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Waukesha County Veterans Services

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FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



The Origins of Memorial Day

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/>

Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared it should be May 30. It is believed the date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

The first large observance was held that year at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Various Washington officials, including Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, presided over the ceremonies. After speeches, children from the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Orphan Home and members of the GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

Official Birthplace Declared

In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, N.Y., the “birthplace” of Memorial Day. There, a ceremony on May 5, 1866, honored local veterans who had fought in the Civil War. Businesses closed and residents flew flags at half-staff. Supporters of Waterloo’s claim say earlier observances in other places were either informal, not community wide or one-time events. By the end of the 19th century, Memorial

Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation. State legislatures passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities. It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, as were some other federal holidays.

To ensure the sacrifices of America’s fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed and the president signed into law “The National Moment of Remembrance Act,” P.L. 106-579, creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission’s charter is to “encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity” by encouraging and coordinating commemorations in the United States of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada states: “It’s a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day.”



COMMENTARY CORNER

By: Tom Ludka, Veterans Service Officer

MEMORIAL DAY

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) is the granddaddy of veteran's service organizations. That organization's membership consisted of the soldiers, sailors and marines who had fought to defend the Union during America's costliest war, the Civil War. The GAR along with their Allied Orders: Woman's Relief Corps, Sons of Union Veterans and their Auxiliary, Ladies of The GAR and Daughters of Union Veterans insured that we would not forget.

What were we not suppose to forget? That all freedom comes at a price that many Americans paid for with their lives. That freedom once lost is only regained with much bloodshed and social upheaval.

In 1868, the GAR National Commander, General John Logan, issued General Order No. 11. This directive established the practice that all the GAR members would decorate the graves of their deceased comrades. At Wood National Cemetery, on the VA grounds in Milwaukee, there is a plaque mounted to a large boulder with the entire inscription of General Order No. 11. It states in part "If other eyes grow dull, other hands slack and other hearts cold in solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain in us." As the GAR passed to their final encampment, we were entrusted with the duty to keep that "solemn trust."

Sadly, we do not speak in the same poetic tones as our ancestors did, but their words kindle the same fire in our hearts. That fire touches the spiritual side of our being and soon it will engulf you. Some of you will be distributing or purchasing poppies from the VFW or The American Legion to help raise funds for our veterans. Some will march in parades while others will attend various civic ceremonies. Some of you will be placing flags, flowers, and wreaths or making speeches. I suspect all of you will take the time to remember in your own way. To keep that fire burning for future generations is one of our solemn obligations. It would only take a generation or two before Memorial Day would become nothing more than another off day to visit the local mall. Shame on us if we ever allow that to happen!

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I cannot improve on what General Logan said. I will let him finish my article. "Let us then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of spring time; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledge to aid and assist those whom they have left among us a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude, the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan."

***"The Waukesha Patriot" is published by:
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If you have any questions or comments about the contents of the newsletter, please contact Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office at 262-548-7732.

Important Agent Orange Information for Navy Veterans that Served During Vietnam

The following information was from VA Compensation & Pension Service Bulletin—January 2010



Information on Vietnam Naval Operations

VA Compensation and Pension (C&P) Service has initiated a program to collect data on Vietnam naval operations for the purpose of providing regional offices with information to assist with development in *Haas* related disability claims based on herbicide exposure from Navy Veterans. To date, we have received verification from various sources showing that a number of offshore “blue water” naval vessels conducted operations on the inland “brown water” rivers and delta areas of Vietnam. We have also identified certain vessel types that operated primarily or exclusively on the inland waterways. The ships and dates of inland waterway service are listed below. **If a Veteran’s service aboard one of these ships can be confirmed through military records during the time frames specified, then exposure to herbicide agents can be presumed without further development.**

All vessels of Inshore Fire Support [IFS] Division 93 during their entire Vietnam tour

- ◆ USS Carronade (IFS 1)
- ◆ USS Clarion River (LSMR 409) [Landing Ship, Medium, Rocket]
- ◆ USS Francis River (LSMR 525)
- ◆ USS White River (LSMR 536)

All vessels with the designation LST [Landing Ship, Tank] during their entire tour [WWII ships converted to transport supplies on rivers and serve as barracks for brown water Mobile Riverine Forces]

All vessels with the designation LCVP [Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel] during their entire tour

All vessels with the designation PCF [Patrol Craft, Fast] during their entire tour [Also called Swift Boats, operating for enemy interdiction on close coastal waters]

All vessels with the designation PBR [Patrol

Boat, River] during their entire tour [Also called River Patrol Boats as part of the Mobile Riverine Forces operating on inland waterways.]

USS Ingersoll (DD-652) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, October 24-25, 1965]

USS Mansfield (DD-728) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River August 8-19, 1967 and December 21-24, 1968]

USS Richard E. Kraus (DD-849) [Destroyer] [Operated on coastal inlet north of Da Nang, June 2-5, 1966, protecting Marines holding a bridge]

USS Basilone (DD-824) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, May 24-25, 1966]

USS Hamner (DD-718) [Destroyer] [Operated on Song Lon Tao and Long Song Tao Rivers, August 15-September 1, 1966]

USS Conway (DD-507) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, early August 1966]

USS Fiske (DD-842) [Destroyer] [Operated on Mekong River, June 16-21, 1966]

USS Black (DD-666) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, July 13-19, 1966]

USS Providence (CLG-6) [Cruiser, Light, Guided Missile] [Operated on Saigon River 3 days during January 1964]

USS Mahan (DLG-11) [Guided Missile Frigate] [Operated on Saigon River October 24-28, 1964]

USS Okanogan (APA-220) [Attack Transport] [Operated on Saigon River July 22-23, 29-30, 1968 and August 5-6, 1968]

USS Niagara Falls (AFS-3) [Combat Stores Ship] [Unloaded supplies on Saigon River and Cam Rahn Bay, April 22-25, 1968]



Never Forget

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The following information is from: [VFW Washington Weekly 19 Feb 2010++](#)

On 1 SEP 2010 Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) will officially become Operation New Dawn (OND) to recognize the continued progress that is being made in the country. In a 17 FEB memo approving the name change to Gen. David Petraeus, the commander of U.S. Central Command, Defense Secretary Robert Gates

said the change sends a strong signal that "our forces are under a new mission. It also presents opportunities to synchronize strategic communications initiatives, reinforce our commitment to honor the Security Agreement, and recognize of evolving relationship with the Government of Iraq."

U.S. War Dogs Monument

The following information is from: [Kansas city InfoZine Erich Hiner article 24 Feb 2010 ++](#)

A new war memorial will pay tribute to dogs that have served with U.S. military units in wars. The Pentagon's approval of the location and design capped years of work by a Vietnam veteran John Burnam who worked with a war dog. A Vietnam War dog handler, met with military officials 15 JAN to finalize a design for the nation's first national war dog monument at Fort Belvoir, Va. Burnam said, "This monument represents all wars, all services and all dog handlers of all wars. It represents a piece of the military that hasn't really been memorialized." He started pushing for the monument in 2001 and has traveled the country to rally support for the project. The military has used dogs since World War II as scouts, trackers and guards. Dobermans landed with U.S. forces at Iwo Jima, while German shepherds helped liberate Sicily. During the Korean War, dogs served as sentries. Several thousand dogs served in Vietnam as trackers and scouts. Dogs have played an integral part in the War on Terror. In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces use dogs to detect roadside bombs or hidden weapon caches, often saving the lives of U.S. and NATO troops. Ron Aiello, Vietnam dog handler and president of the United States War Dog Association, said war dogs have saved thousands of lives

while sometimes giving their own.

As a military monument, the project required approval from the departments of Interior and Defense and numerous congressional subcommittees. It also needed a congressional sponsor, which Burnam found in Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC). Jones introduced a bill calling for a national war dog monument in 2006. It was approved in 2008 as a part of the DOD budget. Jones said the monument has wide, bipartisan support in Congress. The memorial will be about 100 square feet. At its center will stand a bronze statue of a dog handler surrounded by statues of the four most common war dog breeds: Doberman Pinscher, German Shepherd, Labrador Retriever and Belgian Malinois. A granite wall etched with war dog images and history will be placed behind the statues. The monument foundation, a non-profit, will pay for the \$850,000 monument using donations. Burnam said he hopes to break ground by Veterans' Day 2011, but donations for the monument have slowed because of the poor economy. For more information on the foundation and the monument refer to www.jbmf.us.

VA Education Call Center

The following information is from David Sturm Assistant Director VA Debt Management Center (DMC)

Both the National Call Center (800 827-1000) and the Education Call Center (888-442-4551) are assisting VA Debt Management Center (DMC) by taking calls concerning the education special advance payments. We have provided them a template of a special report of contact that sets out the exact information we need to respond to most of the phone calls, which, generally, concern the scheduled April 1st offset of \$750 from the callers' monthly education payments. As you're probably aware, Education Service sent out roughly 122,000 e-mail letters and hardcopy letters notifying

advance pay recipients they would hear from DMC with instructions for reimbursing VA for the advance payments and, also, telling those that have ongoing education payments VA will offset \$750, monthly, from their benefits. DMC followed up in close order and sent each of the advance payment recipients computer-generated letters which gave the recipients notice of their rights and obligations. The VA is seeing the consequences in a record numbers of telephone calls. They have added operators and toll-

(Continued on page 5 - SEE: Call Center)

Special Extra Earnings for Military Service

The following information was found at: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

Special extra earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings credits are not granted for inactive duty training.

If your active military service occurred:

- ◆ From 1957 through 1967, we will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- ◆ From 1968 through 2001, you do not need to do

anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.

- ◆ After 2001, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings

The information that follows applies only to active duty military service earnings from [1957 through 2001](#). Here's how the special extra earnings are credited on your record:

Service in 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service in 1978 through 2001

For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

Additional Campaign Stars Authorized for Iraq Campaign Medal

The following information is from The National Association of Uniformed Services, 03/12/2010

DOD officials announced March 11 that additional campaign stars are authorized for wear on the Iraq Campaign Medal (ICM). The campaign stars recognize a servicemember's participation in DOD-designated campaigns in Iraq.

Individuals who have qualified for the ICM may display a bronze campaign star on their medal for each designated campaign phase in which they participated. The stars will be worn on the suspension and campaign ribbon of the campaign medal. One bronze service star shall be worn for each campaign served. A silver service star will be worn instead of five bronze stars. The additional campaign phases and

associated dates established for the ICM are:

- ◆ Iraqi Surge, Jan. 10, 2007, to Dec. 31, 2008.
- ◆ Iraqi Sovereignty, Jan. 1, 2009, through a date to be determined.

Four other phases, previously identified, include:

- ◆ Liberation of Iraq, Mar. 19, 2003, to May 1, 2003.
- ◆ Transition of Iraq, May 2, 2003, to Jun. 28, 2004.
- ◆ Iraqi Governance, Jun. 29, 2004, to Dec. 15, 2005.
- ◆ The "National Resolution" phase, which began Dec. 16, 2005, and ended Jan. 9, 2007.

Service members should contact their respective military departments for specific implementation guidance.

(Call Center—Continued from page 4)

free lines; but their call volumes remain unprecedented.

Many of the advance payment recipients have gone straight to their online payment site, www.pay.va.gov, and paid by credit card or ACH (direct debit).

VA is receiving record numbers of e-mails on dmc.ops@va.gov. They acknowledge each e-mail,

immediately, but final resolution may take a few days.

Finally, it would be helpful if callers would go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. That site has been recently updated to include helpful information and links to other pages that could obviate the need for another telephone call. Most callers and e-mailers want to either pay the whole debt or set up reduced withholding.

Secretary Seeks Fast Track to Process Claims Focus on 200,000 Veterans Expected to File Claims Under New Agent Orange Presumptives Over Next Two Years

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/ssrel/>

WASHINGTON (March 9, 2010) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today an aggressive new initiative to solicit private-sector input on a proposed "fast track" Veterans' claims process for service-connected presumptive illnesses due to Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

"This will be a new way of doing business and a major step forward in how we process the presumptive claims we expect to receive over the next two years," Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric K. Shinseki said. "With the latest, fastest, and most reliable technology, VA hopes to migrate the manual processing of these claims to an automated process that meets the needs of today's Veterans in a more timely manner."

Over the next two years, about 200,000 Veterans are expected to file disability compensation claims under an historic expansion of three new presumptive illnesses announced last year by Secretary Shinseki. They affect Veterans who have Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease and B-cell leukemia's.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have one of the illnesses covered by the "presumption of service connection" don't have to prove an association between their medical problems and military service. This "presumption" makes it easier for Vietnam Veterans to access disability compensation benefits. Vietnam Veterans are encouraged to submit their claims as soon as possible to begin the important process of compensation.

Along with the publication of proposed regulations for the three new presumptives this spring, VA intends to publish a formal request in Federal Business Opportunities for private-sector corporations to propose automated solutions for the parts of the claims process that take the longest amount of time. VA believes these can be collected in a more streamlined and accurate way.

Development involves determining what additional information is needed to adjudicate the claim, such as military and private medical records and the scheduling of medical examinations.

With this new approach, VA expects to shorten the time it takes to gather evidence, which now takes on average over 90 days. Once the claim is fully developed and all pertinent information is gathered, VA will be able to more quickly decide the claim and process the award, if granted.

The contract is expected to be awarded in April with proposed solutions offered to VA within 90 days. Implementation of the solution is expected within 150 days.

"Veterans whose health was harmed during their military service are entitled to the best this nation has to offer," added Secretary Shinseki. "We are undertaking an unprecedented modernization of our claims process to ensure timely and accurate delivery of that commitment."

Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 to Veterans without any dependents.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.

For more information about disability compensation, go to www.va.gov.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed are available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

**America is #1
Thanks to Our Veterans**



Stop-Loss Pay Update 04

The following information is from [Source: NAUS Weekly Update for 12 Mar 2010 ++]

The Army has started sending direct mailings to 50,000 people believed to have been stop-lossed and have not yet applied for the payments they are owed. It is estimated that over 100,000 eligible soldiers and surviving spouses may be eligible. Based on the response the Army gets, it could send mailings to the other 50,000 people yet to file claims. The mailings will have passwords that allow recipients to access a Web site that can expedite the claims process. So far, 10,000 claims have been sent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for payment. Another 1,400 claims have been deemed invalid because the applicants received a bonus while being held under stop-loss. Servicemembers were able to begin submitting their claims for retroactive Stop Loss special pay on 21 OCT 09. They must provide documented proof they were stop lost with their claim.

Family members of deceased service members should contact the appropriate military service for assistance in filing their claim. Information on how to contact each of the services is listed below:

Army: Go to

- ◆ <https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil> or email RetroStopLossPay@CONUS.Army.Mil

Navy: Email

- ◆ NXAG_N132C@navy.mil

Marine Corps: Go to

- ◆ <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss> or email stoploss@usmc.mil

Air Force: Go to

- ◆ <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss/>

New Members Appointed to Committee on Women Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/ssrel/>

WASHINGTON—Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has appointed six new members to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, an expert panel that advises the Department of Veterans Affairs on a wide array of issues affecting women Veterans.

“VA remains committed to providing quality, timely care for women Veterans, and improving their access to benefits and services,” said Secretary Shinseki. This committee shapes VA’s efforts to address the diverse and ever changing needs of women Veterans.”

The new committee members are Matrice W. Browne from Olney, Md; Valerie Cortazzo from Pittsburgh; Karen S. Etzler from Amazonia, Mo; Lindsay M. Long from Knoxville, Tenn.; Gundel M. E. Metz from Madison, Wis.; and Kayla Williams from Ashburn, Va.

Established in 1983, the advisory committee makes recommendations to the Secretary for administrative and legislative changes. The committee members are appointed to one-, two-, or three-year terms.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veterans population. There are 23 million Veterans; approximately 1.8 million are women Veterans. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veterans population and nearly 5 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services. VA estimates that by 2020 women Veterans will comprise 10 percent of the Veteran population.

VA has women Veterans program managers at VA medical centers and women Veterans coordinators at VA regional offices to assist women Veterans with health and benefits issues.

New Members

VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans

- ◆ Dr. Matrice Browne, Olney, Md. -- A retired Army colonel; currently in private practice, specializing in women’s health and gynecology. She also serves as adjunct assistant professor of obstetrics/gynecology at two universities.
- ◆ Valerie Cortazzo, Pittsburgh -- A former Navy third class petty officer, a former VA employee, currently an advocate for Veterans in southwestern Pennsylvania, specializing in mental health and women’s issues.
- ◆ Karen S. Etzler, Amazonia, Mo. -- A former U.S. Air Force staff sergeant, currently serves as a Veterans service officer and the women Veteran coordinator for the Missouri Veterans Commission.
- ◆ Lindsay M. Long, Knoxville, Tenn. -- A former Marine lance corporal, currently works as a chemical operator for a private contractor, and serves as the American Indian representative for the Department of Energy’s Native American Committee.
- ◆ Gundel M. E. Metz, Madison, Wis. -- A retired Army sergeant first class; currently serves as a Women Veterans Coordinator for the State of Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ◆ Kayla Williams, Ashburn, Va.-- A former Army sergeant with service in Iraq, currently a project associate in a private research organization, conducting research and analysis on intelligence, defense, military and Veterans issues.

Civilian Organization Supports War Effort with Care Packages

The following information from Marty Horn at marty@anysoldier.com

Back in 2003 when Marty and Sue Horn said goodbye to their son, Sergeant Brian Horn, an Army Infantry Soldier with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, they had no idea that in addition to their *own* son, they would later be heading up an organization that supports *thousands* of military personnel.

Any Soldier Inc. (www.AnySoldier.com) now helps nearly 100,000 American soldiers in all branches of the military, both active duty and reservists, and has become one of the leading efforts in making sure the men and women who have been deployed for the war are cared for, via letters and packages from “home.”

[AnySoldier.com](http://www.AnySoldier.com) features emails from different military personnel regarding the type of support needed in the field. The support could be in the form of a simple letter or package, or it could be toiletries, food or even newspapers and magazines. Donors address their letters and packages to the writer’s name, but also add the words “ATTN: Any Soldier” on the second line. The writer shares the mail with fellow servicemen and women. If there is “Any Soldier” who is not receiving a lot of mail from home, that soldier will be the first person to receive the letter.

“[AnySoldier.com](http://www.AnySoldier.com) started as a simple family effort to help our son who was one of the 1,000 soldiers that parachuted into Northern Iraq back in March 2003,” explains Marty Horn, a 20 year Army veteran. “We knew his unit was living under very rough conditions so whenever we sent care packages to Brian, we



always sent enough to share with fellow soldiers.”

The organization grew through a network of family and friends. When the website launched in 2004, 7 soldiers had been added to AnySoldier’s contact list. One year later, the list has ballooned to over 3,500 contacts, and the web site has received over 4.5 million visitors from around the world. In August of 2005, [AnySoldier.com](http://www.AnySoldier.com) also took on the names [AnyMarine.com](http://www.AnyMarine.com), [AnyAirman.com](http://www.AnyAirman.com), [AnySailor.com](http://www.AnySailor.com) and [AnyCoastguardsman.com](http://www.AnyCoastguardsman.com).

One international visitor is writer and Alabama native Priscilla Lalisie, who lives in Paris, France. During a recent trip back home to Alabama, Lalisie was touched by the number of servicemen she saw headed for Iraq and wanted to do something to help them. After doing some research over the Internet she found [AnySoldier.com](http://www.AnySoldier.com) and proceeded to send an armful of letters and packages off to soldiers stationed in Iraq and Kosovo.

“I was so touched by the letters and when you’re living in Paris, you often feel so far away from the events taking place back home,” says Lalisie. “AnySoldier and the Horns have given us a chance to feel like we, too, can be a part of the support effort for our troops who are in harm’s way.”

For more information contact Marty Horn at Marty@anysoldier.com. Visit the website at www.anysoldier.com.



*Those we love remain with us
For love itself lives on.
And cherished memories never fade
Because a loved one’s gone.*

*Those we love can never be
More than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory,
They’ll live on in our heart.*

Author Unknown

VA Recognizes “Presumptive” Illness in Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (March 18, 2010) – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to make it easier for Veterans to obtain disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf War or Afghanistan. This will be the beginning of historic change for how VA considers Gulf War Veterans’ illnesses.

Following recommendations made by VA’s Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, VA is publishing a proposed regulation in the *Federal Register* that will establish new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War, or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001.

“We recognize the frustrations that many Gulf War and Afghanistan Veterans and their families experience on a daily basis as they look for answers to health questions, and seek benefits from VA,” said Secretary Shinseki.

The proposed rule includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with the nine diseases: Brucellosis, Campylobacter jejuni, Coxiella burnetii (Q fever), malaria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Nontyphoid Salmonella, Shigella, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

For non-presumptive conditions, a Veteran is required to provide medical evidence that can be used to establish an actual connection between military service in Southwest Asia or in Afghanistan, and a specific disease.

With the proposed rule, a Veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan, and a current diagnosis of one of the nine diseases. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

The decision was made after reviewing the 2006 report of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), titled, “Gulf War and Health Volume 5: Infectious

Diseases.” The 2006 report differed from the four prior reports by looking at the long-term health effects of certain diseases determined to be pertinent to Gulf War Veterans.

The 1998 Persian Gulf War Veterans Act requires the Secretary to review NAS reports that study scientific information and possible associations between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents by Veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War.

Because the Persian Gulf War has not officially been declared ended, Veterans serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible for VA’s new presumptions. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan Veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are prevalent in that country.

Noting that today’s proposed regulation reflects a significant determination of a positive association between service in the Persian Gulf War and certain diseases, Secretary Shinseki added, “By setting up scientifically-based presumptive service connection, we give these deserving Veterans a simple way to get the benefits they have earned in service to our country.”

Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 to Veterans without any dependents.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.

For more information about health problems associated with military service during operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and related VA programs go to www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/ or go to www.va.gov for information about disability compensation.



United Proud Patriots Veterans Org.

“Remembering the Price of Freedom”

Freedom House Crisis Center
16106 W. Main St
Menomonee Falls, WI 53052

For more information contact:
Larry D. Wiler
262-251-8877 or Freedomhouse@uppvets.org
Web page : www.uppvets.org

Presumptions of Service Connection for Persian Gulf Service

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/bulletins/>

On March 18, 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published a proposed regulation in the Federal Register to establish presumption of service connection for nine diseases. This action is necessary to implement the decision of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that there is a positive association between service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and Afghanistan during certain periods and the subsequent development of the following infectious diseases:

- ◆ Brucellosis
- ◆ Campylobacter jejuni
- ◆ Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)
- ◆ Malaria
- ◆ Mycobacterium tuberculosis
- ◆ Nontyphoid Salmonella
- ◆ Shigella
- ◆ Visceral leishmaniasis
- ◆ West Nile virus

The Secretary's decision to establish presumptive service connection for these conditions is based on the findings of an October 2006 report of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences titled "Gulf War and Health Volume 5." Authority to establish presumptive service connection is provided in title 38 United States Code (USC) § 1118. The nine diseases listed above are the first conditions for which presumption of service connection under § 1118 will be established. Three of the nine conditions (tuberculosis, leishmaniasis, and malaria) are already covered under current statutory presumptions but tuberculosis and leishmaniasis would have open-ended presumptive periods under the new regulation. The presumptive period for malaria under the new regulation would be the same

as it is under 38 USC § 1112(a)(2), which requires malaria to become manifest within one year of service or at a time when standard or accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during service. VA proposes to establish one year presumptive periods for the other six conditions.

The proposed regulation also identifies several secondary health effects potentially associated with each of the nine diseases but does not establish presumptions of service connection for these conditions. The proposed regulation does, however, direct VA to determine, in cases where the veteran has or had one of the nine presumptive conditions and also has one of the identified long-term health effects, whether, based on the evidence in each case, the identified secondary condition was caused by the presumptive condition for the purpose of paying disability compensation.

The new presumptive conditions will apply to veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, as currently defined under title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 3.317(d), and to veterans who served in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001, the date specified in Executive Order 13239 as the date combatant activities commenced in that country. As Congress has not officially ended the period of the "Persian Gulf War," this proposed regulatory change applies to all veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990 to the present.

Written comments regarding this proposed regulation must be received by VA on or before May 17, 2010. A final regulation will be published in the Federal Register after VA considers all of the comments received during the public comment period. The proposed regulation may be accessed on the Federal Register web site at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/browse.html>.



**It takes the courage and strength
of a warrior to ask for help....**

**If you're in an emotional crisis
Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
"Press 1 for Veterans"**

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

New Comprehensive Study on Vietnam-Era Women Veterans

The following information was found on the internet at: www.legion.org

On November 18th, 2009 the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that they will be initiating a comprehensive study on Vietnam-era women veterans. The study will assess women veterans who may have had direct or indirect exposure to trauma. From the assessment, researchers are hoping to answer how many women developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or depression after their service. In addition, they would like to determine how many are still coping with those conditions and are those conditions prevalent among those who served.

The VA will contact approximately 10,000 women who served in the United States Military during the Vietnam-era for participation in mailed survey, telephone interview, and a review of medical records. The overall results of the study will help VA providers to understand the health services needs of this age group of women and future generations of women veterans.

The study will be chaired by, Dr Kathy Magruder, epidemiologist at Charleston (S.C.) VAMC; Dr Amy Kilbourne, mental health researcher for VA at Ann Arbor; and Dr Han Kang, Director of Environmental Epidemiology Service and the War-related Illness and Injury Study Center in Washington DC. The study is slated to last under five years and will cost \$5.6 million.

The VA Cooperative Studies Program Coordinating Center in Perry Point, Maryland, may be contacted for further information:

Cooperative Studies Program (151E)

P.O. Box 1010

Perry Point, MD 21902

410-642-2411 ext 6122

For more information on the study you may go to the following website:

<https://www.csp.research.va.gov/csp579.cfm>

For information on how to participate in the study please call 1-888-831-3325.



Government Headstones & Markers “Available Soon—Medallions”

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



The Department of Veterans Affairs is making available a new medallion to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran.

If requested, the medallion will be furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

The medallion will be available in three sizes, 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1 ½ inches. Each medallion will be inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom. Appropriate affixing adhesive, instructions and hardware will be provided with the medallion.

We estimate this new medallion will be available

by June 30, 2010 and we will begin accepting claims at that time.

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

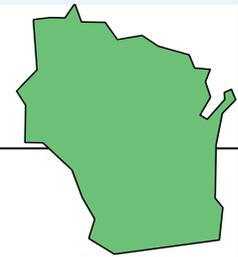
If you think you may be interested in submitting a claim for the new medallion, we will begin accepting claims once a contract has been awarded for its manufacture. A new claim form is being developed for the medallion and it will be posted to this website once it has been approved.

Please continue to monitor this site for updated information regarding the new medallion.

www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmtype.asp

HERE'S TO THE HEROES

NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



Michael Telzrow to Serve as Director of Wisconsin

Veterans Museum The following information was received from: <http://dva.state.wi.us/>

(MADISON) — The Wisconsin Veterans Museum welcomes a new director, beginning March 1, 2010. Michael Telzrow has been working in the museum field for over fifteen years, most recently as executive director of the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Central Florida and earned a master's degree in public history/museum studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. From 1995-1997, he served at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum as a curatorial assistant. Subsequent museum assignments included the Neville Public Museum of Brown County (curator of history) and the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum (director of research and interpretation), and the National Railroad Museum (executive director). He has developed over 20 museum exhibits covering a wide range of subject matter and recently authored a photographic history of the Wisconsin State Reformatory.

In 2008 he was named an “everyday hero” by the Green Bay Press Gazette for his public service, and was recently honored by the Green Bay Area Cham-

ber of Commerce as one of 20 local individuals who have made a particular impact in their field or industry. An eight-year veteran of the United States Coast Guard, Telzrow is married with two children.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum also welcomes Gregory Lawson as gift shop manager. Lawson has a strong background in military history, and has spent time researching the museum's Civil War Battle flag collection as a volunteer effort for the museum, in addition to responsibilities as a Docent. He has also written several abstracts used in museum exhibits and other projects. Lawson's professional experience includes over ten years retail sales at Barnes and Noble.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is a free public educational activity of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and is located at 30 W. Mifflin St., across the street from the State Capitol.

For more information go to
www.museum.dva.state.wi.us.

WDVA Now on Facebook—WDVA Bulletin #919

The following information <http://dva.state.wi.us>

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is expanding its outreach in order to better serve Wisconsin veterans. The WDVA Facebook pages will allow the department another avenue to communicate and interact with veterans, their families, and stakeholders to determine the changing needs of veterans and enhance our ability to meet those needs.

Three Facebook pages have been created: Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Women Veterans of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Veterans Museum. To become a fan of these pages click on the links below. If you are already a Facebook user, login and click on the Become a Fan button that appears to the right of the page name. If you are new to Facebook, first create an account by clicking on the Sign Up button, create your account and become a fan.

Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Madison-WI/Wisconsin-Dept-of-Veterans-Affairs/438662275323?ref=ts>

Women Veterans of Wisconsin Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Women-Veterans-of-Wisconsin/278354881313>

Wisconsin Veterans Museum Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Madison-WI/Wisconsin-Veterans-Museum/16021850972>

Please advise your fellow veterans of this new way to learn about news, events, and interaction with WDVA and other veterans.

For information regarding WDVA on Facebook contact the WDVA Web team at

WDVAWeb@dva.state.wi.us.

Sunday—May 16, 2010—Open House & Old Car Show Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, WI

The following information is from <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>



WHERE: Wisconsin Veterans Home
N2665 Cty Rd QQ
King, WI 54946-0600

WHEN: Sunday—May 16, 2010

REGISTRATION: 10:00 AM—12:30 PM

Donations at Registration are Appreciated

SHOW ONLY—NO COMPETITION

All show vehicles must be at least 20 years old.
Food & restrooms available on the grounds.

For information contact:
Laura Mays: 715-258-4247

The Wisconsin Veterans Home is not liable for
vehicle or property damage and / or loss.



**NO ENTRY FEE
NO ADMISSION CHARGE**

STAY ON OUR MAILING LIST—REGISTER YOUR VEHICLE BELOW

DASH PLAQUES TO THE FIRST 100 TO REGISTER

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
CAR: _____ YEAR: _____

**SEND TO: OPEN HOUSE CAR SHOW
WISCONSIN VETERANS HOME
N2665 COUNTY RD QQ
KING WI 54946-0600**

Madison Artist Michael Hecht Tells the Story of Walt Whitman and His Civil War Involvement through New Exhibit at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum—March 9, 2010—June 12, 2010

The following information <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>

(MADISON) — On March 9, 2010, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum will debut “The Good Gray Nurse: Walt Whitman and the Civil War,” a new exhibit by Madison artist Michael Hecht. This is the fourth exhibit of Hecht’s exquisite knife drawings that the Museum has displayed in the past decade. Much of Hecht’s past work deals with the Holocaust and World War II, but he chose to step back into the 19th century after reading Whitman’s Civil War poems and the discovering the stories of the men who served in the “War Between the States.”

Already a published poet and writer by the outbreak of the Civil War, Walt Whitman, profoundly moved by his southern travels to find his soldier brother in 1862, became a volunteer nurse in Washington, D.C., treating wounded Union combatants. Using

Whitman’s poems about the Civil War as inspiration, Michael Hecht has created another unforgettable exhibit, layering his own knife drawings of soldiers’ silhouettes over stark images from the battlefield. The exhibit will run through June 12, 2010, while a date for an exhibit closing event featuring the artist and a recitation of Whitman’s poems will be announced soon.

For more information on the exhibit, contact **Jeff Kollath, Curator of Programs and Exhibitions**, at (608) 261-0541. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is a free public educational activity of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and is located at 30 W. Mifflin St., across the street from the State Capitol. **For more information go to www.museum.dva.state.wi.us.**

Patient Communication Advocates, LLC

The following information was received from John S Bennett, PhD, J.D.—Founder & President
jsbennett22@gmail.com<http://www.va.gov/opa/ssrel/>

Mission Statement: It is our mission to assist people with chronic medical conditions to maintain good health by enhancing the doctor/patient relationship. We assist our clients with their healthcare decisions and compliance with their prescribed procedures. We enhance the communication between the healthcare providers and our clients in a way that extends the doctor's office visit to a continuing discussion that educates and empowers our clients to make fully informed healthcare choices.

GOAL: Prevent the "Preventable" hospitalizations and acute illness:

- ◆ Enhance the communication between doctor and patient
- ◆ Improve our client's ability to self-manage chronic illnesses
- ◆ Allow clients to live comfortably in their homes.

People Who Benefit From Patient Communication Advocates:

Patients with:

- ◆ Chronic illnesses
- ◆ Multiple Physicians (4 or more)
- ◆ History of hospitalization
- ◆ Family members live far away
- ◆ Too many prescription medications
- ◆ Confused and frustrated with the healthcare system

We are Transition Specialists

- ◆ Work with clients before doctor's appointment—identify issues
- ◆ Attend ALL doctors' appointments with clients—express issues

- ◆ Work with clients after appointment to assure understanding of prescribed treatment
- ◆ Meet clients if admitted to the hospital or emergency room
- ◆ Communicate information between doctors—reduce redundant tests, avoid problems with meds

An Educational Approach

- ◆ Improve health literacy of my clients
- ◆ Educate clients about the basis of their medical education and treatment
- ◆ Help Clients understand the implications of their condition and treatment
- ◆ Assist clients as they integrate the treatment into their daily lives
- ◆ Teach clients to communicate more effectively with their doctors

Benefits for our Clients

- ◆ Less frustration with the healthcare system
- ◆ More effective interaction with doctors
- ◆ Improved disease self-management
- ◆ Reduced change of suffering medical errors
- ◆ Decreased healthcare costs
- ◆ Clients make better informed choices with their personal healthcare

For pricing options please contact:

Patient Communication Advocates, LLC
John S Bennett, PhD., J.D.
Founder & President
 8222 Warren Ave
 Wauwatosa WI 53213
 414-550-4851

Benefit Golf Outing

For the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Entry Deadline: June 1, 2010

When: Saturday
June 12, 2010

Where: Rivermoor Golf Club
30802 Waterford Dr
Waterford, WI 53185

TIME: Registration: 11:30 AM
Start time: 1:00 PM



To sign up and for more details Contact:

Kim T. Michalowski
Milwaukee Pension Center
5400 W. National Ave
Milwaukee WI 53214
414-902-5706

kim.michalowski@va.gov

2010 VETERANS JOB FAIRS & BENEFIT INFORMATION**May 4, Tuesday (9:00-4:00 pm): Madison**

- Madison Area Technical College, Traux Campus, 3550 Anderson Street
Contact: Michael Beck, (608) 242-4910 or Eric Benson (608) 242-4881

May 7, Friday (9:00-3:00 pm): Janesville

- Army National Guard Armory, 11 Palmer Drive
Contact: Dale Belke, (608) 741-3523 or Charles Jones, (608) 741-3522

May 11, Tuesday (1:00-5:00 pm): Kenosha

- Kenosha County Center – Bristol, 19600 75th Street
Contact: Jerry Costello, (262) 697-4707 or Marie Pollnow, (262) 697-4713

May 13, Thursday (9:00-2:00 pm): Milwaukee

- American Serb Hall Banquet & Conference Center, 5101 West Oklahoma Avenue
Contact: Greg Williams, (414) 389-6293 or Stan Kogutkiewicz, (262) 695-7790

June 16, Wednesday (9:00-2:00 pm): Sparta

- Army National Guard Armory, 602 E. Division Street
Contact: Rickie Larson, (608) 785-9363 or Dave Wolf, (608) 785-9363

June 16, Wednesday (11:00-3:00 pm): Green Bay

- Army National Guard Armory, 800 North Military Avenue
Contact: Michael Mack, (920) 448-6776 or Brian Marquardt, (920) 448-6778

July 14, Wednesday (9:00-3:00 pm): Wausau

- Army National Guard Armory, 833 South 17th Avenue
Contact: Gary Albrecht, (715) 261-7726 or Don Masterson, (715) 261-7725

July 15, Thursday (10:00-2:00 pm): Platteville

- Army National Guard Armory, 475 North Water Street
Contact: Tim Murphy, (608) 741-3523 or Dale Belke, (608) 741-3523

Aug 18, Wednesday (9:00-2:00 pm): Oshkosh

- Army National Guard Armory, 1415 Armory Place
Contact: David Williams, (920) 929-3923 or Curt Sattler, (920) 968-6874

September 8, Wednesday (9:00-2:00 pm): Rhineland

- Army National Guard Armory, 1136 Military Road
Contact: Gary Albrecht, (715) 261-7726 or Don Masterson, (715) 261-7725

September 9, Thursday (9:00-4:00 pm): Madison

- Edgewood College, Deming Way Campus, 1255 Deming Way
Contact: Michael Beck, (608) 242-4910 or Eric Benson, (608) 242-4881

VETERANS FEDERAL JOB FAIR**September 16, Thursday (9:00-2:00 pm): Milwaukee**

- Milwaukee VA Medical Center, 5000 West National Ave, Room 3435
Contact: Greg Williams, (414) 389-6293 or Stan Kogutkiewicz, (262) 695-7790

NEWS UPDATE FOR THE LOCAL AREA



Rotary Club Collects Cell Phones for Soldiers

The following information was received from:
Sue Baker-Waukesha Rotary Publicity Chair



WAUKESHA -- The Waukesha Noon Rotary Club collected 33 cell phones in its "Cell Phones for Soldiers" project which encouraged businesses and residents to recycle unused or outdated cell phones and other portable communication devices.

Collected phones were sent to ReCellular, which pays the organization Cell Phones for Soldiers up to \$25 for each donated phone – enough to provide an hour of talk time to soldiers abroad.

Cell Phones for Soldiers was founded by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist from Norwell, Mass., with \$21 of their own money. The registered 501c3 non-profit organization has raised almost \$2 million in donations and distributed more than 500,000 prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas.

More than 150,000 troops are serving overseas and are away from their families. "Our goal is to help make it possible for soldiers to stay in touch with loved ones by donating our old cell phones," says project chair Tricia Conway, a member of the

Waukesha Noon Rotary. "It was an easy and meaningful way for our members to support our troops stationed overseas."

State Representative Mark Gundrum added, "Helping deployed service men and women stay in touch with loved ones back home is a tremendous way to support our troops. I know how precious those minutes were to me when I was deployed to Iraq. Thanks to all who participated in this important effort."

Since July 2008, recycling has helped "Cell Phones for Soldiers" send more than 350,000 free phone cards to military members serving abroad.

Rotary is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. Rotary's global membership is approximately 1.2 million men and women who belong to more than 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

The Waukesha Noon Rotary Club meets each Monday at Waukesha's Frame Park Rotary Building. For more information visit:

<http://www.waukesharotary.org>

For information on donating used cell phones visit: www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

May 21—23, 2010 in Green Bay LZ Lambeau—Welcoming Home Wisconsin's Vietnam Veterans

The following information was found at: <http://lzlambeau.org/>

Be Part of LZ Lambeau May 21-23, 2010 in Green Bay, WI. Everyone in Wisconsin is invited to be part of our state's official Thank You event at Lambeau Field honoring our Vietnam veterans.

Tickets are available now for the special Saturday Night, May 22, 2010 Tribute Event inside Lambeau Field. Free for Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans, \$10.00 for friends, family and the public. A \$2.00 handling charge applies to each ticket.



Don't miss these **Free Events** in the Lambeau Field Atrium and grounds, including:

The Moving Wall™

Music Stage

Vietnam-Era Vehicle Displays

Museum and Portrait Exhibits

Fellowship opportunities and more...

For more detailed information go to:

<http://lzlambeau.org/>