

Veterans & Military Families Monthly News

February 2011 Vol. 2 No. 2

Good afternoon and thank you for reading. We appreciate this newsletter grow. This year is off to a great start and we look forward to working with all of you to continue to grow the newsletter.



Remember, we have two online sources where you can read and comment about the current and previous editions of the newsletter. It will be posted on Facebook through the group called “*Veterans and Military Families Monthly News.*” Check it out and join the group. [Click here](#) to go directly to the page. (Keep in mind you do need a Facebook account to join; however, the documents can be viewed through the docs link toward the bottom of the page even without an account.)

The second source for the online version of the newsletter is the website www.scribd.com. This online source for the newsletter works in the same fashion as the Facebook page.

Please let us know what you think, or if you have any questions about the online sources. For those of you who enjoy just receiving the email each month, we will continue to send it out. But we want to build the online presence as a way to reach out to more people.

As always, thank you very much for reading. Our hope is to continue to expand the newsletter. For that, we need your input. So, again, if anyone has any article topics or wants to write their own piece, we will gladly try to work it in. We hope you enjoy, and please let us know what you think and if you have any ideas.

Thank you very much!

Adopt a Flag Pole-The Fort Custer National Cemetery Advisory Committee Invites you to Fund a Flag Pole on the Avenue of Flags
From: Sherry Swann-Secretary of Fort Custer Advisory Committee and Event Coordinator

The Fort Custer National Cemetery Advisory Committee is raising money to replace our flag poles. The flag poles that now comprise the Avenue of Flags have been there since 1973 and were installed as temporary flag poles. Due to Michigan’s harsh weather and the age of the flag poles, all 152 of them need to be replaced.

Our poles are part of history. The flags that fly on the poles at the cemetery are burial flags that were donated by family members and represent one of our beloved servicemen and women that are buried at the cemetery. Let’s keep our flags flying over these hallowed grounds for our veterans. The cost of each flag pole is \$329.00 installed. Help keep America’s pride flying; adopt a FLAG POLE. Your name or the name of your organization will be placed on a memorial board at the cemetery administration office and acknowledged at next year’s Memorial Day observance. Please make checks payable to Fort Custer National Cemetery Advisory Committee and designate it is for the Avenue of Flags. These donations will be tax deductible. If you have any questions about this new program please call (269) 964-0309.



Michigan Republican Party Facebook Page

Along with building the newsletter’s Facebook page, which can be found by the link above, the Michigan Republican Party is building up their page. If you would like join, please [click here](#).

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Mich Pilots Identified After 41 Years- Col. James Dennany, Maj. Robert Tucci

From: www.woodtv.com



Air Force Col. James Dennany of Kalamazoo, circa 1968. He was shot down over Laos in November 1969. (file photo)

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - More than 41 years after they were shot down over Laos, two Air Force pilots from Michigan were identified and returned to their families. Air Force Colonel James Dennany from Kalamazoo and Major Robert Tucci of Detroit were flying an [F-4D](#) escorting an [AC-130](#) gunship on a night mission on November 12, 1969. The gunship attacked six trucks and requested the pilots to attack other trucks. But

anti-aircraft gunfire shot their plane down, and they were not found.

Starting in the mid-1990s, the US and Laos began working to recover the remains of servicemen lost in the southeast Asia war. Over the years, joint teams from the US and Laos, now known as [Lao People's Democratic Republic](#), recovered aircraft wreckage personal effects and human remains.

Forensic examinations confirmed the remains are Dennany and Tucci. They will be buried together January 14 in the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. The return of Dennany and Tucci leave 1,702 service members still unaccounted.

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



Maj. Robert Tucci

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Please Support "Frontlines of Freedom" Military Talk Radio Hosted by Lt. Col. Denny Gillem You can hear it every Saturday at 1pm on 1260 AM the Pledge (Zeeland, MI), or by visiting the website at www.frontlinesoffreedom.com or for Facebook [click here.](#)



Veterans Radio is dedicated to all of the men and women who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces of the United States of America. Our mission is to provide all veterans with a voice, to give them a forum where they are able to discuss their issues...and tell their stories. You can listen to the show on: WDEO (990-AM Ann Arbor/Detroit), WMAX (1440-AM, Saginaw), WDEO-FM (99.5 FM, Naples FL), KAGY (1510-AM Port Sulfur/New Orleans LA), KIXW (960-AM, Apple Valley CA) and KMRC (1430-AM Morgan City, LA). Or, listen to our Webcast and archives at: www.veteransradio.net

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.
We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream.
It must be fought for, protected,
and handed on for them to do the same.
~Ronald Reagan

US Army Specialist Joseph D Johnson

Joseph Dennis Johnson was born May 7, 1986 in Flint, Michigan. He graduated from Carman Ainsworth High School in 2004 and attended Lake Superior State University. He became a US Army soldier in 2006.

Joe was an adventure, mischievous and fun loving. From the time he was little, you never knew what was coming next. He once said of himself **“I live life to the fullest. You only live once, make the best of it because the only things in life you regret are the risks that you didn’t take!”**. Anyone can tell you that Joe enjoyed life, laughter, and his family. You can’t talk about him without laughing. He loved the outdoors, practical jokes, his sweatpants and slippers, and just having fun. When asked what his favorite color was one day, he replied **“Plaid”**.



select few chosen to teach the Afghan army the skills in which he was trained. He believed in his job and said that for every bomb he found and disarmed, someone’s life was saved. He enjoyed the Afghan people, especially the children. He loved his fellow soldiers, and they loved him. **“His leadership, his laughter, and his light will be missed”**, **“Joe was the rare breed who stepped forward when most stepped back”** were just a few statements made by two of his commanders. He was a courageous soldier and a hero to his family and friends. A real **“GI Joe”**.

Joe was killed in action in Kunduz, Afghanistan on June 16, 2010. He received the Combat Action Badge, Purple Heart, and Bronze Star among several other medals, coins, and commendations.

Cherishing forever his memory are his parents Dennis and Teri Johnson, sister Jennie and husband Nich Pollak, nieces and nephews Hailey, Brennan, Landon, and Brooklyn, grandparents Eugene and Lois Johnson, and Glenna Maxwell. He was preceded in death by niece Katelyn Pollak and grandfather Arthur Maxwell.

“ROCK HARD”



After basic training, Joe received training in many different areas. He became an Airborne Combat Engineer (Rough Terrain) and was trained in identifying and destroying IED’s, both manually and in the using a specialized robot. He deployed to Afghanistan with the 161st Combat Engineers in December 2009 as Counter-IED. He was a team leader, medic, and volunteered for every mission. He worked with many of the armed forces from other countries and was one of a



See next Page for Detail about the Frist Annual Joe Johnson Memorial Golf Outing on May 21st at Sugar Bush Gold Course in Davison. →

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First Annual
JOE JOHNSON
 Memorial Golf Outing
 9:00AM Shotgun Start (Registration from 8:00 to 8:30AM)
 ★★ ★ MAY 21, 2011 ★★ ★
AT SUGARBUSH GOLF CLUB
 SPECIAL GUESTS:
 **RICK LEACH** & **DAN SKUTA** 
 FORMER U OF M QUARTERBACK AND DETROIT TIGER CINCINNATI BENGALS LINEBACKER
SPECIAL PRIZES:
NEW CAR FOR HOLE IN ONE
CHANCE TO WIN \$25,000
 Proceeds from outing will be donated to a scholarship fund to help send teens and young adult students on mission trips approved by the mission board.
 Space will be limited to 144 golfers, Mark your calendar today! Registration form will be available in Early April!
\$49.00
 INCLUDES GOLF, LUNCH, AND LOTS OF PRIZES

Sponsored by the men's ministry **FLINT CENTRAL NAZARENE**

2011 Joe Johnson Memorial Golf To Members and Friends of Flint Central,
 The Men's Ministry has named the annual spring golf outing begun last year as the "Joe Johnson Memorial Golf Outing." This year's outing will take place on May 21 at Sugar Bush Golf Course in Davison. We are planning many upgrades to last year's well-attended outing including a *new car* for a Hole in One on a Par 3 hole.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your participation in one of several ways: **4 Star Sponsorship** (\$900) earns: entry for a foursome for outing, choice of starting hole, 4 dozen Pro V1 golf balls, 4 free Mulligans, and choice of hole on which to advertise. **3 Star Sponsorship** (\$500) earns: entry for a foursome for outing, 1 dozen Pro V1 golf balls, 4 free Mulligans, and request preferred hole on which to advertise. **Hole Sponsors** (\$100): Your family, business, company, or professional organization can sponsor a hole! **Cart Sponsors** (\$25.00) are available. **"Silent Auction"**: Provide items for such as athletic event tickets, use of condo or cabin in vacation areas, or other items of substantial worth. **Prizes**: Provide prizes that would be handed out during the outing. **Play in the outing**: We are targeting a full course with 144 golfers!

Please note: The first 6 items on the above list of contributions may be partially or fully tax deductible. All monies collected from these gifts will go directly to a Scholarship Fund which will be used to fund teens and college aged students' expenses in going on mission trips approved by the Missions Board. Since Joe participated as a teen in mission trips and was impacted by the needs of people there, his parents felt using the monies collected for mission scholarships would have Joe's total approval!

We will be sending out a follow up letter in March to allow you to identify your level of involvement in this exciting first class event. Please contact Keith Burba at: 810-423-5383 if you have any ideas, suggestions, or questions about the golf outing.

Sincerely yours,

Golf Outing Committee of Men's Ministry of Flint Central Nazarene Church

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Sub story WW II - U.S.S. Barb Part II

From: Eugene (Gene) A. Simon- Command Chief Master Sergeant USAF (Retired)

July 22, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan)-Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had built their micro switch. When the need was posed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed tools. The only things beyond their control were the weather....and time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. This would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945-The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American submarine so close



to shore or in such shallow water. Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland. Having lost their points of navigation, the saboteurs landed near the backyard of a house. Fortunately the residents had no dogs, though the sight of human AND dog's tracks in the sand along the beach alerted the brave sailors to the potential for unexpected danger.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then stumbling into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower....an OCCUPIED tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping and Markuson was able to quietly withdraw and warn his raiding party.

The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement for the explosive charge to continue their work more slowly and quietly. Suddenly, from less than 80 yards away, an express train was bearing down on them. The appearance was a surprise, it hadn't occurred to the crew during the planning for the mission that there might be a night train. When at last it passed, the brave but nervous sailors extracted themselves from the brush into which they had leapt, to continue their task. Twenty minutes later the holes had been dug and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath fresh soil.

During planning for the mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. If the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped during this final, dangerous procedure, his would be the only life lost. On this night it was the only order the saboteurs refused to obey, all of them peering anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to make sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a switch failure.

MANGBANG

From: Eugene (Gene) A. Simon- Command Chief Master Sergeant USAF (Retired) & Matthew X. Hauser

As you may have seen in past editions of the newsletter, MANGBANG has been one of our sources. We are thankful for the source and so we just wanted to pass the information along for MANGBANG in case anyone is interested in joining the Michigan Air National Guard Historical Association.

You can contact Lou Nigro if you are interested. We think it is a worthwhile investment-it supports the history of the Michigan Air National Guard and his monthly publications are very informative.

For those who want to view it on our website (www.selfridgeairmuseum.org, <http://www.selfridgeairmuseum.org>), Lt Col Lou Nigro, MI ANG (Ret) Executive Director, Selfridge Military Air Museum Email: louis.nigro@ang.af.mil

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1:32 A.M.-Watching from the deck of the Barb, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. He had skillfully, and daringly, guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 A.M.-The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, "CAPTAIN! Another train coming up the tracks!" The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, "Paddle like the devil!", knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

The darkness was shattered by brilliant light and the roar of the explosion. The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it the cars began to accordion into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs were lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb turned to slip back to safer waters. Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. "Lucky" Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. "All hands below deck not absolutely needed to maneuver the ship have permission to come topside." He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. The Barb had "sunk" a Japanese TRAIN!

On August 2, 1945 the Barb arrived at Midway, her twelfth war patrol concluded. Meanwhile United States military commanders had pondered the prospect of an armed assault on the Japanese homeland. Military tacticians estimated such an invasion would cost more than a million American casualties. Instead of such a costly armed offensive to end



the war, on August 6th the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. A second such bomb, unleashed 4 days later on Nagasaki, Japan, caused Japan to agree to surrender terms on August 15th. On September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Harbor the documents ending the war in the Pacific were signed.

The story of the saboteurs of the U.S.S. Barb is one of those unique, little known stories of World War II. It becomes increasingly important when one realizes that the 8 sailors who blew up the train at near Kashiho, Japan conducted the ONLY GROUND COMBAT OPERATION on the Japanese "homeland" of World War II. The eight saboteurs were: Paul Saunders, William Hatfield, Francis Sever, Lawrence Newland, Edward Klingsmith, James Richard, John Markuson, and William Walker.

Footnote: Eugene Bennett Fluckey retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, and wears in addition to his Medal of Honor, FOUR Navy Crosses...a record of awards unmatched by any living American. In 1992 his own history of the U.S.S. Barb was published in the award winning book, THUNDER BELOW. Over the past several years proceeds from the sale of this exciting book have been used by Admiral Fluckey to provide free reunions for the men who served him aboard the Barb, and their wives.

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You, as a veteran, or disabled veteran, **can't be discriminated against, right?**

By: *Claude McManus, CMC(SW) USN Ret.*

First and foremost, I want to say thanks to all my fans out there. I never thought I would be getting fan mail but it beats the heck out of waiting for the mail buoy at sea. For you land lubbers we really get our mail by helicopter or supply ship, but mail buoy gets the new squids every time.

What I am about to tell you breaks my heart. To tell you that our great nation has deteriorated to discriminating against veterans is just wrong, unfortunately, it is true. Last article I spoke of the American Legion magazine "Legion" had on the front page the broken promise of the federal government. This month's Legion has more letters from veterans complaining of no government jobs and no preference given. One letter of a retired veteran confirms that the population of veterans working at his agency (the VA) is going down. One letter complains that the government workers union is behind the changes. I doubt it though; union members are union members, being a veteran does not impact that too much, in my humble opinion.

I talked about activist judges in my session. What do judges have against veterans? How knows but in general there is, on the basis of rulings, a drift towards defining volunteer armed forces as having been paid for their profession and no further benefit is merited. I tell you, as a swabby who gave this country his youth and parts of his body for our national defense; I am deeply offended by that sentiment. Any veteran that works for a government agency of any kind, and you think what I just offered is pure whale poop. I challenge you to go to MSPB.gov and read the cases of veterans. I have and you should too. So how to convince the sea lawyers out there? Moreover, how do we change the system?

I offer the following as an example of some of the challenges we face. The information is from a disabled veteran who has seen first hand how the government works. The names have been changed to protect the veterans involved.

- "GOV used to have a policy of requiring that State Directors be a resident of the state they reside for at least

two years. Per IRS rules, this would mean that the applicant must physically reside in the state two years prior to applying. It does not mean that the applicant might have lived in the state prior to the two years residency requirement.

GOV has deliberately avoided this law as it discretion by hiring individuals pre-selected from other states and either detail them to the state to get the residency requirement, lying about the persons two year residency and finally seeking permission to waive the residency requirement to pre-select a non-resident to the position in the states of Minnesota, Nebraska and Michigan.

- GOV has miss-used its employees. GOV continually used its veteran employees out of classification to save money. GOV had worked lower grade individuals out of classification by allowing administrated employees to conduct investigations, negotiated settlements and conduct audits of

government grants without overview. Senior managers have promise these employees promotion to the next grade which they have reneged and trumped up charges for misconduct to force the individual to resigned under threat of being fired. The agency allowed these individuals to work these programs knowing that they did not possess the training and experience in investigating complaints and may have made mistakes that cause the veteran complaint economic harm. The knowledge of this discrepancy reached the National Office. This occurred in the State of Nebraska and Michigan.

- GOV failed to properly investigate complaints for veterans and use the Department of Justice to shield their inept work. State Directors refused to conduct interviews of employer in USERRA complaints in direct contradiction to the GOV operational manual. Wisconsin and Michigan. GOV Regional Administrator in Chicago Region has recommended No Merit to the Justice Department with regard to the case being sent forward for representation of the veteran's USERRA claim. Justice in turn sees and acts only on the recommendation of GOVS as whether to pursue the case. Justice notifies the claimant that they will not represent them it is based only on the recommendation of the Regional Administrator Chicago Region



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- GOV oversight to the Jobs for Veterans Act. This act provides funding for a program grant to hired disabled veterans in each state for positions entitled Local Veteran Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Workers. Their job is to assist veterans find employment. In 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 the State of Michigan returned unused funds to Treasury for not filling vacancies. This not only resulted in losing approximately \$300,000 each of the years mentioned but lost tax revenue and income to disabled veterans. Each of these years the senior management did nothing to correct the problem and actually contributed to this mismanagement by providing no guidance to the state or initiating a corrective action plan. This mismanagement of funds would have been reason for termination of a general public employee but GOV embraced these incompetents so they can funnel these funds to other states of their choosing. When notified of these issues the Agency instead of correcting the problem, instead used its authority to terminate the bearer of bad news and protected the national office. *Veterans lost of income were the real victims of this callously behavior.*



- GOV mismanaged a \$250,000 exigency grant by not assisting the State in managing the grant. The responsible GOV employees and the GOV National Office whose oversight responsibility was to ensure these funds were spent. Again, the real victims were the veterans these funds were intended for.

- GOV conducts secret investigations of its employees to obtain dirt to terminate those deem as not team players. GOV on learning that one its employees was working at a veteran homeless shelter conducted a secret investigation which included obtaining Privacy Act information from the employer. On their review the National Office concern is whether the employed failed to get prior approval for obtaining after hours employment. GOV personnel office confirmed that no prior approval was needed. The agency then forced the employee to quit his part time job because it appeared as a conflict of interest even though the employee was paid by HUD and not GOV. GOVS' management silence on its employees obtaining financial information without per-



mission of the employee is a violation of the Privacy Act.

- GOV discriminated against its employees for attempting to join federal diversity committee. GOV knowingly allowed an employee to attend a federal executive board meeting by not acknowledging the employees request to attend this meeting and allowed the employee to attend the briefing and then terminate the employee.

minate the employee.

- GOV refused to allow veteran employee advance sick leave. This action was approved by the National Office Assistant Secretary of GOV.

- GOV refuse its veteran employees to work at home as allowed by the Secretary of GOV. Regional Administrator refused to allow veteran employees to work at home despite being allowed by the Secretary of GOV.

- o GOV Director refused veteran employee to stop working 10 hour days until veteran employee contacted his Senator.

- o GOV conducted a secret investigation of its employee to determine whether the employee was assisting veterans to pursue their claims in which GOV failed to correctly investigate.

- o GOV forced claimant to settle case knowing that the employer failed to properly reinstate claimant

- o GOV refused to investigate whether the claimant was really a independent contractor thus denying the veteran recovery of stolen funds due to the claimant on return from active duty

- o GOV denied claimant ability to seek reimbursement of lost wages caused by

discrimination of the veterans military service in which the union disregarded its own policy to allow these members to work overtime lost.

- o That GOV disregarded its own investigative policies when an employee lodged a USERRA complaint against the agency for termination for helping a claimant with his USERRA complaint and for non-selection for promotion for helping veterans with their USERRA claims

- o Claimant was denied proper investigation by Roger Rabbit who advised claimant that the investigator did not have to speak with the claimant

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o Roger Rabbit threaten the claimant by suggesting claimant obtain personal attorney if not happy with GOV investigation

o Regional Administrator refused to discuss case with investigator and never provided information related to the veteran selection process

Investigator refuse to contact veteran claimant's witnesses GOV success to help veterans is lacking. The premise that we as military people do not leave anyone behind is completely disregarded by GOV. During its reports to Congress it over reaches its accomplishments and intentional hides it failures. In reality, GOV chooses to hide its mistakes, poor leadership and failure not to help all veterans. It keeps inept managers on staff, investigators who do believe veterans do not need our services; fail to hold States accountable by spending the allocated funding under the JVA. It violates personnel hiring practices by hiring individuals not trained in GOV policies as directors who then mismanage the GOV programs without any training, it fails to properly investigate veteran claims, it conducted secret investigations of its veteran employees to find "dirt," to terminate them, and verbally assault its veteran employees by calling them ambulance chasers for helping veterans with their employment claims.

In closing I suggest that all claimants who feel they have a USERRA complaint seek out a second opinion when they believe their case is not be pursue by GOV.

This agency's senior management has proven to have continually fail veterans by gross mismanagement of

its responsibilities and should be held accountable for its failings.(sic)"

Some of you may have the read the above and are shocked as I am. Some of you read it and said no way. Then there are others who read it and cried foul. The bottom line is veterans are being run roughshod across the government employment spectrum. Any current day veteran who has applied through USAJOBS.gov for a veteran preference job has run into the stonewall of modern government employment. I recall one veteran having applied to a government job under both veteran preference and open to all US citizens. The posting or job advertisement required the exact same experience. All applicants must have three years prior federal service in a government agency. How can a US Citizen have prior federal service? They cannot, if they did they are considered a different category, such as re-instatement. It did not matter in this case. The veteran was found "among the highest qualified" for the position. The agency then realized its error and cancelled the job.

In my next installment, I will get into the case law that has set precedent for veterans to be discriminated against. Would you believe that a recent court decision has been made that states the VA disability rating for a veteran does not mean the veteran is disabled. The VA is not a determining agency for establishing disability. I cannot make this stuff up.

Fair Winds and Following Seas.

"Veterans Voices"

From: Dept. Hospital Chairman Merridy Lewis

Hospitalized Veteran's Writing Program (HVWP). This program helps veteran's get their poems and stories down on paper is one of the goals for our volunteers. Volunteer aides help both with a one on one or with groups of patients to help them put their thoughts and feelings into stories and poems.

The stories and poems can be submitted to veteran's voices, a magazine that publishes the articles that have been submitted. The HVWP does its very best to publish every article that has been submitted following the guide lines.

It is important to submit the author's name, VAMC facility and state, the authors permanent address the branch of service and duties along with the serial number or social security number. Manuscripts must be original and unpublished, except in VAMC publications. Writers can submit up to three poems, each no longer than 24 lines with 60 character width. Stories no longer than 10 pages, typed using double spacing.

This is a brief detail of what HVWP is about. It may be an interest you would like to share with a Veteran on a volunteer basis. This is part of our history for generations yet to come we are losing World War 11 Veterans every day and we need to hear their stories. For more information visit their website at www.veteransvoices.org. More information will be in the next issue.



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Need a Ride

Form: www.dav.org

Because so many sick and disabled veterans lack transportation to and from VA medical facilities for needed treatment, the DAV operates a nationwide Transportation Network to meet this need.



Through the Transportation Network, DAV volunteers drive sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical facilities for treatment. The Transportation Network

is a clear example of veterans helping veterans. The DAV stepped in to meet a substantial community need when the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities. The DAV has 189 Hospital Service Coordinators around the country who coordinate the transportation needs for disabled veterans.

Use the [DAV Hospital Service Coordinator Directory](#) to contact your nearest HSC for information or assistance. Please remember that the DAV Transportation Network is staffed by volunteers; therefore, it is unable to cover every community. We hope we can help you.

[Locate your nearest VA Medical Center](#)

News From American Legion Post 341

American Legion Post 341 is seeking the names of troops that are deployed to a combat zone so that we can send them large package of goodies and that their names and address should be sent to the address below.

Also post 341 is always seeking new members please contact Robert at the same address if interested.

American Legion Post 341

Sr Vice Commander

Robert P Goulet

6130 Nicholas

West Bloomfield, MI

rgoulet264@aol.com



Some Useful Links

Air Force Times

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/>

Navy Times

<http://www.navytimes.com/>

Marine Corps Times

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/>

Army Times

<http://www.armytimes.com/>

Military Times

<http://www.militarytimes.com/>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil/>

American Legion

<http://www.legion.org/>

Veterans of Foreign Wars

<http://www.vfw.org/>

AMVETS

<http://www.amvets.org/>

If anyone has a site they would like to have added to this growing list please let us know!

Veteran Legislation

Check Out the E-Newsletter From The House Committee on Veteran Affairs:

<http://veterans.house.gov/enewsletter.shtml>



Upcoming 2011 Events

The Navy will be coming to Michigan and Indiana in a big way this summer. We have secured agreements with the Blue Angels to perform June 11, 12 in Evansville IN, July 2, 3 in Muskegon, July 23, 24 in Detroit and again in Indianapolis dates TBD.-A special thanks to Claude for the tip and more information to come soon!

Battle Creek ANG 110th ASOC for 110th Group-2nd Saturday after the 4th of July on the odd year. July 16th 2011. 12-6pm at 3848 E. Leonard NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525-From Hank Fuhs

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Additional Benefits for Active Duty Time Served: DD FORM 214-SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT

From: Social Security Administration (SSA)

Please share this with anyone who's had active duty service between January 1957 to December 31, 2001 and planning for retirement.

In a nutshell it boils down to this: You qualify for a higher social security payment because of Military service, for active duty any time from 1957 through 2001 (the program was done away with 1 January 2002). Up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit credited at time of application - which can make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement.

You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office and you must ask for this benefit to receive it!

Social Security website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm> This is something to put in your files for when you apply for Social Security down the road... It is NOT just for retirees, BUT anyone who has served on active duty between January 1957 to December 31, 2001. FYI - this benefit is not automatic, you must ask for it!

**From: Patricia Webb- Correction:
It is automatically applied for duty from 1968 forward. Duty prior to 1968 must be applied for.**

To request a copy of a DD-214 visit
www.vetrec.archives.gov.

Old Warrior Camp

From: Hank Fuhs Lt. Col., USAF, Retired, ANG

This Hunting Camp was built by a retired Marine First Sergeant with the primary purpose of facilitating the "Wounded Warriors" as they begin their Journey back to Civilian Life. The First Sergeant is the Commander of the Disabled American Veteran (Manistique Chapter 26) He is also 100% totally disabled.

There is no cost to vets...Bring a Valid Michigan Hunting License and your sleeping bag. Contact Bob Blevins at (906)-477-0025 for dates and times available.



A Note From Department Hospital Chairwoman Merridy Lewis

Hello Everyone,

I'm sure you've heard about budget cuts that are affecting so many of us. Our Veteran Medical Centers are no exception. Have you thought about being a volunteer?

There are so many ways volunteers can help the Veteran's Homes, medical Centers, clinics or even local Hospitals and nursing homes. As a volunteer you help to ensure that our Veteran's are treated with care, affection, respect and enthusiasm.

There are many opportunities available that volunteers are needed for. A few ideas that come to mind would be --- A greeter/ambassador, this position you would help Veteran's who may need assistance locating general information of the hospital, giving directions, or even escort them to an appointment. Perhaps, get a wheelchair for them.

Another idea would be to write letters, read a book or to sit and visit with them, as sometimes they don't have family or friends that are able to visit. Play a game of cards or even work on a puzzle.

The veterans can always use phone cards, bus tokens or transportation, vouchers, crossword puzzles, canteen books to purchase coffee or soda from the canteen and reading materials.

How do I become a Veteran's Affair Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteer? Contact your nearest VA or local nursing home or hospital. Ask to speak to a voluntary service specialist. They will set you up an appointment for an interview to see what interests you have, and give you a scheduled time to volunteer. You will also be given an orientation of hospital policy. Non members of the VFW & Ladies Auxiliary can be sponsored from each post. So, if you have a friend that would like to help you when you volunteer perhaps your Auxiliary would sponsor them. Children are welcomed to volunteer also.

Do you have an out-standing hospital volunteer? Please submit an application to me for the Out Standing Hospital Volunteer of the Year!



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Study Ties Problems to Post-traumatic Stress

By: *Lisa Daniel -American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6, 2011 - Service members who suffer mild traumatic brain injuries in combat and then struggle with depression, irritability, alcohol abuse and similar problems after they return home most likely are experiencing post-traumatic stress, rather than brain injury symptoms, according to a new study.

The study, sponsored by the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments and published in this month's Archives of General Psychiatry, a Journal of the American Medical Association publication, tracked Minnesota National Guard soldiers during the last month of their 16-month deployment to Iraq, then again a year after they returned home.

The findings, based on the self-reporting of 953 soldiers with follow-ups from the clinicians, showed "very little evidence for a long-term negative impact" from concussions or mild TBI on "psycho-social outcomes" -- anxiety, depression, drug and alcohol abuse and the like -- after accounting for post-traumatic stress, said Melissa A. Polusny, a clinical psychologist at the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System and a professor at University of Minnesota Medical School.

Polusny wrote the study along with five other clinical psychologists, and in collaboration with Army Col. (Dr.) Michael Rath, a surgeon with the 34th Infantry Division brigade that participated in the study.

"After we statistically controlled for PTSD symptoms, there were virtually no long-term symptoms from concussive and mild TBI," she said.

Polusny emphasized that the study only investigated mild TBI, which may cause a person to be momentarily dazed or confused or lose consciousness for fewer than 20 minutes, but causes no actual injury to the brain or skull. Also, the study did not consider repeated head trauma -- the subject of other studies that have suggested long-term effects -- in the soldiers, 95 percent of whom were on their first deployment to Iraq in 2005, she said.

The study's focus on mild TBI is significant for today's warfighters, Polusny said, because "the vast majority of reports of TBI are mild."

The study's findings, she added, are "very interesting and not exactly what we expected."

The findings show that service members are much more likely to report concussions and mild traumatic brain injuries after they return home than they are in the combat theater. Of those surveyed, only 9 percent reported concussions or TBI in theater, but 22 percent reported incidents after redeployment.

Similarly, 9 percent reported symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in theater, compared to 14 percent at home; and 9 percent reported symptoms of depression, compared to 18 percent at home.

Many of the soldiers who answered that they did not have mild TBI or post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms actually did, the VA's publication brief of the study says. Of those, 64 percent reported having problems with distractibility and irritability, 60 percent reported memory problems, 57 percent reported ringing in the ears, and 23 percent had balance problems.

Another notable finding, Polusny said, is that after their return home, more than 40 percent of the Iraq war veterans reported some levels of alcohol abuse.

"There's been a lot of attention paid to PTSD and mild TBI and even suicide risk, but the prevalence of problem drinking appears to be much higher among returning service members than any of these other problems," she said.

Researchers were surprised at the wide difference in reporting from the war theater to home, Polusny said. They believe the disparity may be due to service members' reluctance to report problems while deployed, or that they have a different impression of events when they return home, she said. The differences may reflect a need for better post-deployment questioning of veterans, she added.

"One of the really important implications of the findings is that we need to be carefully screening for PTSD, and make sure veterans receive treatment," Polusny said.

Polusny added that the findings caused concern that combat veterans may misattribute the reason for their problems, which could hamper treatment or cause a service member to not seek treatment.

"If a veteran is having irritability and memory problems, and assumes he had a concussion when maybe he is suffering from PTSD symptoms, ... we need to make sure we are treating veterans for the right problems," she said.

The study did not investigate the cause of the PTSD or whether the TBI triggered it.

"The events that surround a concussion or mild TBI in theater -- being exposed to a blast or being in a firefight -- those kinds of events already place someone at risk of PTSD," Polusny said. "Is that due to injury to the brain, or the situation they are in? We can't piece that apart yet."

Related Sites: [Abstract of the Study of PTSD in Minnesota National Guard Soldiers](#)

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Obituary: Richard 'Dick' Winters, courageous

WWII officer portrayed in 'Band of Brothers'

From: Eugene (Gene) A. Simon- Command Chief Master

Sergeant USAF (Retired) By: [T. Rees Shapiro](#) Washington Post Staff Writer

Richard "Dick" Winters, 92, a decorated Army officer whose courageous leadership through some of the fiercest combat of World War II was featured in the best-selling book and HBO miniseries "Band of Brothers," died Jan. 2. He had Parkinson's disease. The Patriot-News in central Pennsylvania reported that Maj. Winters, a longtime Hershey resident, died at an assisted-living facility in nearby Campbellsport. Stephen Ambrose's 1992 book "Band of Brothers" followed the men of E Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. The group came to be known as Easy Company. One of Easy Company's officers was Maj. Winters, a charismatic and compassionate leader who entered Army service as a private and returned home after World War II as a major. He and his men jumped into combat on June 6, 1944, above Normandy and later fought together through Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands and the Battle of the Bulge. The unit experienced heavy turnover because of battlefield casualties. One Easy Company soldier later wrote that among his colleagues, the Purple Heart "was not a decoration but a badge of office." Maj. Winters graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in 1941 before enlisting in the Army. He was selected to attend officer candidates' school, earned a commission in the summer of 1942 and then - drawn by the promise of extra pay for hazardous duty - volunteered to join a newly formed paratrooper unit. Of about 500 officers who volunteered to join the elite unit, only 148 made the cut.

Maj. Winters excelled as an infantry leader and a paratrooper and became a hallowed figure among his men for his "follow me" attitude. He received the military's second-highest decoration for valor, the Distinguished



FILE - In this Dec. 1945 file photo provided by Sgt. Maj. Herman W. Clemens, Ret., Maj. Richard "Dick" Winters. Winters, the man whose quiet leadership was chronicled in the book and television miniseries "Band of Brothers," died Jan. 2, 2011 in central Pennsylvania, a family friend confirmed Monday, Jan. 10, 2011. He was 92. (AP Photo/Courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Herman W. Clemens, Ret.) NO SALES (Anonymous - AP)



Service Cross, for his actions on D-Day. That morning, after landing and untangling from his parachute, Maj. Winters gathered a small group of men for a raid on German cannon emplacements near Brecourt Manor. Guarded by a platoon of 50 German sentries, the heavily fortified battery had been firing on Utah Beach, causing significant casualties and slowing the Allied advance. In their assault of the position, Maj. Winters and his men killed 15 German soldiers and took 12 as prisoners. At one point, Maj. Winters noticed a wounded German soldier crawling toward a machine gun. "I drilled him clear through the head," Maj. Winters told Ambrose. Maj. Winters and his men destroyed three German cannons and completed the action with near-textbook efficiency. Throughout the war, Maj. Winters's leadership skills earned him commendations and promotions. He served as Easy Company's commander and was promoted to lead the 506th Regiment's 2nd Battalion, which included Easy Company. Maj. Winters and his men eventually saw the end of the European campaign while occupying Adolf Hitler's mountainside retreat, the Eagle's Nest, nestled in the Alps above Berchtesgaden. They celebrated by drinking champagne from the Fuhrer's 10,000-bottle cellar. Late in

the war, one of Maj. Winters's soldiers, Floyd Talbert, wrote him a letter from an Indiana hospital, thanking him for his loyalty and leadership. "You are loved and will never be forgotten by any soldier that ever served under you," Talbert wrote. "I would follow you into hell." Richard Davis Winters was born Jan. 21, 1918, in Lancaster, Pa. His family's roots in American history reached back to Timothy Winters, a British immigrant who served in the Revolutionary War and saw action in the Battle of Yorktown. Maj. Winters' own war story went untold for nearly a half-century until the publication of Ambrose's book, which became a national bestseller. In 2001, a television miniseries adapted from Ambrose's work was released on HBO.

The series, co-produced by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, won six Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe. Toward the end of the war, Maj. Winters turned down the opportunity to make the Army a career. He returned to the United States and joined an Army colleague's company, Nixon Nitration Works, in New Jersey. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War as a training officer. For the rest of his career, Maj. Winters owned a farm in rural Pennsylvania and sold animal nutrition products to animal-feed companies. He married Ethel Estoppey in 1948 and had two children. He lived the quiet and peaceful life he'd promised to himself after surviving the war. One of the most harrowing experiences of his military service came in late April 1945. The men of Easy Company discovered a German working camp near Landsberg that was part of the Dachau concentration camp. Maj. Winters found wheels of cheese piled in a nearby cellar and ordered that the nourishment be distributed among the inmates. "The memory of starved, dazed men who dropped their eyes and heads when we looked at them



through the chain-link fence, in the same manner that a beaten, mistreated dog would cringe, leaves feelings that cannot be described and will not be forgotten," Maj. Winters wrote of the experience. "The impact of seeing those people behind that fence left me saying, only to myself, 'Now I know why I am here.'"

SBP for Reservist Update

From: RAO Bulletin January 2010 (Lt. James —EMO Tichacek, USN (Ret) Associate Director, Retiree Assistance Office, U.S. Embassy Warden & IRS VITA Baguio City RPPSC 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 AL/AMVETS/DAV/FRA/NAUS/NCOA/MOAA/USDR/VFW/VVA/CG33/DD890/AD37 member)

A new update in computation rules for the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) will end the practice of deducting RCSBP premiums from the survivors' SBP annuities. RCSBP provides coverage for Guard and Reserve retirees in the so-called "gray area" between the time they retire from drilling status and attainment of retired pay eligibility at age 60. Unlike regular SBP, the beneficiary receives the coverage before the premiums start. Also unlike regular SBP, RCSBP is not subsidized by the government, which means premiums must be set at rates that fully cover the cost of the interim coverage. RCSBP premiums are paid in addition to regular SBP premiums. And because members who die in the "gray area" will never pay any premiums, RCSBP premiums until now have been deducted from both the

retirees' retired pay and the survivors' SBP annuities, with premiums calculated individually for each couple based on their relative ages.

DoD has revised RCSBP premiums periodically to reflect changes in mortality rates and other changing factors (projected COLAs and interest rates, etc.) and has established different premium schedules for members who retired at different times. The most recent calculation update allowed DoD to stop deducting premiums from RCSBP survivors' annuity checks -- a significant benefit improvement. That change will be applied immediately for survivors of retirees passing away in December 2010 or later. The premium relief also will be extended to all 44,000 existing RCSBP survivors, but that won't happen until next summer. That's because the individual nature of the premium calculation means DFAS must reconstruct each deceased member's original retired pay base to calculate the premium rebate for each eligible survivor. The new change will increase the average eligible Guard/Reserve survivor's SBP annuity by about \$18 a month. The new update also reduces RCSBP premiums by an average of about \$5 per month for RCSBP-enrolled retirees who began receiving retired pay on or after May 1, 2010. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 7 Jan 2011 ++]

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Fisher House Program Still Growing After 20 Years

By: Donna Miles From: www.fisherhouse.org

The Fisher House Foundation isn't basking in past achievements as it prepares to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the opening of its first home on the grounds of the National Naval Medical Center here.

As the first military families move this week into one of three new Fisher Houses just across the street from the original, the foundation is moving full steam ahead on nine more being built nationwide, many to be completed by the year's end.

The Fisher House program started as a relatively modest endeavor, with Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher donating a home to provide free temporary lodging for military families while their loved ones received care at the Navy's flagship medical center, foundation president Dave Coker told American Forces Press Service. That original Fisher House, perched on a hillside overlooking the towering hospital, opened its doors June 24, 1991.

Soon the Fishers presented the second Fisher House, which opened a month later on the grounds of the Army's Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Within a few short months, the third opened at the Air Force's Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio.

The project snowballed, Coker said. Three Fisher Houses led to five, then 10. By the time of Zachary Fisher's death in 1999, he and his wife had personally financed more than 20 Fisher Houses.

The Fisher House Foundation, led by the Fishers' grandnephew, Ken Fisher, is keeping their vision alive.

Today, 53 Fisher Houses grace the grounds of dozens of major military and Veterans Affairs medical facilities in the United States and in Landstuhl, Germany. Collectively, they have served more than 142,000 families since the program's inception. During 2010, their 651 guest suites accommodated 12,000 families.

With the last of 10 Fisher Houses donated in late 2010 about to begin receiving families, and more houses under construction, Coker said, he hopes to see capacity increase to 16,000 families this year.

Among the newest Fisher Houses is one at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Coker called it "one of our greatest achievements," because of its impact on families of the fallen. Unlike other Fisher Houses that accommodate families of hospitalized service members and veterans, the Dover house serves grieving families as they prepare to witness the dignified transfer of their loved ones.



"Having the house there lets us how these families how much we appreciate their loved one's sacrifice. That's No. 1," Coker said. "Hopefully, it provides an environment where they can receive a little bit of comfort."

Loving comfort always has been at the heart of the Fisher House mission.

"When you have a loved one who is catastrophically injured or has died, your world turns upside down," Coker said. "So if we can help provide a little stability during that time, something to make these families' loads a little lighter, that's our priority.

"This isn't charity," Coker said, borrowing Ken Fisher's mantra. "It's our duty, our way of giving back for all that the military has enabled us to do, and for protecting our freedoms."

For the Fisher House Foundation, that mission requires always looking ahead so it's ready to respond to military families' needs. For example, three new Fisher Houses were built here to accommodate an expected surge in demand as the hospital merges with Walter Reed Army Medical Center later this year.

"It was very important for us to have these open before Walter Reed closed," Coker said. "[Washington] D.C. has always been underserved, and we wanted to get ahead of the game."

One of the new Bethesda houses already is accommodating families, and another is expected to accept its first families this week. The third, to be dedicated to families whose loved ones are being treated at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence for Traumatic Brain Injuries and Psychological Health Problems, will house its first families soon.

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Meanwhile, a new Fisher House is being built at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The foundation will be laid as soon as the weather allows so the project can be completed by year's end, Coker said.

Another new Fisher House, under construction at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, will replace the Nightingale House, which is scheduled to be torn down along with the aging family housing that surrounds it. Coker said he hopes to see the new house finished by late March and dedicated in April.

In addition, several Fisher House projects are under way at VA medical facilities. While they weren't part of the Fisher House Foundation's original vision, Coker said, he called the VA houses a natural extension of the support provided at military hospitals.

"What we didn't foresee in the beginning was the continuity that exists between DOD and the VA," he said. "DOD focuses on saving the lives, and VA is rehabbing, giving these veterans back their life and regaining and optimizing their potential for recovery."

"These young people getting hurt are going to need care throughout their lives," he continued. "And so we have a chance to support them through the VA health care system."

The Minneapolis VA Medical Center in Minnesota will receive its second Fisher House in the spring to accommodate families whose loved ones are receiving Level 1 polytrauma care.

The initial Fisher House there has eight suites. "But we understand that on any given night, there are 30 families making do in hotels," Coker said. "So getting a house like this one will better allow them to meet the needs of the community. We're going to open it as soon as we get it furnished."

Also in the April-May time frame, other Fisher Houses are expected to open at VA medical centers in Washington, D.C., and Augusta, Ga.

As these houses take shape, construction is expected to begin on new Fisher Houses at VA medical centers in Salt Lake City, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, and Murfreesboro, Tenn.

The Fisher House Foundation also is looking into building a replacement house in the fall at Fort Bragg, N.C.

While numbers tell the story of the Fisher House Foundation's growth, one has to step inside a Fisher House to appreciate fully just how well it delivers on its pledge to support military families in their time of need.

Fisher Houses aren't simply cozy. They're upscale. When you open the door, your eyes go in every direction trying to take it all in: the magazine-quality



décor, the gleaming stainless-steel-and-granite kitchens, the attention to detail in every nook and cranny.

"When somebody walks through the door, we want them to know there are others who care about them in their time of need, and we think we achieve that," Coker said as walked through one of the new Bethesda houses. "If they walk in and they can inhale twice, it is going to hopefully make it a little more manageable when life starts beating them down. And if there is one thing we have learned, it's that life happens."

Each new Fisher House incorporates lessons learned from other houses. Coker remembers visiting one facility and overhearing several wives discussing using a sheet to carry a husband who had been released from the hospital to his wife's upstairs room just long enough to see where she had been staying.

"You hear that once and you recognize that we can do better," Coker said, "and that the right thing is to put in an elevator and make all the rooms handicapped-accessible."

Today, all new Fisher Houses now have elevators as well as wheelchair-accessible rooms and kitchen facilities. The military services and VA, who manage the facilities after the Fisher House Foundation turns them over, have renovated many of the original Fisher Houses to accommodate wheelchairs.

Coker called their dedicated staffs, along with armies of volunteers, the unsung heroes who maintain what the Fisher House Foundation set out to accomplish. They ensure the pantries and refrigerators are stocked, the rooms are clean and the washing machines are in working order, complete with complimentary laundry soap.

And as families gather to share morning coffee or a quick dinner between hospital visits, they're close at hand, ready to provide an understanding ear or, when needed, a shoulder to cry on.

Even after passing control of the Fisher Houses at the dedication ceremonies, the Fisher House Foundation quietly maintains contact with its houses by picking up the \$10 per night fee the services must charge by regulation for families to stay in a Fisher House. This year alone, the foundation will pay more than \$1 million to cover that cost.

The idea, Coker said, is to enable families to forget everything else and focus on what's most important: their loved one's recovery.

"I believe Fisher House is something that improved the quality of health care," he said. "And the reason it improves it is you [as a patient] are not concerned about your family. [Patients] are getting the same world-class health care, but because they know their families are being taken care of, the quality of care, in the eye of the patient and the family, has just increased."

As the Fisher House Foundation looks ahead to future projects, Coker said it's working closely with the military surgeons general and VA to ensure it builds where the long-term need is greatest.

And as many charities have struggled since the economic downturn, Coker reports that the Fisher House Foundation has weathered the storm intact. The foundation doesn't do direct-mail marketing, yet receives more than \$40 million a year in donations. Last month, its online donations averaged \$400 to \$500.

"The American public has been phenomenal," Coker said. "Part of it is the model. We are always going to new communities and bringing something exciting to town. That inspires giving.

"But the other thing is the tremendous respect that the American people have for those who serve," he

continued. "We have a program that focuses on helping people when they need to most, when their world is turned upside down. And people appreciate the opportunity to be able to support people at that point."

Becky Wood, manager of the five Bethesda Fisher Houses, sees the families' appreciation firsthand every day.

"Over and over, I have heard families say, 'I can't believe somebody who doesn't know us has done this for us' – from the Fisher House itself, to the bakery items and home-cooked meals volunteers bring to the families," Wood said.

"They just can't believe that they are staying here, at no cost to themselves," she said. "They're overwhelmed by the beauty of the home and the spirit of generosity that's here."

Wood said she gets tremendous gratification knowing that Fisher House Foundation and the Fisher House staff and volunteers are helping fulfill Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher's dream.

"There's great satisfaction in knowing that we have provided these families comfort at what might for many of them be the hardest time they will ever have in their life, and hearing them say thank you over and over again, and know that in some way, we've made a difference," she said.

TRICARE Retired Reserve Sign-up Options Expanded

From: www.tricare.mil

Since Sept. 1, 2010, members of the Retired Reserve who aren't 60, the so-called "gray area" retirees, have been able to purchase TRR to provide health coverage for themselves and their eligible family members. To make purchasing TRR easier, gray area retirees can now get a DS Logon by contacting the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System/Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) and remotely verify their identity.

Gray area retirees can use the DS Logon to access the Web-based Reserve Component Purchased TRICARE Application (RCPTA) to qualify for and purchase TRR. If a gray area retiree doesn't have a DS Logon, but has a retired military ID card, he or she can call the DSO at 1-800-538-9552 (1-866-363-2883 for the hearing impaired) to request remote proofing documentation. DSO will provide step-by-step instructions and the appropriate documentation to get a DS Logon via remote proofing.

The DSO's hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 5 a.m. until 5 p.m. Pacific time. The DSO is

closed on all federal holidays. To use the remote proofing process, the gray area retiree will identify his or herself with a Social Security number to the DSO. The DSO will then fax, e-mail or send by regular mail, a document the retiree can take with their ID card to a notary public to remotely verify his or her identity. The retiree will return this document to the DSO and, if the notarized photocopy of the ID card matches the ID card on file in DEERS, a DS Logon can be issued.

Gray area retirees who don't have a retired ID card and a DS Logon can get both, and complete the in-person proofing process at a RAPIDS ID card issuing site. To locate the nearest RAPIDS site, go to www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl. Alternatively, they may still go to designated Veterans Administration (VA) regional offices to complete in-person-proofing and get a DS Logon. To locate a VA regional office, visit www.vba.va.gov/vba/benefits/offices.asp.

Retired Reservists may qualify to purchase TRR coverage if they are under the age of 60 and are not eligible for, or enrolled in, the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. They must be members of the retired Reserve and qualified for non-regular retirement. For instructions on how to qualify for and purchase TRR go to www.tricare.mil/trr.

Tricare Young Adult Program Update

From: RAO Bulletin January 2010 (Lt. James —EMO Tichacek, USN (Ret) Associate Director, Retiree Assistance Office, U.S. Embassy Warden & IRS VITA Baguio City RPPSC 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 AL/AMVETS/DAV/FRA/NAUS/NCOA/MOAA/USDR/VFW/VVA/CG33/DD890/AD37 member)

The Department of Defense announced 13 JAN its introduction of the premium-based Tricare Young Adult Program (TYAP) which extends medical coverage to eligible military family members to the age of 26. The program had previously been referred to as "Tricare 26". Expected to be in place later this spring, TYAP implements the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of fiscal 2011. Premium costs are not yet finalized, but the NDAA specifies rates must cover the full cost of the program. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 required civilian health plans to offer coverage to adult children until age 26. Tricare previously met or exceeded key tenets of national health reform, including restrictions on annual limits, lifetime maximums, "high user" cancellations, or denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions – but did not include this expanded coverage for adult children. Dependent eligibility for Tricare previously ended at age 21 or age 23 for full-time college students.

The fiscal 2011 NDAA now gives the DoD the authority to offer similar benefits to young adults under Tricare. "We've been working hard to make sure we could put Tricare Young Adult on a fast track," said Tricare Deputy Director, Rear. Adm. Christine Hunter. "Fortunately for our beneficiaries concerned about health care coverage for their adult children, the law signed by the President includes opportunities for military families to elect this new premium-based plan retroactive to 1



JAN." Beginning later this spring, qualified, unmarried dependents up to age 26 will be able to purchase Tricare coverage on a month-to-month basis – as long as they are not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health coverage.

"This program has the potential to extend Tricare coverage to several hundred thousand additional beneficiaries," said Hunter. "The premium allows us to provide this excellent benefit to our military families while responsibly addressing the impact of health care costs on the DoD budget." Initially, the benefit offered will be a premium-based Tricare standard benefit. Eligible family members who receive health care between now and the date the program is fully implemented may want to purchase TYAP retroactively and should save their receipts. Premiums will have to be paid back to 1 JAN 2011, in order to obtain reimbursement. Adults who are no longer eligible for Tricare, but need health insurance coverage, may wish to explore the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP). CHCBP is a premium-based program offering temporary transitional health coverage for 18-36 months. Coverage must be purchased within 60 days of loss of Tricare eligibility. For more information on TYAP and CHCBP refer to <http://www.Tricare.mil/>. [Source: DoD News No. 035-11 13 Jan 2011 ++]

A Little History of the ANG 110th

From: Eugene (Gene) A. Simon- Command Chief Master Sergeant USAF (Retired)

Ah the Memories!

The picture from 1996 is the one that has been taped to the mirror at the present club. Just thought it was worthy of a digital copy for historical purposes. Just don't think the new club will ever have the memories the old club (aka the Training Room) had...

How many trips did you make back and forth on that infamous sidewalk?



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Operation Never Forgotten

BY: Joseph Tormala, USMC/USA (Ret.) - Purple Heart Chapter 789 Commander, Chassell, Michigan Life Member MOPH - WWP Alumni

In October 2010 I was contacted by the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Veterans Service Office in Detroit c/o MOPH Department Adjutant about Operation Sports Afield & Stream (SAS) which is offered by Operation Never Forgotten (ONF). ONF conducts nation-wide awareness campaigns that recognize Troops, Wounded Warriors, Fallen Heroes and Military Families; and this event was an outreach program for OEF/OIF warriors with physical and invisible wounds like TBI & PTSD to be challenged to participate in extreme sports activities in Big Sky, Montana January 7 through January 11, 2011.

I applied on-line and ONF Vice President John Kinzinger of Ann Arbor contacted me in November advising I'd be attending Operation SAS. I was quite surprised to be selected and looked forward to seeing Montana in the winter, especially the big game in Yellowstone and participating in the various activities they had scheduled. ONF coordinated all travel arrangements to include flight and ground transportation, food and lodging for all the events. The events varied from ice climbing sponsored by Adventure Montana & Prolite Gear, to dog sledding with sponsor Spirit of the North, snowboarding and skiing at Big Sky Resort, a snow coach tour of West Yellowstone National Park with sponsor Yellowstone Snow Coaches, Endless Powder Mountain Trails for snowmobiling and clinics on archery sponsored by Yellowstone Gateway Sports & Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Division, meat processing sponsored by Montana Mobile Meats, fly tying and fly fishing demonstrations sponsored by Warriors & Quiet Waters; use of outdoor adaptive equipment and a PTSD forum was presented by Technical Management Services.

A banquet was held at Big Sky Resort with country music artist and ONF Spokesman Lee Greenwood serving as master of ceremonies and included guest speakers Marc Hoffmeister, Sam Kavanagh and Tim Medvetz who have overcome their disabilities through participation in outdoor sport activities like mountain climbing and biking. Mark Anderson conducted a live auction at the banquet to raise funds for ONF and a Montana Big Game hunt, fly fishing trip and cruise was



given to warriors in attendance. ONF Founder/ President Linda Kelly and Gold Star Mother Peg O'Donnell also addressed the audience with their personal stories of their families service and the need to never forget the sacrifices of our military personnel. The banquet closed with entertainment provided by comedians Mark Sweeney and Marc Yaffee both of whom have entertained troops overseas and in Iraq.

In between all these activities awesome dining arrangements were made to visit surrounding facilities like Lone Mountain Ranch - Big Sky, Montana Ale Works and Post 14 American Legion in Bozeman that sponsored a elk chilly feed for the entire group of 67 participants prior to our departure home. The people of Montana were great and showed us first rate hospitality everywhere we went.

In closing, I thank our MOPH Veterans Service Office in Detroit, Michigan, MOPH Department of Michigan Adjutant Ron Knapp, ONF VP John & Jane Kinzinger, ONF President Linda Kelly & ONF Advisor Gold Star Mother Peg O'Donnell whose son Shane was killed in action while serving with Golf Co. 2/24th Marines. To view a complete list of sponsors please visit: www.operationsas.org and to see examples of ONF campaigns please visit: www.operationNEVERforgotten.org.



We would like to express our appreciation to all of the fighting men and women in the United States Military. Thank you for your service to this county.

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Stand Up For Veterans-They Stood Up For US

-The DAV

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*Lest We Forget-A Clip from Hank Fuhs
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(Just Click the Link Below)*

[I Fought For You](#)



STEP UP AND LEAD

From: The USO

In 2011, we're calling on the brave men and women of our armed forces to make some incredible sacrifices in Afghanistan, Iraq, and remote locations around the world. That means you and I need to make an extra effort to show our support.



One of the best ways to let our troops know that you've got their back is by supporting the work of the USO. [Step Up and Lead -- support our troops by signing up to be part of the USO today.](#)

We would like to express our appreciation to all of the fighting men and women in the United States Military. Thank you for your service to this county.

In Closing

Thank you for your service to our country. It is truly the men and women like you who make this nation great, and we must never forget that.

Thank you to everyone for all the help you have given us with the newsletter. We have been able to reach more people with your help. Compared to when we first started, the amount of input and ideas we received has increased greatly. For that we are very thankful. If you have anything you would like to share, any questions, or have an article idea, please let me know. You may contact me anytime at mhauser@migop.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew X. Hauser and Lt. Col Hank Fuhs



If you don't want to receive these emails or wish to be removed from the list please reply remove to mhauser@migop.org.

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