

RAO

BULLETIN

1 November 2013

PDF Edition

THIS BULLETIN CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES

<u>Pg</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Subject</u>
		Finances
03	== COLA 2014 [02]	(Anticipated 1.5%)
04	== Saving Money	(Manage Allergies Frugally)
05	== Bank Blacklisting	- (1,000,000 Americans Can't Get a Bank Account)
06	== Sheriff Call Scam	(How It Works)
07	== Immigration Scam	(How It Works)
07	== FATCA	(Negative Impact on Retirees Overseas)
09	== Tax Burden for Colorado Retirees	(As of Oct 2013)
		DoD
10	== DoD Mobilized Reserve 25 OCT 2013	(Decrease of 372)
10	== DoD Fraud, Waste, & Abuse [08]	- (\$1.4M in Phony Expense Claims)
11	== Arlington National Cemetery [43]	----- (Cameras Capture Arlington)
13	== Arlington National Cemetery [44]	----- (Section 60 Memento Policy)
		VA
13	== VA Loans [07]	(Buyer's Advantage in Seller's Market)
14	== VA Physical Therapy	(VA's Bodybuilders)
15	== VA Claims Backlog [116]	----- (Reduction Momentum Slowed)
16	== VA Medical Marijuana Policy [07]	- (Arizona Considering PTSD Use)
16	== VA Fraud, Waste & Abuse [80]	---- (Reported 15 thru 30 Nov 2013)
17	== VADIP	----- 3 yr Dental Pilot Program Enrollment Begins 15 NOV)
17	== VAMC Memphis TN	----- (Preventable Veteran Deaths)
19	== Agent Orange C-123 Aircraft [05]	- VA Asked to Reverse Decision)
19	== PTSD [151]	----- (New Maine Marijuana Use Law)
20	== PTSD [152]	----- (PE CPT Treatment Study Planned)
21	== PTSD & TBI	----- (HBOT Therapy Looks Promising)

21 == GI Bill [159] ----- (Virtual In-State Tuition Map)

21 == GI Bill [160] ----- (Another GI Bill Website)

23 == Independent Budget 2015 ---- (Vet View -Most Important VA Issues)

Vets

23 == Veterans Day 2013 [01] ----- (Discounts)

24 == Greatest Generation Award ----- (WWII Veterans Honored)

25 == Vet Job Resume Writing [03] ----- (Five Signs it is Passé)

25 == Vet Jobs Update 128 --- (BLS Vet Employment Stats as of Sep 2013)

26 == Vet Hiring Fairs ----- (1 Nov thru 15 Dec 2013)

27 == Retiree Appreciation Days [11] ----- (Oct 27 thru 16 Nov 2013)

29 == Homeless Vets [46] -- (Hampton VA Transitional Housing Program)

30 == Homeless Vets [47] ----- (Financial Literacy Impact)

31 == Nebraska Vet Home ----- (Central Nebraska Veterans Home)

33 == California Veterans Home [16] ----- (Yountville Wastes \$652,919)

33 == Vet End of Life Care ----- (25% of U.S. Deaths are Vets)

34 == State Veteran's Benefits & Discounts ----- (Ohio 2013)

35 == Knott's Berry Farm's ----- (Annual Tribute to Our Military)

35 == iHistory WWII ----- (National Video Contest)

Vet Legislation

36 == Veteran Legislation 113th Congress ----- (As of 27 Oct 2013)

37 == Veteran Hearing/Mark-up Schedule ----- (As of 30 Oct 2013)

39 == House Vet Bill Progress ----- (28 OCT 2013)

Military

40 == USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000) ---- (Largest USN Destroyer Ever Built)

43 == USS Forrestal (AVT-59) --- (1st Navy Supercarrier, Sold for 1 Cent)

44 == Blue Angels [01] ----- (Angels are Back | 2014 Schedule)

45 == Medal of Honor Citations ----- (Mills, James H WWII)

47 == Medal of Honor Stamps ----- (Available Veterans Day)

48 == Military Compensation [04] ----- (MCRMC Wants Your Input)

49 == Military Compensation [05] ----- (Slow the Growth)

51 == Military Lingo/Jargon/Slang ----- (020)

52 == Chosin Few Reunion ----- (Remembrances)

54 == OBIT | Hensch~Erwin ----- (Oct 15, 2013)

55 == OBIT | Risner~James Robinson ----- (OCT 22, 2013)

57 == POW/MIA [62] ----- (Legion Demands Immediate JPAC Reform)

58 == POW/MIA [63] ----- (JPAC's is Not an Easy Job)

59 == POW/MIA [64] ----- (Identified 15 thru 31 Oct 2013)

Military History

61 == Aviation Art ----- (Pappy)

62 == Military History ----- (Project Nike)

65 == Military History Anniversaries ----- (1 thru 30 Nov)

65 == WWII Pre War Events - (Hindenburg Over Manhattan Aug. 8, 1936)

66 == WWII Defense Workers ---- ('Rosie the Riveter' Elinor Otto @ 93)

68 == Operation Enduring Freedom ----- (12th Anniversary)

70 == Beirut Marine Barracks Bombing ----- (Thirty Year Anniversary)

72 == Spanish American War Image 41 ----- (Louisiana Volunteers)

Health Care

72 == TRICARE Mobile Access ----- (Options)

General Interest

- 73 == Government Shutdown [16] --- (TMC No-Politicians-Allowed Rally)
- 74 == Government Shutdown [17] ----- (WWP To Give \$500 to 40K Vets)
- 75 == Government Shutdown [18] ----- (What Was Lost)
- 76 == Government Shutdown [19] ----- (What Was Missed)
- 77 == Government Shutdown [20] -- (VA to Pay 1Nov Monetary Benefits)
- 77 == Merchant Marine 'Captain Phillips' --- (Ask-Me-Anything Interview)
- 78 == First Flight Controversy - (NC vs. OH vs. CT | Wrights or Whitehead)
- 81 == Google Policy Change -- (Users' Name & Photo Use in Advertising)
- 82 == Food Date Labeling ----- (Sell By, Use By & Best Before)
- 83 == Pineapples ----- (Some Things You May Not Know)
- 84 == Flag Myths ----- (Top 10)
- 85 == Notes of Interest ----- (15 -31 Oct 2013)
- 86== Have You Heard? ----- (Magic Trick)
- 86 == Interesting Ideas ----- (Strawberry Stem Removal)

Attachments

- Attachment - Veteran Legislation as of 27 Oct 2013
- Attachment - Vet State Benefits & Discounts OH 2013
- Attachment - Military History Anniversaries 1 thru 30 Nov
- Attachment - Veterans Day 2013 Discounts

Finances



COLA 2014 Update 02 ► Anticipated 1.5%

The Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that it would publish September's Consumer Price Index figure on 30 OCT. That number is the final data point needed to calculate the 2014 COLA for federal and military retirees, as well as Social Security beneficiaries and those receiving veterans' benefits. The government shutdown delayed the announcement of the 2014 COLA figure, which the government planned to publish on 16 OCT. The government, closed for 16 days because of a budget impasse, reopened on 17 OCT. With available data the 2014 COLA was estimated to be around 1.5 percent which was confirmed 30 SEP as what the COLA will be. Retirees received a 1.7 percent COLA bump in 2013 and a 3.6 percent boost in 2012. The 2012 COLA increase was the first since 2008. The 2014 increase takes effect on December 1 and will be reflected in retirees' first annuity payments in January 2014. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 25 Oct 2013 ++]

Saving Money ► Manage Allergies Frugally

Does hay fever have you sneezing all allergy season? Shape magazine (<http://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/5-easy-home-allergy-remedies?page=2>) suggests kissing your loved one. The website says a study found that allergy sufferers had fewer symptoms after they indulged in a lip lock. Kissing apparently eases stress-induced inflammation. In fact, there's a variety of homemade or frugal ways to reduce the symptoms of allergies. Many natural and home remedies can be used to either replace or complement expensive pills and shots. Suggestions such as antihistamine green tea and vitamin C offer many other health benefits as well. Here are seven more:

Food protection. Another idea from Shape probably should be timed properly with the first suggestion above – eating more garlic and onions. Spice up your food with these items, which are high in quercetin, an antioxidant thought to prevent the cells from releasing histamine. Supplements can be used as well, and you can save on the breath mints.

Rinse and repeat. Saline solution can be used to remove irritants that become lodged in the nostrils. Salt water rinses are available for about \$5 at pharmacies and grocery stores. Discovery Fit & Health offers a recipe for preparing your own solution: Mix a teaspoon of salt in a pint of warm, distilled water and then add a pinch of baking soda. Once or twice a day, bend over a sink and sniff a bit of solution into one nostril at a time, allowing it to drain back out through the nose or mouth. A neti pot or squeeze bottle may be used.



Neti Pot

Shower power. Hot showers help to open up sinus passages and to remove any pollen or other irritants from your body. Bathing in the evening is suggested.

Eucalyptus oil. The invigorating aroma can help open nasal passages, in addition to the oil's anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, says Health magazine (<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20677556,00.html>). Try adding a few drops of the oil to the floor of the shower before you step in. Just don't swallow the oil or apply it directly to your skin because it's toxic in concentrated amounts.

Steam. Steaming your face will soothe irritated sinuses and helps get rid of mucus. A facial steamer can be used, or simply pour several cups of boiling water into a large bowl. Drape a towel over your head and breathe gently for about 10 minutes. As an added bonus, the steam also will moisturize your face and help detoxify your skin.

Wasabi. Japanese horseradish can be used to clear your sinuses and tear ducts. You don't need to snort the green paste. Simply put a bit on your food. The sushi staple contains isothiocyanate, which promotes mucus flow. Another option — although harder to swallow — is to purchase grated horseradish, and take 1/4 teaspoon to alleviate allergy symptoms, says Discovery. Chili peppers and Dijon mustard are known to have the same effect.

Relax a bit more. Rodale News (<http://www.rodale.com/natural-allergy-remedies>) suggests getting a massage to quell allergy symptoms, lower blood pressure and improve circulation. Lowering stress levels can help keep your sneezing and wheezing at bay. Meditation, yoga and visiting with friends are other options for relaxation.

[Source: MoneyTalksNews |Angela Brandt | 26 Jun 2013 ++]

Bank Blacklisting ► 1,000,000 Americans Can't Get a Bank Account

Are you one of the million or so Americans who can't get a bank account? If you are, you know that banks — not only your bank but all banks — can reject you if they think you're more trouble or expense than you're worth. The New York Times reports banking customers' names are gathered in little-known private databases used by the nation's major banks. According to the Times more than a million customers have been rejected for services because of black marks against their names in these databases. One thing that most blacklisted consumers have in common: They're low-income. These are not credit-scoring systems used to assess you for a credit card or mortgage. These are different databases, used internally by banks. At least initially they were developed to fight fraud. But the databases have evolved, also, into a risk-management tool that banks reportedly use to reject customers who might cost the bank more than their business is worth. CNNMoney learned that:

- About 80 percent of the nation's banks use information from the [ChexSystems] database to screen bank account applicants. Most negative information on a person's report stays in ChexSystems' database for five years, according to ChexSystems.
- When your name gets a black mark on one of these databases — for reasons ranging from too many overdrafts or bounced checks to identity theft (one man told CNN that he was rejected after ID thieves drained his accounts, causing bank fees to pile up) — suddenly life gets very difficult. Banks may shut you out from their services for up to seven years.

Being shut out from the mainstream banking system is no small inconvenience. Bank accounts are a necessity of modern life. Electronic payments — credit cards, debit cards and electronic bill payments — are rapidly replacing cash (and checks), and bank alternatives — check-cashing companies, pawnbrokers and payday lenders — can be time-consuming and costly. David Korzeniowski, 23, a part-time construction worker, told the Times that since a financial "mistake" caused him to be rejected by mainstream banks, fees for paying bills, cashing checks and wiring money have eaten up a large part of his paycheck. "Everything is more expensive," he said. The Times spoke with Jonathan Mintz, commissioner of New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs, who said, "Hundreds of thousands of Americans are being shut out for relatively small mistakes. As a result, many have no choice but to turn to costly fringe operations to cash checks, pay bills and wire money. Saving for the future, financial counselors say, can be especially difficult."

If you've been rejected by banks, the bitter truth is that you may not have many options. But there are some things you can do. The Fair Credit Reporting Act requires a bank to disclose why it rejected your business. That doesn't mean the explanations will be clear or easy to understand, however. Make sure that, at the minimum, any information you get from the bank tells you the name of the company that has flagged a problem. Get that company to give you a copy of your report. Read it carefully, looking for errors. If not corrected, negative information can remain for five years on the report. So you'll want to dispute anything that's incorrect. ChexSystems' consumer assistance page <https://www.consumerdebit.com/consumerinfo/us/en/chexsystems/disputes.htm>, for example, explains how to file a dispute with that company. Consumers are entitled to one free annual ChexSystems report. In reality, consumer advocates and federal regulators told the Times, it can be difficult to get errors removed from your report — or even to get a copy of your report in some cases. "Some databases ... provide scant details of the reason for the negative mark, according to a review of more [than] two dozen letters," the Times writes.

Some 15 percent of customers who are rejected by their banks are offered a so-called “second-chance” bank account, CNNMoney says. That article (http://money.cnn.com/2012/08/16/pf/second-chance-checking/index.html?iid=F_Jump) describes second-chance accounts offered by Wells Fargo, PNC and Chase. The downside: While these accounts do give you access to the banking system and a way back into mainstream, they’re expensive. “Consumers who would complain about the fees have to recognize that they’ve earned them, and when your financial service options shrink, the prices go up,” John Ulzheimer, CEO of SmartCredit.com, told CNN. If you can’t get – or don’t want – a bank account, prepaid cards are another route that offers the convenience of credit cards. In fact, the right prepaid card might be cheaper than a second-chance account. Caution: Choose a prepaid card very carefully. They can be loaded with fees. Also, understand that using a prepaid card will not help you build your credit score, as a credit card would. For more on prepaid cards read “5 Tips to Find the Best Prepaid Card” <http://www.moneytalksnews.com/search/prepaid+cards#K8Rwkc6jelqriYY4.99> and check out what Consumer Reports says about the best and worst prepaid cards at <http://www.moneytalksnews.com/2013/07/31/the-best-and-worst-prepaid-cards/>. [Source: MoneyTalksNews | Marilyn Lewis | 23 Oct 2013 ++]

Sheriff Call Scam ► How It Works

The phone rings. Caller ID says the number is the local sheriff's office, so you answer. The "sheriff" tells you there's a warrant out for your arrest. But you can pay a fine in order to avoid criminal charges. Of course, these "police" don't take credit cards; only a money order or pre-paid debit card will do. What's going on here? Scammers are using a computer program that changes the number recipients see on their caller ID. This is known as spoofing. The scam is popping up all around the country, with scammers spoofing different numbers depending on the victim's location. Victims have reported that scammers' trickery doesn't end with faking a phone number. Some reports say that scammers used the names of specific local police officers. Others said the con artists had personal information about the victims. For example, one Detroit-area woman fell for the scam when callers knew about a recent loan she had taken out.



What to Do if the "Sheriff" Calls:

- Don't wire any money. The police will not ask for payment over the phone, especially by money order or prepaid debit card.
- Just hang up and don't call back. It is tempting to get the last word, but you may end up giving scammers information they can use later.
- Call the real police and tell them what happened. If you were targeted, so were others in your area. Help the local authorities get the word out about the scam.
- Never give out your personal information. Caller ID spoofing makes it very easy for callers to pretend to be someone else. Scammers have also posed as immigration authorities and representatives of utilities companies. Just be very skeptical of anyone who calls asking for money or personal information.

To find out more about scams, check out BBB Scam Stopper at <http://www.bbb.org/scam-stopper>. [Source: BBB Scam alert 18 Oct 2013 ++]

Immigration Scam ► How it Works

Scammers posing as immigration officials are calling visa applicants to demand money or personal information. Scammers have even spoofed the US Citizen and Immigration Services phone number, so don't believe what you see on your caller ID. How the Scam Works:

- You answer a call from someone saying he works for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). He seems to know exactly who you are. The caller might have your name and address and even what kind of visa you've applied for.
- The caller tells you that the government is charging a new fee for visa applications. If you don't wire the money immediately, your application will be denied. The caller might threaten you with arrest or deportation. He also might ask for personal information (such as your passport number) in order to "check for issues" in your file.
- The call seems suspicious, so you check your caller ID. A quick Google search shows that the phone number is indeed from the USCIS office. Is this call for real?

It's not! It's a new twist on an ongoing scam. Scammers have recently spoofed USCIS's phone number, lending a new layer of credibility to their fake phone calls. What to Do if "Immigration" Calls:

- Don't wire any money. USCIS will never call someone to ask for any form of payment over the phone.
- Just hang up and don't call back. Scammers have even recreated the USCIS phone tree. If you call back on a number the scammer gave you, it sounds like you're calling the real USCIS.
- Call the real USCIS at 1-800-375-5283. Tell them what happened, and they will instruct you on next steps.
- Never give out your personal information. No matter who a caller claims to be, don't give him/her your I-94 number, "A" number, visa control number or any other personal information. Hang up and call the real USCIS.

For more information read USCIS's blog post <http://blog.uscis.gov/2013/08/scam-alert-caller-id-spoofing.html> or the Federal Trade Commission's alert <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/who-are-you> to learn more about the scam. To find out more about scams, check out BBB Scam Stopper at <http://www.bbb.org/scam-stopper>. [Source: BBB Scam Alert 13 Sep 2013 ++]

FATCA ► Negative Impact on Retirees Overseas

The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA, imposes stricter reporting requirements on Americans with significant assets outside the U.S. The act also demands that all foreign banks — whether they're based in Britain, Botswana or Brazil — disclose to the U.S. government information on accounts held by Americans, under threat of stiff financial sanction. Proponents of the law, including President Obama, praise it as an important tool to help ferret out wealthy tax cheats in America and abroad suspected of hiding millions or even billions of dollars in offshore accounts. But it has also wreaked havoc on many upstanding Americans who have settled overseas for reasons of love, work or adventure, and who now say they are having trouble buying a home, paying for their kids' education or planning for a comfortable retirement.

Because of FATCA, some overseas banks are refusing to take on American customers, declaring themselves unwilling or financially unable to report information to the IRS, which is, after all, the tax agency of a foreign nation. That has created problems for some American entrepreneurs who have started up businesses in other countries and need access to financial services in them. Some older Americans abroad, too, report receiving a nasty shock from their local banks, in places where they've lived for decades, that have decided to close their retirement investment accounts. Non-American spouses of some U.S. citizens have removed their names from shared bank accounts, not wanting their personal financial information divulged to the IRS. And the extra requirements imposed by FATCA have added to the paperwork and tax complications for many overseas Americans, who often pay hundreds of dollars for assistance in filing returns in two countries: the U.S. and their country of residence. In the first half of this year, 1,809 people renounced their American citizenship or their right to reside in the U.S., a tally that exceeds the total for all of 2012.

Some analysts blame FATCA for turning loyal Americans into angry ones, men and women who once flew the U.S. flag proudly as informal ambassadors around the world but who now feel that their nation is treating them unfairly and with unwarranted suspicion. "It's really a shame that government policies are pushing people to renounce" their U.S. citizenship, says Jackie Bugnion, a member of the executive committee of the organization American Citizens Abroad. "These people don't do it with a light heart; they're very, very disturbed about it. But this is what's happening." Colleen Graffy, a law professor at Pepperdine University and former State Department official who lives in London, says the impulse behind the new law, to curb tax evasion and money laundering, is laudable. But she likens FATCA to "using a sledgehammer to crack a nut." "America should not make it difficult and onerous to be an American," she says. U.S. officials insist the law promotes transparency and is fast becoming a model for other nations alarmed by rampant tax evasion. Other nations are negotiating agreements with the U.S. on sharing financial data, including information gleaned from FATCA.

Robert Stack, who specializes in international tax issues at the U.S. Treasury Department, says that FATCA will have "clear, positive benefits" for clamping down on tax evasion. Some technical delays have kept the law from coming into full force as of yet, making it too early to gauge the extent of any benefits. But Stack denies that the law's provisions are particularly burdensome and has dismissed complaints from Americans abroad about the unexpected fallout as "myths." Not myth but unpleasant reality confronted Colorado-born Daniel Kuettel, a resident of Switzerland who says he kept hearing "nein" from Swiss banks to his inquiries about getting a mortgage to buy a house in Florida. Kuettel inherited some money upon his mother's death last year and had hoped to use it to purchase American property for when he retires. Although he eventually found a U.S. lender, he says he was worried by the Swiss banks' refusals and by the possible implications of FATCA for the local mortgage on his Swiss residence. "One after another they said, 'Nope, we reject Americans,'" the 41-year-old software developer says. "Several people in Switzerland said to me: 'Basically, you have a U.S. problem. And you can get rid of it.'"

Taking that leap wasn't easy. His father's reaction in Colorado was a terse "no comment" when Kuettel — who spent three years in the U.S. Army — announced that he had decided to ditch his U.S. citizenship. Kuettel, who held dual citizenship because of his ancestry, moved to Switzerland in 2001 after losing his job in San Diego during the dot-com bust. "I came here to find work. If I stayed in the U.S., maybe I'd be collecting food stamps and I'd be a cost to the U.S.," he says. Last October, he traveled to the U.S. Embassy in Bern, filled out some forms, forked over \$450, raised his right hand and, in a reverse of what thousands of immigrants in the U.S. do each year, forswore his American citizenship. Diane Gelon, an American attorney in London who is originally from Los Angeles, says that by August of this year, she had counseled about 20 clients wanting to give up their U.S. citizenship, compared with what used to be six or seven annually. [Source: Los Angeles Times | Henry Chu | 14 Oct 2013 ++]

Tax Burden for Colorado Retirees ► As of Oct 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 **Colorado**.

Sales Taxes

State Sales Tax: 2.9% (food and prescription drugs exempt); many cities and counties have their own rates which are added to the state rate. Total could be as high as 9.9%.

Gasoline Tax: 40.4 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes)

Diesel Fuel Tax: 44.9 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes)

Cigarette Tax: 84 cents/pack of 20

Personal Income Taxes

All taxpayers: 4.63% of Federal taxable income

Personal Exemptions/Credits: Federal amounts are automatically adopted.

Standard Deduction: None

Medical/Dental Deduction: Federal amount

Federal Income Tax Deduction: None

Retirement Income Taxes: Colorado has a pension/annuity subtraction where, depending on the age of the recipient, the first \$20,000/\$24,000 is not taxed. As a result, taxpayers 55-64 years old can exclude a total of \$20,000 for Social Security and qualified retirement income. Those 65 and over can exclude up to \$24,000. All out-of-state government pensions qualify for the pension exemption. The total exclusion may not be more than indicated from all exempt sources. However, Social Security/Railroad Retirement income not taxed by the federal government is not added back to adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes.

Retired Military Pay: Same as above.

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. For information on the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act refer to

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Revenue%2FREVXLayout&cid=1251568528928&pagename=REVXWrapper>.

Property Taxes

The county assessor determines the value of property using a market, cost or income approach. For 2013 property taxes on real estate are assessed at 7.96% of the property's actual value. You can determine your property tax bill by multiplying the assessed value by the local tax rate. Other property, including personal property is assessed at 29% of actual value.

A homestead exemption is available for qualifying seniors and the surviving spouse of a senior who previously qualified. Seniors must be at least age 65. It allows 50% (up to a maximum reduction of \$200,000) in actual value

of a primary residence to be exempt. The state pays the tax on the exempted value. The person must have owned and lived in the home for at least 10 years. For details refer to <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251590375296>. This exemption has now been extended to qualifying disabled veterans.

Full-year Colorado residents age 65 or older, disabled, or a surviving spouse age 58 or older, may qualify for the Property Tax/Rent/Heat Rebate and/or the Property Tax Deferral. Qualified applicants can receive a rebate of up to \$600 of the property tax and \$192 of their heating expenses paid during the year, either directly or as part of their rent payments.

For more property tax information refer to <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251590375296> and <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=DOLA-Main%2FCBONLayout&cid=1251593376318&pagename=CBONWrap>. For senior and veteran property tax programs go to http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/Treasury_v2/CBON/1251590030644.

Inheritance and Estate Taxes

There is no inheritance tax and the Colorado estate tax does not apply to decedents whose date of death is on or after January 1, 2005.

For further information, visit the Colorado Department of Revenue site or call 303-866 2371.

[Source: www.retirementliving.com Oct 2013 ++]

DoD

DoD Mobilized Reserve 25 OCT 2013 ► Decrease of 372

The Department of Defense announced the current number of reservists on active duty as of 25 OCT 2013. The net collective result is 372 fewer reservists mobilized than last reported in the 15 OCT 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 34,421; Navy Reserve 4,513; Marine Corps Reserve 2,073; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve 7,681; and the Coast Guard Reserve 370. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been activated to 48,958 including both units and individual augmentees. Since 911 there have been 884,786 reservists activated for duty. At <http://www.defense.gov/documents/Mobilization-Weekly-Report-130903.pdf> is a cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently activated .

[Source: DoD News Release No. 746-13 dtd 25 Oct 2013 ++]

DoD Fraud, Waste, & Abuse Update 08 ► \$1.4M in Phony Expense Claims

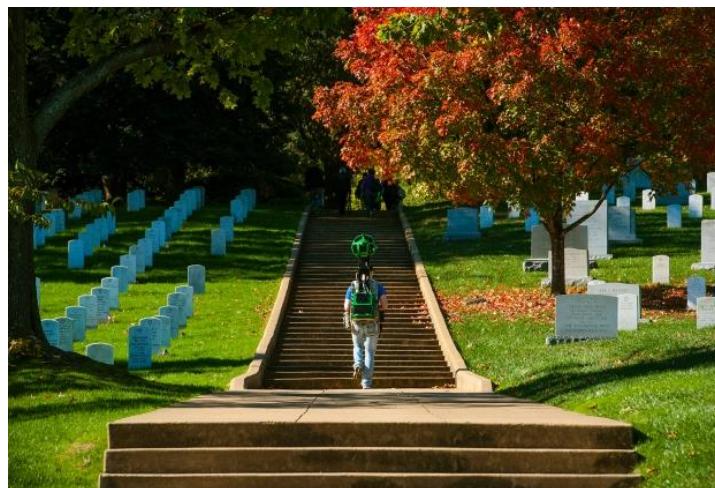
Twenty-one Arizona National Guard airmen once responsible for top-secret Predator drone flights over Iraq and Afghanistan now face felony charges for allegedly bilking \$1.4 million in federal funds through a phony expense scam. Attorney General Tom Horne on 21 OCT [announced the indictments](#) of retired Col. Gregg Davies, seven other officers and 13 enlistees accused of falsifying home addresses so they could collect expenses meant for personnel on short-term assignments. All of the defendants belonged to the Air National Guard's 214th Reconnaissance Group, which operates MQ-1B Predators out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, where

pilots at satellite-linked stations remotely fly the unmanned aircraft. Prosecutors said charges include fraud, conspiracy, operating an illegal enterprise, money-laundering and theft. Some airmen could face prison sentences of up to 12½ years. The accused were not arrested, but authorities sent them summonses for an Oct. 25 arraignment in Pima County Superior Court.

The alleged conspiracy occurred from 2007 to 2010 and involved Air Guard personnel who were on federal assignment, paid with U.S. tax dollars. According to prosecutors, most of the defendants collected more than \$100,000 each in improper expenses. The total loss is estimated at \$1.4 million. Air Force auditors first uncovered the alleged scheme in 2009, and reported at least two dozen Tucson airmen had submitted false temporary duty, or TDY, claims. Some of the airmen were disciplined and ordered to reimburse the military, while suspected criminal conduct was referred to the FBI and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Air Force policy allows airmen on temporary duty away from home to collect payments for housing, meals, travel and other expenses. But auditors in 2009 found many accounts contained “admitted fraudulent activity,” in some cases authorized by the group commander. “This condition occurred due to a complete breakdown of management controls,” they wrote. “The lack of effective procedures allowed 214th RG members to illegally exploit opportunities for personal gain without penalty.” Horne said some of the defendants collected up to five times their salaries in unwarranted expenses.

The controversy over temporary-duty pay spawned a three-year leadership upheaval in the Guard’s aviation division, leading to the ouster last year of Brig. Gen. Michael Colangelo as Air Guard commander. Based on the damning audit, Colangelo relieved Davies as the Predator group boss. One of Davies’ subordinates, Lt. Col. Thomas “Buzz” Rempfer, also was dismissed after he complained about the firing and other issues. The Air Force Inspector General subsequently issued a report concluding that Colangelo abused his authority. Salazar issued a letter of reprimand to Colangelo, who was fired when he protested the discipline. McGuire was not part of the command chain for those actions. He oversaw the 162nd Fighter Wing in Tucson from 2011 until this year, and before that headed the 214th Reconnaissance Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. McGuire, who joined Horne at Monday’s announcement of criminal charges, said: “I welcome the efforts of these law enforcement partners to ensure that we receive an accurate view of the facts. ... We fully support the legal process.” [Source: The Arizona Republic | Dennis Wagner & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

Arlington National Cemetery Update 43 ► Cameras Capture Arlington



In the picture above Patrick Fennie's walk through Arlington National Cemetery on a beautiful October day was being captured by Google for anyone to experience with a few keystrokes or the swipe of a smartphone screen. Google on 20 OCT began its project to map the cemetery by collecting millions of photos and stitching them together to re-create the feeling of strolling the iconic burial ground of presidents and soldiers. The images will be stitched together and released in May (timed with Memorial Day and the 150th anniversary of Arlington), so that people can visit important historic sites remotely from their home computer. Online users will be able to zoom in close enough to read some grave markers. Or zoom out for panoramas of rolling hills dotted with thousands of white headstones. Or experience a 360-degree view of the resting place of America's service members.

Google's hired walker moved briskly among a light stream of visitors, carrying his 50 pound backpack supporting 15 panoramic cameras encased in a green metal sphere the size of a basketball hovering above his head — a contraption known as a Trekker. As he strolled by Section 27, where the first soldier was buried at Arlington in 1864, he stood out, a high-tech intruder among the neatly lined burial rows, where change is seen only in the new gravestones and the passing of the seasons. Cemetery officials hope the project will draw greater attention to one of the nation's most-visited destinations, particularly the areas of the cemetery that are often overlooked. It's great for people who may not be able to visit in person. Being at Arlington gives you the whole perspective of why we are Americans. The effort is part of Google's quest to map every nook and cranny of the Earth, an endeavor that feeds the company's online advertising cash machine. With its car-mounted cameras, Google has captured images of just about every developed nation. It has gone to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and used a tricycle-mounted camera to navigate the stalls of Boston's Faneuil Hall market. Its global picture-snapping frenzy has brought charges of privacy violations in some countries. Google said it will edit out or blur the faces of people captured in photos at the cemetery.



Fennie pauses for a photograph as he captures the scene at the Memorial Amphitheater

The images will be available to the public in May for the cemetery's 150th anniversary, honoring the day when Pvt. William Christman became the first soldier buried there, in Section 27. "This is a tool to explore the cemetery from your home. It's not the same as being here, of course, but for so many who can't afford or are physically incapable of visiting, this is a great tool to get a feel for Arlington and explore its rich history," said Jennifer Lynch, a spokeswoman for the cemetery. Arlington National Cemetery provides online access to photos of its 400,000 above- and below-ground burial sites. Google's images will be less granular and will capture only the gravestones close to where its Trekker passes, the company said. With 27 to 30 burials a day at the cemetery, Google won't be able to display new burials and seasonal changes. Lynch said cemetery officials will work with Google on updates. But combined with the images already used in its Street View software and those from a car that snapped photos along with the Trekker carried by Patrick Fennie on Sunday, users will eventually be able to feel as if they are walking to the Tomb of the Unknowns and up the stairs to the grave site of President John F. Kennedy.

"We want it to be a consistent and immersive experience so that it feels like you are there," said Deanna Yick, a Google spokeswoman. For relatives and friends of service members buried there, visiting the cemetery can be an

important part of grieving, experts say. After Ami Neiberger-Miller's brother died in Iraq in 2007, she went to visit his grave in Section 60 every week. Now, the Purcellville, Va., resident visits every two months. "When you talk to bereavement experts, they say that the people who are able to incorporate their lost ones in their lives in some way helps them to move forward. For some people it can be visiting the burial sites," said Neiberger-Miller, a spokeswoman for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, an organization that assists the families who have lost a member in the military. Some family members worry that the sites of relatives are neglected, with few visitors. So project staff members regularly check on the sites of service members whose families can't visit Arlington but want someone to deliver flowers or just physically be there. "Google is only capturing a moment in time, so it's not like a family member can see how the site looks like on a given day," Neiberger-Miller said. "But it sounds like a great way for the many people who can't visit to get some sense of what it's like there." [Source: Stars & Stripes | Cecilia Kang | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

Arlington National Cemetery Update 44 ► Section 60 Memento Policy

Arlington National Cemetery is relaxing its policies to allow family members of those buried in its section for those who died in Iraq and Afghanistan to leave behind small mementos and photos to honor those soldiers, a spokeswoman said 16 OCT. Section 60 is the part of the cemetery that is home to most of those killed in recent fighting. Families in that section had been leaving stones, photos and other mementos at their loved ones' gravesites, even though cemetery policy strictly regulates such impromptu memorials. Responding to complaints, cemetery staff cleaned out some of those memorials recently. Then families who had left the mementos complained about their removal. Patrick Hallinan is the executive director of the Army National Military Cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery. He met with Section 60 families on 6 OCT, and worked out a compromise that will allow displays through the fall and winter months when the grass doesn't need cut often, said cemetery spokeswoman Jennifer Lynch. Officials emphasized that items that are unsightly, anything affixed headstones, dangerous items such as tobacco, alcohol, ammunition, and glass, as well as any item that might pose a risk to workers or visitors. Lynch said the cemetery will review its regulations and policies to see if long-term accommodation can be made. Officials said small mementos will be permitted. Photos will be allowed, but cannot be taped to headstones, Lynch said. [Source: Associated Press 17 Oct 2014 ++]

VA



VA Loans Update 07 ► Buyer's Advantage in Seller's Market

Veterans may have a leg up with VA loans when it comes to winning bidding wars in a sellers' market. The zero-down feature of VA loans can help eligible borrowers secure the purchase agreement on the home of their dreams in a sellers' market. According to a Forbes article in late February 2013, housing inventory has hit a 13-year low, but buyer traffic remains high. Fewer homes and more buyers are two key ingredients for a seller's market. Though real estate experts are not declaring it quite yet, one might consider the possibility that a seller's market may be brewing. In a sellers' real estate market, home prices are often driven up when the supply is low and

the demand is high. Multiple interested buyers can lead to a bidding war and result in a home sale above asking price.

VA mortgages can help eligible borrowers win bidding wars against some conventional borrowers. A borrower looking to obtain a conventional loan normally must show he or she can come up with the cash for the down payment before getting the loan. Most VA loans can be obtained without a down payment; therefore, the zero-down-payment VA borrower will not have to prove that they have liquid assets to obtain a pre-qualifying letter, and would not usually have to meet this extra qualification. In a news release published in March 2011, the National Association of Realtors® (NARS) publicly came forward in opposition to high down payment requirements stating that they can keep many would-be buyers with good credit and income from becoming homeowners. Agents may consider offers less risky if they don't hinge on the buyer having to prove that they have enough money to cover the down payment. Agents frequently advise their clients to take the less risky bid. Eligible borrowers who want to know more about leveraging their VA home loan benefits in a sellers' market should contact a direct VA loan officer. [Source: Military.com | Money Matters | 25 Jul 2013 ++]

VA Physical Therapy ► VA's Bodybuilders

October is National Physical Therapy Month. You probably didn't have that on your calendar but it's an important reminder that VA physical therapists are a major reason so many Veterans are on the road to managing their conditions. Thousands of Veterans rely on their VA physical therapist to help them prevent injury and further loss of movement. Veterans enrolled in the VHA health care system are assured personal treatment from the onset of a condition until their reach their goals or until they achieve maximum benefit from interventions — one of the many reasons VA physical therapists form strong bonds with many brave Veterans who have served our nation. From injured active duty personnel to middle age and elderly Veterans, patients rely on their VA caregivers to develop unique and resourceful treatment interventions often for complex medical conditions. Blending science with inspiration, VA's physical therapists teach Veterans how to prevent or manage a health condition and help motivate them during treatment so they can function optimally.



Physical therapists work with Veterans to help them understand their body so they will achieve long-term health benefits. VA now has the most comprehensive computerized patient records system in the nation. The system puts each Veteran's medical records, lab results, x-rays, EKGs and more at the fingertips of physical therapists and the entire patient care team as they work together to design treatment interventions. In addition, VA rehabilitation teams work with today's state-of-the-art assistive and adaptive technologies to achieve patient goals. VA physical

therapists develop a plan of care for Veterans using a variety of treatment techniques that help them move, reduce pain, restore function and prevent disability. They also help prevent loss of mobility and motion by developing a fitness and wellness-oriented program tailored to each Veteran's specific needs. VA's physical therapists are highly-educated, licensed health care professionals who can help patients reduce pain and improve or restore mobility — in many cases without expensive surgery and often reducing the need for long-term use of prescription medications and their side effects. Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can find the physical therapist at their VA medical center. The locator is http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flsf.asp?dnum=1. For physical therapists interested in a PT career with VA, check out <http://www.vacareers.va.gov>. [Source: <http://www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/2013/October/Physical-Therapists-VAs-Bodybuilders.asp> Oct 2013 ++]

VA Claims Backlog Update 116 ► Reduction Momentum Slowed but not Stopped

The veterans claims backlog continued to drop this month despite the two-week government shutdown and dire claims from Veterans Affairs leaders that momentum on the problem had been lost. VA officials reported 23 OCT that 411,704 compensation claims have been pending for more than 125 days, the 15th consecutive week the official backlog number has decreased. The figure is down about 10,000 cases since 28 SEP. But the decrease appears to contradict VA claims that the government shutdown would hurt efforts to clear the backlog, by depriving the department of funds for mandatory overtime to work on the problem. On 1OCT — the first day of the budget impasse — VA assistant secretary of Public Affairs Tommy Sowers predicted an increase in the number of overdue claims because of the shutdown. A week later, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki told members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee that “the momentum achieved in the past six months (on the backlog) has now stalled with the government shutdown.” He also indicated that the department’s stated goal of zeroing out the backlog in 2015 could be jeopardized by the shutdown.

In an email, VA officials acknowledged that the backlog did not increase during the shutdown but insisted that it did remain flat during the days department funding was restricted. That ignores a 14 OCT report putting the backlog about 6,000 cases lower than where Shinseki had indicated just a few days earlier. The department attributes the 10,000-case drop from 28 SEP to 19 OCT to the five non-shutdown days included in that reporting period, and the “hard work of our Veterans Benefit Administration employees” despite the distraction. Republicans in Congress have accused the White House of exaggerating the effects of the shutdown and creating unnecessary hardships to make the budget fight more painful. That included decisions to close national parks and furlough thousands of government employees. VA programs were somewhat insulated from the shutdown, because of millions in advance funding appropriated to the department. That kept veterans hospitals and care centers open and most department employees on the job, but did affect non-essential programs such as the overtime claims work. Since March, veterans claims processors have trimmed the backlog total by an average of 31,000 a month. It is unclear whether the slower progress over the last three weeks will prevent similar progress by the end of the month.

In a statement, House Veterans Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL) said he was pleased with the latest numbers. “It’s great to see that the government shutdown didn’t stop VA’s backlog progress,” he said. “If VA’s claims processing overtime program, which is now set to resume, is as crucial to success as department leaders claim it is, we expect the backlog to shrink considerably more in the coming weeks.” Ranking member Mike Michaud (D-ME) said there is “no question the shutdown had an impact on the VA and its ability to keep pace with the previous reductions” in the backlog. “While the impact of the shutdown on the backlog doesn’t appear to be as severe as some had feared, at the very least, it’s comforting to know that the current strategy in place is enough to continue reductions, even without overtime,” he said in a statement. Shortly after the shutdown’s end, VA officials announced they would resume mandatory overtime for all VA claims processors, requiring about 20 hours of extra

work before the end of November. The department also plans to reinstate mandatory overtime again next spring, an indication that they believe they'll need the extra effort to keep the backlog trend headed downward. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Leo Shane | 21 Oct 2013 ++]

VA Medical Marijuana Policy Update 07 ► Arizona Considering Use for PTSD

The Arizona Department of Health Services is considering making medical marijuana available to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder patients. The decision comes after the ADHS accepted a petition to list PTSD as a debilitating condition under the Arizona Medical Marijuana Act on 6 OCT, according to a report from the Arizona Cannabis Nurses Association (AZCNA). During a public hearing 29 OCT at the ADHS, the majority in attendance were in favor of the petition's goal including Vietnam veteran Gerold Deyoung who uses medical marijuana for other conditions but feels in the process, it has helped take away the pain of his PTSD. However, one speaker, Dr. Leland Fairbanks, did not think it would cure veterans of PTSD completely and suggested that "they should join their veteran support groups" or "go to their veterans' hospital" instead. According to the 2012 Department of Veterans Affair Report, 239,174 veterans were reported to have PTSD on Veterans Health Administration rosters. ADHS provides an informational page about the decision process on their website <http://www.azdhs.gov/medicalmarijuana/debilitating> for the public to learn more. A decision will be finalized in January 2014. [Source: abc15.com Taking Action article 29 Oct 2013 ++]

VA Fraud, Waste & Abuse Update 80 ► Reported 15 thru 30 Nov 2013

A former pharmacy technician at a Veterans Affairs medical facility in Augusta Georgia pleaded guilty 24 Oct in U.S. District Court to stealing prescription medication. **Rebecca J. Hamlin**, 61, of Winslow was charged with theft of government property, a federal Class A misdemeanor, after coworkers spotted her attempting to conceal an unlabeled plastic pharmacy bottle in her purse in January. U.S. Magistrate Judge Margaret Kravchuk accepted Hamlin's guilty plea. Sentencing will be set at a later date. Hamlin faces up to a year in jail and a maximum fine of \$100,000. Hamlin's voice often cracked when she addressed the judge. She had no prior criminal history. Hamlin worked as a pharmacy technician at the Togus Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta on Jan. 17, when a coworker saw Hamlin "suspiciously attempt to conceal an unlabeled pharmacy vial in her purse" at her workstation. Later that day, a supervisor noticed more VA medication in the side pocket of a tote bag under Hamlin's desk. Medications in the bag included Acetaminophen, Simvastatin, Phrenilin, Naproxen and a Hydrocodone tablet. Her purse and tote bag were taken to the VA police station, where Hamlin consented to the search and admitted she should not have possessed the prescription drugs. Hamlin later confessed during a 25 JAN interview that she took medication from the VA. A VA pharmacist confirmed that the "national numbers as well as the 7.5 [milligrams] dosage of Hydrocodone found within the defendant's possession were the same as the national number and dosage of Hydrocodone maintained at the VA pharmacy." Due to the small quantities taken, the prosecution believed the stolen medications were for her personal use. Hamlin said she did not disagree with the prosecution's version of events. She was released on \$5,000 unsecured bond until sentencing. [Source: BDN Maine | Alex Barber | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

VADIP ► Enrollment in 3-yr Dental Pilot Program Begins 15 NOV

A new VA program will soon allow all enrolled veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries to purchase private dental insurance at a reduced cost. Dependents of Veterans, except those eligible under CHAMPVA, are not authorized to participate in VADIP. Those individuals may be eligible for separate dental insurance coverage offered by the carriers. Created by the Caregivers and Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, this three year pilot program known as the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) will offer a wide array of affordable plans to veterans and eligible dependents through Delta Dental and MetLife. Covered services include diagnostic, preventative, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment. Delta Dental and MetLife are offering multiple plans. Each participant pays the fixed monthly premiums for coverage and any copayments required, depending on the type of plan selected. Monthly premiums will range from \$8.65 to \$52.90, depending on level of coverage selected. The initial participation period will be at least 12 calendar months. Afterward, VADIP beneficiaries can renew their participation for another 12-month period or be covered month-to-month, as long as the participant remains eligible for coverage and VA continues VADIP. Participation in this program is entirely optional and dental service connection is not required. Enrollment begins on Nov. 15, 2013, with coverage beginning on Jan. 1, 2014. For more information call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or go to <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip> and click the insurer's link for specific information regarding registration, rates and services. [Source: <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip> Oct 2013 ++]

VAMC Memphis TN ► Preventable Veteran Deaths

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) oversaw three preventable veteran deaths due to errors and negligence at a VA hospital in Memphis, according to a new VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) report and other documents obtained by The Daily Caller. VA, which spent more than \$3.5 million on furniture on the last day of fiscal year 2013, also awarded a five-figure bonus to the executive who oversaw the Memphis facility, even as it acknowledged that problems were cropping up. Patient deaths in its emergency department prompted an anonymous phone call to the OIG in October 2012. The damning OIG report comes just weeks after VA admitted that six veteran deaths were linked to delayed cancer screenings at a VA facility in South Carolina and a report that appointment delays led to veterans being harmed in Augusta, Ga. In January 2013, the OIG found:

- “**Facility response [to the deaths] considered inadequate**” and a review was initiated with a May 29-31 site visit. “We substantiated that a patient was administered a medication in spite of a documented drug allergy, and had a fatal reaction. Another patient was found unresponsive after being administered multiple sedating medications. A third patient had a critically high blood pressure that was not managed aggressively, and experienced bleeding in the brain approximately 5 hours after presenting to the ED,” according to the OIG report’s conclusions. “We found that the facility took actions as required by VHA [Veterans Health Administration] in response to the unexpected patient deaths, but noted that implementation of action plans developed through RCAs was delayed and incomplete.
- **We found inadequate monitoring capabilities for patients in some ED rooms**, an issue identified during our site visit last year. We also found that nursing ED-specific competency assessments had not been completed,” according to the report’s conclusions. In each case, erroneous actions by hospital staff contributed to patient deaths, according to the OIG report. “Hand written orders for Patient 1 did not comply with the facility’s requirement that all provider orders and patient care be documented in the EHR [Electronic Health Record]. Since the orders were not entered into the EHR, systems in place to prevent medication errors were bypassed,” according to the report. “When we interviewed staff, we did not get a

clear response about what happened with Patient 2's oxygen saturation monitor. One staff member believed that the monitor slipped off the patient's finger and no one heard and/or responded to the alarm. We were unable to establish whether or not the alarm sounded, but we were told that tests done on the monitor after the event showed the alarm was functional. Since the patient was physically located away from the main ED, it is possible that staff would not have heard the alarm," according to the report. "Patient 3 had preexisting hypertension and multiple comorbidities, but his deterioration may have been prevented if appropriate antihypertensive medications had been given more aggressively," according to the report.

- **The hospital's work in the aftermath of the deaths was also problematic.** "We reviewed facility peer review and root cause analysis (RCA) processes to evaluate if actions taken by the facility following the patient deaths were appropriate. We found that the RCA process needed improvement," according to the report.

The facility director concurred with all four recommendations for improvement laid out by the OIG. Rep. Jeff Miller, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, told The Daily Caller in a statement, "Like other hospital systems, VA isn't immune from human error — even fatal human error. But what the department does seem to be immune from is meaningful accountability. Given that these tragic events are part of a pattern of preventable veteran deaths and other patient-safety issues at VA hospitals around the country, it's well past time for the department to put its employees on notice that anyone who lets patients fall through the cracks will be held fully responsible. It's the only way to ensure veterans get the medical care they deserve and prevent heartbreaking events like this from happening in the future. Until VA leaders make a serious attempt to address the department's widespread and systemic lack of accountability, I fear we'll only see more of these lapses in care." James L. Robinson, a longtime VA veteran who headed the Memphis VA hospital from 2009 until taking another hospital job in August 2012, received a \$10,782 taxpayer-funded bonus from VA in fiscal year 2011, according to documents obtained by TheDC. This was not the first time that the Memphis emergency room came under scrutiny.

- "We previously inspected the facility's ED in 2012, after a confidential complainant alleged that delays and conditions in the ED were putting patients at risk. ... The facility is still in the process of taking follow-up actions," according to the report. The Memphis hospital's problems have been considered severe for quite some time."
- August [2011]: Phone call from ED physician — Patients allegedly left on stretchers in hallway waiting to be admitted. Referred to VISN 9 for response," according to an OIG document obtained by The Daily Caller "November [2011]: VISN response considered inadequate, review initiated," according to the document.
- "Facility's sustained performance for ED [Emergency Department] length of stay far below the VHA standard. Many factors contributed to ED delays," the inspector general's office found in August 2012. "We substantiated that management was aware of these issues but had not taken adequate action for resolution. ... The potential for harm exists, however, if the ED flow problems continue. Boarding patients awaiting admission for lengthy periods '... enhances the potential for errors, delays in treatment, and diminished quality of care,'" according to an August 15, 2012 OIG report.

The Associated Press reported that VAMC Memphis says it has addressed recommendations made by inspectors who investigated the deaths of three patients who died in the facility's emergency department. The medical center issued a statement 24 OCT in response to a report from the Veterans Health Administration a day earlier recommending that the hospital strengthen root cause action plans, improve monitoring of emergency department patients and complete competency assessments for emergency department nursing staff. In addition to addressing the recommendations, the medical center says it has corrected issues identified by the action plan and that the physician involved in the care of two of the patients in the report is no longer working there. The investigation

showed that the facility had completed protected peer reviews of the care for all three patients. [Source: The Daily Caller | Patrick Howley | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

Agent Orange | C-123 Aircraft Update 05 ► VA Asked to Reverse Decision

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) joined with 19 other members of the House of Representatives to implore Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki to reverse the agency's stance against awarding presumptive benefits for Agent Orange exposure to crews who flew aboard C-123 aircraft after the Vietnam war. In a letter dated this week, the congresspersons cited the agency's recent decision to award such benefits to Lt. Col. Paul Bailey, who suffered from cancer that he believes stemmed from his service aboard a C-123 after the War. The Air Force used C-123 to drop the defoliant Agent Orange over Vietnam during the war. Even after the war ended, the planes were deeply contaminated with Agent Orange, which has been determined to contribute to cancers. But the Air Force destroyed many of the aircraft and the VA has not acknowledged that crews who flew in the planes after the war may also have suffered the effects of exposure. A national advocacy effort for C-123 veterans is led by retired Air Force veteran Wesley Carter of McMinnville, who has enlisted the help of Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., and others in a crusade to have the DoD acknowledge that many of them suffer from symptoms related to Agent Orange exposure. [Source: The Oregonian | Mike Francis | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

PTSD Update 151 ► New Maine Marijuana Use Law

A new Maine state law allowing veterans and others suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder to be prescribed medical marijuana will help them live a normal life, advocates and veterans say. Under the law that went into effect 9 OCT, PTSD joins cancer, glaucoma, hepatitis C and others on the list of conditions patients must have to qualify for medical marijuana use in Maine. Hundreds of Maine veterans already use marijuana to treat PTSD, but they weren't previously able to get it from their doctors, said Paul McCarrier, legislative liaison for the Medical Marijuana Caregivers of Maine. "This unites the hands of doctors to allow them to treat their patients," he said. Maine voters legalized marijuana for medical purposes in 1999 and approved a law creating a statewide network of marijuana dispensaries 10 years later. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have legalized medical marijuana use, but only six other states allow its use for PTSD, according to the Marijuana Policy Project, a D.C.-based advocacy group.

Gordon Smith, executive vice president of the Maine Medical Association, said the question of medical marijuana use for PTSD treatment is contentious among the medical community. "We heard both from doctors who felt that particularly people coming back from Afghanistan might be assisted (by it), and we heard from doctors who thought there was not a sound evidentiary basis for it," Smith said. Because the drug is still illegal under federal law, there is a lack of federally funded studies on medical marijuana. That has been a challenge to understanding its impact on various conditions, Smith said. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs changed its policy on medical marijuana in 2011 to ensure veterans using medical marijuana in states where it's legal aren't punished, said Michael Krawitz, director of the Virginia-based group Veterans for Cannabis Access. But VA doctors still can't recommend medical marijuana for treatment or provide documentation to get it.

McCarrier said he suspects the new law will bring many new patients into Maine's medical marijuana program, which had more than 1,450 patients registered with the state in 2012. Efforts to expand the program to include more qualifying conditions will likely continue in Maine. The first draft of proposed law would have allowed doctors to

prescribe marijuana for any condition they deemed necessary. But the Maine Medical Association opposed that, saying that expanding the program to virtually every condition could essentially legalize recreational marijuana use. Begin said the new law will be a huge step forward for veterans struggling with PTSD. That's because marijuana doesn't cause the negative side effects that prescription medication can, like feelings of weakness or depression, but instead allows patients to stay medicated while remaining social and productive, he said. "Just because they have to take medication, they shouldn't be put on the sidelines of life," he said. [Source: Associated Press | Alanna Durkin | 12 Oct 2013 ++]

PTSD Update 152 ► PE | CPT Treatment Study Planned

The Department of Veterans Affairs is preparing to launch a 17-site, \$10 million study that will examine the two leading forms of treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder: Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). "Our primary goal is to compare the treatments," said Dr. Paula Schnurr, the study's lead investigator. "But we'll also examine which treatments are best for different types of patients; for example, women versus men." Schnurr is deputy executive director of VA's National Center for PTSD and a research professor of psychiatry at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. "Patient-centeredness is fundamental to the delivery of care in VA," she said, "and information about the comparative effectiveness of different treatments is a key element of making care 'patient-centered.' We want to make sure that Veterans have information that can help them find the care that is best for them."

In Cognitive Processing Therapy patients learn how to identify, challenge and ultimately neutralize unhelpful thoughts. In Prolonged Exposure Therapy, the patient is allowed to re-experience the traumatic event in a safe and supportive environment and, eventually, engage in activities they've been avoiding because of the trauma. The two therapies are based on differing theories about how PTSD develops. Schnurr said study participants will include male and female Veterans who are experiencing PTSD due to any military event. Half the study population will be randomly selected to receive Cognitive Processing Therapy, while the other half will receive Prolonged Exposure Therapy. Both therapies will be administered in 12 weekly sessions. The study's results will be determined by conducting regular follow-up visits with the participants. These visits will occur at both the middle and the conclusion of the study and then three to six months later. Enrollment in the study is scheduled to begin in March 2014.

Dr. Kate Chard, another member of the research team said, "PTSD is an anxiety disorder that people sometimes develop after witnessing or experiencing a dangerous or life-threatening event. The trauma can be caused by any number of things: exposure to combat, a car accident here at home, physical abuse, a sexual assault..." Chard is a psychologist in the Cincinnati VA Medical Center's PTSD Division. She's also an associate professor of clinical psychiatry in the University of Cincinnati's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience. "People with PTSD," she said, "often continue to feel anxious or frightened even though the danger is no longer present." Another investigator on the study, Dr. Josef Ruzek said PTSD symptoms tend to fall into three primary categories. "People with PTSD may have flashbacks or intrusive memories about the traumatic event," he explained. "Or they may have a tendency to avoid places or situations that remind them of the event. A third symptom is difficulty concentrating, or getting startled too easily." Ruzek is director of dissemination and training at VA's National Center for PTSD and a faculty member at Palo Alto University. For more information on PTSD, visit the VA National Center for PTSD Website at <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>. [Source: VHA | Tom Cramer | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

PTSD & TBI ► HBOT Therapy Looks Promising

Veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury may soon have relief from their symptoms. Dr. Paul Harch, a leader in hyperbaric medicine, claims hyperbaric oxygen therapy may permanently curtail TBI and PTSD symptoms. Harch is in charge of the hyperbaric oxygen therapy program at LSU Medical School in New Orleans and says his therapy could help prevent 22 suicides that happen every day in the military. Harch says with his therapy, he's seen brain traumas cured in veterans. "To our great surprise, after 25 treatments he [one patient] came and said to me, 'My PTSD is gone,'" Harch said. Dr. Harch says he hopes his upcoming FDA trial using veterans with PTSD will prove to the military that the oxygen chamber they already use to help their divers heal can also be used to treat post traumatic stress disorder. "It acts as a signal to our genes in our DNA and it turns on growth and repair hormones," said Harch. Dr. Harch isn't waiting to get military members to him. Mercy Medical Airlift, a non-profit group, is stepping in to help. The Department of Defense, the Veteran's Administration, and the National Institute of Mental Health recently pledged \$100 million for further PTSD and TBI research and treatment, impacting over 550,000 brain injured veterans. For more information on hyperbaric oxygen treatment refer to <http://www.hbot.com>. [Source: WVEC.com 13News Now | Lucy Bustamante | 15 Oct 2013 ++]



GI Bill Update 159 ► Virtual In-State Tuition Map

The American Legion, Student Veterans of America (SVA) and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) have created an interactive map that will help student veterans decide which States provide them the best deal on college. The Virtual In-State Tuition Map maps out the entire country and color codes each State according to whether it allows all veterans to attend state colleges at in-state tuition rates. The map will be updated regularly when new information and updates are verified. Refer to <http://www.studentveterans.org/what-we-do/in-state-tuition.html>. To find an SVA chapter near you, access SVA's chapter locator on the same website. [Source: <http://www.studentveterans.org> Oct 2013 ++]

GI Bill Update 160 ► Another GI Bill Website

Little more than a year after government officials took over the private website <http://www.gibill.com>, saying that it misled veterans, a new website has popped up that may renew similar concerns. The site, <http://www.gibill.asia>, encourages vets to use their GI Bill benefits to study at various overseas universities. The site displays U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force logos, as well as the iconic Uncle Sam image from World War I-era recruiting posters. This version reads: "We want you or your kids to study free in Asia." The website apparently has no connection to the U.S. government. "I have no affiliation to anyone," said Nile Mosley, who told Military Times in

a telephone interview that he developed the site independently and is semi-retired and not working for any organization, public or private. "It's just a cool idea."

Mosley said he worked previously at Asian University in Thailand as a software engineering professor. During that time, he said he met many U.S. military veterans who enjoyed studying abroad. He added that he does not intend for his site to appear to be affiliated with the U.S. government and would be happy to change the site to make that clear. The site touts education abroad as "a four-year study vacation" and suggests student veterans can get more out of their GI Bill benefits by taking classes in foreign countries with a lower cost of living and pocketing leftover GI Bill money. However, the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the most commonly used vet education benefit, adjusts its housing stipends to match an area's cost of living. Several pages on the site also have typos and grammatical errors. The site describes several vet education benefits, contains links to the Veterans Affairs Department website, provides instructions and touts some benefits of studying abroad. It promotes dozens of universities in several countries, from China and Japan to Russia, Israel and Kuwait.

In June 2012, the attorneys general of several states agreed to a settlement with the marketing company behind www.gibill.com, requiring the company to pay \$2.5 million in investigative costs and hand the domain over to VA. Officials said many vets believed that site was an official government entity and disclosed personal information, such as Social Security numbers, to the site. A few months later, VA announced it was trademarking the phrase "GI Bill." The gibill.com site now redirects visitors to the official VA website. But other commonly used extensions — gibill.edu, gibill.org, gibill.net — do not, instead loading error messages or blank pages. Mosley said he also has the rights to gibill.eu and is planning to do another version of his site focused on study in Europe. A spokeswoman for Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), who has sharply criticized other organizations that he viewed as misleading veterans or wasting their education benefits, said his office did not know about gibill.asia previously but will ask VA to look into it.



 gibill.asia is a privately owned website and is free to be used by anyone. gibill.asia is not affiliated with any organization.

Officials with VA, the Justice Department and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau declined to answer questions about gibill.asia or were unavailable. "We can't comment on someone's personal website, but I have forwarded the information on to our people in education services at [the Veterans Benefits Administration] for potential review," VA spokesman Randy Noller said. Mosley said he does not follow U.S. politics and was not aware of the gibill.com controversy. "I don't want to piss anyone off. I just enjoy running the site," he said.

[Source: ArmyTimes | George Altman | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

Independent Budget 2015: Vet View of Most Important VA Issues

The four Independent Budget (IB) partners have released their critical issues for FY 2015. The IB, which VFW co-authors with AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America, provides the Administration and Congress a veterans' view of the most important issues as it pertains to VA healthcare, benefits and infrastructure, as well as issues facing service members as they transition from uniform to veteran status. The IB is in its 28th year of publication and has been praised by Congress as an honest and accurate view of what VA needs to take care of all veterans. The 2015 IB highlights the following five issues:

- **Trends in VA Funding.** While the demands on the VA health-care and benefits systems continue to grow, funding for these programs is not keeping pace with those demands.
- **Completing the Transformation of VA's Benefits Claims-Processing System.** Although there is measurable progress in reducing the backlog of veterans' claims, the Veterans Benefits Administration must increase its openness, transparency, cooperation, and collaboration with Congress and veterans service organizations to successfully complete this transformation.
- **Maintaining VA's Critical Infrastructure.** To provide high-quality, accessible care, the Department of Veterans Affairs must receive adequate funding to maintain current structures and reduce the backlog of critical infrastructure gaps in utilization, space, condition, and safety that are outlined in VA's Strategic Capital Investment Plan.
- **Accountability to Veterans and Their Representatives.** The Department of Veterans Affairs must ensure its organizational structure, policies, and programs promote good governance to be responsive to the needs of veterans.
- **The Continuing Challenge of Providing Specialized Care and Benefits Services to Veterans.** The Department of Veterans Affairs must work to provide integrated health services and benefits that meet the needs of newer veterans and veterans from past generations of service

The full IB will be released in conjunction with the President's proposed budget earlier next year. To read details on the critical issues and review past year's IB inputs go to: <http://www.independentbudget.org/>. [Source: VFW Washington Weekly 18 Oct 2013 ++]

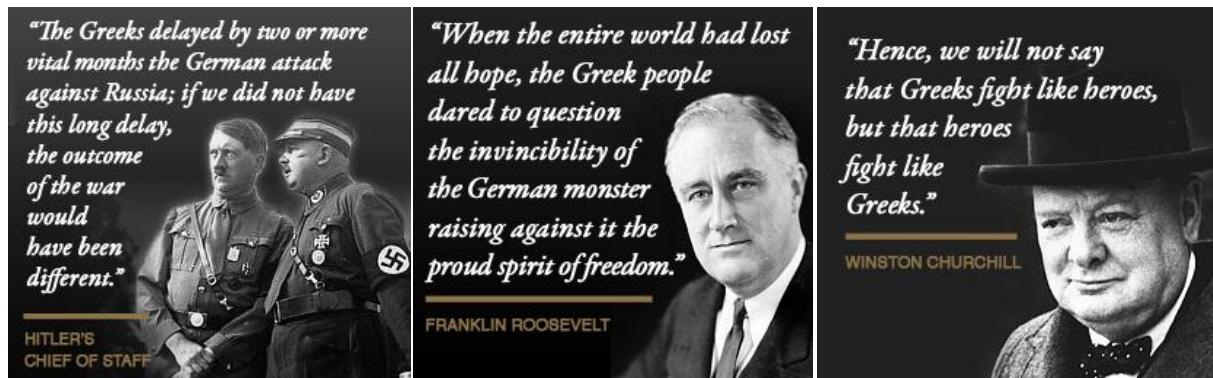
Vets

Veterans Day 2013 Update 01 ► Discounts

There is no way members of the US Military can ever properly thank for all that they have done. They are certainly not paid enough for their work and their great sacrifice. Iraq and Afghanistan have been particularly tough and stressful for members of the military, their families and loved ones. However, some stores and services doing their part to make life easier by offering discounts to active, reserve, and retired members of the US Military and their immediate family members this coming Veterans Day 11 NOV. A summary of these can be found in the attachment to this Bulletin titled "**Veterans Day 2013 Discounts**". Note that some stores offer discounts only at the owner's discretion and other discounts vary by state. Also, many stores that give a military discount don't advertise it. It is always worth asking a store whether they have one or not and to have your military ID on you. [Source: <http://www.militaryconnection.com/deals.asp#vetdaydeals> Oct 2013 ++]

Greatest Generation Award ► WWII Veterans Honored

Not enough is said about the contribution of the people of Greece to the Allied victory in World War II, Derek Chollet, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs said at the annual Oxi Day Foundation ceremony 24 OCT. "During World War II, devastation and sacrifice inhabited every corner of the earth," Chollet told the audience at a ceremony hosted by the Oxi Day Foundation at the World War II memorial. At the ceremony held in the World War II memorial, three veterans of World War II receive the Greatest Generation Award, which honors a Greek, a Greek-American and an American for their service in the war. Greek Army Lt. Gen. Konstantinos Korkas, the late U.S. Army Lt. Col. Christopher Mehil and Congressman John Dingell were honored. The foundation draws its name from the response given in 1940 by Greece's prime minister to an Axis demand that Greece surrender. By this point the Axis powers had already defeated 15 countries, Chollet said, but Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxis responded, simply, "Oxi." -- Greek for "No."



"In many ways, there might not be a more consequential word for that era," Chollet said. "Winston Churchill put it best when he said that if there had not been the virtue and the courage of the Greeks, we do not know what the outcome of World War II would have been," he added. "The Greeks showed resilience and courage, and ultimately were the first to defeat the Axis powers in World War II," Chollet said. The world continues to look to Greece as an example of strength and strong partnership, the assistant defense secretary said. The United States and Greece have a robust and enduring relationship, Chollet said, noting that the military to military engagement is particularly strong. "We continue to work together in joint training and multilateral exercises," he said. "Greece has acquired a significant amount of United States' technology for its military. And we work together in coalition operations around the world." Greece also hosts forces at Souda Bay, which was essential to NATO's successful 2011 air campaign over Libya, Chollet said.

As recently as August, President Barack Obama hosted Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras at the White House and praised the strong bilateral military and intelligence cooperation between our two countries, the assistant defense secretary said. "The United States' relationship with our European partners, especially Greece, is crucial, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation and to working together to achieve our common security interests," Chollet said. "The three heroes honored here today are a testament to our many decades of work and sacrifice together, and members of my generation draw inspiration from this greatest generation." [AFPS | Claudette Roulo | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

Vet Job Resume Writing Update 03 ► Five Signs it is Passé

The workplace is not what it was five years ago. Neither is the job hunt. The most successful candidates are those who are ready and willing to adapt to a changing landscape. But it doesn't matter how ready you are for the modern workplace if your resume's straight out of 1994. And sometimes, it's the most minute details that make all the difference. Does your resume speak to the modern hiring manager? Or does it need a serious makeover? Your resume might be passé if:

- 1. You've forced it to fit onto one page.** You've reduced your font size to eight, eliminated margins altogether and left out key information about yourself -- all to conform to that age-old one-page resume rule. Big mistake. After all, would a recent college grad really need the same amount of resume real estate as someone who's been in the workforce for 20 years? Of course not. Your resume should be concise. Recruiters are busy people -- they don't have time or the patience for long-winded career chronologies. But if your experience warrants two pages, by all means, don't limit yourself to one.
- 2. You list an objective.** Of course you're looking to gain more experience in the field/sector/type of company to which you're applying. Your interest in the job implies that. Do you really need to say it at the very top of your resume? At this point in the selection process, hiring managers are far more interested in what you can do for them than in what they can do for you. If you want to explain why you're applying for the job, say so in your cover letter. Resume space is far too valuable to waste on information that is both redundant and inconsequential.
- 3. You don't brand yourself.** With the rise of social networking, everyone has become their own brand and you shouldn't be afraid to show companies what you represent. Don't just promote your accomplishments, but promote who you are. Include your Twitter and blog URLs or your Google profile, so potential employers can learn more about you as a person. Twtbizcard is a great way to capture all of your 2.0 IDs. Of course, double-check to make sure there isn't anything you wouldn't want a potential employer to see on your sites.
- 4. You write "References available upon request" at the bottom.** Once again, a waste of valuable space. Do you really need to say so? The hiring manager can only assume that if they ask you for references, you'll provide them. What, are you going to say, no? Instead, prepare a list of references with contact details and your relationship to each. Hold onto it until you're further along in the selection process -- you don't want to annoy your references with repeated contact by employers who are less than serious about you. Most respectable employers wouldn't bother to contact a reference until they are fully ready to make you an offer.
- 5. You list every job you've ever had in chronological order.** In the olden days, the person with the most experience got the job. Nowadays, the person who's most talented, has the most relevant skill set and has proved to be most valuable to her former employers gets the job. If you want to be that person, make sure your resume says so. Don't list jobs that are irrelevant to the one you're applying for just to fill up space. Instead, expand on the jobs that are relevant. Focus on measurable achievements in each role as opposed to a play-by-play of your daily responsibilities.

[Source: Mil.com | Career Advice | Sep 2013 ++]

Vet Jobs Update 128 ► BLS Vet Employment Stats as of Sep 2013

Typically the latest Bureau OF Labor Statistics (BLS) statistics are posted the first Friday of the month ... however many at VA and Department of Labor were involved in the government shutdown. As a result, BLS didn't release

the September 2013 and 3rd Quarter data until 22 OCT. Following is a summary. For a more complete breakdown refer to Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm>.

Cohort (% of total)	Rate	Change
National >27 Weeks	7.3%	-0.1%
All Veterans (100%)	6.2%	-0.2%
Male	6.0%	-0.4%
Female	7.7%	1.1%
Post-9/11 Veterans (34%)	10.0%	2.3%
Male	9.9%	2.2%
Female	10.3%	2.6%
18-24 Veterans* (4%)	18.4%	1.0%
Male	22.4%	2.0%
Female**	9.8%	1.5%
25-34 Veterans (22%)	10.7%	3.9%
Male	10.2%	3.6%
Female	12.4%	4.6%
35-44 Veterans (18%)	6.1%	-0.3%
Male	5.6%	-0.5%
Female	8.9%	1.1%
45-54 Veterans (20%)	4.7%	-1.0%
Male	4.3%	-1.1%
Female	7.1%	-0.4%
55+ Veterans (36%)	5.4%	-1.0%
Male	5.6%	-1.1%
Female	2.9%	-0.1%

The quarterly BLS data was also released . Because the BLS data is not seasonally adjusted, it is often best to compare data to prior years during the same time period, so below you will find a comparison of the 3rd quarter data going back each year to 2010.

Quarter	All Veterans
3Q-2010	8.4%
3Q-2011	8.1%
3Q-2012	6.7%
3Q-2013	6.4%

[Source: Cold War Veterans Blog | Sean Eagan | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

Vet Hiring Fairs ► 1 Nov thru 15 Dec 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

November 01, 2013 – **JB Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, DC**
November 05, 2013 – **Morristown, NJ**
November 05, 2013 – **Bossier City, LA**
November 07, 2013 – **Lancaster, CA**
November 07, 2013 – **New Orleans, LA**
November 07, 2013 – **Fort Bragg, NC - Military Spouse Hiring Fair**
November 07, 2013 – **Philadelphia, PA**
November 07, 2013 – **Burlington, VT**
November 08, 2013 – **Anchorage, AK**
November 11, 2013 – **Des Moines, IA**
November 12, 2013 – **Augusta, GA**
November 14, 2013 – **Portland, OR**
November 14, 2013 – **Seattle, WA**
November 14, 2013 – **Portland, ME**
November 14, 2013 – **Career Expo with Suntrust - Atlanta, GA**
November 15, 2013 – **Warwick, RI**
November 19, 2013 – **Kansas City, MO**
November 20, 2013 – **Melbourne, FL**
December 02, 2013 – **Norfolk, VA Military Spouse Networking Reception**
December 03, 2013 – **Fort Indiantown Gap, PA**
December 03, 2013 – **Norfolk, VA Military Spouse Hiring Fair and Career Forum**
December 04, 2013 – **Parkersburg, WV**
December 05, 2013 – **Las Vegas, NV**
December 05, 2013 – **Holmdel, NJ**
December 11, 2013 – **Charleston, SC**
December 12, 2013 – **Bakersfield, CA**

Note: A key tactic that most job-seekers overlook when attending a job or career fair is to 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 28 Oct 2013 ++]

Retiree Appreciation Days Update 11 ► Oct 27 thru 16 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 28 OCT. 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
Moody AFB, GA (Retiree App Week)	27 Oct-2 Nov	229-257-3209 (Note 1)
Fort Benning, GA	1 November	706-545-1805
Fort Knox, KY	1-2 November	502-624-1765
Luke AFB, AZ	1-2 November	623-856-3923 (Note 2)
Buckley AFB, CO	2 November	720-847-9213/6693 (Note 3)
Daegu, KOR	2 November	+82-2-7913-3735
JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK	2 November	907-384-3500
JEB Little Creek, VA	2 November	757-462-7563/8863
Navy Region Southwest-San Diego, CA	2 November	619-556-8987 (Note 4)
Tyndall AFB, FL	2 November	850 283 2737 (Note 5)
Fort Huachuca, AZ	9 November	520-533-5733\1120 (Note 6)
Guam - Joint Region Marianas RAD	16 November	671-366-2574 (Note 7)
Indianapolis, IN	16 November	317-891-7717 (Note 8)
Yongsan, KOR	16 November	02-7913-3735

NOTES

1. Moody Air Force Base is scheduled to host Retiree Appreciation Week from 27 October to 02 November to honor retired service members. The week will consist of base tours, demonstration from military working dogs, health and information fair, free flu shots, bingo, and a golf tournament. There will also be specials and discounts here on base. This year's theme is "Remember, Honor and Serve." For more information on Retiree Appreciation Week, please contact the Retiree Activities Office at 229-257-3209.

2 Luke AFB, 56th Fighter Wing Retiree Appreciation Day, Saturday, Nov 2, 2013, Club Five Six 0800-1200. Scheduled events: *Prize Drawings/Grab Bags, Flu Shots, Health Education Booths, VA - Federal & State Information and Refreshments (NOTE: Only enrolled beneficiaries to Luke AFB are eligible for prize drawing giveaways). For more information, visit <http://fightercountry.org/56mdghealthfair> or contact RAO at 623-856-3923 or rao@luke.af.mil

3 The Northern Colorado Retiree Activities Office is having its Retiree Appreciation Day at Buckley Air Force Base in the Leadership Development Center (Bldg.1032) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Nov. 2. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. and the program begins at 9. Exhibits and organizational displays will be available 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call 720-847-9213/6693, or send email to david.colella.2@us.af.mil.

4 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 eMail: rao@navylifesw.com and CNRSWRAO@navy.mil or Phone: (619)556 8987 for additional information.

5 RAD will begin at 0900 until 1300, Tyndall AFB Exchange/Commissary Mall complex.

6. The Fort Huachuca RAD is scheduled for November 9, 2013. Registration and social hour will begin at 8:30 a.m. The event will run from 9:00-3:00 p.m. A lunch buffet will be served from 12:00 - 1:00 at a cost of \$14.00 per person. Seating is limited for this event so please RSVP as soon as possible. As always, the RAD is open to retirees from all branches of the Armed Forces, so feel free to spread the word! For RSVP information, please call 533-5733 or 533-1120 or by email at: usarmy.huachuca.imcom-central.mbx.retirement-services-officer@mail.mil

7 Joint Region Marianas RAD will be held at Andersen Air Force Base, GU, Coral Reef Fitness Center Gym. Registration via email at retireeappreciation@outlook.com. For more info and current updates, keep in touch with Guam RAO on Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GuamRAO or call 671-366-2574.

8. The 2013 Indiana Military Appreciation Day and Information Fair will be held at the US Dept of Defense Finance Center on old Fort Ben Harrison. For more information, call 317-891-7717 or 317-709-2567. NOTE: Registration for scheduled luncheon must be received by 12 November. (SOURCE: Fort Knox Retiree Bulletin at http://www.knox.army.mil/Garrison/dhr/ag/mpd/rsb/docs/rso_bulletin.pdf)

NOTICE: The MacDill AFB FL RAD, previously scheduled for 02 November 2013, has been cancelled. However, the 6th Medical Group will be available to assist and provide medical service and information to Retirees and their family members. More information, i.e., times and services, etc., about this event will be posted in the MacDill Exchange Food Court at the Information Kiosk. Point of contact, Retiree Activities Office 813-828-4555.

[Source: www.hostmtb.org | Milton Bell | 28 Oct 2013 ++]

Homeless Vets Update 46 ► Hampton VA Transitional Housing Program

Virginia's largest veterans transitional housing program is without a home, and it doesn't appear the service will find shelter any time soon. Earlier this year, the program was cast from its home of more than a dozen years at the VA Medical Center, after the 100-year-old building that housed it was found to need \$3.5 million in repairs and renovation. The Salvation Army had operated the transitional program for 14 years on the Hampton VA property until an inspection found its Civil War-era barracks in need of \$3.5 million in repairs. The VA chose to demolish the building, although it extended the Salvation Army's lease when the search for a new location proved difficult. The program finally had to vacate on 31 JAN, said Maj. Kim Feinauer of the Salvation Army. Without a home, the program is "in suspension," he said. "If the Salvation Army can't become operational in the very near future, the program will cease to exist," said David Wall, who oversees the program for the Veterans Medical Center. The federally funded program serves veterans who cannot find housing elsewhere. Administrators monitor participants' progress finding a job and saving money so they can find permanent housing.

The Hampton City Council voted on 9 OCT to deny a permit needed by the Salvation Army Transitional Housing Program to move into an existing extended-stay hotel on Commander Shepard Boulevard. City Council members said the Salvation Army Virginia Peninsula's proposal directly butts against an ordinance passed in August that

limits the length of stay at hotels to 30 days, with some exceptions for extended stay hotel as well as business and military contracts. Extended-stay hotels, though, are often the last choice for people with meager incomes and no other place to stay. The council passed the ordinance as a part of a larger push to reduce crime related to unsavory living conditions. Councilman Chris Stuart said the Salvation Army proposal was in the wrong location and comes at a time when the city is cracking down on extended-stay hotels. The council's decision was unanimous; council members Linda Curtis and Chris Snead were not present.

The Salvation Army has searched for a facility with more than 60 beds and that meets both municipal and Veterans Affairs standards. "It was not an easy process," Feinauer said. "(The hotel) really is the best thing we found." Salvation Army officials considered a 15-bed facility on Kecoughtan Road once used as a juvenile detention facility, although it was not as big as administrators would have liked, said Paul Greggs, a Salvation Army program manager. Feinauer said the city is working with the Salvation Army in hopes to find a new place. They've identified one facility that may work for the short term, but Feinauer can't find the owner to discuss a sale or lease. City officials are also looking into longer-term arrangements. "The city of Hampton hasn't written us off," he said. But considering he can't yet find the owner of the new property, the program's future "is pretty uncertain," he said.

The program serves a significant number of single women with children. Many of them are now staying in hotels, a situation that is not ideal, Feinauer said. But he's also concerned for homeless veterans who need help now, saying the program "has a steady turnover." "We have greater control when we can combine them into one place," he said. Hampton City Manager Mary Bunting confirmed that the city is working with the Salvation Army to find an appropriate location. "The ordinance really just applies to hotels," she said. "The issue is that hotels are not intended to be converted to apartment complexes – it's one of the reasons the council adopted the hotel-stay ordinance." In the past 12 years, the shelter program has helped more than 2,000 veterans, and boasts a 70 percent success rate finding them permanent housing and a job, Feinauer said. Close to 40 percent of the veterans using the program are considered disabled. "It's one of the best-kept secrets on the Peninsula," he said. "Because we were on the hospital grounds, no one knew we existed." Feinauer said being located on the Hampton VA campus allowed the program to remain close to the hospital while being largely invisible to the surrounding community. "Success is depending on them achieving their goals, to live independently," Greggs said. "Their growth is dependent on their own initiative, their motivation, their use of the opportunities made available to them."

Wall, who works for the Veterans Medical Center, monitors the progress of veterans and compares their performance against similar programs throughout the country. "The Salvation Army has consistently out-performed other programs in the country," he said. The program provides both shelter and guidance. "It's not like a hotel situation," Feinauer said. "The people there are under constant supervision." Drugs and alcohol are not permitted and the property is monitored by video surveillance. Before being accepted, applicants must pass drug and alcohol tests. They must not have been convicted of a sex offense, arson or any other violent crime, and must not have an active warrant, Greggs said. While veterans can come and go as they please during the day, they live by a nightly curfew. The average participant remains in the program for four to seven months. Participants generally pay only for food while in the program. "It's comfortable living, but nothing is going to encourage them to stay in their rooms," Greggs said. A program can be suspended for "usually a year, maybe a year and a half," Feinauer said, but probably not beyond that. The program is not accepting new applicants. "That makes it harder for us," he said. "If we did lose it, we won't get it back again." [Source: Hampton Daily Press | Robert Brauchle | 22 Oct 2013 +]

Homeless Vets Update 47 ► Financial Literacy Impact

Veterans are more likely to end up homeless not just because of military stressors but also because of poor financial skills, according to new research. A new report in the American Journal of Public Health found that military

members in general are less familiar with household budgets, more likely to be targets for predatory lenders and “may not have the opportunity to learn the skills necessary for being financially independent and managing money.” The study — part of a host of new research released by the journal 22 OCT on veterans housing and health issues — might help explain why veterans are overrepresented in the homeless population. Past studies have found that veterans make up about 20 percent of Americans without stable housing, even though veterans are less than 8 percent of the population.

A Department of Veterans Affairs study published in the journal found that about 2 percent of all veterans who sought health care last year were at risk of losing their home or had spent time on the streets. While post-traumatic stress, brain injuries and drug abuse have been established as contributing factors to the homelessness problem, the financial literacy study lists money mismanagement as another dangerous pitfall, and one that’s potentially easier to address. Researchers from the University of North Carolina and Duke University said the study of 1,000-plus veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan era found nearly one-third had gone over their credit limit, written a bad check or been contacted by a collection agency. About 5 percent of those surveyed spent some time homeless. The median income for the group was \$50,000, and researchers said the financial problems weren’t confined to low-income veterans. “Money mismanagement was reported by a substantial number of veterans and urgently needs to be addressed,” the report said. “Financial education even on simple issues, such as how to create a budget, avoid financial scams, balance a checkbook … could readily and inexpensively be added into pre- and post-separation work with veterans.”

VA leaders have set a goal of ending veterans homelessness over the next two years and have expanded housing assistance and job training programs. Researchers said the department and military do offer some financial literacy programs, but their effectiveness needs to be re-examined. A VA study out of New York, also published 22 OCT in the journal, found that homeless veterans are six times more likely to consider suicide than those with stable finances. A VA study by Colorado researchers noted that half of all homeless veterans could be suffering from traumatic brain injury. The special issue of the journal was developed with help from VA and its National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans. In an editorial published with the research findings, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan said their hope is that the work will increase public focus on the problem. “Homeless veterans — all homeless Americans — must not remain our invisible citizens,” they wrote. “What they need are permanent places to live, jobs, education and quality healthcare.” [Source: Stars & stripes | Leo Shane | 23 Oct 2013 ++]

Nebraska Vet Home ► Central Nebraska Veterans Home

When it comes to the best interest of central Nebraska veterans, the Grand Island Veterans Home administrator says only a new home will do. Kearney was chosen in July as the site of the Central Nebraska Veterans Home, which will replace the Grand Island home following approval of federal funding. GIVH Administrator Alex Willford said last week during a tour of the 126-year-old campus that members of the home would be best served with new facilities. “It’s going to allow us to be able to care for vets better and provide a quality of life and dignity that an old building doesn’t do,” Willford said. Citing fire exits, hallways and doorways too narrow for wheelchairs, walkers or stretchers to safely pass through; outdated heating systems that take days to warm up or cool down, making seasonal changes uncomfortable for members and employees alike; a lack of room to expand any of the major services the home offers its members; and an institutional environment with as many as 18 members sharing one bathroom, Willford said the home cannot and should not be renovated.

Willford was responding to a proposal sent to U.S. Secretary of Veteran Affairs Eric Shinseki 26 SEP suggesting portions of the G.I. home be renovated instead of building the Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney. The proposal was written by two Wood River veterans and endorsed by members of G.I.'s Home for our Heroes Committee. It suggests renovating the Anderson and Pershing buildings on the Grand Island campus and demolishing the remaining buildings to erect new ones to the west. Willford said suggested renovations to the Pershing Building are impossible. Narrow stairways don't comply with safety standards. Wheelchair ramps that would be considered fire exits are not ADA-compliant because of steep grades and little or no landings to open doors or turn safely. These fire-safety issues could not be fixed without moving load-bearing walls on three stories, a structural impossibility, Willford said. The proposal suggests the bottom floor of Pershing be used for member bedrooms in order to fit 39 rooms in the building as required in state criteria, but much of the bottom floor is underground and not approved for member rooms, Willford said.

Even if the Pershing Building cannot be saved, the proposal suggests that keeping the home's dementia unit, the Anderson Building, would save the state 21 percent of the projected \$121 million cost of a new facility. Willford said Anderson meets a number of criteria and is the one building on the property that could be saved, but doing so would mean the loss of extra funds for amenities that cities dedicated as part of their proposals. Also, the federal grant program would not have funded the craft room, wood shop, chapel or Foxhole shopping area. Taking competitive bids from interested cities ensured these costs would be covered by whichever city was chosen. One of the highlights of Kearney's proposal was more than \$2.5 million in funds for these amenities and others that members request. "The bidding process led to funding for these extra projects," Willford said. "One of the issues then, if we redo it, is this would go away." A new home will provide much-needed space to expand almost every service available to members at the current home. A larger clinic will bring in more doctors, specialized nurses, labs and equipment to reduce trips to various hospitals and VA clinics, and an expanded pharmacy will become the central hub for all VA pharmacies throughout the state.



Grand Island Bathroom Facilities

At a press conference 17 OCT Gov. Dave Heineman agreed with Willford that renovation is not in the best interest of the veteran members who call the building home. "We ask veterans, 17 or 18 of them, to share one bathroom. That's not fair, and that's not appropriate," Heineman said. "The current facility is 126 years old. It's outdated, outmoded. It ought to be torn down."

Buildings planned for the Central Nebraska Veterans' Home use what Willford called a Green House concept. The campus would be set up with several connected buildings. A central administration building will house the chapel, a 4,800-square-foot clinic, a 3,000-square-foot pharmacy, the library, a 4,000-square-foot wood shop and crafts area, the Foxhole, private dining rooms for members and their families, and a recreation room with pool tables and other games. Member units, with neighborhoods of four or five households, would branch off the administration buildings. Each household is made up of 10-12 members, grouped by illness, disability and peer

group. Each member would have his or her own bathroom and shower, which Willford said will enhance the members' dignity and freedom. Each member building will have a central dining room area in which the households can come together, a kitchen area served by activity staff, a common den area, and an outside porch and gazebo. Willford said these buildings will be more like home than an institution. [Source: Kearney Hub | Adam Konruff | 21 Oct 2013 ++]

California Veterans Home Update 16 ► Yountville Wastes 652,919

Hundreds of thousands of tax-payers' dollars have been squandered on a plan to build an adventure park on the grounds of a historic state-run veterans home in Northern California. California State Auditor Elaine Howle said in a report released 17 OCT that the administrator of the Veterans Home of California in Yountville wasted more than \$650,000 working to build a nearly 200-acre park and for a contract to operate a cafe and a tavern on the site. "The administrator's actions in executing two specific contracts demonstrated her disregard for state contracting rules and the importance of using funds reserved specifically for veterans in a prudent manner," Howle wrote. Veterans Affairs Secretary Peter Gravett acknowledged the problems cited in the audit and said the department would now be reviewing all expenditures for veterans homes. "It is clear that poor decisions were made," Gravett said Thursday in a statement. "The individuals who are the subjects of the BSA report are no longer employed by CalVet."

The administrator, who was not named in the audit, is no longer employed by the Veterans' Affairs Department. The adventure park's primary attraction was to have been a sprawling zip-line tour snaking across the scenic property, situated in the heart of the state's Napa Valley wine-growing region. The park would have featured seven zip lines linked together by a series of platforms and footpaths. It would also have included an observation deck, trails for mountain biking and hiking and a lake path. Staff and residents first became aware of the project in July 2010, the audit said, when they were startled to see a helicopter hovering over the property, ready to deliver several large wooden beams to support the planned zip lines. Soon after, crews arrived with bulldozers and other heavy machinery to uproot trees from a thickly forested section of the grounds. Construction was stopped a month later after residents and staff began to complain to state officials.

Though the administrator admitted that "she really did not understand what a zip line was," the audit said, she was excited about the project's potential to raise income for the home from visitors willing to pay to use the park. She also said she thought the residents would be excited about using the park, which another home employee had promised her would accommodate disabled veterans and be available to them for free. The average age of the home's 1,100 veterans is 79, according to the audit. Termination of the park project cost the state \$228,612, the audit said. The administrator also contracted out the operation of a cafe and a tavern at a cost of \$424,307 over a two-year period, the audit said, even though both could have been operated by another entity at little to no cost. That operator is no longer under contract, and there is now a new operator. California runs six state homes for veterans, providing them with housing, medical care and three meals a day. The Yountville home, built in 1884 by veterans of the Mexican War and the Civil War, is the largest such facility in the nation, according to the state Veterans Affairs Web site. [Source: Associated Press | Channing Joseph | 1 Oct 2013 ++]

Vet End of Life Care ► 25% of U.S. Deaths are Vets

End-of-life care is not a comfortable topic of conversation for most families, but it should be spoken about more often, especially within the veteran community. According to the National Hospice and Palliative Care

Organization, 26 million veterans are living in the United States today. Twenty-five percent of all deaths in the U.S. are veterans and more than 1,800 veterans die each day. Although these statistics may be surprising, what is even more staggering is the fact that only 33 percent of veterans receive benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ; only four percent of veterans die in a VA facility, leaving 96 percent to pass away in a community-based service. The U.S. is seeing many of the veterans who served in World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and those who served during peacetime pass away. Finding a community hospice that is trained in veteran services can make a major difference in both the patient and their family's experience during one's end-of-life. Hospice providers that are trained in the We Honor Veterans program are equipped to recognize the unique needs of veterans who are facing a life-limiting illness. The program trains caretakers to be sensitive to the notion that lifelong scars left behind from war can come to the surface when a veteran faces a terminal illness.



When you are looking for care for your grandparent, husband or wife who has served, look for caretakers who are trained in veteran issues so they can help you and your loved one achieve a more peaceful ending. In certain cases where there might be some specific needs related to the veteran's military service, combat experience or other traumatic events, these hospices are able to provide the tools that will support those they are caring for. Not every veteran has unique needs, but there are many aspects that influence a veteran's ideals and values, which is important for palliative care professionals to be aware of. One should not assume that a non-combat veteran did not experience extreme stress, as this is not always the case. Individuals who were prisoners of war, those who have experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the amount of time they spent in a war, the branch of service in which they served, their rank and whether they enlisted or were drafted are all factors that caretakers need to consider.

Veterans were trained to believe that expressing emotions exudes weakness and it may compromise missions. These same emotion-suppression techniques that were taught during their military training can also be what they employ to handle their own end-of-life circumstances. Although not everyone is the same, many veterans may be happy to celebrate their service. One way you or your hospice caretaker can help do this is by asking the patient if they would like to be issued new medals and awards if they were lost or stolen. The process of replacing the medals will allow for you to gain new knowledge of the veteran's service, while also allowing you to show your gratitude for their sacrifice. Each veteran's war experience is different and should be treated delicately, without prior assumptions. It is very important for the community, families and caretakers to be aware of the differences and sensitivities that veterans experience at the end of life. For more information visit www.WeHonorVeterans.org.

[Source: Mission Home Health | Laura Semmler | 29 Oct 2013 ++]

State Veteran's Benefits & Discounts ► Ohio 2013

The state of Ohio provides several benefits to veterans as indicated below. To obtain information on these plus discounts listed on the Military and Veterans Discount Center (MCVDC) website, refer to the attachment to this

Bulletin titled, “**Vet State Benefits & Discounts – OH**” for an overview of the below benefits. Benefits are available to veterans who are residents of the state. For a more detailed explanation of each of the following refer to <http://dvs.ohio.gov> & <http://militaryandveteransdiscounts.com/location/ohio.html>.

- Housing Benefits
 - Financial Assistance Benefits
 - Education Benefits
 - Other State Veteran Benefits
 - Discounts
- [Source:<http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/ohio-state-veterans-benefits.html> Oct 2013 ++]
- *****

Knott's Berry Farms ► Annual Tribute to Our Military

Knott's Berry Farm's annual tribute to our Military, past and present, starts November 4th. Complimentary admission for Veterans and current serving military personnel, and one guest, with proper I.D. presented at turnstile. Additionally, you can purchase up to six additional tickets for just \$22 each, until November 27. November 28 - January 5, 2014, purchase up to six additional tickets can be purchased for \$27 each. The eligible servicemember/Veteran must be present with valid proof of military service and photo I.D. required. (Dependent I.D.s not accepted.). Other offers for select categories include:

- At times other than noted above, Knott's offers a military discount on their regular admission \$62 tickets for \$37.44. Offer does not apply to Special Ticketed Events, i.e. Halloween Haunt.
- Senior and junior regular admission tickets until 31 DEC 2013 for \$33 each. Offer does not apply to Special Ticketed Events, i.e. Halloween Haunt.
- Show your USA AAA membership card and save 30% on Knott's Berry Farm Regular admission tickets & save 20% on Regular admission tickets at Knott's Soak City water parks! (offer does not apply to Junior or Senior tickets or to Special Ticketed Events, i.e., Halloween Haunt or New Year's Eve)

[Source: <https://www.knotts.com/what-s-new/promotions> Oct 2013.



iHistory WWII ► National Video Contest

Do you know someone who served in World War II? There are 1.2 million WWII Veterans still living? However, time is running out to hear their stories of bravery and sacrifice that help define our country. The iHistory WW2 video contest is a national competition to inspire teen filmmakers to capture these stories on film. Aspiring young American filmmakers (ages 13-18) have the opportunity to hear and record these stories firsthand, make a mini-documentary, and win coveted prizes for themselves and their school. The total value of combined prizes is over

\$11,000. iHistory WW2 is working with the Library of Congress to preserve the interviews in their archives. For details about the contest, the Official Rules, and registration go to <http://www.ihistoryprojectww2.org>.



[Source: <http://www.ihistoryprojectww2.org> Oct 2013 ++]

Vet Legislation



Veteran Legislation 113th Congress ► As of 27 Oct 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.3330 : **Veterans' Independent Living Enhancement Act.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal the limitation on the number of veterans authorized to be enrolled in programs of independent living services and assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- S.1573 : **Military Family Relief Act.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the payment of temporary compensation to a surviving spouse of a veteran upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes.

[Source: <http://www.loc.gov> & <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills> 12 Oct 2013 ++]

Veteran Hearing/Mark-up Schedule ► As of 30 Oct 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=sverte>.

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>:

- **October 30, 2013.** HVAC Chairman Jeff Miller, SVAC Chairman Bernie Sanders, HVAC Ranking Member Mike Michaud, SVAC Member Sen. John Boozman, SVAC Member Sen. Mark Begich, representatives from Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and Military Officers Association of America will hold a press conference Wednesday morning to announce their support for advance appropriations throughout VA
- **October 30, 2013.** HVAC-DAMA will conduct a hearing entitled, "Focused issues on Dignified Burials: A National Cemetery Update."
- **October 30, 2013.** The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will be holding a hearing that examines Department of Veterans Affairs conferences in July and August of 2011 in Orlando, Florida.
- **October 30, 2013.** SVAC intends to hold a legislative hearing on issues related to VHA, VBA, NCA, Outreach, and IT.

Tentative schedule of bills:

- S. 1148 (Heinrich) Veterans Benefits Claims Faster Filing Act
- S. 1155 (Tester) Rural Veterans Mental Health Care improvement Act
- S. 1165 (Tester) Access to Appropriate Immunizations for Veterans Act of 2013
- S. 1211 (Boxer) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of the phrases GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill to give a false impression of approval or endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- S.1216 (Bennet) Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013
- S.1262 (Nelson) Veterans Conservation Corps Act of 2013

- S. 1281(Blumenthal) Veterans and Servicemembers Employment Rights and Housing Act of 2013
- S. 1295 (Brown) 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 organization, and for other purposes.
- S. 1296 (Nelson) Servicemember's Electronic Health Records Act of 2113
- S. 1361 (Murphy) World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act
- S. 1399 (Durbin) A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend the interest rate limitation on debt entered into during military service to debt incurred during military service to consolidate or refinance students loans incurred before military service.
- S. 1411 (Franken) Rural Veterans Health Care Improvement Act of 2013
- S. 1434 (Moran) A bill to designate the Junction City Community-Based Outpatient Clinic located at 715 Southwind Drive, Junction City, Kansas, as the Lieutenant General Richard J. Seitz Community-Based Outpatient Clinic.
- S. 1471 (Coats) Alicia Dawn Koehl Respect for National Cemeteries Act
- S. 1540 (Brown) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to include contracts and grants for residential care for Veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects
- S. 1547 (Burr) A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to review the dialysis pilot program implemented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and submit a report to Congress before expanding that program, and for other purposes
- S. 1556 (Brown) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargain of employees in the Veterans Health Administration
- S. 1558 (Begich) A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program of outreach for Veterans, and for other purposes
- S. 1559 (Durbin) Benefits Fairness for Filipino Veterans Act of 2013
- S. XXXX (Sanders) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to update the Service-Disabled Insurance program to base premiums rates on the Commissioners 2001 Standard Ordinary Mortality able instead of the Commissioners 1941 Standard Ordinary Table of Mortality.
- S. XXXX (Sanders) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide replacement automobiles for certain disabled Veterans and members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.
- S. XXXX (Sanders) Military Sexual Trauma
- S. XXXX (Sanders) Medical Foster Home Act of 2013
- S. XXXX (Sanders) Veterans Health Care Eligibility Expansion Enhancement Act of 2013
- S. XXXX (Hirono) To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for reimbursement for emergency medical treatment to certain Veterans that were unable to receive care from the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 24-month period preceding the furnishing of such emergency treatment.
- S. XXXX (Tester) A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the payment of temporary compensation to a surviving spouse of a Veteran upon the death of the Veteran, and for other purposes. (DIC)
- S. XXXX (Sanders) Mental Health Support for Veteran Families and Caregivers Act of 2013
- S. XXXX (Sanders) Enhanced Dental Care for Veterans Act of 2013

- S. XXXX (Sanders) Survivors of Military Sexual Assault and Domestic Abuse Act of 2013
 - S. XXXX (Sanders) SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act of 2013
 - S. XXXX (Sanders) A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit reports on the provision of services by the Department of Veterans Affairs to Veterans with hearing loss and the measures that can be taken jointly by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense with respect to hearing loss, and for other purposes.
 - S. XXXX (Blumenthal) To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand and facilitate compensation of Veterans for illnesses associated with exposure to toxic substance during service on active duty in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.
 - S. XXXX (Blumenthal) To establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for the diagnosis, treatment, and research of health conditions of the descendants of Veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces, to provide certain services to those descendants, and for other purposes.S. XXXX (Burr) To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs has an up-to date policy on reporting of cases of infectious diseases, to require an independent assessment of the organizational structure of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks and Department medical centers, and for other purposes.
- **November 4, 2013.** Rep Takano, Ranking Member on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, is holding a field hearing entitled, “Examining Higher Education Institutions’ Services to Veterans.” The Field Hearing will be held at the Riverside Community College in Riverside, California. VFW and the American Legion were invited to participate.
- **November 6, 2013.** The Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs has tentatively scheduled a confirmation hearing for Mr. Sloan D. Gibson for the position of Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Ms. Constance Tobias for the position of Chair, Board of Veterans’ Appeals.
- **November 6, 2013.** The Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, House Committee on Veterans Affairs, will conduct a field hearing entitled, “Texas’ Innovative Approaches to Jobs and Employment for Veterans.”
- **November 7, 2013.** Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, House Committee on Veterans Affairs, will hold a field hearing entitled, “Complications of Geography: Focusing on VBA Outreach, Accessibility, Leadership and Staffing Efforts to Meet the Needs of Veterans Living in Areas Remote from a Regional Office.” The hearing will take place at 2:00 PM (PST) at the Las Vegas City Hall in Nevada.
- **November 13, 2013.** The Economic Opportunity Subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs will conduct a hearing on November 13, 2013 (originally scheduled for October 23, 203) entitled, “VA’s Independent Living Program – A Program Review
- **(Hearing has been postponed)** SVAC will hold a hearing on claims transformation and efforts at reducing the backlog.
- **(Hearing has been postponed)** HVAC will conduct an oversight hearing entitled “Building VA’s Future – Confronting Persistent

[Source: Veterans Corner w/Michael Isam 29 Nov 2013 ++]

House Vet Bill Progress ► 28 OCT 2013

Over Veterans Affairs Department objections, the House passed a bill 28 OCT creating a commission to evaluate new ways of reducing the backlog of veterans benefits claims, including new claims awaiting an initial decision and

those where a veteran has appealed the decision. VA officials argued, unsuccessfully, that a new commission or task force created by H.R.2189 would slow down progress already being made. Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), the House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman, said the bill that passed by a 404-1 vote is a shining example of how our legislative process is supposed to work. “Republicans and Democrats came together to support a range of legislation with two overarching goals: helping veterans, while improving accountability and efficiency at the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

Rep. Mike Michaud of Maine, ranking Democrat on the veterans’ committee, had similar praise for the House vote. While warning there is “no easy quick fix to the claims backlog,” Michaud said the bill “provides the VA with the additional tools it needs to help reach its goal of ending the backlog by 2015.” In addition to creating the task force, the bill includes a provision to speed payments to veterans with more than one disability by providing partial payments as soon as any disability issue is decided, requiring the VA to provide information to veterans about the fastest way of getting a decision and requiring publicly available information to track claims and compare the performance of VA regional offices. The fate of the bill is unclear. Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who chairs the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, remains unconvinced a new task force is needed to look at a long-studied problem with slow claims processing, but he might support some of the provisions of the bill. The House also passed several veterans bills by voice vote. These include:

- **H.R.1742 The Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013**, sponsored by Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV), prevents Veterans Affairs Department aid and attendance payments from being counted as income when considering eligibility for housing grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. “The men and women who have worn the uniform should not be sleeping on the streets,” said Heck .
- **H.R.2481 The Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013**, sponsored by Rep. Bill Flores (R-TX), expands mortgage and foreclosure protections for service members and survivors. About 175,000 would receive extra protection under the bill, according to estimates prepared by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. Among those helped would be service members who are convalescing, those who are medically retired or transferred to the temporary disability retired list and surviving spouses who jointly owned property with a service members who die of a service-connected cause.
- **H.R.1405**, sponsored by Rep Dina Titus (D-NV). There are three key provisions to this bill. Her core bill required the VA to provide an appeals form along with any notice to a veteran that their benefit claims has been denied, a most that she says would be a “simply courtesy” to veterans. Additionally, the bill expands the legal definition of “veteran” to include National Guard and reserve members eligible for retired pay, without providing them any new benefits to go with the title, and overhauls rules for fiduciaries appointed to handle financial matters for veterans.

[Source: HVAC Press Release 18 Oct 2013 ++]

Military

USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000) ► Largest USN Destroyer Ever Built

After embarrassing troubles with its latest class of surface warships, the Navy is hoping for a winner from a new destroyer that's ready to go into the water. So far, construction of the first-in-class Zumwalt, the largest U.S. Navy destroyer ever built, is on time and on budget, something that's a rarity in new defense programs, officials said. And the Navy believes the ship's big gun, stealthy silhouette and advance features will make it a formidable package. The

christening of the ship bearing the name of the late Adm. Elmo "Bud" Zumwalt was canceled in mid-OCT because of the federal government shutdown. Without fanfare, the big ship will be moved to dry dock and floated in the coming days. Meanwhile, the public christening ceremony featuring Zumwalt's two daughters will be rescheduled for the spring.

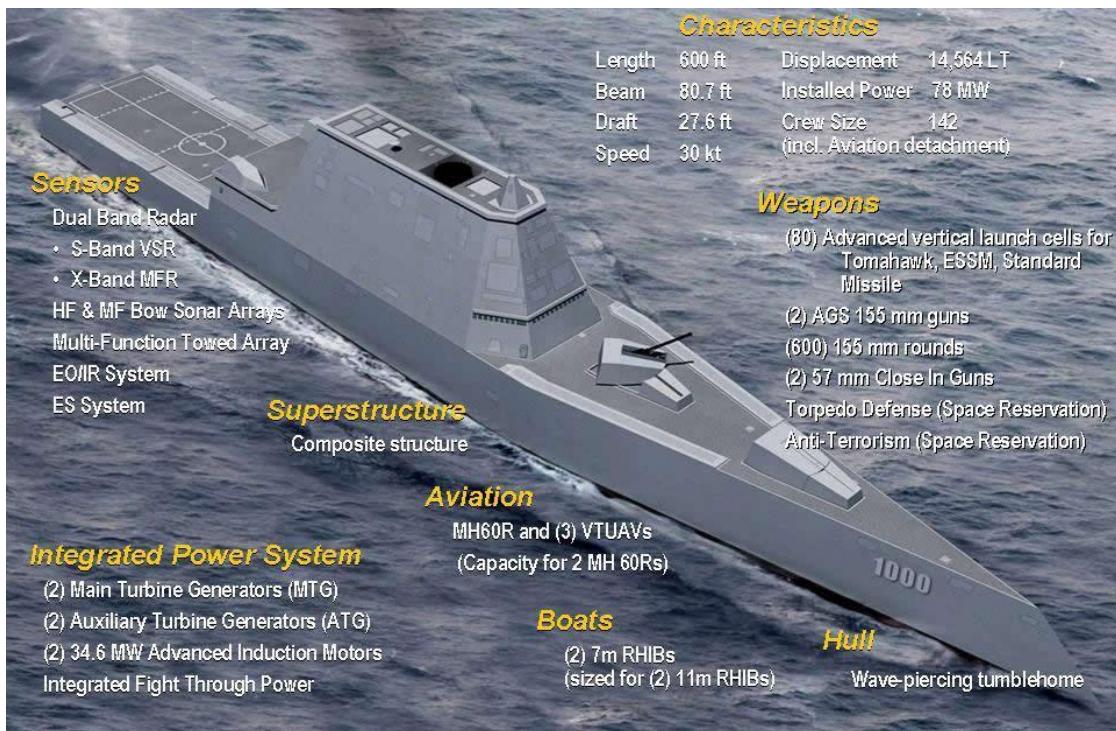


(1) The first-in-class Zumwalt Oct. 8, 2013

(2) The 1,000-ton deckhouse of the destroyer USS Zumwalt is craned toward the deck of the ship at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, Dec. 14, 2012

Adm. Zumwalt served in destroyers during World War II and was awarded a Bronze Star for valor at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. As the nation's youngest chief of naval operations, appointed at age 49 by President Richard Nixon, he fought to end racial discrimination and allowed women to serve on ships for the first time. Like its namesake, the ship is innovative. It is so big that Bath Iron Works, a General Dynamics subsidiary, built a 106-foot-tall, \$40 million "Ultra Hall" to accommodate its large hull segments. The ship is 100 feet longer than the existing class of destroyers. It features an unusual wave-piercing hull, electric drive propulsion, advanced sonar and guided missiles, and a new gun that fires rocket-propelled warheads as far as 100 miles. Unlike warships with towering radar- and antenna-laden superstructures, the Zumwalt will ride low to the water to minimize its radar signature, making it stealthier than others. Originally envisioned for shore bombardment, the ship's size and power plant that can produce 78 megawatts of electricity — enough to power 78,000 homes — make it a potential platform for futuristic weapons like the electromagnetic rail gun, which uses a magnetic field and electric current to fire a projectile at seven times the speed of sound.

There are so many computers and so much automation that it'll need fewer sailors, operating with a crew of 158, nearly half the complement aboard the current generation of destroyers. "The concept of the Zumwalt is sort of a bridge between the traditions of the past and the new world of networked warfare and precision guided munitions," said Loren Thompson, defense analyst at the Lexington Institute. "It's not so much a radical concept as it is an attempt to pull off a full range of missions with a ship that has one foot in the present and one foot in the future." The Navy once envisioned building more than 20 of the ships. But the ship has so many sophisticated features and its cost grew so high that senior Navy officials tried to kill the program. Instead, it was truncated to just three ships, the first being Zumwalt. The Zumwalt will cost more than \$3.5 billion — about three times that of current destroyers — but the program has not been beset by big cost overruns or delays, officials said. The fact that construction has gone smoothly is a relief for the Navy, which has dealt with embarrassing troubles on its new class of speedy warship, dubbed the "littoral combat ship."



USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000) Design

Those smaller ships, designed to operate close to shore in littoral waters, have been plagued by escalating costs, production delays and mechanical problems. Mission modules that give them the flexibility to perform roles including anti-submarine warfare and minesweeping are not ready, even though the first ships have been commissioned. "That ship is a total disaster," said Norman Polmar, a naval historian, analyst and author. Against that backdrop, shipbuilders at Bath Iron Works have been toiling away on the Zumwalt, the first entirely new ship built on the banks of the Kennebec River since the original Arleigh Burke was christened more than 20 years ago. Dan Dowling, president of Local S6, which represents 3,200 shipbuilders, said it's been a challenging project with a new hull design, composite materials and new technology. "It is a radical departure from what we've known. Whether the Navy is satisfied with the design of the ship is up to them. We can only build what they asked for," he said, adding, "I hope they'll be pleased with it. We'd like to build as many of them as we can." [Source: Associated Press | David Sharp | 20 Oct 2013 ++]



USS Forrestal (AVT-59) ► 1st Navy Supercarrier, Sold for 1 Cent

The Forrestal, a decommissioned aircraft carrier aboard which more than 130 sailors died amid a series of explosions and massive fire in 1967, has been sold for a penny. The Navy awarded a \$0.01 delivery order 22 OCT for dismantling and recycling ex-USS Forrestal (AVT 59). The delivery order was made under an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract to All Star Metals for the towing, dismantling and recycling of conventionally powered aircraft carriers stricken from the Naval Vessel Register. The price of the delivery order reflects the net price proposed by All Star Metals, which considered the estimated proceeds from the sale of the scrap metal to be generated from dismantling. In May 2012, the Navy solicited proposals for the award of up to three contracts for the dismantling and recycling of inactive conventionally-powered aircraft carriers. All Star Metals is the first of three successful offerors to receive its facility security clearance, which is required prior to contract award. After the initial award of one carrier to each successful offeror, the Navy has the capability of scrapping additional conventionally-powered aircraft carriers over a five-year period under delivery orders competed between the three contractors. All Star Metals will now develop its final tow plan for the Navy's approval for the tow of ex-Forrestal from its current berth at the Navy's inactive ship facility in Philadelphia to All Star Metals' facility in Brownsville. The ship is expected to depart Philadelphia before the end of the year. Navy civilian personnel will be on site full time to monitor the contractor's performance during dismantling of the ship.



The Navy's first supercarrier was in the Gulf of Tonkin the morning of July 29, 1967, for the Vietnam War effort when stray voltage triggered a rocket to launch from an F-4 Phantom on the flight deck. The rocket struck an armed A-4 Skyhawk -- piloted by a young Lt. Cmdr. John S. McCain III -- rupturing the fuel tanks and sparking a chain reaction of fires and explosions on the deck, which was parked full of planes. The crew fought the flight deck fire for an hour, but other fires blazed into the next day. In the aftermath, 134 men were killed and more than 300 injured. The ship was heavily damaged, and more than 26 aircraft were destroyed and more than 30 damaged. More importantly, the Forrestal fire prompted changes to the way the Navy handles damage control and helped improve disaster training. The aircraft carrier spent more than seven months in a shipyard undergoing repairs after the tragedy but returned to sea for more than two decades. On Sept. 11, 1993, the Forrestal was decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register after more than 38 years of service. The Navy made Forrestal available for donation in June 1999 as a museum or memorial but received no viable applications. [Source: Stars and Stripes | Audrea Huff | 23 Oct 2013 ++]



Blue Angels Update 01 ► Angels are Back | 2014 Schedule

The United States Navy announced 24 OCT that the Blue Angels, its touring squadron of stunt pilots, will be operating along its full tour schedule this year, after missing out on the 2013 season from federal budget cuts due to sequestration. According to Rear Admiral John Kirby on the Navy's official blog, the reduction in funding in 2013 caused the Navy to cancel approximately 2,800 community outreach events. This year, he wrote, "We will be able to provide Americans around our nation with special events to explain and show what their Navy does. These events include full schedules for Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron (Blue Angels) and Parachute Teams (Leap Frogs); five Fleet Weeks; six Navy Weeks; Navy and regional band performances; and 10 port visits to U.S. cities. Regarding the news that the team would be performing a full tour schedule, Commander Thomas Frosch, the team's lead pilot, told the Pensacola News Journal that, "I think everybody was just excited to finally hear it. It's just been a long six months ... It's a great feeling, that's all I can tell you." While grounded, the group performed other community outreach. One of the most welcome stops on the tour—which runs from March 16 to November 2, 2014—is the U.S. Naval Academy's commissioning and graduation week in Annapolis, Maryland at the end of May. The Blue Angels have performed during the occasion since 1954, but their last full performance was in 2010. In 2011, the squad underwent changes after their CO was relieved of command for flying too low, and in 2012 they only performed a flyover.



The complete schedule for 2014 is available at <http://blueangels.navy.mil/show>. The site indicates all shows through 2013 as being cancelled. Recommend 2014 attendees check the website for any last minutes schedule changes prior to attending a show in your area. At present shows are scheduled for:

Date	Show Name	Location
MAR 15	NAF El Centro Air Show @ NAF El Centro, CA	
MAR 22-23	March ARB Airstfest @ March ARB, CA	
MAR 29-30	Wings Over South Texas @NAS Kingsville, TX	
APR 5-6	Sun'n Fun @ Lakeland, FL	

APR 12-13 Fort Smith Air Show 2014 @ Fort Smith, AR
 APR 26-27 Fort Worth Air Power Expo 2014 @ NAS Fort Worth JRB, TX
 MAY 3-4 Spirit of St. Louis Air Show @ St. Louis, MO
 MAY 10-11 Vero Beach Air Show @ Vero Beach, FL
 MAY 17-18 MCAS Cherry Point Air Show @ MCAS Cherry Point, NC
 MAY 21 USNA Air Show @ US Naval Academy, MD
 MAY 23 USNA Graduation Fly-Over @ US Naval Academy, MD
 MAY 24-25 Bethpage Jones Beach Air Show @ Jones Beach, NY
 MAY 31 Deke Slayton Airfest @ La Crosse, WI
 JUN 1 Deke Slayton Airfest @ La Crosse, WI
 JUN 7-8 Wings Over Pittsburgh @ Pittsburgh, PA
 JUN 14-15 The Great Tennessee Air Show @ Smyrna, TN
 JUN 21-22 Milwaukee Air & Water Show @ Milwaukee, WI
 JUN 28-29 Dayton Air Show @ Dayton, OH
 JUL 5-6 National Cherry Festival Air Show @ Traverse City, MI
 JUL 12 Pensacola Beach Air Show @ Pensacola Beach, FL
 JUL 19-20 Defenders of Freedom Air Show @ Offutt AFB, NE
 JUL 26-27 Thunder Over Utah Air Show @ St. George, UT
 AUG 2-3 Seafair 2014 Air Show @ Seattle, WA
 AUG 16-17 Chicago Air & Water Show @ Chicago, IL
 AUG 23-24 Duluth Air & Aviation Expo Duluth, MN
 AUG 30-31 Selfridge ANGB Air Show @ Selfridge ANGB, MI
 SEP 6-7 Cleveland National Air Show @ Cleveland, OH
 SEP 13-14 Star-Spangled Spectacular 2014 @ Baltimore, MD
 SEP 20-21 NAS Oceana Air Show @NAS Oceana, VA
 SEP 27-28 Kaneohe Bay Air Show @ MCB Hawaii, HI
 OCT 4-5 MCAS Miramar Air Show @ MCAS Miramar, CA
 OCT 11-12 San Francisco Fleet Week @ San Francisco, CA
 OCT 18-19 Memphis Air Show @ Millington, TN
 OCT 25-26 Jacksonville Sea & Sky Spectacular @ Jacksonville Beach, FL
 NOV 1-2 Wings Over Houston Air Show @ Houston, TX
 NOV 7-8 Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show @ NAS Pensacola, FL

[Source: Atlantic Wire | Brian Feldman | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

Medal of Honor Citations ► Mills, James H WWII



Mills, James Henry

Rank and organization: Private, U.S. Army, Company F, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division

Place and date: Near Cisterna di Littoria, Italy, May 24, 1944

Entered service at: Ft. Meade, Florida

Born: May 3, 1923, Ft. Meade, Florida

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Pvt. Mills, undergoing his baptism of fire, preceded his platoon down a draw to reach a position from which an attack could be launched against a heavily fortified strongpoint. After advancing about 300 yards, Pvt. Mills was fired on by a machinegun only 5 yards distant. He killed the gunner with 1 shot and forced the surrender of the assistant gunner. Continuing his advance, he saw a German soldier in a camouflaged position behind a large bush pulling the pin of a potato-masher grenade. Covering the German with his rifle, Pvt. Mills forced him to drop the grenade and captured him. When another enemy soldier attempted to throw a hand grenade into the draw, Pvt. Mills killed him with 1 shot. Brought under fire by a machinegun, 2 machine pistols, and 3 rifles at a range of only 50 feet, he charged headlong into the furious chain of automatic fire shooting his M 1 from the hip. The enemy was completely demoralized by Pvt. Mills' daring charge, and when he reached a point within 10 feet of their position, all 6 surrendered. As he neared the end of the draw, Pvt. Mills was brought under fire by a machinegunner 20 yards distant. Despite the fact that he had absolutely no cover, Pvt. Mills killed the gunner with 1 shot. Two enemy soldiers near the machinegunner fired wildly at Pvt. Mills and then fled. Pvt. Mills fired twice, killing 1 of the enemy. Continuing on to the position, he captured a fourth soldier. When it became apparent that an assault on the strongpoint would in all probability cause heavy casualties on the platoon, Pvt. Mills volunteered to cover the advance down a shallow ditch to a point within 50 yards of the objective. Standing on the bank in full view of the enemy less than 100 yards away, he shouted and fired his rifle directly into the position. His ruse worked exactly as planned. The enemy centered his fire on Pvt. Mills. Tracers passed within inches of his body, rifle and machine pistol bullets ricocheted off the rocks at his feet. Yet he stood there firing until his rifle was empty. Intent on covering the movement of his platoon, Pvt. Mills jumped into the draw, reloaded his weapon, climbed out again, and continued to lay down a base of fire. Repeating this action 4 times, he enabled his platoon to reach the designated spot undiscovered, from which position it assaulted and overwhelmed the enemy, capturing 22 Germans and taking the objective without casualties.



Pvt. James Henry Mills

Mills was the only Polk County, Florida native to receive the Medal of Honor in World War II. He joined the Army from his birth city in September 1943. Mills lost his life twenty-nine years later on November 11, 1973 at the hands of a thief posing as a stranded motorist, whom Mills had stopped to assist, near Gainesville, Florida. He was laid to rest at Oak Hill Burial Park Cemetery in Lakefield Florida. A section of SR 570 in Lakeland, Florida is named the James Henry Mills Medal of Honor Parkway in his honor. The Veterans Memorial Park in Lackland is also the site of the James H. Mills Memorial and burial.



Lakeland Center James Henry Mills Memorial & Oak Hill Burial Park Cemetery Grave

[Source: <http://www.history.army.mil/html/moh/wwII-m-s.html#MABRY> & <http://fl-genweb.org/decole/Polk/military/pvtJamMills.html> Oct 2013 ++]

Medal of Honor Stamps ► Available Veterans Day

The U.S. Postal Service will issue special Medal of Honor stamps on Veterans Day. The first side of the four-page design highlights 12 photographs of the last living recipients of the Medal of Honor from World War II. In January 2012, the Postal Service invited these men to join in honoring the extraordinary courage of every individual who received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the war. All the men pictured agreed to participate in this momentous event. Sadly, Senator Daniel K. Inouye and Vernon McGarity died before the stamps could be issued, as did Nicholas Oresko, who died after the stamps were printed.



The photographs surround two forever stamps. One stamp features a photograph of the Navy version of the Medal of Honor; the other stamp features a photograph of the Army version of the Medal of Honor. The two center pages list the names of all 464 recipients of the Medal of Honor from World War II. The remaining 18 stamps are located on the back page. To learn more about the stories behind the new stamps, visit the U.S. Postal Service Blog at <http://www.uspsstamps.com/blog/2013/10/18/>. The new issuance contains two different Forever stamps. One features a photograph of the current Navy version of the Medal of Honor, and the other features a photograph of the current Army version of the award. (The Air Force version of the medal is not shown, because it was not created until after World War II). The stamps will be released on Monday, November 11, 2013, at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. [Source: <http://www.uspsstamps.com> Oct 2013 ++]

Military Compensation Update 04 ► MCRMC Wants Your Input

The FY13 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) established a 9 member independent commission to review all military compensation, benefits and retirement. Its findings and final recommendations could have a major impact on future decisions regarding military compensation, benefits and retirement. The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) has been instructed by President Obama to not alter the current retirement system for those already serving, retired or in the process of retiring. Along with a review of military compensation, the President asked that the commission look at the “interrelationship of the military’s current promotion system...as well as associated force shaping tools.” The president has stated that the commission must review “the full breadth of the systems,” including healthcare, military family support, and any federal programs that could influence the decision of current or future servicemembers to stay in uniform or leave the service. The Commission is tasked with studying and making recommendations on a wide range of topics, including:

- Manpower and compensation
- Living standards
- Pay
- Effectiveness
- Flexibility
- Motivation to advance

The chairman of the MCRMC is the Honorable Alphonso Maldon, Jr., a retired Army officer, and the Founder and President/CEO of Partnership Strategies Consulting. He is also a founding partner of Major League Baseball’s Washington Nationals. During the Clinton administration, he was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Policy, responsible for policies, plans and programs for all military and civilian personnel management and oversaw the Department’s commissaries/stores and Department of Defense schools. Members of the Commission are:

- Senator Larry Pressler: Rhodes Scholar, U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran (1966-1968). Former Republican U.S. Senator (1979-1997) and Congressman (1975-1979) from South Dakota.
- Senator Bob Kerrey: U.S. Navy Vietnam Veteran, Medal of Honor Recipient. Former Democratic U.S. Senator from Nebraska (1989-2001) and Governor of Nebraska (1983-1987).
- Honorable Dov Zakheim: Former Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) (2001-2004).
- Mr. Mike Higgins: Retired U.S. Air Force officer, former professional staff member, House Armed Services Committee (1990-2013) and MOAA Paul W. Arcari Meritorious Service Award recipient in 2005.
- General Peter W. Chiarelli, USA (Ret): Former U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff (2008-2012).

- Congressman Chris Carney: A currently serving naval reserve officer, Carney is a former Democratic Representative from Pennsylvania (2007-2011).
- Congressman Stephen Buyer: Retired U.S. Army Reserve officer. Former Republican Representative from Indiana and former Chairman of the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs.
- Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, Jr., USN (Ret). Former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (2005-2007).

The Commission has an aggressive schedule and the Pentagon is required to provide their recommendations to the Commission no later than November 1, 2013. Before making their final recommendations to the President, the MCRMC must examine the impacts of proposed recommendations on currently serving members, retirees, spouses, children and survivors; DoD-specific programs such as pay and retirement, MWR, commissaries, exchanges, housing, dependent schools; DoD and VA programs such as health care, disability, survivor, education, dependent support; Department of Education Impact Aid; and support/funding to states, territories, colleges and universities. The MCRMC has launched a new website where stakeholders can submit their comments. To make sure your voice is heard go to <http://www.mcrmc.gov/index.php/public-comments> and fill out the inclusive form. Comments may also be submitted by email to: response@mcrmc.gov or via mail to: The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, Post Office Box 13170, Arlington, Virginia 22209.

Comments and attachments may be submitted without personal identifying information. However, if such information is included, all comments may be made available to the public. Comments sent via the online form or e-mail may be posted on MCRMC's website. MCRMC will not edit personal identifying information from submissions so submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. You are allowed to submit up to three attachments. Individual attachment size cannot exceed 10 MB and the total size of all attachments cannot exceed 20 MB. Allowed attachment file types include: DOC, DOCX, CSV, GIF, JPG, JPEG, PDF, PNG, RTF, TXT, XLS, XL. No deadline was given but bear in mind the sooner you make your input the more likely the Commission will have time to consider your comment. The commission's report is due on May 1, 2014. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 18 Oct 2013 ++]

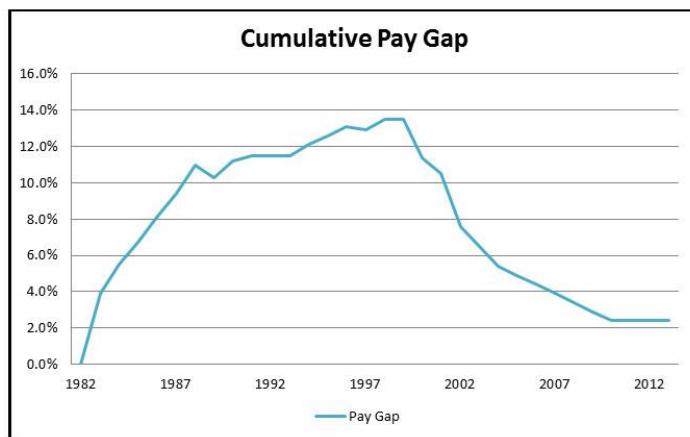
Military Compensation Update 05 ► Slow the growth

Over the past several months, the Pentagon has adopted a new budget-cutting catch phrase: "Slow the growth." Don't sugarcoat it. Call it what it is — extended pay caps. On his recent trip to South Korea, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin Dempsey spoke before a U.S. Forces Korea town hall meeting and said when it comes to pay and benefits, "... we have to slow the growth." In September, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. James Winnefeld spoke before the Air Force Association conference about slowing the growth, saying, "While everyone here would agree that our magnificent men and women in uniform deserve more than the average bear, we simply cannot sustain our recent growth trajectory in pay and benefits and expect to preserve a properly sized, trained, and equipped force." Also that month, Under Secretary of Defense Robert Hale, the Pentagon's comptroller, bluntly laid out harsh budget cut plans before members of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, citing what lies ahead based on continuing the devastating and harmful effects of sequestration.

During this discussion, Hale used the same catchy phrase when speaking about proposals to limit future pay raises, saying, "As we look out right now — even in a period when unemployment improves — it appears to us that our compensation package is sufficient to let us to do that and we could slow the growth ... not cut pay, but slow the growth." When the Pentagon submitted the FY 2014 budget in April, the submission included the following statement:

If we do not slow the growth in military compensation, the DoD will have to make additional force structure reductions, which would harm military capability and undermine the national security strategy, or make further cuts to funds for training and equipping our forces resulting in a “hollow-force” unable to win wars and minimize casualties. As one Marine in Afghanistan put it — “the best quality of life is coming home alive.”

Unfortunately, this statement pits weapons systems against the very men and women who operate them, as if the weapon system will save readiness. What ensures that our men and women in uniform come home safely is the experienced, mid-level NCO or officer. A compensation package that keeps pay compatible with the private sector is needed to sustain that very weapon system. What does “slow the growth” mean? Well, from the Pentagon’s perspective, they still are providing pay raises — so you should be quiet and happy. Yet, from MOAA’s perspective, they are failing to sustain military pay with that of private-sector pay — capping your pay — and failing to learn from hard lessons of the past by proposing a raise required by law to keep up with the average American’s pay. The Pentagon and think tanks continue to narrowly look backwards at pay growth since 2000, insisting compensation and health care costs are growing at rates that, as Dempsey said, “... are unsustainable to the all-volunteer force.” It’s important to put the pay-growth-since-2000 argument into perspective and understand why military pay has risen greater than that of the average Americans pay between 2000 and 2010. In 1999, the military pay gap (the comparability of military pay with that of the private sector) had grown to a 13.5-percent difference.



As illustrated in the chart, Congress (with the full support of the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs in 2000-2005) worked diligently for the a 10-year period to fix the 13.5-percent pay gap (and the resulting retention problems) caused by repeatedly capping military raises below private-sector pay growth in the 1980s and '90s. The pay-growth argument focuses solely on the 2000-2010 period and conveniently forgets the dismal recruiting and retention environment of the late 1990s. And what's worse is think tanks and the Pentagon use the growth factor over the past decade (one that exceeded private-sector pay by 11.4 percent) to forecast growth over the next decade and beyond — an outright exaggerated assumption for determining future pay growth. A more appropriate planning factor, now that military pay has essentially met pay parity, would be one that matches private-sector pay, not exceeds it.

We've been down this road multiple times before and always with disastrous retention and readiness results. History shows once pay caps start, they're continued until they undermine retention and readiness. And now is no exception. During a press conference in July, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel outlined various options being studied as a result of the Strategic Choices and Management Review to include one option to continue “to limit

military pay raises" — potentially for the next nine years of sequestration. Now that we basically achieved pay parity, the Pentagon wants to undo all the hard work of the past decade — not just for one year but for several years. Comparability only works if it's sustained through both good and bad budget times. MOAA understands the difficulty sequestration places on the Pentagon, but it's simply appalling defense leaders are turning a blind eye to the past pay caps and pushing for caps now. Our men and women in uniform have voluntarily answered the nation's call and have persevered through unprecedented demands and sacrifices, especially over the past 12 years. If that's not enough, the Pentagon — with the support of the Joint Chiefs — and the administration have proposed a 1-percent pay cap for currently serving members for FY 2014 instead of a 1.8-percent raise required by law to keep up with the average American's pay.

But most troubling is that when addressing compensation last month, Hagel said, "I think we will go after military compensation aggressively." Not "study" or "review" but aggressively go after military compensation. This kind of language demonstrates a gross insensitivity to the terrible trials military people have been put through by these same military and defense leaders — almost as if the past 12 years never happened. We demand unlimited loyalty and sacrifice from the troops, and instead of having their leaders return it in-kind, they now are targets for savings — as if the all-volunteer force is some kind of liability. The bottom line: "Slow the growth" is an attempt to divert your attention to what is simply a military pay cap — a cap that could last several years. Leaders need to learn from the past and keep military pay on par with that of the private sector. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 18 Oct 2013 ++]

Military Lingo/Jargon/Slang ► 020

USA Academy: *Coastie* - any member of the Coast Guard Academy

USA Acronyms: *POG* - 1) People Other than Grunts or 2) Permanently On the Ground

USA Equipment: *Deuce* - common utility truck (2-1/2 ton truck; from "deuce-and-a-half"); same as "six-by"

USA Field Slang: *TAMFR* - This Aint My First Rodeo. Often used by newly promoted captains.

USA Misc: *Chicken shit* - This term started during the second world war. It is used to either describe the abuse an officer gives his enlisted subordinates or to describe the officer himself. examples "That was really chicken shit what he did." "That LT is chicken shit, through and through".

USA Rank: *Baby G* - Brigadier General, lowest rank of general.

USA Soldiers: *Cookie* - Mess Sergeant

USA Unit Nicknames: *Borinqueneers* - Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment. The only all Hispanic unit in the history of the U.S. Army. They are credited with the last battalion-sized bayonet assault in US Army history. In early 1951 while fighting in Korea, two battalions of the 65th fixed bayonets and charged straight up hill toward the enemy, over running them and overtaking the enemy's strategic position

USAF: *Gong* - A medal.

USMC: *Battle blaze* - Original name for the 1st & 2nd Marine Division shoulder sleeve insignias commemorating service in the Battle of Guadalcanal.

USN: *Church Pennant* - The only flag authorized to fly above or at the same point of hoist as the National Ensign however it can only be done at sea and only during the hours of a divine service.

Vets: *de novo* - Lawspeak for a new look at your claim

Chosin Few Reunion ► Remembrances

It was frigidly cold the night of Nov. 27, 1950 when the Chinese army overran the U.S. Marine headquarters near the Chosin Reservoir where Marvin Garaway was serving during the Korean War. "My rifle would fire but would not eject" the bullet casings, he told the Yuma Sun Friday 11 OCT. "It was frozen. At that point when I saw the enemy — and I had nobody and I couldn't shoot or move myself back into another position — I just crawled under a Jeep and played dead." Once he had taken cover, Garaway realized he wasn't alone. There was another Marine next to him, but this man really was dead. Some time later, a Chinese soldier became aware of the bodies beneath the Jeep, and began poking the dead man next to Garaway to see if he was still alive. Garaway knew he was next, and that the Chinese soldier would realize he was alive, leading to execution or imprisonment in a prisoner of war camp. But before the soldier could check Garaway's "corpse," the enemy combatant was called away by another soldier. Garaway got "real lucky," he said.

Although he had not been discovered, Garaway still had to lie next to that dead Marine all night in sub-zero temperatures. According to historians, it would get down to about -35 degrees Fahrenheit during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir — conditions that can easily lead to hypothermia, frostbite or even death. And that didn't even account for the wind chill factor. Garaway knew if he stayed still for too long, he might freeze to death. "If you stopped, you froze," he said, adding the Marines "did not have the winter clothes we should have. The worst thing we didn't have was the proper boots." Against all odds, Garaway lived. "There is no explanation" to communicate how cold it was that night, he remarked. "How anybody survived? Unbelievable. But we all did. I guess it was our willpower — and this was the first night of the battle." The next morning, "things got cleared up and our units pushed them out of our headquarters. We had to go through the rifles to find out which ones would fire." Some of the Marines had to resort to drastic measures to get their rifles functioning. "The only way we got them warmed up was to piss on 'em," said Clyde Queen Sr., who served with the 1st Marine Division during the battle.

It is stories such as these which still draw the surviving members of the battle, known as the "Chosin Few," to get together for reunions nearly 63 years later. The most recent Chosin Few reunion, hosted by the Arizona Chapter, was held in mid-OCT at the Best Western Coronado Hotel. "Nobody else understands unless you have been there," Garaway said. "There is no way. You can't explain to people what we've been through. Other people just don't believe it. They can't understand it." However, the reunions aren't all serious. "We get together and we lie to each other, and lie about each other, and most of the time you have to wear boots because the stories get pretty deep," Garaway joked laughingly. Queen Sr. well remembers that first terrifying night when "the Chinese hit our lines," he said during the reunion. "I heard (enemy) bugles from the front, bugles from the rear, bugles from the right side, and bugles from the left side." Then he heard "a lot of yelling and screaming and all hell broke loose," he added. "The first night they hit was the scariest moment because they had us surrounded — coming from all sides." It was mixture of "a will to live and fear" that kept him going, Queen Sr. continued, adding he didn't have time to think about his own mortality. "The only thing I was thinking about was getting the hell out of there."



Marines of the 5th and 7th Regiments, 1st Marine Division, receive the order to withdraw 29 NOV 1950 from their positions near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea after repelling a surprise attack by three Chinese communist divisions

The battle at the Chosin Reservoir would continue to rage on until 13 DEC. During that time, the 30,000 Marines and soldiers with the United Nations under the command of General Edward Almond were encircled by at least 67,000 Chinese troops under the command of Song Shi-Lun. Queen Sr. had his fair share of close calls, including an artillery shell that landed about 10 feet from his foxhole. "The concussion knocked me out," he said, adding it is the incoming rounds you can't hear which are the deadliest. He will never forget the noise an incoming shell creates — "zho-zho-zho-zho-zho" in a rapid succession beginning in a higher pitch and ending in a lower pitch before exploding on impact. Garaway wasn't quite so lucky. He was wounded by shrapnel in the right arm before the battle was over and he evacuated. "I had gotten tired and asked a radio operative who had a Jeep if I could sit down," he said. "As soon as I sat down I got hit. Of course I was in the jeep so he brought me over to the medic. They wouldn't take (the shrapnel) out. It paralyzed my arm" and remains there to this day. "I got out at an emergency airstrip at Hagaru-ri... on the last airplane out before they closed" the outpost. "We were flown out to Japan and were at a hospital" where the pretty nurses and warm beds were much appreciated, he joked, adding he later found out he was stricken with frostbite.

Back in Korea, the frigid icy temperatures continued to take a toll on the men in the field. "Imagine yourself being in a foxhole 24-hours a day," Queen Sr. said. "The Siberian winds are coming down off the snow and ice covered mountains. It's blowing right down on you and there is no escape from it. Just imagine yourself being in that foxhole and your limbs froze. And suddenly" when enemy troops attack "your arms are so stiff that you can't get up and move quickly. Everything is slow motion." Bob Hennings, a Chosin Few veteran who has lived in Yuma since 1986, still suffers from being exposed to the elements during the Korean War. "It was even worse than awful cold," he said. "Everybody has frozen parts we are still suffering with – hands and feet. My hands hurt. If it gets cold I can't take it. It don't bother me much in the summertime" because of the plentiful Yuma heat, which is part of the reason he now resides here.

There aren't many members of the Chosin Few left, which makes it even more important for the remaining veterans to gather together while they can. "They keep dropping all the time – just age and health-wise," Garaway said. "I mean, my health is horrible. I am 80, but most of them are older." There are only about 83 Chosin Few members left in the entirety of Arizona, and only a handful were able to make it to Yuma for the reunion, noted Bob "BJ" Johnson, who served with the 7th Regiment of the 1st Marine Division during the battle. Of the total amount surviving, only a handful were well enough to travel to the reunion in Yuma. "We just have a small group here," Johnson said. Johnson hopes people will remember and honor the memory of the veterans of the Korean War —

both those who came home and the 33,686 U.S. military members who died in combat — before their generation is lost forever to the never-ending march of time. "That is a whole different story," he said, noting those who served during the Korean War, also known as the "Forgotten War," just want people to realize and appreciate the sacrifices the soldiers, sailors and Marines made in service to their country. "We just happen to be between World War II and Vietnam. Everybody on the home front hated us anyway because we were causing too much trouble. They were tired of war. That's where we ended up and we are still fighting it right now." [Source: The Sun, Yuma, Ariz.]
Chris McDaniel | 14 Oct 2013 ++]



Cpl. Charles Price sounds taps 13 DEC 1950 over the graves of fallen Leathernecks during memorial services held in the 1st Marine Division cemetery at Hungnam, Korea, following the division's break-out from Chosin Reservoir in North Korea.

OBIT | Hensch~Erwin ► Oct 15, 2013

Hensch grew up on his family farm in Sanborn, the youngest of nine siblings. He was the only one who attended college and earned a bachelor's degree. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota, where he met his wife, who was earning her home economics education degree. Hensch was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. A month later, he enlisted and after attending officer's training he and his wife were married on Christmas Day before he went off to war. He was stationed aboard a minesweeper that roamed the Dutch East Indies searching for German mines for 19 months before he was transferred to the USS Indianapolis, in November of 1944. When the heavy carrier was sent back to San Francisco for repairs before what would be its last voyage, his wife met him in California. At the time, Hensch said no one knew that the explosive part of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima was placed on board, which was delivered to the island of Tinian.



Erwin Hensch

The Indianapolis met its fate on July 30, 1945, four days after arriving from San Francisco at a U.S. base on Guam's Tinian island with the secret cargo that would end World War II. The enemy torpedoes slammed into the USS Indianapolis under darkness in the South Pacific, just after the U.S. Navy ship had delivered the enriched uranium and other critical components that would be used in the atomic bombs dropped on Japan. The ship sank in just 12 minutes and the disaster remains the Navy's greatest single loss of life at sea. Hensch, one of 1,200 or so sailors and Marines aboard, soon found himself flailing in the water among the fewer than 900 who initially survived the cruiser's sinking. "Shark attacks began with the coming of daylight," according to an exhaustive narrative written by Patrick J. Finneran, former executive director of the Indianapolis' Survivors Memorial Organization. "One by one sharks began to pick off the men on the outer perimeter of the clustered groups. Agonizing screams filled the air day and night. Blood mixed with the fuel oil. The survivors say the sharks were always there by the hundreds — swimming just below their dangling feet. It was a terror-filled ordeal — never knowing if you'd be the next victim."

"I was absolutely determined to make it because I had a brand new wife at home and I'd seen her only a few times since we were married," Hensch told the Albuquerque Journal in 1969. "I didn't give up. The ordeal left Hensch, the ship's assistant chief engineer and a Navy lieutenant, 25 pounds lighter and ailing. After weeks in a Guam hospital, he went to Washington, D.C., and helped Capt. Charles McVay prepare hundreds of condolence letters for the families of those who perished. Hensch also testified during McVay's court-martial, a trial that "I was frankly angry about ... because I thought McVay acted properly in all circumstances," Hensch told the Journal. "He was a fine officer." Hensch died 15 OCT at a senior living facility in Crosby, Minn. The longtime Burnsville resident was 93 and had been battling complications brought on by Alzheimer's disease. With Hensch's death, there are no longer alive any Minnesotans who were on the Indianapolis, according to Ed Harrell, a survivor who lives in Tennessee and tracks his shipmates. "Now there's 37 of us," said Harrell, referring to himself and the others still alive. Sue Ecklund, a daughter of Hensch's, said her father spoke little about the war until after he retired, "then he started speaking about it a lot to us, his grandchildren and organizations." She said what "has stuck with me the whole time were not the gory details but my father's faith in God. ... He always seemed very calm and together about what happened."

Hensch, who grew up on the family farm in Sanborn, Minn., returned to the University of Minnesota after the war and earned a master's degree, then began his career as city manager in Fergus Falls, Minn. He moved to Duluth and was that city's public works director for eight years, then took the same job in Albuquerque, N.M. The Henschs, who were married on Christmas Day 1941, moved to Burnsville in 1980 upon Erwin's retirement. Along with Ecklund, Hensch is survived by his wife of 70 years, Helen, daughter Judith Trujillo, of Portland, Ore., and son Thomas of Minneapolis. A memorial service was held 23 NOV at Heartwood Living Community in Crosby.
[Source: Star Tribune (Minneapolis) | Paul Walsh | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

OBIT | Risner~James Robinson ► 22 OCT 2013

The nation lost a great hero with the passing of retired Air Force Brig. Gen. James Robinson "Robbie" Risner, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said 25 OCT. Risner, 88, a highly decorated fighter pilot who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War during his 30-year military career, died in his sleep October 22, 2013, at his home in Bridgewater, Virginia three days after suffering a severe stroke. Hagel said in a statement that he was deeply saddened by the passing of Robbie Risner earlier this week, and my heart goes out to Dorothy and the entire Risner family. "I have known and admired Robbie for many years, and was always moved by his unwavering spirit and love of country. He served in the U.S. Air Force for more than 30 years -- seven of which he endured as a

prisoner of war in Vietnam, facing relentless torture and extended periods of solitary confinement at the so-called Hanoi Hilton. Robbie's constant resistance in the face of his captors served as an inspiration not only to his fellow prisoners of war, but millions of Americans around the country. While our nation has lost a great hero, Robbie -- like all American prisoners of war -- will never be forgotten."



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Air Force Maj. James Robinson "Robbie" Risner with his F-86 Sabre in South Korea.

(2) Risner in 1973 after being released as a POW by the North Vietnamese.

(3) Risner signs a wall in the POW exhibit June 2, 2005, at the Enlisted Heritage Institute, Maxwell AFB.

During his military career, Risner had earned the Air Force Cross twice over, once for valor in aerial combat and again for gallantry after spending seven years as a prisoner of war. After being stationed in Panama during World War II, Risner spent several years as a civilian. He returned to active duty in 1951, flying F-86E Sabre jets into combat against MiG-15s over Korea. He became a jet ace after shooting down five MiGs within four months of joining his combat unit. He ultimately flew 108 missions during the Korean War and downed a total of eight MiG-15s. In one notable exploit, Risner chased a MiG 35 miles into China, hugging riverbeds and threading through hangars at a Chinese air base before finally shooting the plane down, where it crashed into a row of parked jets. On the return flight, Risner's wingman was hit and leaking fuel. To help him reach friendly territory, Risner inserted the nose of his aircraft into the tail of his wingman's plane and pushed him out over the East China Sea. The wingman was able to bail out near a United Nations rescue base, but unfortunately drowned when he became entangled in his parachute lines.

During combat over North Vietnam, Risner earned his first Air Force Cross after leading two missions to destroy a strategically important bridge. The ensuing air battle marked the first time U.S. jets fought against the MiG-17 and led to significant changes in Air Force doctrine. Risner was featured on the April 23, 1965, cover of Time magazine following the battle. The first time Risner was shot down by the North Vietnamese, on March 16, 1965, he was rescued after bailing out over the Gulf of Tonkin. Six months later, he was shot down again and captured. During his time as a prisoner, Risner served as the senior officer at Hoa Lo Prison -- the infamous Hanoi Hilton -- and as the vice commander of the 4th Allied POW Wing. In an article for Air Force News Service, Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, the Air Force chief of staff, described the events that unfolded after Risner organized a forbidden church service. "As their captors led Risner away, Col. "Bud" Day and the more than 40 other POWs in the room began singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" to show their support. Hearing the defiant singing, Risner walked away with his back straight, head held high, full of pride.

"When asked later how he felt at that moment, Risner said, 'I felt like I was 9 feet tall and could go bear hunting with a switch.' That moment and his words are reflected by a statue, exactly 9 feet high, that now stands at the U.S. Air Force Academy. "Bud" Day spoke at the unveiling of the statue, saying, 'We knew he was, in fact, 9 feet tall. This is a life-size statue.'" Risner spent seven years as a POW in North Vietnam -- three in solitary confinement -- before being released in 1973. He retired from the Air Force in 1976. He later authored a book about his experiences, "The Passing of the Night: My Seven Years as a Prisoner of the North. Burial will be at Arlington on a date yet to be determined. Possibly a number of weeks or more. Currently, there is a scheduled waiting period for those awaiting burial. [Source: AFPS | Claudette Roulo | 25 Oct 2013 ++]

POW/MIA Update 62 ► Legion Demands Immediate JPAC Reform

The American Legion has demanded immediate reform of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command over a report that the agency had staged ceremonies celebrating the "arrival" home of missing troops, a practice that some base staffers in Hawaii dubbed "The Big Lie." Legion officials said the practice of honor guards carrying flag-draped coffins off cargo planes at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii and incorrectly announcing they had just returned that day from foreign battlefields was deceptive and must be changed. "Symbolic honors are one thing, but deception is quite another," American Legion National Commander Daniel Dellinger said in a statement. "The so-called 'Big Lie' does not honor our war dead. Instead, it misleads and insults the living. It is especially egregious during a most sensitive and vulnerable time for families."



Military personnel escort a flag-draped transfer case from a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III during the U.S. Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Arrival Ceremony, on Nov. 30, 2012, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The Legion's statement was released a day after NBC News reported JPAC had staged the phony arrival ceremonies for seven years and that the planes used in the ceremonies often couldn't even fly. Pentagon officials were forced to admit the deception but claimed the coffins did contain remains, just not ones that had arrived that day. "Part of the ceremony involves symbolically transferring the recovered remains from an aircraft to a vehicle for follow-on transportation to the lab," the Pentagon told NBC. "It is important to note that recovered remains ceremoniously transferred from the aircraft to the [bus] have been in the lab undergoing forensic analysis to determine identity. When remains first arrive in Hawaii, JPAC cannot confirm if the remains are those of an American servicemember." Rick Stone, a retired police chief and former WWII investigator for JPAC, told Stars and Stripes that the silver cases were stacked outside, next to the JPAC identification laboratory, before and after the ceremonies, so if remains were contained inside, as the Pentagon contends, it was disrespectful.

Stone provided NBC photographs he took of the cases leaning up against the building. Pentagon officials said the ceremonies were "misinterpreted" and changes have been made to label them "honors ceremonies," NBC reported. The Pentagon also said it is reviewing procedures. The NBC report was the latest in a string of embarrassments for the country's POW/MIA accounting apparatus. In July, The Associated Press exposed an internal review by a management consultant that chronicled turf wars and questionable recovery results that the JPAC brass covered up. The report called the agency "acutely dysfunctional." Soon after, the GAO released its own report detailing inefficiencies and saying the accounting apparatus needs an overhaul. Congressional hearings were held in August, and the allegations are under review by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, officials said.

Legion officials said they believe JPAC was not trying to be cruel by staging the phony ceremonies, but honesty from the beginning would have been more honorable. "I sincerely believe, based on The American Legion's experiences and interactions, that the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command is, by and large, dedicated to its mission and provides a valuable service to the military family community," Dellinger said. "The mission of identifying and repatriating our missing is a sacred obligation." [Source: Stars & Stripes | Matthew M. Burke | 15 Oct 2013 ++]

POW/MIA Update 63 ► JPAC's is Not an Easy Job

A host of critics and a government report contend that the military is coming up short with one of its most sacred tasks: finding, identifying and returning the bodies of missing American soldiers. No one disputes the difficulty of the job facing the Joint Prisoners of War , Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC). Recovery work is like finding a needle in a haystack — except the haystack is a humid jungle and the needle is human remains buried beneath decades of soil or sand. "We're talking about individuals who were lost 50, 60, 70 years ago, and there was an attempt at that time to recover those individuals," said Johnie Webb, JPAC's deputy to the commander for external relations and legislative affairs. "I think many people visualize you're going out to a plane crash and you just simply go in and find the bodies and bring them back home. That's not what we find. You can walk across that crash site and not know it. Almost all that aircraft has been salvaged, used for different things, sold for scrap metal." But critics — lots of them — argue the Department of Defense is making a hard job even more difficult. Agencies often spar over who should pursue a case or perform a task, the government report attests, or fail to prioritize the cases most likely to be solved.

More than 83,000 Americans are missing from World War II and more recent conflicts. More than 600 people work in the agencies tasked with finding them, according to a Defense Department spokeswoman. Identifying the missing is a daunting task. Often, all researchers have to go on are incomplete records and the fading memory of,

say, an elderly local woman trying to remember where a plane crashed 70 years earlier. Even critics of the accounting agencies note that rank-and-file workers are extremely dedicated to the cause. Still, a Government Accountability Office report released in July details instances of recovery agencies engaging in bureaucratic scrums that often seemed to have more to do with congressional appropriations and prestige than finding the body of a Marine still mourned seven decades after he was killed. Legislators called agency leaders to testify on Capitol Hill about the report's findings. The report notes that JPAC and other accounting agencies have been slow to order exhumations of unknowns already buried on U.S. soil.

Webb said JPAC alone doesn't have the authority to disinter a body from a national cemetery, a decision that ultimately rests with one of the several organizations, including the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Department of the Army, that maintain the cemeteries. "To do a disinterment (of) an unknown, we must be able to narrow the scope of possibilities of who that person could be," Webb said. "We have to draft up the work and say 'we think this unknown remains represents one of five or eight individuals.' Then we have to submit that up through channels." The GAO report notes hopeful signs, and a Defense Department spokeswoman said officials at the Pentagon are looking at how to implement the recommendations and "improve our activities." "The JPAC motto is 'Until they are home,' and that's ... the pledge that we make to their families," said Webb, the JPAC official who is a Vietnam War veteran. "We're going to do everything we can until their family members are home." [Source: Chicago Tribune | Mitch Smith | 23 Oct 2013 ++]

POW/MIA Update 64 ► Identified 15 thru 31 Oct 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 or call (703) 699-1169. 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

- None

Korea

- The DPMO announced 19 OCT 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 Pfc. **Norman Dufresne**, 20, of Leominster, Mass., will be buried Oct. 19, in Leominster, Mass. In July 1950, Dufresne and elements of G Company, 2nd Battalion of 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division were deployed astride hills along the Chinju-Hadong road, just west of the Nam River, deep within South Korea. In late July 1950, the North Koreans launched a massive attack against 2nd Battalion positions and the American forces fell back from Chinju. Dufresne was lost during the course of this moving battle. He was reported as missing in action July 30, 1950. In August 1951, the U.S. Army Graves Registration Service (AGRS) recovered the remains of a U.S. serviceman from a battlefield near Chinju, South Korea. The remains were buried in the United Nations Cemetery in Tanggok. Several months later, the remains were disinterred and transferred to the U.S. Army's Central Identification Unit in Kokura, Japan for laboratory analysis. In September 1954, a military review board declared the remains unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were transferred to Hawaii, where they were interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the "Punchbowl." In 2012, analysts from Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) reevaluated Dufresne's records and determined that, due to the advances in technology, the remains should be exhumed for identification. To identify Dufresne's remains, scientists from the (JPAC) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, such as dental comparison and radiograph comparisons.



Pfc. **Norman Dufresne**

World War II

- The DPMO announced 18 OCT that two U.S. Marines missing in action from World War II, have been accounted for and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors. U.S. Marine Corps Capt. **Henry S. White**, of Kansas City, Mo., and Staff Sgt. **Thomas L. Meek**, 19, of Lisbon, La., will be buried as a group in a single casket representing the two servicemen, on Oct. 18, at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On July 21, 1943, White and Meek were crew members of an

SBD-4 Dauntless dive-bomber that departed Turtle Bay Airfield on Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides, on a night training mission and failed to return. During the training mission, the aircraft was reported as crashed on a coral cliff on nearby Mavea Island. In September 1947 a U.S. Army Graves Registration Service team investigated the crash on Mavea Island, but recovered no remains. In 2012, a JPAC team excavated the crash site on Mavea Island, Republic of Vanuatu, and recovered the remains of White and Meek and non-biological evidence amid the aircraft wreckage, which included U.S. and Australian coins dating to 1942 and earlier, U.S. military Captain's bars, and a military identification tag that correlates to Meek by name and service number. What was found at the crash site, along with the remains, correlate circumstantially to White and Meek, however, no individual identifications were possible.

- The DPMO announced 22 OCT that the remains of U.S. servicemen, lost during World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Technician Fifth Grade **Oneal Rush**, 24, of Galivants Ferry, S.C., will be buried Oct. 26, in his hometown. In August 1944, Rush, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers soldier, and six other service members were aboard an C-47A Skytrain aircraft that departed from Shingbwiyang, Burma to Myitkyina, Burma, on an air supply mission. Rush and the six service members were reported missing in action when the airplane failed to reached its destination. Soon after the loss and following the war, Army personnel attempted to locate the aircraft wreckage, but were unsuccessful. Subsequently, in 1945, a military review board declared Rush and the other six service members to be presumed dead and his remains non-recoverable. On March 10, 2003, Burmese officials informed the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team of a crash site and a local villager handed over material evidence that correlated to two crew members aboard the Skytrain. JPAC investigated this site in November 2004, and recovered Rush's remains, aircraft wreckage and cargo. To identify the 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 that of Rush's niece. The six other service members have yet to be identified.

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

Military History

Aviation Art 50 ► Pappy



Pappy
by Jim Lauriel

Major Greg Boyington was the enigmatic leader of Marine Squadron VMF-214 during World War Two. VMF-214 adopted the name "Black Sheep" squadron because it was originally comprised of unassigned pilots. Many Black Sheep pilots called Boyington "Gramps", but somehow the nickname "Pappy" was introduced, and once the press and American public heard it, the moniker stuck. When Pappy was "encouraged" to leave the Marine Corps early in his career, he joined the American Volunteer Group (A.V.G.) a.k.a. The Flying Tigers. After serving with that group in China briefly, he quit and returned to the U.S. to try to fly with the Marines again. Pappy was initially given command of Marine Squadron VMF-122 at Guadalcanal. Then, on Sept 7, 1943, under Pappy's command, VMF-214 officially began its first combat tour at Munda, on the island of New Georgia. He led this squadron on two successful tours until he was shot down in January of 1944. Pappy Boyington was an aggressive and competitive individual and often liked to challenge others to a wrestling match or some other form of competition. He smoked a lot of cigarettes, and sometimes drank to excess and for a good part of his life he struggled with the consequences of these vices. Black Sheep pilots respected Pappy's natural ability as a fighter pilot and felt confident when they flew into combat with him. In the air he seemed to possess an uncanny sense of timing and his situational awareness gave him a great advantage in dogfights. He was officially credited with 26 aerial victories and was awarded the Medal Of Honor. He was shot down on January 3rd, 1944 in an uneven battle against numerous Mitsubishi Zero fighters and he spent the remainder of the war in a Japanese prison camp. After the war, his fortunes swung from high to low and back again, but he seemed to always land on his feet, ready for another fight. In 1976 Hollywood made a television series about Pappy and VMF-214 called "Black Sheep Squadron" which aired 36 episodes. He was loved by many, disliked by some, but respected by all who knew him, including his Japanese captors, who afforded him the privileges reserved for honorable warriors. He was an individualist, yet he cared deeply for the men who served with him. He was one of the most unconventional Marines in the Corps, a distinction that earned him yet another title - "Black Sheep One". Greg Boyington passed away on January 11, 1988 at the age of seventy-five. What makes him so memorable is not so much his 26 combat victories, but his character and his brash approach to life. He was daring, stubbornly independent, and beautifully defiant. He embodied many of the ideals that have made America's history so rich and unique. He is truly unforgettable.. [Source: <http://www.aviationarthangar.com/avarthapabyj.html> Oct 2013 ++]

Military History ► Project Nike

There was a Soviet heavy bomber that was feared by the U.S. Defense Department in the 1950s and 1960s. It was the Tupolev Tu-95, nicknamed "the Bear" by NATO. World-War II-era anti-aircraft guns were useless against these heavy post-war heavy bombers; they flew too high and too fast. So to keep the Tu-95 in check, the Army in the late 1940s initiated Project Nike. Its centerpiece was the Nike Ajax missile, the world's first operational air defense supersonic guided missile. One problem. Because of its limited range, the Ajax had to be launched as the invading bomber was nearly overhead. So the Army built 240 Nike installations from coast to coast, all near potential Soviet targets, Bridgeport being one of them. "We were the last line of defense," said Eric Muth, a retired licensed optician who was one of about 50 National Guardsmen who manned the Milford Ajax operation. "Those who operated the Nike sites were our nation's last line of defense against the very real threat of a Soviet attack," Bridgeport Mayor Benjamin Blake said. "The threat of a Soviet bomber attack was real, make no mistake about it."



Tupolev Tu-95 Strategic Bomber , nicknamed "the Bear"

Most Nike sites were split into two separate units within a mile or two of one another — the radar installation site and launch site, where 30 or more missiles were kept in underground concrete bunkers. In Milford, the radar installation was on Eells Hill and the launch site was on what is now Londonderry Lane, now a quiet, residential street. Most of the buildings at the Eells Hill radar site are still intact, although they're hidden in the brambles that have taken over. Precision was always the goal, Muth said. The missile required three radar systems — a target-acquisition radar, a target-tracking radar and a missile-tracking radar. After the target was acquired, a computer compared the signals from the tracking and missile radars to calculate the intercept point and steer the missile to its target. Still, there were the offbeat, day-to-day adventures found at all army bases, be they staffed by Roman-era infantrymen or Nike missilemen.

- "The guardsmen used to go to the Bridgeport jail with shotguns to pick up prisoners," said Muth. The prisoners, he said, were used to perform assorted "menial" tasks. "But one time, we let a prisoner go to visit his father," he said. "Hey, we felt sorry for the guy. But he beat the crap out of his dad and that was the end of that. Thankfully, I wasn't in that detail."
- A dummy Ajax, used for parades and other celebrations, fell off of its truck on Merwin Avenue near Riverdale Road, causing quite a stir.
- There was the case of the poor sergeant. "He had a little foreign car, a Renault Dauphine," said Muth, with a twinkle in his eye. "So one day we hid the car in the enlisted man's club." Another time, Muth and his buddies rolled the hapless Renault into a delivery truck bound for Queens, N.Y. "He wasn't too happy about having to go to Fort Totten to collect his car," Muth said.
- Women were forbidden on the Ajax grounds, at least officially. Since they couldn't get past the guard shack, the men positioned a ladder on the other side of the 8-foot, chain-link perimeter fence. "When she got to the top of the fence, we'd slowly pull the top of the ladder down so she could climb down the other side and get inside the base," he said. "Sometimes they would get their skirts caught on the barbed wire."

The missilemen were required to annually brush up on their firing skills at Fort Bliss, Texas, where crews took turns knocking dummy flying targets out of the sky. The Connecticut National Guard contingent typically outscored the Army crews, former crew members said. "We practiced every day for four or five years, so of course we were better than the Army," said Chief Warrant Officer (retired) Ron French. "I made nine trips to Fort Bliss which is in El Paso, right next door to Juarez, Mexico," Muth recalled. "After we completed our mission at McGregor Range, we would go to Juarez to blow off steam, learn the art of putting down multiple shots of tequila and the art of bargaining to buy trinkets." The Nike sites and the men who manned them were active in the community, hosting Boy Scout troops, staging blood drives and such. "The kids loved being marched about by men in uniform," Muth said of the Scouts. But it wasn't all fun and games.

- When the Cuban Missile Crisis began on Oct. 14, 1962, the site was on red alert for two weeks. "All of our missiles went topside, ready to go," said William Biagioni, a communications specialist at the Milford site.
- When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, the sites went on high alert status again. "The booster stage fell off six seconds after they were fired, and the spent booster would have wound up in a residential area," Biagioni said. "But if it came to that, you really didn't care whose house it fell on. There were Navy picket ships right off the coast, and if those bomber got by them, we were it."
- Ken Bruno of Stratford, a crew member at the Nike site in Ansonia, said that the Tupolevs routinely made runs from the Soviet Union to Cuba, skirting U.S. airspace off the Eastern Seaboard along the way. "We had to be ready to launch all the time," Bruno said.

Designed to intercept high-altitude aircraft, the Ajax missile consisted of a 14 feet solid propellant booster and a 21 foot liquid-fueled upper stage. Its maximum speed was 2.25 mach with a range of 25 miles. It could reach an altitude of 69,900 feet. Later models were longer and faster. The first Nike Ajax was made in 1951, and the project was operational from 1953 to 1964. At first, the Nike sites were operated by the Army, but most of the installations were soon handed off to the state National Guards. By the mid-1960s, a larger and faster Nike variant and one with three times the range was developed, the Nike Hercules. The meant that fewer missile sites were needed. So most of the Ajax sites in Connecticut were closed for good in the early 1960s. Two were converted to Hercules operations in the state, one in Ansonia, the other in East Windsor. Some of the Hercules missiles were nuclear-tipped, sources told the Post — the idea being that a well-placed atomic blast could take out an entire bomber wing. Both Ajax and Hercules missiles had a surface-to-surface capability, too, so they could be used against Soviet subs. "We were it," said Bruno. "Those bomber pilots knew that once we locked on to them, they were as good as gone."



Nike missile family on display at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. From left, MIM-14 Nike Hercules, MIM-23 Hawk (front), MGM-29 Sergeant (back), LIM-49 Spartan, MGM-31 Pershing, MGM-18 Lacrosse, MIM-3 Nike Ajax.

The missiles were named after Nike, the winged goddess of victory in Greek mythology. She's famously depicted in the c. 424 BCE relief sculpture "Nike Removing her Sandal," which was part of the Temple of Athena in Athens. In the 1950s, mention the word "Nike," and it was the missile, not a sneaker, that came to mind. (The original sculpture can be seen in the Acropolis Museum in Athens; a copy has been installed in the temple.) In all, 26 states

had Nike sites. In Connecticut, they were located in Ansonia, Fairfield, West Haven, Milford, Westport, Shelton, Portland, Manchester, East Windsor, Cromwell, Simsbury and Plainville. These sites no longer exist, or at best are barely recognizable as defense installations. The Ansonia Nike Hercules launch base is a horse farm, the Autumn View Equestrian Center. For a time in the 1970s and 1980s, the Milford school system used the squat, cement-block buildings on Eells Hill for office space. Some Nike launch and radar sites have become parks, some have been developed into condominiums and others have been lost to the weeds. Indeed, in the American consciousness, the Cold War has been similarly lost in the weeds of history. It's more often than not mentioned in the same breath as tail fins and poodle skirts, two other artifacts from that era. [Source: Bridgeport Connecticut Post | John Burgeson | 13 Oct 2013 & http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Nike ++]

Military History Anniversaries ► 1 thru 30 Nov

Significant events in U.S. Military History are listed in the attachment to this Bulletin titled, "**Military History Anniversaries 1 thru 14 Nov**".

WWII Prewar Events ► Hindenburg Over Manhattan Aug. 8, 1936.



The zeppelin Hindenburg floats past the Empire State Building over Manhattan on Aug. 8, 1936. The German airship was en route to Lakehurst, New Jersey, from Germany. The Hindenburg would later explode in a spectacular fireball above Lakehurst on May 6, 1937.

WWII Defense Workers ► ‘Rosie the Riveter’ Elinor Otto @ 93

Elinor Otto braces her slight frame and grips the riveting gun with both hands, her bright red hair and flowered sweater a blossom of color in Long Beach, Calif.’s clanking Boeing C-17 plant. Boom, boom, boom. She leans back as the gun’s hammer quickly smacks the fasteners into place. Then she puts the tool in a holster and zips around a wing spar to grab a handful of colorful screw-on backs, picking up another gun along the way to finish them off. Her movements are deft and precise. “Don’t get in her way, she’ll run you over,” a co-worker says with a smile. Otto finishes a section of fasteners, looks up and shrugs. “That’s it.” Just another day at the office for a 93-year-old “Rosie the Riveter” who stepped into a San Diego County factory in 1942 — and is still working on the assembly line today.



Elinor Otto, 93, prepares to rivet a wing while working at Boeing in Long Beach

Ootto is something of a legend among her co-workers on the state’s last large military aircraft production line. And her legend is growing: She was recently honored when Long Beach opened Rosie the Riveter Park next to the site of the former Douglas Aircraft Co. plant, where women worked during World War II. “She says, ‘We can do it!’ and I’m doing it!” Otto says, flexing her thin arm and laughing, mimicking the iconic poster. If she were younger, she jokes, she would look at herself now and wonder, “What’s that old bag still doing here?” But Otto seems to have more energy than those half a century younger. “I wish I was in as gooda shape as she’s in at my age,” says fellow structural mechanic Kim Kearns — who is 56. Otto is out of bed at 4 a.m. and drives to work early to grab a coffee and a newspaper before the 6 a.m. meeting. In the Boeing lot, she parks as far from the plant as possible so she can get some exercise. Every Thursday, she brings in cookies and goes to the beauty parlor to have her hair and nails touched up after her shift ends. “She’s an inspiration,” says Craig Ryba, another structural mechanic. “She just enjoys working and enjoys life.

Ootto was beautiful, with bright blue eyes and dark hair piled high, when she joined a small group of women at Rohr Aircraft Corp. in Chula Vista, Calif., during World War II. The bosses threatened to give demerits to the men who stood around trying to talk to her — so Otto’s suitors left notes for her in the phone booth, where she called her mother every day. Back then, everyone worked for the war effort, Otto says, so they didn’t think much of their jobs — it was tough to find good ones. World War II was all-consuming, with product rationing and scrap metal collections, and men leaving for the war. Otto joined the war effort with her two sisters, one who worked alongside her at Rohr, the other a welder in a Bay Area shipyard. She was newly single with a young son. “During those days, we could hardly find an apartment that would let you rent with kids. My goodness, they’re going to go to war someday and they can’t even live in an apartment,” says Otto, who had to board her son out during the week. “It cost \$20 a week, and it was hard because I made 65 cents an hour.”



Elinor Otto in her 20s and at 93

At the plant, she would make the others laugh at how fast she could rivet, she says, quickly moving her hands and stomping her feet to demonstrate. The men resented the women at first — shirts had to stay on, for one thing — and doubted that they could get the job done, she says. “It turned out we worked better than them, faster, because they were so sure of themselves.” And on the days they didn’t feel like going in, she and the girls would put “Rosie the Riveter” by the Four Vagabonds on their 78 phonograph. (*All the day long, Whether rain or shine, She’s a part of the assembly line. She’s making history, Working for victory, Rosie — BRRRR — the Rivet-er.*) They would sing and bop along to the music to get themselves motivated and out the door. Days after the war ended, Otto and other women were let go as men returned home. “They needed us at one time, and when the war was over, they let us go,” she says. “That’s how it was.”

Thousands of women flocked to California to work at aircraft factories during the war. The first wave was mostly single women, but wives, mothers, groups of friends and sisters followed. It was tough work, with the challenge of finding child care and the pressures of a society shaken by war and changing norms, says Long Beach Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, who wrote the book “Rosie the Riveter in Long Beach.” After a hard day’s work, men and even other women would sometimes harass Rosies if they went home in their dirty pants or overalls instead of changing into a skirt and sweater, she says. “It’s an interesting struggle that women went through just simply because they were trying to do something to help end the war,” Schipske says. “It was an incredible amount of work they had to do.” Interest in Rosies peaked in the 1970s and ‘80s, as the “We Can Do It” poster was rediscovered and became a symbol of the women’s movement, Schipske says. Now, families are becoming more aware of relatives’ contributions during the war, she says.

After the war ended, Otto tried other jobs, but sitting in an office drove her nuts — she hates being still. Car-hopping worked out until roller skates were added to the uniform. (“I’da broke my neck, skating and holding food! No, no, no.”) So she worked for Ryan Aeronautical Co. in San Diego for 14 years, until she was laid off. At a party nearly a year later, a girlfriend told her to get to Los Angeles as fast as she could. Douglas Aircraft was hiring women for the first time since the war. A car full of women left for Long Beach that night, she says, and were hired right away. In its heyday, Otto says, the C-17 plant was fully staffed with a parking lot so big that workers put flags on their cars to find them in the sea of vehicles. Long Beach was a hub of production during the war and after, but in the decades since, the aerospace industry in the city has shrunk as demand for military aircraft has fallen. In mergers over those years, Douglas became McDonnell Douglas Corp., which later joined with the Boeing Co.

But as the production at the C-17 plant dwindled and operations became more mechanized, “It was kinda like trimming back the bushes, you can see your neighbor again,” Kearns says of meeting Otto a decade ago. “She tells us not to treat her any different,” Ryba says. “She works that job just like any of us and sometimes maybe better.” A year ago, Otto would have said that working during the war was no big deal, grandson John Perry, 43, says. But as more people talk to her about her history, he says, the more she realizes she really did something important. “You’ve

saved American lives and you've been saving American lives your whole life," Perry says he tells his grandmother. "It's a powerful story, a positive story, and one hell of a tribute to the female work force." Growing up, Perry says, his grandmother taught him etiquette and culture when he was shuttling back and forth between parents. When he wrote letters to her, she corrected his spelling in neat red pen and sent them back. "As long as her eyes are open," Perry says, "she's going."

On Sept. 12, the Air Force ended its 32-year relationship with the Long Beach plant as it received its 223rd and final cargo jet. Foreign sales are few and small, but will keep the plant running until late 2014. Boeing will soon make a decision about the future of the production. The great-grandmother says she would like to retire soon as well, but she refuses to become a couch potato ("Gotta keep moving!"). She's worked so long for economic reasons — she cared for her mother and son for years — but also because of her endless energy. "When I go to heaven," she says with a laugh, "I hope God keeps me busy!" [Source: Stars & Stripes | Samantha Schaefer | 23 Sep 2013 ++]

Operation Enduring Freedom ► 12th Anniversary

October marked 12 years since the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, and for a conflict that's been seemingly forgotten by most Americans who've grown weary of war. U.S. launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) on 7 OCT 2001. There are still 54,000 American troops in Afghanistan, which is more, by far, than at any time during the first seven years of the war. With nearly three months left in 2013, as of 1 OCT at least 102 U.S. troops had died in Afghanistan according to The Associated Press -- more than during any of the first six years of the war. The U.S. role is diminishing and casualties among members of the U.S.-led international coalition are down as the Afghan security forces take over more of the fighting. But Americans are still fighting — and dying. The military is whittling forces down to approximately 34,000 by February and the number of coalition bases has gone from a high of 800 to about 100 now. But combat troops will be there for another 15 months, so we are likely still a long way from the last U.S. casualty in Afghanistan.



(1)



(2)

(1) Sgt. Blaine Zimmerman walks through a wheat field during a mission near Strong Point Dennis at Combat Outpost Nalgham, on May , 2011

(2) U.S. soldiers with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and Afghan troops hug the ground as a CH-47 Chinook helicopter kicks up dust and rocks. It was lifting off outside the village of Shuyene Wusa, as part of a recent clearing operation in the Arghandab River valley, Kandahar province, Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a topic seldom mentioned by the White House. With public support for the military mission there having crumbled in the past few years, it's easy to see why. Recently, Syria's civil war and the use of chemical weapons as well as the federal government shutdown have buried Afghanistan news. Ahmad Majidyar, an Afghanistan expert at the American Enterprise Institute and a frequent adviser to the U.S. Army says, "President Obama talks about Afghanistan strategy maybe only once in a year. When he does talk about it, he talks about the end of the war and talks only of positive things." A. Trevor Thrall said, "Media interest in the war has been waning for years, driven by Obama's silence on the issue since the end of his troop surge." Thrall is a professor at George Mason University and the author of *War in the Media Age*, which explores the intersection of the military, media and public opinion in conflicts since the Vietnam War. Thrall said it isn't the first time a president has tried to bury news about Afghanistan. "Bush stopped talking about Afghanistan almost immediately after he shifted focus to Iraq," he said. "Afghanistan was truly a forgotten war (when) Obama took over and it became it again after the surge was over. The result is the public really has no idea what's going on there."

Operation Enduring Freedom was initiated because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The U.S. sent in a small force heavily reliant on special forces able to quickly knock out the Taliban, who had sheltered the al-Qaida terrorists responsible for the attacks. But Osama Bin Laden escaped, along with many other al-Qaida leaders, and it would be nearly 10 years before the U.S. tracked him down, hiding in a safe house in neighboring Pakistan. After several years of relative calm following then-President George W. Bush's declaration of victory in Afghanistan in 2004 — a time when international troops were supporting nation-building efforts, and U.S. and world attention was focused on the continuing war in Iraq — the Taliban regrouped. They mounted a violent and effective guerrilla campaign that eventually pushed President Barack Obama to increase troop levels, sending a "surge" of 30,000 additional troops to the country in 2009. Despite the surge, though, the Taliban remain entrenched, inflicting heavy casualties on Afghan forces — who have largely taken over security responsibilities from coalition forces — with little more than a year to go before all international troops are scheduled to leave.

In 2010, during the surge, it was hard for a reporter to find a cot at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan, with journalists from around the world packed tightly into a tent that served as a media center, even battling over access to electrical outlets. Now, it's rare that embedded reporters even need to share a room at a major base. The new challenge is getting approval to embed with troops at all, as the U.S.-led coalition has made it much more difficult, largely cutting off access to international troops on the battlefield at a crucial moment when NATO is handing more responsibility to Afghan forces. U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno, the former top military commander in Iraq, said the lack of public awareness worries him because international engagement is key to sustaining gains made in Afghanistan. "If we continue on this [current military] path, I think Afghanistan can become a success story, and I worry that's not being talked about at all," he said.

Afghanistan was considered the "good war" with the just cause, the one everyone could get behind. With its clear links to the 9/11 attacks, as opposed to Iraq's, based as it was later learned on faulty intelligence, the war in Afghanistan was much more popular at first, Majidyar said. Because of this, though, it also never generated the attention — or the outrage — of the Iraq war, which led to worldwide protests and heated debates of a kind never seen in relation to Afghanistan. But now, many see Afghanistan as the foreign policy guest that has long overstayed its welcome. America and its Western allies have gone from war fatigue to numbness. There's a "sense of exhaustion" among long-time Afghan hands in aid organizations and foreign service positions, who are often "tired and, in some cases, deeply fed up" with the situation in Afghanistan, said Graeme Smith, the International Crisis Group's senior analyst in Afghanistan and author of "*The Dogs Are Eating Them Now: Our War in Afghanistan*." Public ambivalence about Afghanistan stems in part from the failures of the past few years, which, despite the surge of foreign troops, saw a sharp rise in casualties; violence remained above the pre-surge levels after the additional forces left, Smith said.

“The short attention span of the West is such that if the problem hasn’t been solved by now, maybe they figure it’s unsolvable, which is too bad because I think what Afghanistan needs right now is continued engagement,” Smith said. “In a lot of ways, a lot of Afghanistan’s future depends on whether Western nations feel guilty enough about the mess they made to stay involved.” Smith, who, as a reporter with the Toronto Globe and Mail was the only Western reporter living in the violent southern city of Kandahar, said the relative calm seen today in that city, the Taliban’s spiritual homeland, shows the stakes of continued international involvement and the fragile state of military gains. Right now, the Afghan military and local militias, known as Afghan Local Police, have the city and surrounding area fairly secure, but the salaries for those fighters are paid for entirely by foreign funds. Smith said that recently, some local commanders have complained that they haven’t been getting paid. “Some of the [Afghan Local Police] are just Taliban, who have been recruited to the government side, and if they don’t get paid, they can easily go back to the Taliban overnight.” [Source: Stars & Stripes | Heath Druzin | 13 Oct 2013 ++]

Beirut Marine Barracks Bombing ► Thirty Year Anniversary

The massive suicide bombing that ripped apart the four-story Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, early Oct. 23, 1983 — killing 241 U.S. troops — violently shook Carmel, Maine, resident Mark Nevells and other Marines from their Sunday morning slumber, he remembers. “I grabbed my gear and ran to the barracks,” Nevells, who was 21 and a lance corporal with what was then the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit’s service support group during the terrorist attack, recalled Friday. “We watched as the building dropped then we went over for the recovery mission. There were so many people in that building and we just wanted to get them out.” The explosion was so violent that it created an 8-foot crater and buried Nevells’ friends and brothers-in-arms under 15 feet of the building’s rubble. He and other Marines spent five days digging for survivors and freeing the bodies of the men they served with during the multinational peacekeeping mission. “That was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” Nevells said while wearing a black Beirut veteran’s hat honoring those who perished during the bombing. “We just did what we had to do.”



The Beirut Memorial in the Lejeune Memorial Gardens in Jacksonville, N.C.

The second-generation Marine is among those marking the 30th anniversary of the attack this week in Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C., home of what is now known as the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the country’s Beirut Memorial. A total of 220 Marines, most with the 1st Battalion of the 8th Marines, as well as 18 Navy sailors and three Army soldiers, died during the suicide truck bombing. Cpl. Bruce L. Howard from Strong is the only

Maine resident listed as killed in the attack, according to the Beirut Memorial website. It was the second deadly truck bombing in Beirut in a matter of months, and the first of two that occurred that day. The U.S. embassy in Beirut was hit by a truck bomb in April 1983 that killed 63 people, 17 of them Americans, and a second suicide bomber on Oct. 23, 1983, drove into the barracks of a French detachment in West Beirut within minutes of the first explosion and blew up their living quarters, taking the lives of 58 paratroopers inside.



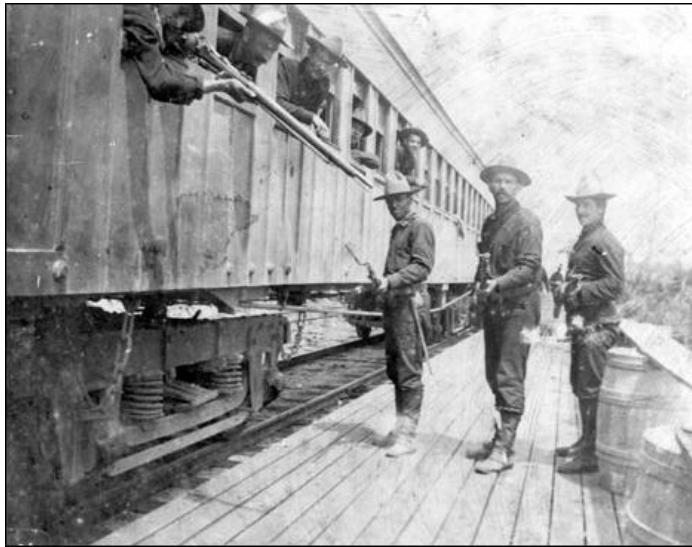
Marine Barracks Beirut rescue operations

The Marines were sent to Lebanon, along with troops from Great Britain, France and Italy, on a peacekeeping mission to broker a truce between clashing Christian and Muslim Lebanese factions. About 300 service members slept in the destroyed barracks and another 1,500 were living nearby. Nevells' sleeping quarters were about 100 yards away from the target of the bombers, he said. The chaos that followed the 6:22 a.m. blast kept U.S. troops extremely busy, so much so that Nevells forgot to call home and let everyone know he had survived. "It was three days before my mother knew I was alive," the former transport officer said. The only time before that the Marine Corps had suffered a larger loss of life in a single day was during the historic 1945 Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II, according to military organization websites. The last Marine left the area four months after the deadly barracks bombing. "The worst part for me is that nobody remembers [Beirut]," Nevells said.

Nevells, who followed his father into the Marines, left Maine on 18 OCT with his wife and stepson for Camp Lejeune. He met his stepdaughter, her boyfriend and his grandchildren in North Carolina. It's the first time he has been back since taking off his uniform in 1985, he said. The Beirut Veterans of America, of which he is a member, and The Beirut Connection, a group of families who met because of the attack and have stayed connected, are holding an all-day ceremony 23 OCT to honor the fallen. "The Remembrance also honors the service of those who participated 55 years ago during the 1958 Beirut landing and the scores of other servicemembers who died and were wounded in Beirut during 1982 through 1984," a Beirut Veterans of America press release about the gathering states. The 1983 bombings were the start of the war on terrorism and were a "precursor of what was to come," Nevells said, referring to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in America. A U.S. federal judge ruled in 2003 that the terrorist group Hezbollah was responsible for carrying out the attack on the U.S. barracks in Beirut at the direction of the Iranian government.

The 23 OCT remembrance services included a candlelight vigil, guest speakers, a wreath-laying ceremony, and the reading of the names of the Beirut bombing victims. "It's not about us who survived, it's about those who didn't survive and gave their lives," Nevells, who is the service manager for Quirk Subaru on Hogan Road, said about the trip to the memorial. "It's something I've got to do," he said. "Thirty years later, we just can't forget." [Source: Bangor Daily News | Nok-Noi Ricker | 22 Oct 2013 ++]

Spanish American War Images 41 ► Louisiana Volunteers



Soldiers of the 2nd Regiment of Louisiana Volunteers at train depot: Cocoa, Florida (1898)

Health Care

TRICARE Mobile Access ► Options

We live in an increasingly mobile world, with more and more people possessing technology that allows them to use the Internet on the go. Beneficiaries can access their TRICARE benefits and benefit information on their mobile devices through a variety of mobile applications and mobile-optimized sites. The first mobile tool people should know about is the mobile version of TRICARE.mil, accessible on mobile devices including tablets and smartphones. Simply type <http://www.tricare.mil> into a mobile device's browser to get benefit and contact information. Beneficiaries can download educational materials, view episodes of TRICARE TV, listen to podcasts, read TRICARE news, find contact information for different regions and plans, submit benefit questions and access costs, plans, referrals and other information specific to their plan.

Each of the TRICARE regional contractors also has their own mobile site or app. Health Net, the North Region contractor, operates <http://www.hnfs.com/go/mobile>, which allows beneficiaries to locate TRICARE-authorized providers and access resources including contact information and information about benefits, claims and eligibility. The South Region contractor, Humana Military, has a mobile site at m.humana-military.com. Humana Military Mobile offers links to a provider locator, a search tool for urgent care centers and eligibility and plan information. In the West Region, UnitedHealth Military & Veterans has a mobile app for mobile devices called "OptumizeMe." This app encourages healthy lifestyles by letting users challenge other users to health and fitness goals on their smartphones. OptumizeMe lets users track their own progress and post the results to Facebook. Beneficiaries can download OptumizeMe from iTunes or the Google Play store.

The TRICARE pharmacy contractor Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI) offers both a mobile site, <http://www.express-scripts.com/mobile>, and an app called Express Rx. These allow beneficiaries to get benefit information, start home delivery of their prescriptions, check order status, order prescription refills and find a nearby network pharmacy. They even have information about drugs and potential side effects. Beneficiaries must register with ESI before using

the mobile site by going to <http://www.express-scripts.com/activate>. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) also offers a mobile app (for Android phones) called milConnect Mobile. The app allows beneficiaries to locate identification card-issuing facilities, find contact information for TRICARE regional contractors and review frequently asked questions. Beneficiaries can download milConnect Mobile from the Google Play store.

These mobile options make it easier than ever to get the information and access beneficiaries need to take control of their health care options. If beneficiaries can't get the information they need from one of these mobile options, they can always call TRICARE or their contractor. Visit <http://www.tricare.mil/callus> for a list of contact numbers [Source: TRICARE e-Mail Update 16 Oct 2013 ++]

General Interest



Government Shutdown Update 16 ► TMC No-Politicians-Allowed Rally

Military advocates massed at the World War II Memorial again on 15 OCT to plead for an end to the government shutdown, saying it's hurting veterans and endangering national security. The message was unchanged, but the crowd was distinctly different from those at recent rallies at the site. In the last two weeks, the monument has become a rallying spot for visiting veterans, posturing politicians and -- on Sunday -- a few thousand angry conservatives who relocated park service barricades from there to the White House a few blocks away. Tuesday's rally, organized by the Military Coalition (TMC), was billed as a no-politicians-allowed event. The group of 33 influential organizations for veterans and active-duty troops said its goal was to highlight the pain the shutdown has caused and the need to find a compromise solution.



Ray Kelley, VFW's national legislative director, is joined by representatives of several veterans groups as he speaks at a press conference at the National World War II Memorial in Washington on Oct. 15, 2013.

"I don't think we've ever seen Congress fail us this badly before," said Paul Rieckhoff, executive director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America "Right now, veterans are hurting. They don't know if their disability checks are coming. They don't know if their GI Bill checks are coming." Veterans Affairs officials have warned that benefits payouts and a host of support programs could stop if the shutdown lasts into late October. The Defense Department has halted some base services and family support programs and furloughed thousands of civilian workers. Steve Gonzalez, assistant director of the American Legion's economic division, said efforts to help homeless and unemployed veterans have been stalled by the shutdown. Last week, officials from the Fisher House Foundation began paying death gratuities to the families of fallen troops, because Pentagon officials said they no longer had the legal authority to do so. "Our servicemembers and veterans are being forced to depend on charity for their very existence," Gonzalez said.

Speakers at the rally, attended by about 200 people, did not offer a solution to the shutdown, other than to "end it." Lawmakers have been deadlocked for two weeks over how to continue funding federal operations and raise the national debt ceiling. House Republicans have passed a measure that would reinstate full funding for VA programs while the shutdown occurs, but the idea has gained little support among Democrats in the Senate. Leaders from the Veterans of Foreign Wars said they oppose piecemeal solutions, noting that many military and veteran support programs rely on agencies like the Department of Labor, Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Education. "Fixing it little by little is not going to solve this problem for veterans," said Ray Kelley, VFW's national legislative director. The Military Coalition has offered no preferred path for ending the political stalemate. "That's for the politicians to decide," said Bob Norton, deputy director of government relations at the Military Officers Association of America. "How they do it is up to them. But it needs to be resolved." [Source: Stars & Stripes | Leo Shane | 15 Oct 2013 ++]

Government Shutdown Update 17 ► WWP to Give \$500 to 40K Vets

A non-profit group that helps those wounded in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars says that if the government shutdown results in cutting off VA compensation benefits, it will send out \$20 million to some 40,000 young veterans it has assisted in the past. The decision announced 15 OCT by Florida-based Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) is among the largest initiatives by a private group or individuals to cover unmet needs in the wake of the government shutdown 1 OCT. "You're hearing (from veterans) a lot of fear, and you're hearing a lot of anger and frustration," says Steven Nardizzi, a co-founder and the executive director of Wounded Warrior Project. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki told Congress last week that if the shutdown continues through the end of October, the VA will not be able to send out 1 NOV monthly checks totaling \$6.25 billion to more than 5 million beneficiaries, including nearly 4 million veterans.

Nardizzi says the money his group would provide, if necessary, to 40,000 veterans is admittedly modest — \$500, enough to cover some basic needs. But, he added, "we had to do more than just a call to action. We had to do everything we could to provide support to those families." He said many Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have a complex array of disabilities that include amputations, spinal injuries, brain injury and emotional issues. Many are receiving benefits for more than one disability and rely heavily on a VA compensation check amounting to several thousand dollars the first of each month, he says. "You have folks who are dealing with mental health issues who are concerned about am I going to be able to feed my family at the end of the month," Nardizzi says. A common refrain from many of them, Nardizzi says, is "I served my country, I did my part, I did what was asked of me. And now my country is breaking its promise to me.' Right now they're so angry with the government, but they understand that the public is still behind them."

The potential \$20 million offer of assistance from Wounded Warrior Project would be the among largest initiatives by a private group or individual to cover unmet needs in the wake of the government shutdown Oct. 1. A Texas billionaire couple donated \$10 million to help keep the federal Head Start programs running. And the Fisher House Foundation, which builds residences on the grounds of military hospitals for families visiting their wounded loved ones, is providing \$725,000 as gifts to the families of 29 troops who have died since the shutdown, some of them in combat. Those families were initially denied death gratuities from the Pentagon because of the shutdown. Congress last week restored the \$100,000-per-family payments. [Source: USA Today | Gregg Zoroya | 5 Oct 2013 ++]

Government Shutdown Update 18 ► What Was Lost

The U.S. government is back, and we avoided the worst-case scenario - a default on America's debt and a resulting worldwide financial collapse. But a government shutdown of more than two weeks didn't do us any favors either. For instance, many reports suggested the shutdown would hurt small business, and it did, especially in towns surrounding national parks and other government-dependent areas. "Pete's Diner & Carryout, a 50-year-old Capitol Hill eatery frequented by House Speaker John Boehner, lost about 80 percent of its usual business," Bloomberg says. "For thousands of small businesses, this was no glitch. It's money that can't be easily recovered, creating a long-term ripple effect - with the holidays approaching - that will be difficult to forget." Here are some of the other effects, according to Bloomberg, CNN, Time and other sources:

- Standard & Poor's estimates the shutdown cost us at least 0.6 percent of fourth-quarter 2013 gross domestic product growth, or \$24 billion.
- Furloughs of civilian employees as a result of the government shutdown cost the Defense Department at least \$600 million in productivity, the Pentagon's top financial officer said.
- While Congress authorized back pay for federal government employees who were furloughed, thousands of workers for private contractors have no such luck. (Federal agencies award private contractors about \$1.4 billion a day, on average.)
- Consumer confidence - a measure of how comfortable people are spending money right now - plunged to the lowest level in nearly two years. This, among other things, slowed new car sales and home purchases.
- Some college students in the military dropped out of classes because the Defense Department's tuition assistance program was shut down.
- No new craft beers were introduced during the shutdown, because the federal government couldn't process applications.
- The failure of Congress to quickly resolve its issues has also resulted in no action being taken regarding the 1 OCT expiration of the most recent farm bill. Without an agreement coming soon, milk prices could double, and prices for grains and other farm products could soar as well.
- The Pentagon's decision to cancel the air show at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar just one day before it was slated to begin cost the base between \$600,000 and \$700,000, though officials aren't sure yet how big a hit the Marine and family programs that usually benefit from the show's profits will take.
- Feds who received unemployment during shutdown must return payments
- Processing of VA disability claims for 1400 vets each day of the shutdown were delayed. This delay has created concern about Secretary Eric Shinseki's ability to keep his pledge to end all backlogged claims – those older than 125 days– by 2015.

Additionally, a Macroeconomic Advisers report suggested the ongoing budget battles are continually increasing unemployment, Bloomberg says. It's estimated that Congress cost us about 900,000 jobs this year. And, the 16 OCT budget deal wasn't a permanent fix. It only agreed to fund the government through 15 JAN and lift the debt ceiling

through 7 FEB. A more light-hearted poll from Public Policy Polling last week may be even more telling, as pollsters pitted Congress against everything from Wall Street to witches, and you might be surprised by the various entities -- including Wall Street and witches -- that had better approval ratings than Congress. Among the things that bested Congress, according to respondents: dog poop (47%-40%), hemorrhoids (53%-31%), jury duty (73%-18%), toenail fungus (44%-41%), cockroaches (44%-42%), the IRS (42%-33%), the respondents' mothers-in-law (64%-20%), potholes (47%-36%) and zombies (43%-37%). [Source: MoneyTalksNews | Brandon Ballenger | 17 Oct 2013 ++]

Government Shutdown Update 19 ► What Was Missed

Numerous government facilities operation and services were impacted or stopped as a result of furloughs of non-essential personnel . Refer to <http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2013/09/politics/government-shutdown-impact/> for a complete list. By referring to the website noted you can anticipate how it will affect you and plan accordingly if we have another shutdown in FEB. Following are a select few of these:

- The acting head of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) told a Senate panel on 11 OCT that Aviation, rail and subway accidents were going uninvestigated because of the government shutdown. In the first 10 days following the lapse of appropriations a number of accidents occurred for which an investigator or investigative team was not sent. With 383 of the NTSB's 405 employees furloughed the shutdown resulted in the suspension of ongoing investigative work across all modes of transportation, including postponement of two investigative hearings and the issuance of two sets of urgent recommendations identifying imminent threats to life or property.
- Chemical safety has been an obvious issue since 9/11, further highlighted by the April fertilizer-plant explosion in West, Texas. The shutdown pushed back some meetings related to an Obama directive in August prompting agencies to work on improving chemical-plant safety and could delay other deadlines.
- CDC furloughed 9,000 workers leaving only about 4,000 on the job. Not enough to keep on top of a variety of infectious diseases. Thus, there was no real-time surveillance and we lost situational awareness, or intelligence about what was happening. The CDC provides disease-tracking services that no other agency or private entity does. The CDC is the agency that makes the judgment call about what flu vaccines to distribute across the nation. Without the CDC, we have no real-time tracking of disease outbreaks. It monitors high-security labs that do tests on deadly pathogens like anthrax. It collaborates across international borders to stop outbreaks.
- In addition to National parks The Smithsonian Institution's museums -- including the National Air and Space Museum, the most-visited museum in the country -- were closed during the shutdown, spoiling vacation plans for thousands. By one estimate, national parks and nearby communities lost \$76 million for each day that park gates were closed. Obama offered states the opportunity to reopen the facilities if they would absorb the operating cost. They declined.
- The Capitol was closed to visitors
- Before the shutdown caused the furlough of 45% of Food and Drug Administration employees, it was expected that the agency was going to pass regulations outlawing TV advertisements for e-cigarettes. For the time being, however, commercials for e-cigarettes are still being shown on TV, which is good for e-cigarette sales—and bad for those trying to limit exposure for tobacco products.
- Because of the shutdown, the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau could not process applications for new breweries, nor for new beers that craft brewers were trying to introduce.
- A high-profile legal battle over transparency between the largest Internet companies in the U.S. and the federal government came to a standstill, because Justice Department lawyers assigned to the case are

prohibited from working. Also, two ostensibly independent government investigations into the National Security Agency's surveillance programs were disrupted.

- The absence of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's website as a result of furloughs made it harder for some to find out about current weather conditions or see views of the Northern Lights. Those who depend on this information for school or other research were missing a key resource. Also, views of what's out there in outer space were no longer available due to the shutdown of NASA's website.
- Access to the Library of Congress and census data for research were lost.
- Social Security stopped accepting new applications for benefits and issuing replacement Social Security cards, replacement Medicare cards and proof-of-income letters.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was not in operation during the shutdown. This program services nine million pregnant women and their children.
- The IRS will suspended audit activities but continued to process all tax payments.
- Issuance of gun permits were put on hold.
- New loan applications for small businesses were not accepted.
- The independent Ability One agency's 30 employees, who work on behalf of the blind, were prohibited from working during the shutdown.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission sites worldwide were closed to the public.
- The annual Combined Federal Campaign charity drive was interrupted.

[Source: Various 20 Oct 2013 ++]

Government Shutdown Update 20 ► VA to Pay Monetary Benefits 1 NOV

Employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs are working to resume normal operations as quickly as possible. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) regional offices reopened their doors and resumed public contact services for Veterans 17 OCT. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said, "With the shutdown over, we are all very grateful that the 1 NOV benefit checks will go out to approximately 5 million Veterans and other beneficiaries as scheduled. We at VA are working quickly to resume normal operations in order to fulfill our solemn obligation – to ensure that Veterans receive the benefits and services they have earned through their service. I want to thank all of our VA employees for their dedication and resolve during this difficult period."

During the government shutdown, VA medical centers, clinics, and other health services remained open. Due to the shutdown, VA claims processors were unable to continue working 20 hours of overtime per month to reduce the backlog of claims, overtime that has helped VA significantly reduce the disability claims backlog by more than 190,000 claims over the last six months. Mandatory overtime will resume immediately and will continue as planned through 16 NOV, at a minimum. "In the coming weeks and months, we will fight hard to regain ground lost as a result of the government shutdown," said Shinseki. "We remain committed to eliminating the disability claims backlog in 2015." [Source: VA News Release 17 Oct 2013 ++]

Merchant Marine ‘Captain Phillips’ ► Ask-Me-Anything Interview

Richard Phillips, Merchant Marine and ship captain whose story inspired the Tom Hanks' film "Captain Phillips" about his abduction by Somali pirates, conducted a surprisingly candid Reddit Ask-Me-Anything (AmA) on 24 OCT. Phillips, who has been sailing for 34 years, offered answers to "almost anything" on his career, which he

described as "many different things, including Somali Pirates (which you may have heard of, thanks to the recent movie)." He received some praise from redditors for answering some of the more unpleasant questions — including ones dealing with accusations from his crew that he put them in danger. You can read more on the AmA at http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/1p2csm/i_am_captain_richard_phillips_whose_story/. Following are some Q&As that have been edited for clarity:

- *On criticism he has received that he ignored warnings of a minimum safe distance off the Somali coast and put the crew in danger* --- Again this has to do with the suit that started shortly after the incident. The 600 miles were advisories and warnings put out by various organizations. But if you look at a chart of our route, we were never outside of 600 miles. And this ship had been in that area for 4 years. So the warnings and advisories were basically if you can avoid the area, to avoid it by 600 miles and we were always in 600 miles. And ships had been taken out 1200 miles before, so the 600 miles was not that accurate.
- *A follow-up question asked him to "convince me the accusations your former crew is levying against you are false."* --- I don't think there's enough time here to convince you. It's a suit that is ongoing that started 2 weeks after they got back. It's not all my crew and unfortunately we live in a litigious society. Some of the crew had been on for a while and had never complained until after this incident, so the court will decide and hopefully that will convince you.
- *On how he coped with the stress after the ordeal of being held by pirates* --- I have really had no nightmares or dreams from the incident. 2 days after in the movie it shows me crying in the hospital, and the incident actually occurred the 2nd and 3rd night, I would wake up in the night and I had a digital clock so I knew exactly what time it was, and I would be crying, racking and sobbing. And I would mentally slap myself in the head and say "What's your problem? You made it, you're lucky." And there was this one SEAL who somehow sensed something in me and basically was harassing me, and he explained "Rich, it doesn't always turn out like this." They are not always successful. After some missions, they have to talk to psychologists. So I said "if you leave me alone, I will call him" so I called the SEAL psychologist. And he got a sense of me on the phone talking to him and he asked me if I was sad the pirates died, and I said no doc, no Stockholm Syndrome here, and then I said put us all back in the boat and we'll see who walks out. And then he asked me if I was sleeping and I said I slept like a baby.

And then he asked me if I was eating and I said I was not eating much but because it was hot that was normal for me. And then he asked me if I cried a lot, and I said no but I was waking up at 5 in the morning crying like a little baby. And he said basically it was the hormones and chemicals put out by your body during a fight or flight situation. And he asked me what I did when I woke up crying, and I told him what I am telling all of you, and he said well that is one mechanism to release these chemicals and hormones, crying and talking about it, so he told me the next time it happened to let it run its natural course. For the fourth morning, I woke up at 5 in the morning crying and sobbing like a little baby and I just let it flow for 45 minutes and it ended on its own. And it never happened again after that. And so I truly believe now that it is important to talk to someone who can help you, and to cry.

- *On who would win in a fight — him or Tom Hanks* --- Ha! That's easy, Tom Hanks would lose. I probably have 25-30 pounds on him, although he is taller. Besides he's a big crybaby.
- *On the accuracy of the film Captain Phillips* --- The story was fairly accurate in the film. We all have to remember it is a movie, and it is compressing 5 days into 2 hours, so some of the scheduling is different, but it follows the true story fairly well. For example, in the real incident it was into the rescue boat and then the life boat, and in the movie, I was directly sent into the life boat to save time.
- *On his first thoughts and the first sign he realized a pirate problem was imminent* --- Well it was really a sinking in your stomach, an uneasy quease. And then we just went to our procedures and did what we could to try to keep them off. The biggest facet in dealing with piracy is the weather and indeed that

morning, the chief mate and I had both said that we could not wait for the monsoon to change because this was indeed a pirate weather day, very little swell, near glass seas and very little wind. The first sign was a sailor had noticed an intermittent blip on our radar, and at a little over 3 miles we saw the boat. It was hazy as it usually was in that part of the world.



Captain Richard Phillips

Phillips closed out his AmA by thanking redditors for their questions and reminding people of the Merchant Marines and what they have done in the past — in addition to thanking the U.S. military, especially Navy SEALS.

"WWII Merchant Marine Vets that still get no recognition but what they did during WWII that not a lot of people realize is that the rate of death was second only to the frontline U.S. Marines division," he wrote. "Many lost their lives supplying the Military in WWII. MacArthur had said that U.S. Merchant Marines were the lifeblood during World War II, and this is a group that needs recognition that is sorely due them as they get older and older and up in age."

NAUS agrees with Captain Phillips and will continue to work for recognition of this cadre of brave men. If you agree use the NAUS CapWiz site <http://capwiz.com/naus/issues/alert/?alertid=62978021> to send its preformatted editable message to your elected officials. [Source: NAUS Weesly Update 25 Oct 2014 ++]

First Flight Controversy ► NC vs. OH vs CT | Wright Brothers or Whitehead

Ohio and North Carolina partisans, who have sniped at each other in a century-long struggle over the Wright Brothers legacy, will join forces this week for a First-in-Flight feud with a new common enemy: Connecticut. In a shared press conference to be staged Thursday near historic aviation landmarks at Dayton and Kitty Hawk, two legislators from the Buckeye and Tar Heel states will launch a hot-air assault on a new Connecticut law that gives credit for the first flight by a heavier-than-air craft to a Bavarian immigrant named Gustave Whitehead. "Sometimes people say things that aren't true, and if they say them enough, people start to believe them," N.C. Sen. Bill Cook of Chocowinity, whose district includes the Dare County Outer Banks, said in an interview 23 OCT. "I really can't believe what the folks in Connecticut did. That's beyond the pale." The Whitehead legislation "kind of crossed the line," said Ohio Rep. Rick Perales, a retired Air Force major who commanded a squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, named for the brothers. "Changing history without any substantive evidence is just, in my eye, irresponsible."



Orville Wright takes off with Wilbur running beside photo, December 17, 1903 plus drawing which accompanied an article of Whitehead's flight on page 5 of the 18 August 1901 Bridgeport Herald

Orville and Wilbur Wright refined their box-kite biplane at their bicycle shop in Ohio. They launched it at North Carolina's windswept Outer Banks on Dec. 17, 1903. They took care to document their historic feat with copious records, witnesses and photographs. But was the Wrights' flight truly the first? Whitehead claimed to have flown for two miles in his bird-like machine on Aug. 14, 1901, near Bridgeport, Conn., and for seven miles in 1902 over Long Island Sound. Scattered newspaper reports from that decade include eyewitness accounts, recantations, boasts and declarations of failure. The Wrights and others credited Whitehead with building engines for other successful airplanes in subsequent years. But the only clear photographs from that era showed Whitehead and his own aircraft on the ground – not in the air. Whitehead's claim was debated for decades after his death in 1927. It picked up momentum this year when Australian researcher John Brown announced on his website, gustave-whitehead.com, that he had photographic proof. From a photo of a 1906 aviation exhibition hall, Brown zoomed in on a group of photographs displayed on a wall at the back of the room. He enlarged and analyzed a tiny, blurry rectangle and declared it to be a photograph of Whitehead's 1901 flight.

Paul Jackson, editor of Jane's All the World's Aircraft – widely respected as an aviation authority – may have tipped the scales with an endorsement of Brown's finding. He declared that the first controlled flight of a powered airplane had indeed taken place in Connecticut in 1901. In terms of aerodynamic design, Whitehead's No. 21 Condor was inferior to the Wright Flyer, Jackson said. It looked like a rowboat suspended from ribbed, bird-like wings and steered with a bird-like tail. But Whitehead compensated with more locomotive power – 30 horsepower in his engine, compared to the Wrights' 12. "The Wrights were right, but Whitehead was ahead," Jackson wrote. Connecticut residents had long been fans of Whitehead. Bridgeport last year erected a monument with a stylized replica of his aircraft and an inscription hijacked from the North Carolina license plate slogan: First in Flight. But there was plenty of respect for the Wright Brothers in Connecticut history, too. U.S. Sen. Hiram Bingham of Connecticut helped secure money to establish a marker at Kitty Hawk recognizing the first flight. He attended the dedication in 1928 with dignitaries including Orville Wright and aviator Amelia Earhart.

And there was a state law authorizing an annual Powered Flight Day "to honor the first powered flight by the Wright brothers." In a rewrite of the law signed by the governor in June, the Connecticut legislature erased the Wrights and awarded the historic honor to Whitehead. "His special talents and gifts deserve recognition, particularly in his most notable achievement – being the first in flight," Connecticut Rep. Larry Miller, the bill's sponsor, said Wednesday by email. "In Connecticut, we felt it was important to do so as this was the home to his most momentous achievement." Several aviation historians dismissed Brown's photographic evidence. Two analysts published papers concluding that the blurry image was either a 1905 photo of a California glider or a picture of Whitehead's airplane on the ground, not in the air. "I've been reading about Whitehead for over 40 years," said Tom Crouch, senior aeronautics curator for the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, whose centerpiece

exhibit is the original Wright Flyer. “I talked about him in my doctoral dissertation in 1976. “You will never drive a stake into the heart of this one,” Crouch said. “All you can do is try to keep people informed. In a nutshell, I don’t think there is any reputable evidence to support his flight claims.”

Whitehead partisans have had unkind words for the Wrights. In presentations to Connecticut audiences this past summer, Brown said the 1903 Wright Flyer was not airworthy and that the famous 1903 Kitty Hawk photos did not actually provide evidence of sustained flight. The Smithsonian has drawn fire, too. Miller said a “secret contract” unearthed in 1976 showed that the Wright family had donated the original aircraft after extracting the Smithsonian’s promise to defend the brothers’ first-in-flight legacy. “If the Smithsonian deviates from the narrative on the Wrights, they must return the plane to the Wrights’ heirs, so they have a considerable interest in refusing to do so,” Miller said. That pledge has made it difficult to correct the historical record, he said. Crouch said the contract stemmed from a time when some Smithsonian officials showed misguided loyalty to their own leader, who also was a Wright Brothers competitor. Samuel Pierpont Langley, then the Institution’s secretary, tried and failed to fly his own airplane in 1903. After his death in 1906, Smithsonian officials recognized that the Wright Brothers were the first to fly – but they also maintained, for years, that Langley “had been capable of flight before them,” Crouch said.

That’s one reason why Orville Wright initially gave his prized flying machine to a museum in London instead of one in the United States. Eventually, the Smithsonian reconciled with the Wright family and received the Wright Flyer in 1948, shortly after Orville’s death. Wilbur Wright had died in 1912. When lawyers for the Wrights’ estate insisted on a pledge that the Smithsonian would honor the brothers’ place in history, Crouch said, they had Langley’s ghost in mind. “That contract is a reminder of a dark time in the history of the Smithsonian, when we didn’t do right by the Wright Brothers,” Crouch said. “If in fact I, as a historian and a scholar, was ever convinced that anybody had flown before the Wright Brothers, I would say so.” In 1986, North Carolina adopted a resolution endorsing the Wright Brothers, repudiating Whitehead and citing a quotation often attributed to 19th century showman P.T. Barnum – another son of Bridgeport: “There’s a sucker born every minute.” Perales hopes to push an anti-Whitehead measure through the Ohio legislature this fall. Ohio claims on its license plates to be the “Birthplace of Aviation,” but Perales doesn’t want to quarrel with North Carolina any more. “Who would have thought that North Carolina and Ohio could be in sync on a Wright Brothers issue?” Perales said. “We’ve always fought about who owned what. Now, we’re going to come together and put that aside.” [Source: The News & Observer (Raleigh, N.C.) | Bruce Siceloff | 24 Oct 2013 ++]

Google Policy Change ► Users’ Name & Photo Use in Advertising

Thanks to tweaks made to its terms of service 11 OCT, Google will be able to use its users’ names and photos in select advertising beginning 11 NOV. The updated terms of service, first noticed by The New York Times, specifically allow for the company to use what it calls “shared endorsements,” which, the Times explains, occur only when a user comments, +1s (Google’s equivalent of a Facebook ‘like’) or follows pages or brands included in Google’s services. That means anytime a Google Plus user endorses a company—say, McDonald’s—by giving it a +1, Google can then use those endorsements alongside an ad it later runs for the company. Google will only share the endorsed ads with the people who originally saw the endorsement, making it all the more important that users specify the friend groups, or circles with which they share their feedback and reviews. Otherwise, a publicly shared endorsement will allow the company to include a user’s name and photo in online ads distributed to just about anyone. Nearly 400 million users engage with Google Plus either directly or indirectly through interaction with other Google-owned sites like YouTube.

While Google is opting all of its adult users into the scheme, it's also providing a means of opting out. Users can decide whether or not to share their name and photo in Google's "shared endorsements" setting. Given the likelihood that many people will never read the company's updated terms of service, the change is bound to go unnoticed by many of Google's users. In the world of social media advertising, Google's move is merely keeping up with the Joneses. Facebook, for one, already uses its user information in ads. But in the past, Google pegged itself as a standout in this regard; it has talked about not stepping over the "creepy" line, even if it nudges up against it. Given its recent involvement in US National Security Agency's data sharing scandal, admission that its email service Gmail isn't private, and this latest ad endeavor, the creepy line looks like it's being crossed. [Source: Quartz Daily Brief | Roberto A. Ferdman | 11 Oct 2013 ++]

Food Date Labeling ► Sell By, Use By & Best Before

Are you one of the millions of Americans tossing hundreds of dollars in the trash each year? Probably so if you don't understand those "sell by," "use by" and "best before" labels stamped on the groceries you buy. "The Dating Game: How Confusing Food Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America" found that the vast majority of Americans misinterpret food labels and throw out perfectly good food. An average household of four is unnecessarily pitching \$275 to \$455 in food each year. By understanding some simple terms, you can keep that money in your pocket, rather than toss it in the trash can.

"Sell by" date. If you throw out food based on the "sell by" date, you're not alone. The study found that more than 90 percent of consumers make that mistake. Yet keeping food past that date does not mean it's unsafe. In reality, the sell by date is used by manufacturers to let grocery stores know they shouldn't sell food past that date so it still has shelf life after a consumer purchases it, according to the report.

"Best before" date and "use by" date. "Best before" and "use by" dates don't mean you should toss that food away. Those labels typically indicate the manufacturer's estimate of when the food will be past its peak for quality, but that doesn't mean the food is unsafe, the report says. There's no standard that establishes those dates. Laws vary by state, and manufacturers have their own means of setting dates. Neither the U.S. Food and Drug Administration nor the U.S. Department of Agriculture has stepped in to address the confusion. Amazingly, infant formula is the only product for which the date on the label is federally regulated.

Given the confusion over dates, you're probably wondering how long you can safely keep food without jeopardizing your family's health – or your own pocketbook. Depending on what you are looking for check out the following:

- The federal government gives you good starting points. At <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>, you'll find recommended refrigerator and freezer storage times for various meat products. Most meats can be safely stored in the refrigerator for a few days and in the freezer for a few months. But the site points out that freezer storage guidelines are only for quality, and foods can stay safely frozen indefinitely.
- You'll find more in-depth information on food safety and the limits of labeling on the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service website <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>. Those eggs you bought last week can be safely refrigerated for three to five weeks. And who knew shelf-stable canned meat and poultry is still good after two to five years.
- The Whole Foods website <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/about-our-products/food-safety/handling-dairy-products-cheese-and-eggs-safely> has helpful information on storing dairy products and cheese.

Storage times vary greatly, so you might want to take that into consideration when deciding what to buy. Opened butter, for example, will last one to two weeks, while opened margarine will last four to six months.

- On the Spice Islands site <http://www.spiceislands.com/SpiceEducation/ShelfLife.aspx>, you'll find information on the shelf life of spices and herbs. Buying whole spices rather than ground spices is a better choice because they last longer.
- You'll find safety and storage recommendations for nearly every product under the sun at <http://www.stilltasty.com>. Wonder how long you can keep that raw shrimp in the fridge or freezer, or whether that unopened package of spaghetti that got buried in the back of the pantry is still good? The answer is just a click away.

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Susan Ladika | 15v Oct 2013 ++]

Pineapples ► Some Things You May Not Know

- The pineapple is a member of the bromeliad family. It is extremely rare that bromeliads produce edible fruit. The pineapple is the only available edible bromeliad today.
- It is a multiple fruit. One pineapple is actually made up of dozens of individual flowerets that grow together to form the entire fruit. Each scale on a pineapple is evidence of a separate flower.
- Pineapples stop ripening the minute they are picked. No special way of storing them will help ripen them further.
- Color is relatively unimportant in determining ripeness. Choose your pineapple by smell. If it smells fresh, tropical and sweet, it will be a good fruit. The more scales on the pineapple, the sweeter and juicier the taste.
- After you cut off the top, you can plant it. It should grow much like a sweet potato will.

Health Benefit

- Pineapple is valuable for easing indigestion, arthritis or sinusitis. The juice has an anthelmintic effect; it helps get rid of intestinal worms.
- Pineapple is high in manganese, a mineral that is critical to development of strong bones and connective tissue. A cup of fresh pineapple will give you nearly 75% of the recommended daily amount. It is particularly helpful to older adults, whose bones tend to become brittle with age.
- Bromelain, a proteolytic enzyme, is the key to pineapple's health value. Proteolytic means "breaks down protein", which is why pineapple is known to be a digestive aid. It helps the body digest proteins more efficiently.
- Bromelain is also considered an effective anti-inflammatory. Regular ingestion of at least one half cup of fresh pineapple daily is purported to relieve painful joints common to osteoarthritis. It also produces mild pain relief. In Germany, bromelain is approved as a post-injury medication because it is thought to reduce inflammation and swelling.
- Fresh pineapple is not only high in this vitamin C, but because of the Bromelain, it has the ability to reduce mucous in the throat. If you have a cold with a productive cough, add pineapple to your diet. It is commonly used in Europe as a post-operative measure to cut mucous after certain sinus and throat operations.
- Those individuals who eat fresh pineapple daily report fewer sinus problems related to allergies. In and of itself, pineapple has a very low risk for allergies.

- Pineapple is also known to discourage blood clot development. This makes it a valuable dietary addition for frequent fliers and others who may be at risk for blood clots.
- An old folk remedy for morning sickness is fresh pineapple juice. It really works! Fresh juice and some nuts first thing in the morning often make a difference.
- It's also good for a healthier mouth. The fresh juice discourages plaque growth.

[Source: NaturalNews.com | Sheryl Walters | 28 Feb 2009 ++]

Flag Myths ► Top 10

1. The Flag Code is The American Legion Flag Code -- On Flag Day, June 14, 1923, The American Legion and representatives of 68 other patriotic, fraternal, civic and military organizations met in Washington, DC for the purpose of drafting a code of flag etiquette. The 77th Congress adopted this codification of rules as public law on June 22, 1942. It is Title 4, United States Code Chapter 1.

2. A flag that has been used to cover a casket cannot be used for any other proper display purpose -- Not true. It can be used for any proper display purpose to include displaying this flag from a staff or flagpole.

3. The Flag Code prohibits the display of a United States flag of less than 50 stars -- According to the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry the United States flag never becomes obsolete. Any officially approved American flag, irrespective of the number or arrangement of the stars and/or stripes may continue to be used and displayed until no longer serviceable.

4. The Flag Code does provide for penalties for violations of any of its provisions -- No. It is simply a guideline for proper flag etiquette. The law does not provide penalties for violation of any of its provisions.

5. You must destroy the flag when it touches the ground -- As long as the flag remains suitable for display, the flag may continue to be displayed as a symbol of our great country.

6. The Flag Code prohibits the washing or dry-cleaning of the flag -- There are no provisions of the Flag Code, which prohibit the washing or dry-cleaning of the flag. The decision to wash or dry-clean would of course depend upon the type of material.

7. There has been a change to the Flag Code that no longer requires the flag to be properly illuminated during the hours of darkness -- There has been NO CHANGE to Flag Code section 6(a), which states: "It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flag staffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness."

8. The mayor, a town official, or the Post Commander can order the flag to be displayed at half-staff -- The gesture of placing the flag at half-staff means that the Nation or the state mourns the death of a highly regarded National or state figure, hence only the President of the United States or the Governor of the state may order the Flag to be half-staffed in accordance with Flag Code section 7(m). Those individuals and agencies that usurp authority and display the flag at half-staff on inappropriate occasions are quickly eroding the honor and reverence accorded this solemn act.

9. The Flag Code states that when the flag is no longer a fitting emblem for display it is to be disposed of by burning in private -- The Flag Code as revised and adopted by the Congress of the United States in 1942 has never

included the word(s) "private" or "in privacy." Section 8(k) of the Flag Code states: "The flag, when it is in such a condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Since 1937, The American Legion has promoted the use of a public flag disposal ceremony as does the VFW. This ceremony is a fitting tribute and an overt expression of patriotism, which enhances the public's understanding of honor and respect due the American flag.

10. The Flag Code prohibits the “fringing” of the flag -- Fringing of the flag is neither approved of nor prohibited by the Flag Code. The American Legion considers that fringe is used as an honorable enrichment to the Flag. Additionally the courts have deemed without merit and frivolous, lawsuits that contend that the gold fringe adorning the flag conferred Admiralty/Maritime jurisdiction.

[Source: American Legion Online Update 17 Oct 2013 ++]

Notes of Interest ► 15 thru 31 Oct 2013

- **DeCA.** The day before the Commissaries were closed for the shutdown sales were \$30.6 million, more than double the normal sales volume, making it the No. 1 sales day for DeCA since 2000.
- **Home Insurance.** The average rate hike for a family filing a homeowners claim is about 9 percent, or \$150 a year, according to a new study by Insurance Quotes. In some states, premiums can jump double that amount (i.e. MN — 21% | CT — 21% | MD — 19% | CA — 18% | OR — 17%). Locate your state at <http://www.insurancequotes.com/Media/Default/images/home-claim-increase-table.png>.
- **Fast Food.** McDonald's dollar menu will be rebranded 4 NOV to include items up to \$5 in even dollar increments.
- **Checking Accounts.** Even if you have a so-called free account, you may be paying significantly more than you were even a few years ago. Bankrate.com surveys bank fees annually and has found the costs associated with checking accounts haven't gone up a little; they have gone up a lot. From 2007 to 2012: Average overdraft charge — up 11% | Average ATM surcharge — up 40% | Average monthly service fee — up 142% | Minimum balance needed to avoid a monthly fee jumped 365 percent in a five-year period to an average of \$723 in 2012. So much for free checking.
- **USS Ford (CVN-78).** For the first time the Navy will have no urinals on this carrier, the most expensive ship (about \$14B) ever . It's use of gender neutral toilets mean berthing can be swapped between male and female without concern and one unit means fewer spare parts and repair.



USS Ford Bow Section

- **Student Debt.** The typical millennial college graduate has a student loan bill of \$23,300 tucked in with his diploma, and a median starting salary of \$45,327, according to new research by NerdWallet. Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are the generation born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. The study says most won't see retirement until age 73, 12 years later than the current average retirement age, which, surprisingly, is 61.
- **VA Strategic Plan.** A draft of the VA Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2020 is now available for review at <http://www.va.gov/performance/docs/VA2014StrategicPlanDraft20130808.pdf>.
- **Air Force Academy.** The Air Force Academy will make the "so help me God" clause of the cadet honor oath optional, academy officials announced 25 OCT.
- **OEF.** The average cost of each U.S. troop in Afghanistan will nearly double in the last year of the war to \$2.1 million, according to a new analysis of the Pentagon's budget.

[Source: Various 15-31 Oct 2013 ++]

Have You Heard? ► Magic Trick

A sailor and a marine go into a pastry shop. The sailor whisks three cookies into his pocket with lightning speed. The baker doesn't notice.

The sailor says to the marine: "You see how clever we are? You marines can never beat that!"

The marine says to the sailor: "Watch this, any Marine is smarter than a Dixie Cup, and I'll prove it to ya." He says to the baker, "Give me a cookie, I'll show you a magic trick!" The baker gives him the cookie, which the marine promptly eats. Then he says to the baker: "Give me another cookie for my magic trick." The baker is getting suspicious, but he gives it to him.

He eats this one too. Then he says again: "Give me one more cookie..." The baker is getting angry now, but gives him one anyway. The Marine eats this one too.

Now the baker is really mad, and he yells: "And where is your famous magic trick?" The marine says, "Look in the sailor's pocket!"

Interesting Ideas ► Strawberry Stem Removal



"The problem in defense is how far you can go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without."

— President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th U.S. President (1890-1969)



How to tell if your dog is involved in a sex scandal!



FAIR USE NOTICE: This newsletter contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of veterans' issues. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material in this newsletter is distributed without profit to those who have expressed an interest in receiving the included information for educating themselves on veteran issues so they can better communicate with their legislators on issues affecting them. For more information go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this newsletter for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

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. Readers who have not yet validated their email addee 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 15,674 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.
4. New subscribers and those who submit a change of address should receive a message that verifies their addition or address change being entered in the mailing list. If you do not receive a message within 7 days it indicates that either I never received your request, I made an error in processing your request, or your server will not allow me to send to the email addee you provided. Anyone who cannot reach me by email can call (951) 238-1246 to ask questions or confirm info needed to add them to the directory.
5. If you have another email addee at work or home and would like to also receive Bulletin notices there, just provide the appropriate email addee to raoemo@sbcglobal.net.
6. Past Bulletin articles are available by title on request to raoemo@sbcglobal.net. Refer to the RAO Bulletin Index alphabetically listing of article and attachment titles previously published in the Bulletin. The Index is available under pinned topics at <http://s11.zetaboard.com/CFLNewsChat/forum/27519/>. Bear in mind that the articles listed on this index were valid at the time they were written and may have since been updated or become outdated.
7. The Bulletin is normally published on the 1st and 15th of each month. To aid in continued receipt of Bulletin availability notices, recommend enter the email addee raoemo@sbcglobal.net into your address book. If you do not receive a Bulletin check either <http://www.veteransresources.org> (PDF & HTTP Editions), <http://frabr245.org> (PDF & HTTP Editions), or <http://vets4vets.zymichost.com/rao.html> (PDF Edition) before sending me an email asking if one was published. If you can access the Bulletin at any of the aforementioned sites it indicates that something is preventing you from receiving my email. Either your server considers it to be spam or I have somehow incorrectly entered or removed your addee from the mailing list. Send me an email so I can verify your entry on the validated mailing list. If you are unable to access the Bulletin at any of these sites let me know.

== To subscribe first add the RAO email addee raoemo@sbcglobal.net to your address book and/or white list. Then send to this addee your full name plus either the post/branch/chapter number of the fraternal military/government organization you are currently affiliated with (if any) "AND/OR" the city and state/country you reside in so your addee can be properly positioned in the directory for future recovery. Subscription is open to all veterans, dependents, military/veteran support organizations, and media.

== To automatically change your email addee or Unsubscribe from Bulletin distribution click the "Change address / Leave mailing list" tab at the bottom of the Bulletin availability notice that advised you when the current Bulletin was available.

== To manually submit a change of email addee provide your old and new email addee plus full name

Lt. James "EMO" Tichacek, USN (Ret)
Editor/Publisher RAO Bulletin
RAO Baguio, PSC 517 Box RCB, FPO AP 96517
Tel: (951) 238-1246 in U.S. or Cell: 0915-361-3503 in the Philippines.
Email: raoemo@sbcglobal.net
Web Access: <http://www.veteransresources.org>, <http://frabr245.org> or <http://vets4vets.zymichost.com/rao.html>
Office: Red Lion, 92 Glen Luna, cnr Leonard Rd & Brent Rd. Baguio City 2400 RP TUE & THUR 09-1100
AL/AMVETS/DAV/NAUS/NCOA/MOAA/USDR/VFW/VVA/CG33/DD890/AD37/TSCL member