

Veterans & Military Families Monthly News

March 2011 Vol. 2 No. 4

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

Remember, we have two online sources where you can read and offer comments on the current and previous editions of the newsletter. The newsletter is 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 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 suggestions for topics to cover or wants to write their own piece, we will gladly try to work it in. We hope you enjoy, and please share your feedback with us.

Thank you very much!



2011 Memorial Day Ceremony- A Day of Remembrance

From: Sherry Swann (Secretary of Fort Custer Advisory Committee and Event Coordinator)

Memorial Day is the holiday held in the United States of America in memory of the dead servicemen and servicewomen of all wars. The largest ceremony held in our area annually is always held the day before the date of the actual holiday. This year’s ceremony will take place on Sunday, May 29th, at 2 p.m. at Fort Custer National Cemetery, 15501 Dickman Road, Augusta, Michigan. The ceremony is sponsored by the Fort Custer National Cemetery Advisory Committee, Inc. We encourage area residents of all ages to attend this stirring patriotic event. Attending an hour-long event like this is a wonderful way for young people to learn why they should take pride in being an American.

For further information about the event please contact the Fort Custer National Cemetery Advisory Committee for the cemetery please call Sherry D. Swann, Program Chair, at (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 their page. If you would like join, please [click here](#).

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 country.

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Save the date-110th ASOC presents our Bi-Annual Reunion for 110th and 172nd

From: *Hank Fuhs*

Date – July 16, 2011, Time: Noon – 4:00 P.M.,
Place: Home of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Henry (Hank) Fuhs 3848
E Leonard Grand Rapids, MI Phone: 616-949-8613 Cell:
616-437-9059, Food: Bring Dish to pass, Drinks: BYOB

At 2:00 p.m. there will be one minute of silence
for those who have passed away and for our troops in
Iraq, Afghanistan and the rest of the world. See you
there.....rain or shine....We have a tent!

Hosts

**Ron Bienias, Co-Chair, Larry Harr, Co-Chair, Jim
Ondersma, Co-Chair, Hank Fuhs, Co-Chair, Keith
Acker, Rep. Dave Agema, Bruce Blakeman, Stephen
Burke, Jerry Cook, Bill DeBroux, Bill Donovan, Ivan
Giese, Larry Gilbert, Hal Isenhoff, Dennis Keast, Tom
King, Rob Koenig, Dick Kreuzer, Fred Langeland, Don
Lewis, Lyle & Linda McPherson, Theodore Nikodem,
Art Oxley, Marie Oxley, Claude Oxley, Donna Rojas,
Ron Seely, Jack Seranian, Dee Simmonds, Gene Simon,
David Stanley, Dave Strohm, Fred Strauss, Gorden
Stump, Joseph Tomlinson, Pat Webb, James Wise**

Support Our Troops!

We all know people who are currently serving in the mil-
itary. For example: My nephew Scott who is an Army
Staff Sargent just came back from serving three years in
Iraq and one year in Africa. We need to remember those
who are now serving and say Thank you.

Please pass this flyer on to your military buddies.....if
you have addresses of people you would like me to send
invitations to please send them to hankfuhs@juno.com



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Last Known US Doughboy dies at age 110.
See pages 7 and 8 for more information.

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

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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 details about the First Annual Joe Johnson Memorial Golf Outing on May 21, at Sugar Bush Gold Course in Davison, MI. →

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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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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](#)



Veteran Legislation

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

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



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!

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 and 12 in Evansville IN, July 2 and 3 in Muskegon, MI July 23 and 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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Last American WWI Veteran Dies

By: Fred W. Baker III

From: American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28, 2011 - Frank Woodruff Buckles, the last surviving American World War I veteran, died yesterday at his West Virginia home. He was 110.

Sixteen-year-old Buckles enlisted in the Army on Aug. 14, 1917 after lying to several recruiters about his age.

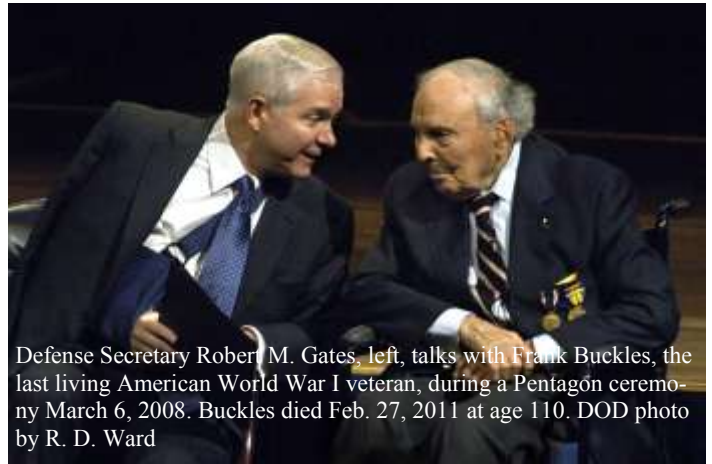
"I was just 16 and didn't look a day older. I confess to you that I lied to more than one recruiter. I gave them my solemn word that I was 18, but I'd left my birth certificate back home in the family Bible. They'd take one look at me and laugh and tell me to home before my mother noticed I was gone," Buckles wrote in 2009.

Buckles tried the Marines and Navy, but both turned him away. An Army recruiter, however, accepted his story.

"Somehow I got the idea that telling an even bigger whopper was the way to go. So I told the next recruiter that I was 21 and darned if he didn't sign me up on the spot!" he wrote.

Buckles earned the rank of corporal and traveled England and France serving as an ambulance driver. After the Armistice in 1918, Buckles escorted prisoners of war back to Germany. He was discharged in 1920.

In 1942 Buckles worked as a civilian for a shipping company in the Philippines, where he was captured in Manila by the Japanese the day after they attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He spent three and a half years in the Los Baños prison camp. He was rescued on February



23, 1945.

Buckles married Audrey Mayo of Pleasanton, Calif., in 1946. The couple moved to his Gap View Farm near Charles Town in January 1954 where Buckles reportedly continued to drive his tractor until he was 106.

On February 4, 2008, with the death of 108-year-old Harry Richard Landis, Buckles became the last surviving American World War I veteran. Since, Buckles championed veterans' causes, was invited to the White House and honored at the Pentagon.

In March 2008 Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates honored Buckles during a Pentagon ceremony in which officials unveiled a World War I veterans' exhibit.

"Whoever views this display will, I am sure, feel a connection to Mr. Buckles and his comrades-in-arms," Gates said. "We will always be grateful for what they did for their country 90 years ago."

Buckles, then 107, received a standing ovation from the mostly military audience.

"I feel honored to be here as a representative of the veterans of WWI and I thank you," Buckles said.

Buckles is survived by his daughter, Susannah Buckles Flanagan. His wife, Audrey, died in 1999.

In a White House statement issued today President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama saluted the fallen veteran.

"Frank Buckles lived the American Century," the President stated. "Like so many veterans, he returned home, continued his education, began a career, and along with his late wife Audrey, raised their daughter Susannah. And just as Frank continued to serve America until his passing, as the Honorary Chairman of the World War I Memorial Foundation, our nation has a sacred obligation to always serve our veterans and their families as well as they've served us.

"We join Susannah and all those who knew and loved her father in celebrating a remarkable life that reminds us of the true meaning of patriotism and our obligations to each other as Americans."



Photo from: Dale Hemphill-Designer, Spirit of America flag, 574-340-1192 Please visit www.forgottenheroesusa.com/

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The World War I Memorial Foundation

From: www.wwimemorial.org

In March 2008, Frank Buckles, the last surviving American veteran of World War I, visited the District of Columbia War Memorial, on the National Mall in Washington DC. He observed that this peaceful, secluded memorial, dedicated in 1931 as a memorial to the 499 residents of the District of Columbia who gave their lives in that war, sits neglected and in extreme disrepair, and that there is no national memorial to World War I. Mr. Buckles issued a call for the restoration and re-dedication of the D.C. memorial as a National and District of Columbia World War I Memorial.

The World War I Memorial Foundation was formed to make Frank Buckles' dream a reality. The mission of the Foundation is to advocate and raise funds for the re-dedication of the DC War Memorial as a national World War I memorial, dedicated to all those Americans who served in the Great War.

In 2014 the world will mark the centennial of World War I. Nearly 5 million Americans served during the war, and 116,516 Americans died in defense of democracy overseas. America's support of its allies in World War I marked the first time in this nation's history

that American soldiers went abroad to defend foreign soil against aggression -- and it marked the true beginning of "the American century."

Yet while the later conflicts of the 20th century - World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War -- rightfully have national memorials on the National Mall, there is no such memorial to "the Great War," even though more Americans gave their lives in World War I than in Korea or Vietnam. The D.C. memorial, which is already located adjacent to those other memorials, is the most fitting site for a national World War I memorial.



American history through a similar formula. These films demonstrated a intense and blockbuster success and a powerful indicator for the public's level of interest in such stories.

But what if there was a *true* story of an American who actually accomplished these things and whose life is a parallel to the proven success of these films? The life of America's last World War I veteran, Frank Buckles, is the one story, the one survivor and the one whose story needs to be shared.

Pershing's Last Patriot: The Frank Woodruff Buckles Story is slated for release in

2011. In this unique and insightful documentary film, we will travel with Frank to reflect on his early life in rural Missouri and Oklahoma. Frank will share his experiences as he enlisted and served our nation in "The War to End All Wars". We will experience his life in a Japanese prisoner of war camp, and relive his amazing rescue from death. Finally, we will see how Frank's life has changed over the decades, and his rise to fame as America's last witness to the First World War and so many other world events.

Pershing's Last Patriot

From: www.pershingslastpatriot.com

Many award-winning feature films have tried to bring the American twentieth century to life through fictional stories. *Forrest Gump* walked us through the twentieth century with his profound life; *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* used a characters life to entertain us through American History from 2005 to World War I, and *The Notebook* escorted us through a tale of

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MICHIGAN AIR NATIONAL GUARD HISTORY BOOKS

The Michigan Air National Guard Historical Association created a three volume set of history books covering the periods 1926-1996. A fourth volume covering the years 1996 to 2006 is in production and should be available soon.

- Volume 1 covers the period 1926 to 1976-Cost: \$1.00
- Volume 2 covers the period 1976 to 1986-Cost: \$4.00
- Volume 3 covers the period 1986 to 1996-Cost: \$1.00
- Volume 4 will cover the period 1996 to 2010 **IN PRODUCTION**

If you wish to purchase one or more of these volumes or are interested in more information, please contact MAGHA at Phone: 586-239-6768, Fax: 586-239-6646, Email: 127.wg.selfridgeairmuseum@ang.af.mil

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

"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.



Special Event: Lest We Forget's May

2011 Tribute to Korean War Veterans

From: Don Alsbro, Colonel US Army (Ret)

BENTON HARBOR, MI – Lest We Forget's events are becoming an annual Rite of Spring, not unlike sighting the first robin, seed catalogs in the mailbox or baseball's spring training – something looked to in anticipation. This year, the Lest We Forget group has planned for you a tribute replete with education, comedy and reverence. Come along as they immerse you in the facts and feelings from 1950-1953 in "A Tribute to Korean War Veterans."

In prelude to the big event, the week is peppered with entertainment. Not to be missed is a live performance of M*A*S*H*! This humorous play - under the direction of Marty and Wendy Golub and featuring an All-Star cast of local talent - reflects circumstances and conundrums faced by our medical military serving in Korea. Shows are at 7pm Friday and Saturday evenings, May 13-14 at the Hanson Theater at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center in Benton Harbor, with a third performance date to be determined. A shorter vignette takes place during the Tribute weekend. On Thursday, May 19, the film *Chosin* tells of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir - fought during a brutal, icy winter in the most rugged and steep terrain of North Korea. The film is set for 1900 hours (7pm civilian time) at Celebration Cinema in Benton Harbor.

Spanning May 20-22, the Southwestern Michigan Regional Airport will be bustling with activity. In addition to all our guests, each Berrien County high school (public and private) has been invited to send one bus with 30 students on Friday for a preformed itinerary of the highlights from 9am until 3:30pm. Funds to pay for this transportation have been provided by the Berrien County Community Fund. The day will feature war-era aircraft - some available for paid rides; Korean food tasting (this is your chance, if you dare, to discover the flavor of kim-chee); and exhibits and the 20th Century Military Museum with Korean artifacts. On both Friday and Saturday are the Tootsie Roll Drops. The Marines at Chosin were running low on 60mm artillery ammunition. In sending the message for more ammo, they had to use the code word "Tootsie Roll." Someone in the rear didn't realize that it was a code for ammunition and actually sent Tootsie Rolls. The parachute drops of this candy to our armed forces turned out to more than satisfy a sweet tooth. The high-energy chocolate candies were the only food U.S. soldiers could thaw in the -30° temperatures and are even credited with saving lives of those near starvation. The Leap Dog Parachute team drops on Friday and Saturday are at noon. Another jump, sans the candy, is Saturday afternoon.



Friday evening takes a look into the vast contrast of war and peace, as Korea: Then and Now shows all aspects of the dichotomy. What look at Asian history would be complete without fireworks! After dusk falls on Friday, watch as the brilliance of glowing color and rocketing sound sparkle overhead in a patriotic celebration.

Saturday evening's program includes a South Shore Band performance of patriotic songs and shenanigans of The Misfits.

Sunday's Chapel Service, conducted by Vietnam-decorated-veteran Bud Baker, is always moving and motivating. Following the service is the recognition of 36 local Ko-

rean veterans killed in Korea. Presently, over half of the 36 families have been contacted and plan to participate in the tribute presentations on Sunday afternoon.

Afterward is Veterans Stories - a segment during which stories are shared on-the-spot by veterans in attendance. This component has been key in the publishing of two books to date by Lest We Forget, who hopes to continue compilation for another book. This segment has also brought forth the sharing of tales by some veterans who had not uttered a word prior about their experiences. This catharsis is liberating to them and adds a chapter to history.

Lest We Forget acknowledges the efforts of Henry Seo, a retired Berrien County school teacher who has been making arrangements with Koreans locally, in South Bend and Chicago. Henry, as a child, was rescued by the Americans in North Korea and has expressed his appreciation to the American soldiers for many, many years. Also important to note are the individuals who have been meeting two to three times a month for the past seven months - Korean veterans Dale Jeffers, program chairman; Red Sage, school program chairman; Art Clark, veterans stories; Bill Burke, Memorial Service for Korean casualties; and Jim O'Malley, M*A*S*H play. Assisting them have been Lest We Forget members Lew Burchard, Operations; Marv Abbott, Logistics; Jim Brinkman, Financial Operations and Don Alsbro, President of Lest We Forget.

We will be privileged to have Medal of Honor Recipients Ron Rosser and Duane Dewey return to the Twin Cities. Ron, who lives in Ohio, and Duane, who lives in Michigan, received their Medals of Honor for heroic actions saving many American lives. With attendance by Korean Consul Officials from Chicago, Korean War event presentations and a multi-sensory sampling of Korean culture, once again the incentives are vast and varied to partake in an event you will not soon forget.

If you have questions, please call Don Alsbro at 269-921-7176 or Dale Jeffers at 269-429-3733.

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Think USERRA won't help; there is always Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint (EEOC) right? Or Veteran's Preference Part Four.

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

I must pause and thank all of my fans out there. I really appreciate your letters of support and kind words as I try to make this complicated subject clear as mud. Keep the fan mail coming, my wife gets a kick.

If you ever wanted to know about the EEOC process, please go to www.eeoc.gov/facts. From this website, it is the EEOC's policy to seek full and effective relief for each and every victim of discrimination. Sounds great, we as veteran's are protected here, right? Not so fast shipmate. All one has to do is look at some recent rulings to understand something is very wrong with the system.

The EEOC has stated that merely because an individual has a service related "disability" does not automatically mean that the individual is disabled for purposes of the Rehabilitation Act. See *Holstein v. U.S. Postal Service*, EEOC Appeal no. 01A01808 (March 6, 2003). The individual must still establish that their medical condition meets the regulations in the Rehabilitation Act or American's with Disability Act (ADA) as set forth in 29 C.F.R. Section 1630.2(g). What does this mean? In a nutshell, if you are rated disabled by the Department of Veteran Affairs, it does not mean you are disabled in the eyes of the federal work force.

Even if the federal agency solicits you as a disabled veteran with a service connected disability of 30% or more (qualifying for veteran's preference), you are not necessarily disabled to an Administrative Judge under the EEOC case law and current Acts. Think about that. If you are like me and a few veterans I know, you have some challenges from your service. Maybe its shot knees, maybe its missing parts, maybe its bad hearing, but you try to be normal and fit into society. If you fit in and try to do the best you can, sorry, you are not disabled. Does not matter what the VA says.

A qualified individual with a disability or regarded as having a disability, or has a record of a disability as defined by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Section 791 et seq; is required to prove a claim of disparate treatment based on disability. That means if you have a VA determination letter, based on a VA doctor's assessment of your condition, it may not matter. Even if the VA

regards you as disabled, sends you checks every month, the U.S. Department of Labor does not necessarily agree.

Even if you are required by the federal agency to inform them in writing (sometimes dozens of times) of your disability, it does not mean the agency has been informed of your disability. You must be able to prove that the supervisor of the agency personally admitted knowledge of your disability. I will say that differently, you must be able to get the offending supervisor to admit he/she screwed up and knew you were disabled. If you cannot get that, then under the law, you are not protected. See *Matheny v. Department of the Treasury*, EEOC Petition No. 03840172 (Oct. 31 1985).

Let's shift gears shipmate. If you think that the laws are clear still, try to get you head around this. The Labor Laws are broken down and enforced by different components of the federal government. If you think the FBI and CIA did not talk to each other before 9/11, the Labor Department apparently does not consider itself worth having a consistent message internally. Inside the Labor Dept, there is the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and the VETS agency. Both are tasked with enforcing the Labor Laws and protecting veteran's rights. In fact, the sections of USERRA and OSC complaints come from the same laws, under Title VII. However, if a veteran complains to the OSC or VETS, it is not considered valid under EEOC activity. What does that mean? It means that if you follow the system as a person attempting to get employment with a federal agency, and you follow the rules, a complaint filed with VETS is not a valid complaint under EEOC. Despite the fact that the same laws are used and drawn upon.

I am no lawyer to be sure. But I am a disabled veteran who has helped many veterans with the federal system, and when you follow the rules, you will get referred to the VETS agency, then the OSC, then the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) and the EEOC. All roads end before an administrative judge unless you elect to go to federal court. Of course, you must have a significant wallet to back the legal fees necessary to go through this process. And still the deck is stacked against you.

Why? Well I said in my opening columns, there are not many veterans any more. Where are the federal jobs, most are in large cities such as Washington, Dallas, Chicago, New York, etc. Where are the attorneys that have the necessary expertise? You guessed it; they are in the large cities where the federal agencies are located.



In fact, the federal agencies have hundreds of attorneys that are employed by the agencies to defend the agency against such complaints filed by veterans. Here in the Midwest there is one such attorney out of Chicago who is widely known in veteran circles for running rough shod over veterans. Now I realize that attorneys are essentially hired guns. So if you have the opinion that the government that you fought for is going to stand up for you, forget it. The hired guns are coming for you courtesy of the US Government.

There is a case that was attempted that should have been the case to change the law. Two US Navy JAG officers, after separation from service applied for jobs. They were not selected because they were considered not qualified. They filed a complaint. They elected to go to federal court, claiming discrimination against veterans. The result of that case was that in order for a veteran to prevail, he or she must show that the offending agency has admitted to discriminating against the veteran. This has resulted in investigating agencies often telling veterans they will not investigate because the veteran cannot meet the burden of proof required under 20 C.F.R. section 1002.

Are you feeling like we are underway in 40 foot seas? We are when it comes to veteran's preference. The sea of rulings is against us. There is no veteran's preference and the agency does not have to give it to you if they do not want to under OPM rules. They may hire under any authority they deem fit. Think you can fight the system? The DOLVETS will not help you because their job is to enforce the interpreted law as defined by case law. The OSC is the same. The MSPB and the EEOC are the same, if you do not have definitive proof as defined as the

specific offending agency admits is discrimination, you lose. Even if you are lucky enough to get hired, (Some agencies actually suggest you find a former Admiral or General in the agency to influence your hire) you may still run into discrimination from those who would not serve our nation.

Now I have tried talking to Senator Stabenow, Senator Clair McCaskill, CBS News, the late Senator Kennedy, Senator McCain, and several Michigan State representatives. All to no avail, the answer is as Senator Stabenow's office explained, yes its messed up, but its not important enough.

The only way forward is we have to get the word out. We have to get the laws revised. In my next installment, I am going to drill down on Title 38, which specifically is written to protect veterans against discrimination. Unfortunately, this law has been modified by activists judges. So we need a change in the law to undue the unintended consequences of the USERRA implementation and the VA disability rating being ignored by the US DOL.

Spread the word shipmates; write your Congressman and Senators. Write the Legion, VFW and DAV. Whatever you do, don't just take this laying down.

Recently, I noticed on Military.com an advertisement for Veterans Campaign. This website and 501(3) (c) non-profit is dedicated to teaching veterans how to run for public office. Why does such a website and service exist? In 1969, the number of veterans in Congress was almost 75%. Today it is less than 23% and dropping. Congress is becoming more and more out of step with veterans needs and our service. Please check out this website, veterans-campaigns.com.

Fair Winds and Following Seas.

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.



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Legal Help for Veterans

From: James G. Fausone

Legal Help for Veterans, PLLC is a law firm located in Northville, Michigan. We have a national practice representing veterans on veterans disability claims. This representation occurs at the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the Board of Veterans' Appeals and regional offices. We have helped veterans collect over \$10,000,000 in retro and future benefits. Over the last decade, LHFV has become a trusted name in the legal community for providing legal services to veterans and lecturing at law schools, bar associations and community events.

Members of the Legal Help for Veterans practice group are former service members who bring not only legal expertise but an understanding of service and duty. The members of the group have medical and administrative backgrounds as well as finely honed legal skills developed over twenty years of practice and experi-



ence. We have represented thousands of veterans and currently have over 650 active clients.

For more information about legal help for veterans and for contact information www.legalhelpforveterans.com and found on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Our telephone number is 800.693.4800. Our blog discusses current issues facing veterans and the VA.

Typically our clients are enlisted men and women who served post Korea. The Vietnam vet is still the one with the most common problems. These include Agent Orange related disabilities, PTSD, psychiatric or orthopedic injuries. Other vets often have hearing loss, military sexual trauma or tinnitus. We are now seeing Iraq and Afghanistan vets with TBI. Many vets do not even begin the disability claim process until many years after service. The trigger may be unemployability and the need for benefits. With a million claim back log at VA, it is a slow and confusing process and many people need professional help establishing the proper diagnosis and service connection. That is what Legal Help for Veterans, PLLC has been doing for clients for years.

B-36 Ride to Hell... Part II

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

Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt attempted to restart the number-one engine, the one that had spouted flames on take-off, but fuel was not getting to its induction system. He tried to restart the number-three engine, but could not unfeather the propeller on that engine. As the bomber passed to the west of Cleburne, the right scanner reported dense white smoke, oil, and metal particles coming from the number-five engine.

After a short while the number-five engine lost power, and Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt feathered the propeller on that engine while still twenty-one miles from Carswell Air Force Base. The B-36B could not stay airborne on the power of the three remaining failing engines.

It was flying at just 125 miles per hour, seven miles per hour above the stall speed, losing both altitude and airspeed. Howard McCullough and W. Boeten were flying Civil Aeronautics Authority DC-3 N342 near Cleburne. They were notified by Meacham Tower to be on the lookout for 44-92035. They spotted it about five miles south of Cleburne. They observed that the number-one and number-three propellers were feathered and the number-five engine was on fire. They turned to follow the descending bomber. Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt



ordered the crew to bail out of the stricken bomber.

Bombardier Captain Robert Nelson had bailed out of airplanes on two previous occasions. He had crash landed twice and ditched once. He was the first man to bail out from the forward crew compartment. He suffered contusions of his lower spine when he landed.

Radar Operator Captain James Yeingst responded to stress with laughter and jokes. He was a bit giddy before the bailout. He was the second man to exit from the forward crew compartment. His parachute streamed after he pulled the rip cord. He passed Captain Nelson going down. Captain Yeingst's parachute mushroomed open just before he hit the ground, but he suffered fatal injuries.

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 country.

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Co-pilot Captain Wilbur Evans was the third man to exit from the forward crew compartment. He had bailed out of airplanes twice before and crash landed several times during WW-II. This time he broke both bones in his lower right leg when he landed.

Navigator Captain Horace Stewart had previously tried to get off flying status because he felt that the B-36 was too dangerous. It is reported that during the hour before bailout, he was tense, nervous, and chain-smoking. He was the fourth man to bail out from the forward crew compartment. He pulled his rip cord right as he exited the forward escape hatch on the left side of the fuselage. His parachute opened and pulled him toward the number three propeller. His head hit the downward pointing blade of the propeller, killing him instantly.

Radio Operator Cpl. Paul Myers followed Captain Stewart out the escape hatch. Myers landed with minor injuries. Flight Engineer M/Sgt. Edward Farcas jumped head first through the exit hatch of the forward crew compartment right after Cpl. Myers. His parachute did not open when he pulled the rip cord. He pulled the parachute out of its pack with his hands and landed with only minor injuries.

Radar Mechanic Robert Gianerakis and Flight Engineer Captain Samuel Baker were the next to escape from the forward compartment. Both landed with only minor injuries. Radio Operator Sgt. Armando Villareal bailed out after Captain Baker. Villareal did not trust his parachute to open, so he pulled the rip cord while he was



still in the forward crew compartment. He held his parachute in his arms as he jumped feet first through the escape hatch. Despite his unorthodox method of escape, he landed with only minor injuries.

Pilot 1st Lt. Walter Ross was the next to last to leave the forward compartment. He landed with only minor injuries. Gunner S/Sgt. Andrew Byrne and Radar Observer S/Sgt. Ray Earl were the first two crew members to bail out of the rear crew compartment. Both landed with only minor injuries. Gunner Cpl. Calvin Martin was the third man to exit the rear crew compartment. He was swinging under his parachute as he hit the ground. He broke his right ankle as he landed. He fell backward onto a rock, fracturing his third lumbar vertebra and compressing his tailbone. Gunner S/Sgt. Ronald Williams followed Cpl. Martin out the rear escape hatch. He landed with only minor injuries. Gunner S/Sgt. Fred Boyd was the last man to exit the rear crew compartment. He called to Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt over the intercom to let him know that everyone had escaped from the aft compartment. When he turned back to the exit hatch, it had fallen shut. He had to open the hatch again to make his escape. He broke the fibula of his left leg when he landed farther to the north than the other crew members.

After S/Sgt. Boyd reported that all other crew members had bailed out of the rear compartment, Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt set the autopilot and jumped clear when the bomber was less than 1,000 feet above the ground. He and nine other crew members escaped from the B-36B with only minor injuries. When McCullough and Boeten in DC-3, N342 saw the parachutes of the escaping crew members, they announced the bail-out on the emergency frequency of 121.25 megacycles.



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BURIAL AT SEA-Part II

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



MY FIRST NOTIFICATION-My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed: Name, rank, and serial number, name, address, and phone number of next of kin. Date of and limited details about the Marine's death. Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station. With a strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed. The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away. I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store / service station / Post Office. I went in to ask directions. Three people were in the store. A man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The Storeowner walked up and addressed them by name, "Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper." I was stunned. My casualty's next of kin's name was John Cooper! I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, "I beg your pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Copper of (address.);" The father looked at me—I was in uniform—and then, shaking, bent at the waist, and vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor. The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The store-owner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving. I returned the storeowner to his business. He thanked me and said, "Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars." I shook his hand and said; "Neither would I." I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk. Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone. My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

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Each report of Emergency Parachute Jump indicates that the incident occurred 20 miles south southeast of Carswell Air Force Base. The descent of the B-36B was witnessed by Mr. Buck Bell and his wife, who lived about 5 to 7 miles southwest of Crowley, Texas. Mr. Bell saw the crew members parachuting from the bomber, but did not see it hit the ground about one mile north of his house. Mr. James Bandy and his wife were on the road to Cleburne about 4 miles from their house on Route 1 near Joshua when they spotted the B-36B trailing smoke, flying in a nose-high attitude. They saw it hit the ground in a level attitude, raising a cloud of dust.

The B-36B descended straight ahead in a nose-high attitude for a mile after Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt bailed out. It stalled, pitched nose down, and impacted in a terraced field on Less Armstrong's Dairy Farm, 14 miles south of Carswell Air Force Base, 2 miles west of the South leg FTW range, and six miles west of Crowley at 9:50 in the morning. The forward crew compartment separated and folded underneath the rest of the fuselage. The tail section broke off, and the rear crew compartment came away from the mid-fuselage as the wreckage slid 850 feet along the ground and twisted to the right. The rear sections of the airplane remained largely intact. The elevation at the crash site was approximately 700 feet. Mr. W. Doggett witnessed the bail-out and crash from his home on Route 1 near Joshua. The B-36B impacted about 2-1/2 miles north of his house. He drove to the crash site in his pickup truck and helped the surviving crew members to regroup.

Four minutes after the crash, McCullough and Boeten in DC-3, N342 reported that two Navy aircraft were circling the wreckage. The wreckage smoldered for about eight minutes before a fire broke out in the number-six engine.

The 15,000 gallons of remaining fuel consumed the forward fuselage and wings. The civilians and crew members were driven away from the crash site by exploding ammunition and the knowledge of the presence of 1,500 pounds of bombs aboard the airplane. **-Read this the next time you think you're having a bad day**



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THE FUNERALS -Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys and how to fold the flag. When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, “All Marines share in your grief.” I had been instructed to say, “On behalf of a grateful nation.” I didn’t think the nation was grateful, so I didn’t say that. Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn’t speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, “I’m so sorry you have this terrible job.” My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION-Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother’s house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff car. I parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming “NO! NO! NO! NO!” I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house. Eight or nine neighbors followed. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving. The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me.



Rehearsal for Burial at Sea. Docked in Norfolk, summer 1965

The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION-From my office. I called the Longshoreman’s Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father’s schedule. The Business Manager asked, “Is it his son?” I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, “Tom is at home today.” I said, “Don’t call him. I’ll take care of that.” The Business Manager said, “Aye, Aye Sir,” and then explained, “Tom and I were Marines in WWII.” I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, “Is Mr. Smith home?” She smiled pleasantly and responded, “Yes, but he’s eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?” I said, “I’m sorry. It’s important, I need to see him now.” She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, “Tom, it’s for you.” A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, “Jesus Christ man, he’s only been there three weeks!”



Bugler playing “Taps” at Arlington National Cemetery. Some Marines prefer burial at sea. Before the ceremony is the tough task of notifying the family.

BURIAL AT SEA-Months passed, more notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth. I never could do that and held an imaginary phone to his ear. It was another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, "Got it." and hung up. I had stopped saying "Thank You" long ago. Jolly, "Where?" Me, "Eastern Shore of Maryland. The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam." Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, "This time of day, it'll take three hours to get there and back. I'll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter. And I'll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief's home." He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father's door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, "Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?" I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime. He called me that "I've gone through my boy's papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?" I said, "Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will." My wife who had been listening said, "Can you do that?" I told her, "I have no idea. But I'm going to break my ass trying." I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, "General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?" General Bowser said, "George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you. I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, "How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel." I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?" The Chief of Staff responded with a name. The Admiral called the ship, "Captain, you're going to do a burial at sea. You'll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed." He hung up, looked at me, and said, "The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don't have to sic Al Bowser on my ass." I responded, "Aye Aye, Sir" and got the hell out of his office. I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship's crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, "These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?" All the high priced help including me stood there looking dumb. Then



the Senior Chief stood and said, "Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War I hang out." They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worst for wear, and said, "It's simple; we cut four 12" holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat." The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth. The sun was hot and the ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplin spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea. The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever. The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, "General, get me the f*ck out of here. I can't take this s**t anymore." I was transferred two weeks later. I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up. Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said, "Well Done, Colonel. Well Done." I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!-Lt. Col George Goodson

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P-MART: A Reliable Pharmacy Safety Tool for Service Members

From: www.tricare.mil February 22, 2011

FALLS CHURCH, VA -Since 2002, the Prescription Medication Analysis Reporting Tool (P-MART) has screened 1.1 million service members deploying overseas to ensure they were taking appropriate prescription drugs.

P-MART, a TRICARE pharmacy tool, confidentially checks service members' prescription records to rapidly and accurately assess their medication needs when they deploy.

"A critical part of TRICARE's mission is to ensure and enhance the readiness of U.S. Armed Forces," said Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, chief of the TRICARE Pharmaceutical Operations Directorate. "P-MART is a useful tool to make sure our fighting men and women are taking safe and appropriate prescription medications."

When it screens a service member, P-MART flags medications that may be unsuitable for the deployed environment or that require a more intensive medical review. P-MART generates reports for unit medical officers who can prescribe different medications, provide a waiver or make other arrangements.

"In 2010, 160,187 service members were screened before deployment using P-MART," McGinnis said. "A medication that is fine to take while serving at a desk job in Kuwait, may not be right for a Marine on patrol in Afghanistan."

Of the 1.1 million service members screened by P-MART since 2002, over 350,000 have been identified as taking high-risk medications. These include medications not easily available overseas, those that require monitoring or that could result in a medical evacuation if



not provided.

Since 2009, P-MART has also been used to screen service members at Warrior Transition Units after their deployment, producing reports outlining their prescription portfolio. The reports highlight controlled substances and psychotropic drugs. They are available to the team of pharmacists, medical providers, nurses and case managers caring for the service member. The reports are used to help identify at-risk service members who may need additional treatment while transitioning back to civilian life.

For more information about TRICARE pharmacy programs, visit www.tricare.mil/Pharmacy. The PEC website, www.pec.ha.osd.mil/, contains more information about P-MART. Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at www.tricare.mil/subscriptions. Connect with TRICARE on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/tricare and www.twitter.com/tricare. The TRICARE Management Activity administers the worldwide health care plan for 9.6 million eligible beneficiaries of the uniformed services, retirees and their families.



Please Support "Frontlines of Freedom" Military Talk Radio Hosted by Lt. Col. Denny Gillem.

You can hear it every Saturday at 1p.m. on 1260 AM the Pledge (Zeeland, MI), or by visiting the website at www.frontlinesoffreedom.com or for Facebook [click here](#).

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 country.



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.

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520 Seymour Street, Lansing, MI 48933

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

From: RAO Bulletin March 2011 (Lt. James —EMO Tichacek, USN (Ret) Associate Director, Retiree Assistance Office, U.S. Embassy Warden & IRS VITA Ba-guio 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)

Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) last week sponsored a resolution designating 30 MAR as —Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day! The proposed resolution S.RES. 55, presently has 5 cosponsors. It states and resolves that the Senate:

(1) honors and recognizes the contributions of veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces in Vietnam during war and during peace;

(2) encourages States and local governments to also establish 'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day'; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe 'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day' with appropriate ceremonies and activities that:

a. provide the appreciation Vietnam War veterans deserve, but did not receive upon returning home from the war;

b. demonstrate the resolve that never again shall the Nation disregard and denigrate a generation of veterans;

c. promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of such veterans during their military service as well as to their communities since returning home;

d. promote awareness of the importance of entire communities empowering veterans and the families of veterans to readjust to civilian life after military service; and

e. promote opportunities for such veterans to assist younger veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilitation from wounds, both seen and unseen, and to support the reintegration of younger veterans into civilian life.

[Source: TREA Washington Update 25 Feb 2011 ++]



Honor and Remember Campaign

From: RAO Bulletin March 2011 (Lt. James —EMO Tichacek, USN (Ret) Associate Director, Retiree Assistance Office, U.S. Embassy Warden & IRS VITA Ba-guio 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 simple Honor and Remember banner is designed to honor those who served and died in the military. But a national campaign to add the red-and-white "Honor and Remember" banner to official U.S. flag displays on military holidays is creating painful divisions among veterans and the relatives of loved ones killed in action. For lawmakers nationwide, the "Honor and Remember" debate forces an uncomfortable question: Who can say what should be done to honor people who died for the country? The banner - a red-and-white background with a star, an eternal flame and the words "HONOR AND REMEMBER" - was conceived by a Virginia man, George Lutz, who lost his son in Iraq in 2005. Lutz has visited all 50 states to promote its display beneath the American flag and the POW/MIA flag adopted by Congress in 1989. Delaware, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Virginia have adopted the banner, and federal legislation to do so is pending for a third consecutive year in Congress. "It's public recognition of the price of freedom, and I don't think we can do that enough," said Lutz, of Chesapeake, Va., who has gathered signatures of support from countless relatives of fallen service members and many public officials, including governors and members of Congress.



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Lutz says the campaign helps him mourn his son, Pfc. George Anthony "Tony" Lutz II, killed at age 25. "It's a great idea," said Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA) who has sponsored bills in Congress requiring the "Honor and Remember" flag to be flown under the national flag and POW/MIA flag at federal buildings on federal holidays. "There was no flag that was separate and apart to honor those who had given their lives in the defense and honor of the country," Forbes said. But many oppose the new banner's display alongside Old Glory. In Colorado, state senators in late JAN rejected a second attempt to have the "Honor and Remember" flag flown over the state Capitol on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The decision literally brought tears to the eyes of some on the Senate State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee after hours of emotional testimony from veterans. Dozens in the standing-room-only crowd dabbed their eyes. Comments included:

- "We believe Old Glory is the only flag we want representing us," said Marvin Meyers, former chairman of the Colorado Board of Veterans' Affairs. "We fought for it. We're buried under it."
- "We don't need any other flag other than the United States flag - the flag of our country," said Ralph Bozella, a Vietnam veteran and current chairman of the Colorado Board of Veterans' Affairs.
- "When troops fallen in battle come home, their caskets are covered in the American flag," Bozella said. "That's the flag we fought for, and that's the flag we honor."

But others argue that the American flag is too multifaceted to simply honor those killed in war. They point out that while the nation observes the POW/MIA flag, fallen veterans don't have a flag of their own. "I know there are some veterans that are adamantly opposed to it, and I respect that," said Molly Morel of Martin, Tenn., whose son, Marine Capt. Brent Morel, died in Afghanistan. Molly Morel is president of the nation's largest organization for mothers who have lost children in battle, American Gold Star Mothers, created after World War I. She's a passionate supporter of the "Honor and Remember" flag and has one embroidered with her son's name. Morel says she doesn't understand why some veterans chafe at including the flag on official displays. "Does America have too many reminders about the sacrifices? I don't think so," Morel said.


Prominent military historians are skeptical about the new banner. Andrew Wiest, a historian at the University of Southern Mississippi who specializes in the

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Vietnam War, says the POW/MIA flag was adopted in "a fit of national conscience and remorse" over how Vietnam veterans were treated when they returned home. "The national flag is supposed to represent everything, the sacrifice of all veterans," Wiest said. The debate is giving public officials an uncomfortable choice between veterans' groups and grieving relatives. The national American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars groups haven't taken positions on the banner, though many state chapters oppose its inclusion. "This is gut-wrenching," said Colorado Sen. Rollie Heath, a Boulder Democrat who cast the deciding vote not to fly the "Honor and Remember" flag above the state Capitol in Denver. "I happen to believe the American flag is the flag we ought to fly," he said. "Do I feel good about it? No. This has caused a rift in the veterans' community. And that's something that pains all of us." For more on the Honor and Remember campaign refer to <http://www.honorandremember.org> [Source: AP Kristen Wyatt article 31 Jan 2011 ++]

Online Access to VA Health Records
 From: www.military.com-Week of February 28, 2011



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has announced a new online feature that allows active duty and retired service-members to access their electronic health records (EHRs) online. The VA's "Blue Button" Web Portal gives veterans direct access to the agency's MyHealthVet personal health record on any computer, including mobile devices. Blue Button capability allows VA patients to download and also share their healthcare records with medical providers. For more information, visit myhealth.va.gov. To learn more about your state's veteran benefits, visit the Military.com State Veteran's Benefits Directory.

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USS Memphis Completes Final Deployment After 33 Years of Distinguished Service

By: Lt. Patrick Evans, Submarine Group 2 Public Affairs Officer

GROTON, Conn. (NNS) -- Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Memphis (SSN 691) returned to Naval Submarine Base New London March 2, completing her final overseas mission.

Next month, the Navy will hold a decommissioning ceremony for Memphis, which has been in service for more than 30 years, spanning six presidents. The ceremony is scheduled for April 1st at 1:00 p.m. at the submarine base.

When Memphis arrived, most crewmembers were wearing their service dress uniforms, but Chief Fire Control Technician Brian Paugh was dressed in a white jumpsuit with rhinestones, depicting music icon Elvis Presley.

"Since I love Elvis, and I love Johnny cash - both are from Memphis, Tenn. - I said, 'Sure. Why not? I'll do it,'" said Paugh. Many crewmembers are remembering this final deployment with reverence.

"There've been lots of great chiefs who have come before me, who have served on Memphis," said Paugh. "I've met a lot of them over this past year with the boat decommissioning and everything. To be able to say I was one of the last chiefs in the chief's quarters is a great honor and a privilege."

Memphis, which departed Jan. 10, supported missions in the European Command area of responsibility. "The deployment went excellent," said Capt. Carl Lahti, Memphis commanding officer. "The crew performed extremely well. We fulfilled all of our



missions exactly as we were tasked overseas. I'm particularly proud of the crew and the effort they put in to get the 33-year old ship prepared. We are in excellent condition."

"Not sure if you guys realize it, but what you just pulled off here with this fairly short deployment overseas has accredited you rock star status in the submarine force," Capt. William Merz, commodore of Submarine Development Squadron 12 told the crew of Memphis. "While you were brilliantly completing your missions, you enabled a dozen other ships to better complete theirs."

Shortly after the homecoming, Capt. Carl Lahti turned over command of Memphis to Cmdr. Jeffery Joseph, who will lead the submarine through the decommissioning and inactivation process.

"It's a distinct honor to be the last commanding officer," said Joseph. "It is a unique responsibility because we are responsible for the legacy of the ship."

Previously, Joseph previously served as deputy commander of readiness for Submarine Squadron 3 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He was also executive officer of USS Louisville (SSN 724).

Commissioned Dec. 17, 1977, Memphis became an Atlantic Fleet operational asset as part of Submarine Squadron 8 in Norfolk, Va. in 1978. All current and former crew members, their families, and friends are cordially invited to attend activities connected to the historic decommissioning ceremony. For more news from Commander Submarine Group 2, visit www.navy.mil/local/Subgru2/.



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Wellness Massage for USA Troops and Veterans

From: Mary Harris

Historically, massage has been used to prepare armies for battle. As history repeats itself, Massage Therapy in this era, again, is found to be a valuable component of wellness. Recent research shows professional massage can improve physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of health. An example, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be helped with massage. Information, available through the American Massage Therapy Association, defines how massage benefits PTSD.

Traumatic events, such as fire, earthquake, bombing, and hurricane, occur daily. Such devastating circumstances often cause an acute reaction of fear and terror for individuals who experience them. War, rape, and physical assault or abuse, whether of a child or an adult, produce equally frightening results, known as post-traumatic stress. It occurs when traumatized individuals cannot safely assign to the past what has happened in their life. The experience of trauma undermines one's expectations of safety and security in the world.

Saakvitne and Pearlman postulate that the experience of trauma undermines five basic human needs:

1. The need to be safe.
2. The need to trust.
3. The need to feel some control over one's life.
4. The need to feel of value.

The need to feel close to others.

The overall goal in the massage treatment of PTSD is to help the client to become safely "embodied within the self." Massage therapists can teach clients safe and effective ways of self-soothing and stress management. People who have been traumatized are no longer at home in their bodies. Talk therapy alone does not always adequately address the fear and mistrust that has been encoded into their bodies. In a multidisciplinary context, massage therapy can help bring clients back into themselves by increasing their ability to feel safety and mastery in the

A Note from Naomi Love

Donating Sky Miles to Veterans and Fisher House. Many of us have sky miles we will never use. We just don't have enough for a flight and the miles just sit there until they expire. Donate those miles to our Military Veterans and their families. It is easy to do.

Visit www.fisherhouse.org or go on-line to check the account you have your miles with and find the donate sky miles tab. This is such an easy way to help a vet and their families.



world, to be freely curious without fear, to feel comfortable with their body, and to experience boundaried intimacy with another human being.

(Source note-Saakvitne, Karen W., and Laurie Anne Pearlman, *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996, p. 33.)



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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
Lt. Col., USAF, Ret, ANG
(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 country.

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 because of your help. Compared to when we first started, the amount of input and ideas we receive 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 us 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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