SBP/SSBP/RCSBP/RSFPP: Generally subject to state taxes for those states with income tax. Check with state department of revenue office.

Property Taxes

There is a Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral Program allows people 65 years of age or older, whose household incomes are \$60,000 or less, to defer a portion of their property tax on their home. This deferral program has two primary advantages for senior citizens. It limits the maximum amount of property tax you pay to three percent of your total household income, and it provides predictability. The amount of tax you pay will not change for as long as you participate in this program. It is not a tax forgiveness program. It is a low interest loan from the state. The deferred tax is paid by the state to your county. Interest will be charged on this loan. The interest rate will be adjusted annually, but will never exceed five percent. A lien will attach to your property. For more on this refer to http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/propertytax/factsheets/factsheet_03.pdf.

Minnesota has two property tax refund programs for homeowners: the regular property tax refund, and the special property tax refund. You may be eligible for one or both, depending on your income and the size of your property tax bill. For details refer to <http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/Pages/default.aspx>

Inheritance and Estate Taxes

Minnesota has an estate tax. The estate tax is a tax on all of the assets of a decedent before they are distributed to beneficiaries. If the estate meets the filing requirements, the estate pays this tax to the IRS and/or the state in which the decedent lived (prorated to any other states where the decedent had property). Many states have a threshold different from the federal level.

Minnesota does not have an inheritance tax. An inheritance tax is a tax on the beneficiaries of an estate (a tax on what you inherit). If you are a beneficiary, you generally do not have to include inheritance on your income tax return. However, you may have to pay income tax if you inherit an IRA/annuity, etc., which includes the decedent’s pre-tax dollars. You should be notified by the estate if this is the case. The income tax is owed to the state in which the beneficiary lives (not the state where the decedent lived.).

For further information go to the Minnesota Department of Revenue site <http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/Pages/default.aspx>. [Source: <http://www.retirementliving.com/taxes-kansas-new-mexico#Minnesota> Jul 2013 ++]



Veteran Legislation as of 28 JUL 2013: For a listing of Congressional bills of interest to the veteran community introduced in the 113th Congress refer to this Bulletin’s “**House & Senate Veteran Legislation**” attachment. Support of these bills through cosponsorship by other legislators is critical if they are ever going to move through the legislative process for a floor vote to become law. A good indication of that likelihood is the number of cosponsors who have signed onto the bill. Any number of members may cosponsor a bill in the House or

Senate. At <http://thomas.loc.gov> you can review a copy of each bill's content, determine its current status, the committee it has been assigned to, and if your legislator is a sponsor or cosponsor of it. To determine what bills, amendments your representative has sponsored, cosponsored, or dropped sponsorship on refer to <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d111/sponlst.html>.

Grassroots lobbying is the most effective way to let your Congressional representatives know your wants and dislikes. Members of Congress are the most receptive and open to suggestions from their constituents. The key to increasing cosponsorship support on veteran related bills and subsequent passage into law is letting legislators know of veteran's feelings on issues. You can reach their Washington office via the Capital Operator direct at (866) 272-6622, (800) 828-0498, or (866) 340-9281 to express your views. Otherwise, you can locate your legislator's phone number, mailing address, or email/website to communicate with a message or letter of your own making at <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d111/sponlst.html>. Refer to http://www.thecapitol.net/FAQ/cong_schedule.html for dates that you can access them on their home turf.

FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF VETERAN RELATED LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE SINCE THE LAST BULLETIN WAS PUBLISHED:

- H.R.2704 : Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2013. A Bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes.

- H.R.2726 : Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.

- H.R.2743 : Veterans Eagle Parks Pass Act. A bill to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to certain veterans.

- H.R.2749 : Veterans Education Transparency Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain records available to educational institutions where veterans or persons receiving educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary are enrolled, and for other purposes.

- S.1295 : VA Notice of Relevant Services Available to Vets from VSO's. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide veterans with notice, when veterans electronically file claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, that relevant services may be available from veterans service organizations, and for other purposes.

- S.1296 : Servicemember's Electronic Health Records Act of 2013. A bill to amend the Wounded Warrior Act to establish a specific timeline for the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to achieve interoperable electronic health records, and for other purposes.

- S.1320 : Military Reserve Jobs Act of 2013. A bill to establish a tiered hiring preference for members of the reserve components of the armed forces.

[Source: <http://www.loc.gov> & <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills> Jul 2013 ++]

Veteran Hearing/Mark-up Schedule ► As of 30 Jul 2013

Following is the current schedule of recent and future Congressional hearings and markups pertaining to the veteran community. Congressional hearings are the principal formal method by which committees collect and analyze information in the early stages of legislative policymaking. Hearings usually include oral testimony from witnesses, and questioning of the witnesses by members of Congress. When a U.S. congressional committee meets to put a legislative bill into final form it is referred to as a mark-up. Veterans are encouraged to contact members of these committees prior to the event listed and provide input on what they want their legislator to do at the event. Membership of each committee and their contact info can be found at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/directory/committees.tt?commid=svete>. Missed House Veteran Affairs committee (HVAC) hearings can viewed at <http://veterans.house.gov/in-case-you-missed-it>. Text of completed Senate Veteran Affairs Committee (SVAC) hearings are available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/committee.action?chamber=senate&committee=va&collection=CHRG&plus=CHRG>:

- **July 24, 2013.** SVAC will conduct a mark-up on pending legislation.
 - S.944 - Veterans' Educational Transition Act of 2013.
 - S.893 - Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013.
 - S.851 - Caregivers Expansion and Improvement Act of 2013.
 - S.572 - Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act.
 - S.373 - Charlie Morgan Military Spouses Equal Treatment Act of 2013.
 - S.287 - A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to expand the definition of homeless veteran for purposes of benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.
 - S.6 - Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act of 2013.
 - S.131 - Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013.
 - **July 31, 2013.** SVAC will hold a hearing entitled "Preserving the Rights of Servicemembers, Veterans, and their Families in the Financial Marketplace." 10:00 A.M.; 418 Russell
 - **August 1, 2013.** HVAC will markup pending legislation. 10:00 A.M.; 334 CHOB
- [Source: Veterans Corner w/Michael Isam 30 Jul 2013 ++]

Senate Vet Bill Progress ► 16-31 Jul 2013

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee voted along party lines to extend special Caregiver benefits for Post-9/11 veterans to the Caregivers of veterans of prior conflicts at a markup hearing Wednesday, but it failed to identify a "Payfor" to cover the \$8.5 billion cost drawing the opposition of panel Republicans. Caregivers of veterans who served after Sept. 10, 2001 receive special benefits including training, counseling, respite care and a stipend depending on the severity of a veteran's disability. The Committee favorably voted out a number of other measures including:

- **In-State Tuition for Student Veterans.** Veterans enrolled at any public college will be reimbursed at the in-state tuition rate even if they haven't established residency. The bill takes effect on July 1, 2015 and veterans would have three years from separation to claim the in-state rate if they are non-residents.
- **VA Claims backlog.** The VA must report publicly every quarter on disability claims goals and how it's meeting those objectives
- **Veteran Status for Certain Career Reservists.** An amended provision honors as veterans National Guard and Reserve members who served long enough to earn a reserve pension and TRICARE benefits but performed no service on active duty orders. Prior versions of the bill, S. 629, foundered on objections that the legislation would open up unearned veterans benefits. The compromise language authorizes veteran status to the career reservists but strikes any reference to Title 38, the U.S. set of laws governing veterans benefits.
- **Sexual Assault Claims.** Veterans traumatized by sexual assault in military service can apply for disability under procedures similar to those created for PTSD claims.
- **Survivor Education Benefits.** Surviving spouses of fallen service members of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars will be authorized the same schooling benefits their children get under the Fry Scholarship program.
- **COLA Increase.** Disability, pension and other benefits paid by the VA will get a rate hike on January 1, 2014 based on any adjustment to Social Security benefits.
- **Definition of spouse.** VA laws will be changed to reflect the Supreme Court's decision on same-sex couples.

Other bills also cleared the panel for floor vote over the objection of Ranking Member Richard Burr (R-NC). The panel extended for two years the popular Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) that re-opens training benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill to veterans aged 35-60; approved advanced fertility treatment to approximately 2,000 veterans, male and female, with severe wounds or injuries from IED blasts; and created two new employment programs for veterans. Burr opposed the provisions and the Caregiver extension “so we won’t continue to saddle future generations of Americans with continued debt.” Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) promised he would do his “best to find the funding” before the bills reach the floor of the Senate. [Source: MPAA Leg Up 26 Jul 2013 ++]



Have You Heard? ► Murphy's Other 15 Laws

1. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
2. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
3. He, who laughs last, thinks slowest.
4. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
5. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
6. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
7. Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.

8. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
9. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end-to-end, someone from California would be stupid enough to try to pass them.
10. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
11. The things that come to those who wait, may be the things left by those who got there first.
12. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
13. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
14. God gave you toes as a device for finding furniture in the dark.
15. When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people, who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.

Military Lingo/Jargon/Slang ► 014

USA Academy: *Fried Egg* - Insignia of the USMA, worn on the hat or tarbucket

USA Acronyms: *PCP* - "Pork Chop Platoon" Physical Conditioning Platoon

USA Equipment: *Fatigues* - An archaic term for the work/combat uniform

USA Field Slang: *Spoon* - A cook or someone who serves food as their job.

USA Misc: *Class 6* - Refers to the base liquor store. Also refers to female entertainment and companionship.

USA Rank: *Hard Stripes* - Used to describe Corporal stripes

USA Soldiers: *Fobbit* - Term used for soldiers that never leave the FOB (Forward Operating Base). The term came into use during the Iraq War. It is used with some condescension.

USA Unit Nicknames: *Gaggin' Dragon* - The XVIII Airborne Corps, from their unit patch.

USAF: *Bowser* - An aviation fuel truck.

USMC: *Asiatic* - Mildly deranged or eccentric as a result of too much foreign duty, or one who has missed too many boats.

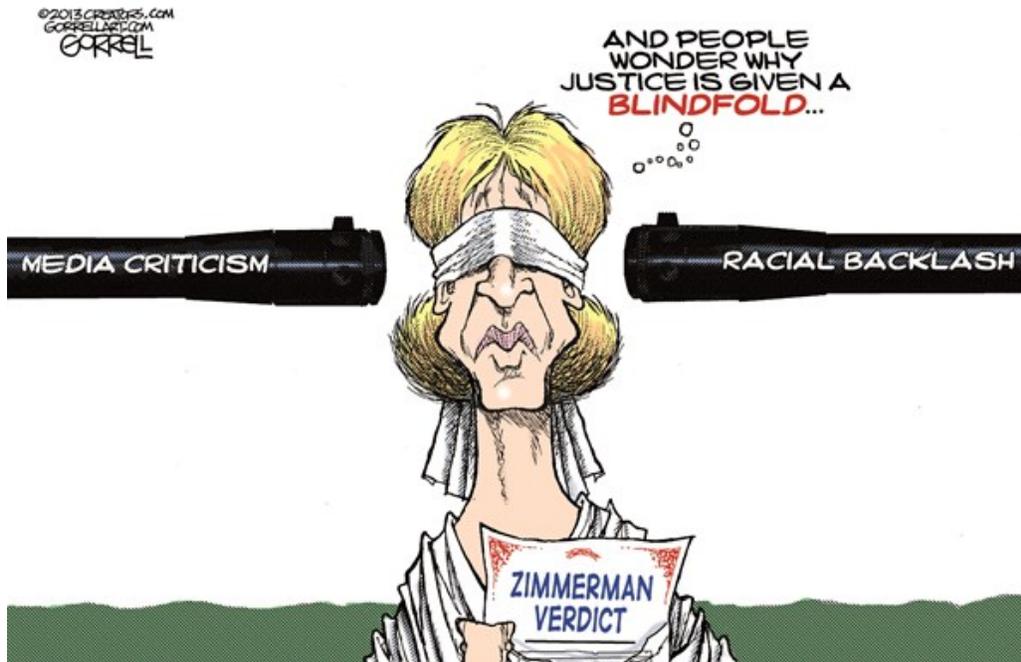
USN: *Cup of Joe* - Josephus Daniels (18 May 1862 - 15 January 1948) was appointed Secretary of the Navy by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913. Among his reforms of the Navy were inaugurating the practice of making 100 Sailors from the Fleet eligible for entrance into the Naval Academy, the introduction of women into the service, and the abolishment of the officers' wine mess. From that time on, the strongest drink aboard Navy ships could only be coffee and over the years, a cup of coffee became known as "a cup of Joe".

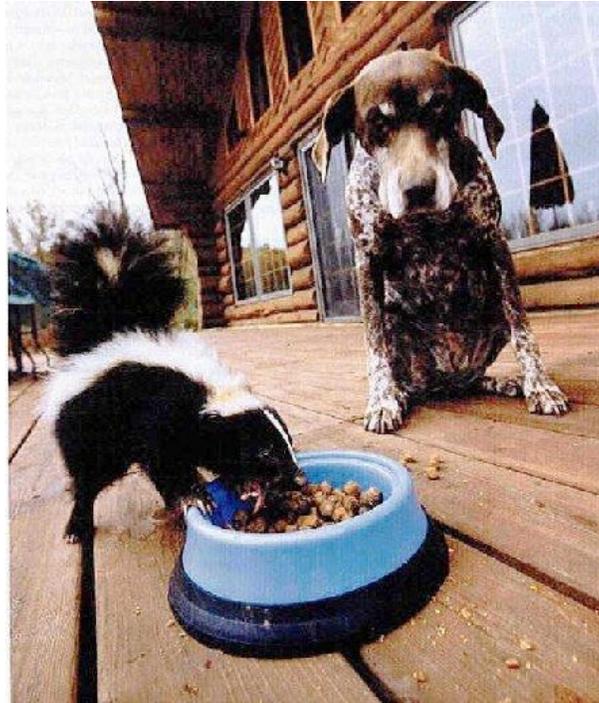
Vets: *Fig Newton* = figment of the imagination; something that doesn't exist on paper

Interesting Ideas ► Making BLT's



“The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.”
— **Herbert Spencer**, English Philosopher (1820-1903)





Two of the Greatest Qualities in Life are Patience and Wisdom
(BOTH ARE SHOWN HERE)





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Notes:

1. The Bulletin will be provided as a website accessed document until further notice. This was necessitated by SPAMHAUS who alleged the Bulletin's former size and large subscriber base (94,000+) were choking the airways interfering with other email user's capability to use it. They directed us to stop sending the Bulletin in its entirety to individual subscribers and to validate the subscriber base with the threat of removing all email capability if we did not.
2. Subscribers who have not yet validated their email addree who desire to continue to receive the Bulletin can send a message to raoemo@sbcglobal.net with the word "KEEP" in the subject line to restore their subscription. Anyone who no longer wants to receive the Bulletin should send a message to raoemo@sbcglobal.net with the word "DELETE" in the subject line This Bulletin notice was sent to the 13,688 subscribers who have responded to date.
3. Bulletin recipients with interest in the Philippines can request to be added to the RAO's Philippine directory for

receipt of notices on Clark Field Space 'A', U.S. Embassy Manila, and TRICARE in the RP.

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Editor/Publisher RAO Bulletin, U.S. Embassy Warden & IRS VITA

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