

May & Jun 2009

Vol. 7 No. 03

**Commandant:
Cliff Handerhan, Jr.**

**Editor:
Joe Motes**



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



Roster of Officers and Committee Chairperson 2008-2009

Commandant	Cliff Handerhan, Jr.	chanderhan@aol.com	954-721-7511
Sr. Vice Commandant	John Palermo	semperfi54@aol.com	561-716-2334
Jr. Vice Commandant	Joe Motes	joemotes@aol.com	954-441-8735
Judge Advocate	Joe Mirsky	N/A	
Jr. Past Cmdt.	Jim Ruggiero	commandant755@aol.com	954-857-9136
Adjutant	Cathy Pacini	NHPAULJ@aol.com	954-977-8843
Paymaster	Jim Ruggiero	commandant755@aol.com	954-857-9136
Chaplain	Trevor Wharton	trev466@yahoo.com	954-270-3029
Historian	Trevor Wharton	trev466@yahoo.com	954-270-3029
Youth Activities	looking for a volunteer	N/A	N/A
Sgt At Arms	Jeff Morgan	marinem77@bellsouth.net	954-597-2232
Public Relations	looking for a volunteer	N/A	N/A
Ship Store	Joe Motes	joemotes@aol.com	954-441-8735
Webmaster	Joe Motes	joemotes@aol.com	954-441-8735
Fund Raiser	Angelo Noberto	N/A	954-683-8525
VAVS	looking for a volunteer	N/A	N/A
Roll Call Editor	Joe Motes	joemotes@aol.com	954-441-8735
Color Sgt	Angelo Noberto	N/A	954-683-8525
Assistant Color Sgt	Trevor Wharton	trev466@yahoo.com	954-270-2039
Veteran's Coalition	Marvin Schentzel	N/A	954-718-0572
Toys for Tots	Joe Motes	joemotes@aol.com	954-441-8735

A COMMITTEE REPORT IS REQUESTED AT EVERY MEETING!

May 2009							June 2009						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9 Exec Meeting	10	11	12	13
10	11	12 Exec Meeting	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17 MCL Meeting	18	19	20
17	18	19	20 MCL Meeting	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				



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From the Commandant

It is my sad duty to report on the passing of Abraham (Al) Gardner. Al was hospitalized at Holy Cross for a procedure in April & developed Pneumonia. At the request of the family we provided a Memorial service for them at the Forest Lawn Funeral Home & at the grave site. We had a great turnout for the service with 14 members in attendance. Cmdt. Cliff Handerhan gave the Remembrance & acting Chaplain Kevin O'Callaghan said the prayer. Also in attendance were: Jerry Colbert, Mike Burns, Harvey Ellenthal, Hy Finkelstein, Tom Johnson, Joe Mirsky, Angelo Norberto, Mike LaBozzetta, Marvin Schentzel, Catherine Pacini, Murray Wolf, & Ed Weber. Thank you all for showing up on such short notice to honor Al. The family expressed their appreciation for our efforts. We folded the flag at graveside & presented it to the family as Taps was played & muffled drum sounded. He will be missed.

On a brighter note, congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Hy Finkelstein on their 63rd wedding anniversary.

I would like to thank all members for the help they have given me during my term in office. I could not have done all that is required without the help of the membership. I hope you will continue this support with the new slate of officers for the year 2009-2010. Don't forget our Installation dinner on 16 May. If you plan to attend please let us know your meal selection, chicken or prime rib.

Important dates in history: May / 15 May 1862 Cpl. J.F. Mackie 1st. Marine to receive the Medal of Honor. 1 May 1898 Adm. Dewey destroys the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. 22 May 1912 1st. Lt. A. Cunningham is first Marine aviator. 7 May 1945 Germany surrenders unconditionally. 8 May 1953 Dien Bien Phu fall in Indochina. 14 May 1975 Marines board Mayaguez which Cambodians had seized.

June: / 18 June 1912 U.S. declares war on Great Britain. 10 June 1898 Marines land at Guantanamo Bay, Sgt. John Quick receives Medal of Honor. 6 June 1917 5th. Mar. Reg. sails for France. 6 June 1918 Marines advance into Belleau Wood. 17 June 1940 France surrenders to Germany. 1 June 1942 1st blacks enlist in Corps, 19,168 will join during WWII. 6 June 1944 D-Day. 21 June 1945 U.S. secures Okinawa. 25 June 1950 North Korea invades South Korea. 25 June 1971 last U.S. ground troops leave Viet Nam. 6 June 1980 Marines evacuate civilians from Lebanon. 8 June 1995 40 Marines rescue Air Force pilot shot down in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Happy Mothers Day, Happy Memorial Day, Happy Veterans Day, Happy Armed Forces Day, Happy Fathers Day, Happy Flag Day. Just stay happy.

Cliff Handerhan Jr.
Commandant



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)

Founded in 1946 to provide for our nation's veterans while they are cared for by VA health care facilities
One of the largest centralized volunteer program in the Federal government, over 350 organizations support VAVS.
Volunteers have provided over 676 million hours of service since 1946.

Community Assistance

Assist veteran patients by augmenting staff with end of life care programs, foster care, community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, and veteran outreach centers.

Contributions

Annual contributions over \$50 million in gifts and donations volunteers contributed a more than 13 million hours of service to veterans in FY2005

VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to America's veterans and to VA

How do I sign up to be a VAVS Volunteer? You have two convenient ways:

1) Contact the Department of Veterans Affairs facility nearest you. Ask for Voluntary Service. Tell their staff of your interest in becoming a VAVS Volunteer. The staff will take care of everything else including your interview, orientation, and assignment! Locate the VA facility nearest to you.

2) Or Volunteer NOW at the following website: www1.va.gov/volunteer/volnowDB.cfm

MEMBERSHIP DUES

New members pay \$50.00 for the first year.
Renewal Dues \$45.00 per year.

*You must be a MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING
in order to be eligible for Life Membership.*

2009 Life Member Dues rated by age as follows:

1974 and after —	\$500.00
1959 to 1973 —	\$400.00
1949 to 1958 —	\$300.00
Before 1948 —	\$150.00

The following members dues are now past due, please bring your membership up to date.

Renewals are \$45.00. Thank You for your participation and cooperation.

Richard Davitt	11/08
Robert W. Terry	11/08
Joseph C. Aiello	09/08
Eduardo Lombardo	08/08
Milan Soule	05/08
Francis Murphy	05/08
Jory Dillingham	05/08
Dick Lee, Jr.	05/08

If you have already paid,
Please ignore this notice.

Please check this section periodically to see when your dues are up for renewals. Thank You!

May 2009 Renewals	June 2009 Renewals	July 2009 Renewals
Mario Castelli	none	John Deitle
		Salvatore D'Alessandro
		Dale MacCucheon



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TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



UPCOMING DETACHMENT 755 MEETINGS

MAY 12TH 2009
1930 HRS
EXECUTIVE MEETING

MAY 20TH 2009
1930 HRS
REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 9TH 2009
1930 HRS
EXECUTIVE MEETING

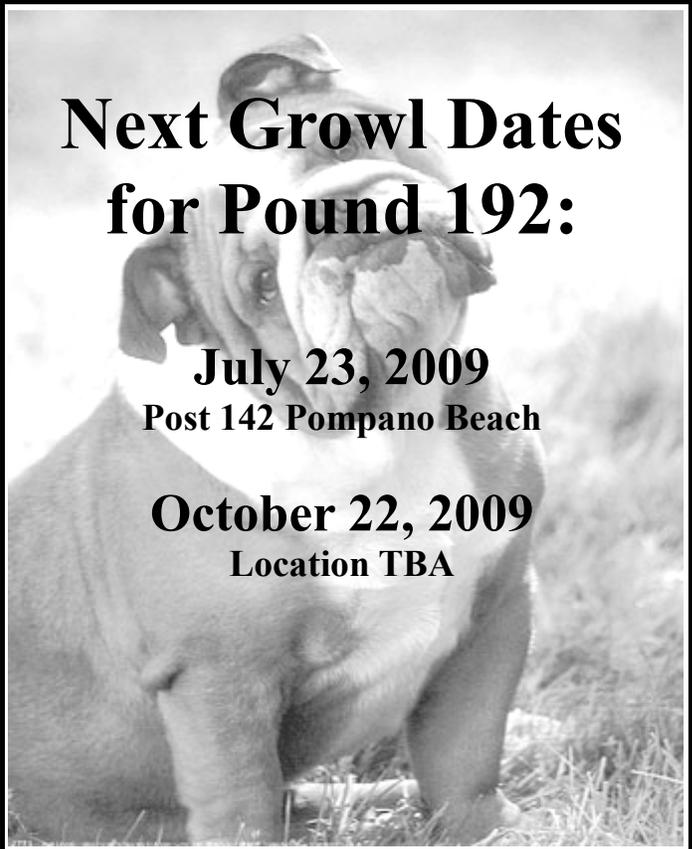
JUNE 17TH 2009
1930 HRS
REGULAR MEETING

**WE MEET AT AMERICAN LEGION POST 157
IN MARGATE**

Next Growl Dates for Pound 192:

July 23, 2009
Post 142 Pompano Beach

October 22, 2009
Location TBA



Col. Scott Slater and Richard Savage were presented their Life Membership certificate during our March meeting by Commandant Cliff Handerhan.



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



Application to Join



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Date of Birth ____/____/____ Date of Enlistment/Commissioning _____
 Date of Discharge/Separation/ Retirement _____ SSN# _____
 Type of Application - () Renewal - () Associate - () Regular - ()
 Phone (____) _____

() I hereby apply for membership in the Tamarac Detachment 755 Marine Corps League and enclose \$50.00 for one year's membership.*

-OR-

() I hereby apply for membership in the Marine Corps League as a Member-at-Large, and enclose \$25.00 for one year's membership.*

* Includes free subscription to MARINE CORPSS LEAGUE MAGAZINE

I hereby certify I have served as a U.S. Marine for more than 90 days, that the character of my service has been honorable, and if discharged, I am in receipt of an honorable discharge. By signature on this application, I hereby agree to provide proof of honorable discharge/service upon request.

(Sponsor—where applicable) _____

Applicant's Signature _____

Upon completion turn in to your detachment sponsor with your payment

FROM YOUR ADJUTANT

Please include your

Date of Birth

&

Extended four-digit zip code

on all membership renewals.

This is now a requirement from

National Headquarters.

Remit your dues to the
 Detachment Adjutant
 at our P.O. Box Address:



**Post Office
 Box 26023
 Tamarac, Fl.
 33320-6023**

GET INVOLVED!

We look forward to meeting our new members at our regular monthly meetings.

We are always seeking new members.

If you don't have a blank membership application you will be fined one dollar. To benefit youth activity programs.

Editors Note:

If you find an error in this publication, please feel free to bring it to the my attention. I will be happy to make any necessary corrections in the next edition.

Thank You!

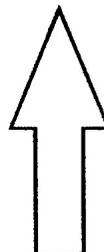
Your Editor,

Joe Motes or email: joemotes@aol.com

We meet on the
 3rd Wednesday of each month
 at the American Legion Post #157,
 1791 Meers Parkway
 Margate Florida.
 The meetings start at 1930.

Royal Palm Blvd

Copans Rd.



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N
o.
7

NW 19th St.

Meers Pkwy

Coconut Creek Parkway



954- 971-0882



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



PERMANENT LIFE MEMBERS

HELP SUPPORT YOUR DETACHMENT

REMINDER

YOUR \$10 PLM DONATION EXPIRES THE END OF DECEMBER, DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR \$10 DONATION WHICH COVERS JANUARY THRU DECEMBER 2009

BOOSTERS

HAVE YOU DONATED FOR A BOOSTER AD, COST IS \$20 FOR COUPLES A YEAR PLEASE SUPPORT OUR DETACHMENT

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO MCL DET #755 & MAIL TO

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755
PO BOX 26023
TAMARAC FL 33320-6023

May & June



William Eckerth	05/09	Betty Price	05/12
Jennifer Morgan	05/13	Alex Cuesta, Jr.	05/19
Todd Renna	05/21	James Ruggiero	05/27
Rahl Price, Jr.	05/28	William Pauly, Jr.	06/02
Milton Ran	06/05	Sumner Warshaw	06/07
Antonio Gutierrez	06/21	Dale McCucheon	06/21
Marvin Schentzel	06/21	Werner Hatzelhoffer	06/23
Leonard Swartz	06/27	Francis Murphy	06/28
Reuben Urist	06/29		

I would appreciate everyone who receives this newsletter to email me or call me with your Date of Birth if it did not appear here, we are trying to update our records, Thanks!



ROLLCALL *Newsletter*

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VA News

IRS COLLECTION POLICY UPDATE 02: As the nation sinks deeper into recession, the IRS is offering to waive late penalties, negotiate new payment plans and postpone asset seizures for delinquent taxpayers who are financially strapped, but make a good-faith effort to settle their tax debts. IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman said 6 JAN that tax agents are being given new authority to work with victims of the nation's economic woes who are struggling to pay their bills. "We need to recognize that it's an extraordinary, challenging time," Shulman said in an interview. "We need to understand the taxpayers' perspective. We need to walk a mile in their shoes." It's unrealistic to expect some taxpayers to make timely payments in this economy, Shulman said. However, he cautioned that those seeking help will have to demonstrate their inability to pay. Those who fail to file tax returns, or who simply ignore collection notices, will not be eligible for help, he said. "The most important thing for people to do is to get on the phone or walk into an IRS office," he said. "The worst thing someone can do is go dark and not be in a discussion with us." Just last month, the agency announced a program making it easier for homeowners with an IRS lien on their property to refinance their mortgages or sell their homes.

With the filing season for 2008 tax returns opening this week, the IRS expects to process 250 million returns over the next few months, including 130 million from individuals. The new leniency program is geared toward people who have paid their taxes in the past, but who are now having facing a financial hardship. "This is not a free ride for people who can actually pay their taxes," Shulman said. The IRS doesn't know how many taxpayers might take advantage of the new program for stretching out payments on overdue taxes or even reducing their tax liability. But millions could be eligible. In the fiscal year ending last 30 SEP, the IRS took enforcement action against more than 3 million taxpayers. The actions included property liens and asset seizures, including homes, cars, bank accounts and garnishing wages. This year, even more taxpayers could fall behind in their tax payments as the economy continues to sour. Record numbers of homeowners are falling behind on mortgage payments and the U.S. economy is losing jobs at an alarming rate. Since the start of the recession last December, the economy has shed 1.9 million jobs, and the number of unemployed people has increased by 2.7 million — to 10.3 million now out of work.

The leniency program is an extraordinary step by the IRS, said Ellis Reemer, head of tax litigation at the law firm of DLA Piper. IRS agents, he said, are generally well-meaning public servants who want to work with taxpayers but are often bound by policies that limit their discretion. "This is not a normal course of events," Reemer said. "This is an institutional determination that we are in very difficult economic times." The program was described as the "give the tax man a heart plan," said Steve Ellis, vice president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a budget watchdog group. Ellis said the program makes sense given the state of the economy, but he cautioned that it should be closely monitored for consistency and fairness. "You don't want people to get off the hook and not pay their fair share," he said. "They need to make sure that it's consistent." The IRS is doing the same thing many private creditors are doing. She said the mortgage crisis, Wall Street meltdown and job losses have left many families unable to pay their bills, said Sharon Price, policy director of the National Housing Conference. However, she worried that many taxpayers won't know how to access the benefits. "The problem is, will it be consistent and how will people find out about it?" Price said. To help explain the leniency program, the IRS has posted answers to common taxpayer questions on its Web site, <http://www.irs.gov>. The advice under "What if I can't pay my taxes?" begins with some reassuring words: "Don't panic."

VA EMERGENCY CARE UPDATE 03: On 19 FEB U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced the Veterans' Emergency Fairness Act of 2009 (S.404). This bill would enable the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reimburse veterans enrolled with VA for the remaining costs of emergency treatment received outside of VA's health care system if the veteran has outside insurance that only covers part of the cost. Under current law, VA can reimburse veterans or pay outside hospitals directly only if a veteran has no outside health insurance. "Because insurance may not cover all costs, a trip to the ER can leave insured veterans financially crippled. My bill would enable VA to fill the gap for veterans whose outside insurance does not meet their needs," said Akaka. In addition to reimbursing veterans for future costs of emergency care, the bill would allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide retroactive reimbursements back to May 2000 when VA was first authorized generally to cover the cost of outside emergency care for veterans enrolled with VA for their care.

ESTATE PLANNING UPDATE 01: Many veterans use tax-deferred investments such as IRA's or fixed annuities to supplement their retirement income. These investments are popular because of their potential tax advantages. Tax deferred accounts typically allow investment earnings that would ordinarily be taxed on an annual basis to accumulate free of taxation until funds are withdrawn from the account, generally to provide income at retirement. In addition to taxes at the time of withdrawal, a 10% penalty on the earnings may be imposed on tax deferred accounts if withdrawn prior to age 59 ½. While these are excellent vehicles when you want to accumulate wealth, they can be inefficient if you want to pass the assets to your heirs. They could be subject to both income and estate taxes at your death. The combined tax impact could erode the value of your tax-deferred investment depending on the overall value of your estate and the status of estate tax regulations. Goals and plans change over time, so if your current goal is to pass your existing IRA or fixed annuity to your heirs and you do not plan on using the asset for income, Capital Transfer could be an effective planning tool for you.

Visit our website: WWW.TAMARACMCL.US VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



ROLLCALL TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755 Newsletter



VA News

Capital Transfer is designed to maximize the value of your tax-deferred investments when passed to your heirs. This planning concept repositions the tax-deferred asset to avoid both the income and estate taxes due at death. The Capital Transfer concept uses the value of your tax-deferred investment to purchase a life insurance policy. If properly structured, the life insurance death benefit can be free of income and estate taxes for your heirs. Life insurance death benefits are generally income tax-free to the beneficiary and may also be estate tax free if the insurance is purchased outside your estate. Capital Transfer is not right for everyone, but could be suitable for your specific situation and result in a larger inheritance for your heirs. Before investing you need to consider your investment goals, time horizon and applicable risks and consider working with an investment professional that deals with several companies and knows life insurance policies. Usually credit unions and banks have investment professionals on their staff to assist you. It is very important that you evaluate your current financial situation to determine if Capital Transfer will meet your planning needs. [Source: Wealth News Feb 09 ++]

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC): DIC is a monthly tax free benefit paid by the Veterans administration to eligible survivors of a:

- Military service member who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training; or
- Veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease; or
- Veteran whose death resulted from a non service-related injury or disease, and who was receiving, or was entitled to receive, VA Compensation for service-connected disability that was rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death, OR since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR for at least one year before death if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999.

Those eligible to receive benefits are:

1. Surviving spouses meeting the following criteria:

- Validly married the veteran before 1 JAN 57; or
- Was married to a service member who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training; or
- Married the veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated; or
- Was married to the veteran for at least one year; or
- Had a child with the veteran, and cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, and is not currently remarried. However, a surviving spouse who remarries on or after 16 DEC 03, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.

2. Surviving child(ren) who are not included on the surviving spouse's DIC and are unmarried and under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school, or a helpless adult meeting specific criteria. Criteria requirements for helpless adult children can be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000.

3. Surviving parent(s) may be eligible for an income-based benefit. When countable income exceeds the limit set by law, no benefit is payable. Eligible parents must report all sources of income to VA; for example, gross wages, retirement annuity, insurance proceeds or annuity, interest, and dividends. The spouse's income must also be included if living with a spouse. A spouse may be the other parent of the deceased veteran, or from remarriage. The 2009 income limit for a sole surviving parent, or one of two parents not living with a spouse is \$13,456. For a sole surviving parent living with a spouse, or one of two parents living with a spouse it is \$18,087. Payment rates are reduced based on the countable income of the parent or parents: Income limits change annually.

Those eligible for DIC are also eligible for Health Care (CHAMPVA), Federal Employment Preference, Home Loan Guaranty, and Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance. Under current law a spouse's Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP) annuity is reduced by any DIC amount received. Bills have been submitted in Congress for the last 4 years to eliminate this deduction without success. The 2009 bill is H.R. 775. The basic monthly rate of DIC changes annually with COLA adjustments. There can be no decrease in the amount. For 2009 it is \$1,154 for an eligible surviving spouse. The rate is increased for each dependent child, and also if the surviving spouse is housebound or in need of aid and attendance. Add \$246 if at the time of the veteran's death, the veteran was in receipt of or entitled to receive compensation for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling (including a rating based on individual unemployability) for a continuous period of at least 8 years immediately preceding death and the surviving spouse was married to the veteran for those same 8 years. VA also adds a transitional benefit of \$286 to the surviving spouse's monthly DIC if there are children under age 18. The amount is based on a family unit, not individual children. For benefit rate tables, including those for children alone and parents, refer to <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates> or call 1-800-827-1000. To apply for DIC claimants should complete VA Form 21-534 Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child. Veterans in receipt of VA disability compensation are encouraged to brief their spouses on how DIC would apply to them to ensure there are no false expectations in their estate planning. [Source: www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheet 12 Jan 09 ++]



ROLLCALL *Newsletter*

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



VA News

VA CLAIMS BACKLOG UPDATE 21: Eric K. Shinseki, the new Veterans Affairs secretary, said 4 FEB he is trying to reduce the six-month delays in paying veterans' disability claims, and he wants to move quickly toward an all-electronic claims system that could speed up the process. In his first appearance before Congress since becoming secretary, Shinseki said the VA is looking at a major switch that would phase out paper processing, possibly by 2012. "This is a brute-force solution," Shinseki told the House Veterans Affairs Committee, adding that a technological format is needed "to ensure timely, accurate consistent decision-making on behalf of our veterans. This is part of what our backlog is about. That will take investment, of course," he said. In his testimony, Shinseki also said he was launching a topdown review of his embattled department and reiterated his promise to submit a "credible and adequate 2010 budget request" that will be cost-effective while fully sensitive to veterans in need. "If it's going to be solved any faster, it's going to take leadership," he said of the challenge ahead, promising a "change of culture" at the government's second largest agency.

Shinseki, got a recent tour of the paperwork battlefield on which VA claim adjudicators serve every day. It was a bracing scene -- literally. "You walk into one of our rooms where...decisions are being made about disabilities for veterans [and] see individuals sitting at a desk with stacks of paper that go up half way to the ceiling. And as they finish one pile, another pile comes in," Shinseki told the Committee. "There are 11,100 people doing this...good people, hired to do a rather challenging job in which they are trying to apply judgment to situations that occurred years ago," Shinseki said. Paperwork, he added, doesn't draw out "a full appreciation for the context of combat." The army of claim adjudicators is equal in size to the 82nd Airborne Division, Shinseki said. It grew by 4000 in the last two years. Another 1100 will be hired this year to address VA's claims backlog. It's "a brute force solution" to a problem best solved with an electronic claim processing system. "If we don't...create a paperless process," Shinseki told lawmakers, "I'll report a year from now that we hired more people to do this." Rep. Vic Snyder (D-AR 2nd) said Shinseki should make another visit soon to one of VA's file rooms. "It's almost dangerous," said Snyder. The rooms "are overwhelmed" with claims. Some individual claims have swelled to "three, four and five volumes." Ironically, Snyder said, technology might be aggravating the problem. Veterans who look continuously to strengthen disability claims are making internet searches. Printouts on all aspects of their conditions or diseases are then sent to the VA to be added to case files. "The files will just keep growing," Snyder said. "We've got to get a handle on this whole thing."

One new proposal that Shinseki floated was that he believes that all active duty military members, upon discharge or retirement should be mandatorily enrolled in the VA health system. Rep. Steve Buyer (Ind.), ranking Republican on the committee, asked Shinseki to support an increase in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. DIC is paid to survivors of members who die on active duty or die of service-related conditions in retirement. DIC hasn't kept pace with survivor compensation for federal civilian workers, Buyer said he is preparing a bill that would raise DIC by 12 percent across the board. Basic DIC is now \$1154 a month and \$286 a month is added for each dependent child under age 18. Another \$246 is added if, at time of death, a veteran had been rated as 100-percent disabled for eight years, and had been married during that the same period.

Shinseki was warmly received by the committee where he laid out administration priorities for veterans. Behind him, representatives of various veterans' service organizations mostly nodded heads in agreement. They didn't nod, however, when Shinseki declined to endorse a legislative priority for many VSOs this year: a bill to require that VA health budgets be funded a year ahead of normal appropriations. Advocates say this will ensure timely funding of VA hospitals. They no longer would have to operate on the cheap under a "continuing resolution" because the VA budget got bogged down by a partisan fight. In late January, many VSOs hailed such a bill, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act, reintroduced for 2009 by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Senate VA Committee chairman. But Shinseki implied Congress simply needs to act more responsibly on VA appropriation bills. "My preference would be for a timely budget and I will assure you I'll do my part," he said. While Army chief of staff, Shinseki recalled, "I lived with continuing resolutions and I know full well the impact they bring." If his experience as VA secretary shows health care budgets still can't get passed on time, then "other options" will be discussed, Shinseki said.

House Veterans Affairs Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA 51st) said that after several years of budget restrictions and growing backlogs, the VA must work hard to restore credibility among the nation's veterans. "So many veterans view the VA as 'Veteran's Adversary,'" he said. Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ 5th) who chairs the oversight subcommittee, said he wants to ensure the VA remains mindful with its technology initiatives to "implement high standards" of quality given the department's past problems with maintaining electronic data. "We all have our work cut out for us," Mitchell said. Shinseki said he would review the "fundamentals in every line of operation." "I intend to ... demand the highest levels of integrity, transparency and performance in leading the department through the fundamental and comprehensive change it must quickly undergo," Shinseki said. "We will be measured by our accomplishments, not by our promises," he added. [Source: AirForceTimes Hope Yen & Stars and Stripes Tom Philpott articles 4 & 7 Feb 09 ++]



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



VETERAN'S PENSIONS Update 01: If you are a wartime veteran with a limited income and you are no longer able to work, you may qualify for a Veterans Disability Pension or the Veterans Pension for Veterans 65 or older. Many veterans of wartime service are completely unaware of the fact that if they are 65 or older and on a limited income they may qualify for a VA Pension without being disabled. An estimated 2 million impoverished veterans and their widows are not receiving the VA pension they deserve because they do not know about it. The VA has had limited success in getting the information to them. Generally, you may be eligible if:

- You were discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and
- You served at least 90 days of active military service 1 day of which was during a war time period. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty (There are exceptions to this rule), and

- Your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law (The yearly limit on income is set by Congress), and You are age 65 or older, or, you are permanently and totally disabled, not due to your own willful misconduct.

With the advent of the Gulf War on 2 AUG 90 (and still not ended by Congress to this day), veterans can now serve after 2 AUG 90 during a period of war time. If your countable income appears to be near the maximum you should apply. VA will determine if you are eligible and notify you. If you do not initially qualify, you may reapply if you have un-reimbursed medical expenses during the twelve month period after VA receives your claim that brings your countable income below the yearly income limit (i.e. These are expense you have paid for medical services or products for which you will not be reimbursed by Medicare or private medical insurance). Countable income for eligibility purposes includes income received by the veteran and his or her dependents, if any, from most sources. It includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business. There is a presumption that all of a child's income is available to or for the veteran. VA may grant an exception to this in hardship cases.

There is no set limit on how much net worth a veteran and his dependents can have, but net worth cannot be excessive. Net worth means the net value of the assets of the veteran and his or her dependents. It includes such assets as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds and any property other than the veteran's residence and a reasonable lot area. The decision as to whether a claimant's net worth is excessive depends on the facts of each individual case. All net worth should be reported and VA will determine if a claimant's assets are sufficiently large that the claimant could live off these assets for a reasonable period of time. VA's needs-based programs are not intended to protect substantial assets or build up an estate for the benefit of heirs. The Maximum Annual Pension Rates (MAPR) effective 1 DEC 08 for both living and deceased veteran's surviving spouse/children cannot exceed the following:

Veteran or widow/er with no dependents \$11,830 or \$7,933.

Veteran with spouse and child or widow/er with a child \$15,493 or \$10,385.

Veterans or survivor with additional children: add \$2,020 to the limit for each child.

Housebound veteran or widow/er with no dependents \$14,457 or \$9,696.

Housebound veteran or widow/er with one dependent \$18,120 or \$12,144.

Veteran or widow/er who needs aid and attendance and you have no dependents \$19,736 or \$12,681.

Veteran or widow/er who needs aid and attendance and you have one dependent \$23,396 or \$15,128.

Some income is not counted toward the yearly limit (for example, welfare benefits, some wages earned by dependent children, and Supplemental Security Income). It's also important to note that your medical related expenses are considered when determining your yearly family income. VA pays you the difference between your countable family income and the yearly income limit which describes your situation. This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar. You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation Or Pension. If available, attach copies of dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates) and current medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports). You can also apply on line through the VONAPP website <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. For More Information Call 1(800) 827-1000. [Source: www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/pension/index.htm 12 Feb 09 ++]



ROLLCALL *Newsletter*

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



ECS 2009 UPDATE 06: The new economic stimulus plan includes one-time cash payments and/or tax-credits for millions of Americans whether they are working or retired. The plan is complicated, and controversial. Some say it is the only way to pull the nation out of recession. Others say we are mortgaging our children's future. Time will tell. Regardless, here is how the one-time cash payments and/or tax-credits will apply to you:

Wage-earners: The "Make Work Pay" provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus bill) will provide a refundable tax credit of up to \$400 for working individuals and \$800 for married taxpayers filing joint returns in both 2009 and 2010. For most employees (who receive a W-2 from an employer), the employer will automatically make the withholding changes this spring, thereby increasing take-home pay. Taxpayers who do not have taxes withheld by an employer during the year will be able to claim this credit on their 2009 and 2010 tax returns. This tax credit is not available to all as it has income limits (phases out for individuals with adjusted gross income (AGI) in excess of \$75,000, or \$150,000 for married couples filing jointly). However, employers do not have access to an individual's entire income, and so individuals with multiple jobs or married couples who file jointly and whose total AGI income is higher than the above income limits, will likely want to submit an updated W-4 form to their employer to ensure high enough withholding-or their "stimulus" when they file their 2009 and 2010 taxes will be to send more money back to the IRS. Anyone with additional questions should contact the IRS.

Retirees: Most seniors - that is retirees who receive Social Security (regular Social Security, disability Social Security and SSI), Veterans' or Railroad Retirement benefits - will receive a one-time \$250 payment (just once, not once in 2009 and once in 2010). It will be sent automatically to these individuals, they do not need to apply for this payment. There is no income limits for this payment, so all eligible individuals are to receive it, no matter their income. As of now, SSA is saying all payments will be distributed by May. Anyone with additional questions should contact SSA, VA, or Railroad Retirement Board (whichever agency they receive regular payments from).

Non-Social Security Retirees: Government retirees, including some federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees do not receive any Social Security. In addition to federal retirees, there are also state and local government retirees who work outside of Social Security. The Senate Finance Committee, included a refundable \$250 tax credit for these individuals. This tax credit is to be referred to as the "Refundable Tax Credit for Certain Federal and State Pensioners, and is for tax year 2009. At this time, we are waiting for further guidance from the IRS on how it is to be implemented.

[Source: NARFE Legislative Department Jill Crissman comments 2 Mar 09 ++]

CAMP LEJEUNE TOXIC EXPOSURE UPDATE 04: In the early 1980's, two solvents, trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE), both unregulated at the time, were found in two water systems serving the Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point areas of Camp Lejeune. Certain drinking water wells were identified as the source of the chemicals and were taken out of service in 1984 and 1985. If you lived or worked at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in 1987 or before, you should register with the Marine Corps by visiting www.marines.mil/clsurvey or by calling the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Call Center at 877-261-9782, M-F, 0830 - 1700 EST. The Department of the Navy is funding two independent research initiatives. The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is determining if there is an association between exposure to the water and certain adverse health effects. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is evaluating specific health risks associated with exposure. Upon completion of the research, the Marine Corps will directly notify those on the registry through direct mail and email. Currently, Camp Lejeune water meets or exceeds all environmental standards. Drinking water wells at Camp Lejeune are tested four times a year for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), in addition to monthly drinking water sampling. The base is in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations to ensure safe drinking water. [Source: CA DVA Press release 27 Feb 09 ++]



ROLLCALL *Newsletter*

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



VA MUSEUM or MEDICAL CENTER UPDATE 01: The Indianapolis Department of Veterans Affairs says the controversy over a World War II-era newspaper is settled, but a group of former Marines vows to keep fighting. Members of the local Marine Corps League, angry that a framed front page from 1945 was removed from a hallway at the Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center, are considering picketing the hospital. We're talking about some demonstrations out there," said Ronald "Bud" Albright, the group's leader. "We don't intend to let this thing drop." The group wants restored a page from The Indianapolis Times with the headline "Japs Surrender." Albright says its removal is akin to "whitewashing history." The VA announced 4 MAR that the historic page was gone for good and would be replaced by a front page from The Indianapolis Star bearing the same news but expressed as: "WAR IS OVER -- Truman." The VA's National Center for Ethics suggested the replacement article.

The front page from The Times had hung for a decade or more at the VA Medical Center, but last month it caught the eye of a new employee who considered it a racial slur and complained to hospital Director Tom Mattice. Mattice ordered the newspaper removed. When local Marine Corps League members learned of the newspaper's removal, they met with Mattice and urged him to put it back. In the two weeks since, Mattice said, he'd received more than 100 letters, e-mails and phone messages, almost all of them urging the newspaper be put back on display. But he was not swayed. Mattice met again with the former Marines and told them he would not reconsider. "We want to honor our veterans and their accomplishments in a positive way," Mattice said later. "It was not good," Albright said of the meeting. "We shook hands, but we told him we'd do what we had to do, which is get more involved in this thing." Besides pickets, Albright said, his group may hand out facsimiles of the expelled page to hospital visitors and urge those who are like-minded to bombard Mattice with letters. A framed copy of the "WAR IS OVER -- Truman" front page has been placed put the wall; the original is being framed and is expected to replace the copy later this month. Hospital officials are also in the process of re-evaluating the rest of their memorabilia to ensure it doesn't offend anyone.

Floyd Mori, executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League, the nation's largest and oldest Asian-American advocacy group, said Mattice did the right thing. "Even though this was a World War II newspaper, it sends the wrong message to today's generation," Mori said. "To have it displayed sends a message to today's (citizens) that it's OK. And it's not OK." Mori, 69, said anti-Japanese sentiment is alive and well. He wrote a letter to NBC this week to complain about a "Saturday Night Live" skit; recently he was alerted to a South Carolina car dealer who, in a TV ad, urged viewers to buy his American-made cars because "our cars don't smell like rice." The former Marines at odds with the local VA hospital director say they have no ill feeling toward the Japanese but simply want to honor history and not to shrink from showing the prejudice that existed during the war. "I think in a historical sense those are good lessons," said Mori, "and in a museum that would be appropriate and educational and helpful -- in a place where a lesson is being taught. "But in a hospital, it might be better taking it down." [Source: Indianapolis Star Will Higgins article 5 Mar 09 ++]

ECS 2009 Update 04: Veterans in receipt of service-connected compensation or non service-connected pension, as well as survivors in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), will receive a one-time stimulus payment of \$250. The legislation orders the Secretary of the Treasury to disburse a \$250 payment to each individual who fulfills the conditions set aside, for any month during the 3-month period ending with the month which ends prior to the month that includes the date of the enactment of this Act. Therefore, veterans in receipt of compensation and pension benefits during any of the months of NOV or DEC 08, and/or JAN 09 are eligible for this payment. The criteria for payment eligibility applies to those in receipt of a veterans benefit compensation or pension payable under title 38, United States Code (iii) listed under the following sections:

- (I) section 1110, 1117, 1121, 1131, 1141, or 1151;
- (II) section 1310, 1312, 1313, 1315, 1316, or 1318;
- (III) section 1513, 1521, 1533, 1536, 1537, 1541, 1542, or 1562; or
- (IV) section 1805, 1815, or 1821 to a veteran, surviving spouse, child, or parent as described in paragraph (2), (3), (4)(A)(ii), or (5) of section 101.

The legislation also provides this benefit to citizens in receipt of certain Social Security benefits as well as those receiving benefits under the Railroad Retirement Benefit. Citizens are not entitled to receiving this benefit from multiple sources. If a veteran is also in receipt of one of these other benefits, the \$250 payment will only be issued once. Plans call for an automatic matching system to be coordinated between the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Treasury Department to administer the funds. The specific regulation regarding this disbursement, yet to be written, will cover the details of the timeline by which veterans can expect to receive this payment, as well as recourse for veterans who believe they deserve this payment but have not been issued it. [Source: AL Bulletin, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission 20 Feb 09 ++]



ROLLCALL Newsletter

TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



Although numbers don't tell the whole story, America's 20th-century wars produced highly consistent rates of Medal of Honor heroism. From World War I through Vietnam, the rate of Medal of Honor recipients per 100,000 service members stayed between 2.3 (Korea) and 2.9 (World War II). But since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 only five Medals of Honor have been awarded, a rate of 0.1 per 100,000 — one in a million. A similar disparity occurs on the second tier of valor awards: Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and Air Force Cross. Throughout the 20th century, the rate of service cross recipients per 100,000 troops ranged from a low of 19 in Korea to a high of 167 in World War I. But for the post-9/11 wars, it's only one per 100,000. "All of us are a little concerned about the fact that people aren't being recognized," said Army Reserve Col. Jay Duquette, who recently retired as deputy director of operations at Headquarters, 9th Regional Support Command, Fort Shafter, Hawaii. "There's a perception that somehow the political process has at the Defense Department or wherever created some sort of limitation on higher-level decorations," Duquette said. "I don't know if that is true. But that is a perception that exists among the lower-level officer corps."

Former Marine Joseph Kinney, a Vietnam veteran who has advocated for greater recognition of heroism in combat, is convinced that's true. The military awards system, he said, is "broken." Kinney testified before the House Armed Services Committee in 2006, urging the Pentagon to be more consistent in applying award criteria and to speed the review process for Medal of Honor nominees. In an interview, Kinney noted how much longer award reviews took in the George W. Bush years versus the Clinton administration. It took just 6½ months for the Clinton administration to posthumously award Medals of Honor to Army Master Sgt. Gary Gordon and Army Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shughart for heroic action in Somalia on 3 OCT 93. By contrast, during the Bush years, the speediest Medal of Honor approval took 18 months. One took as long as three years. "The system has failed because of this inordinate fear that somebody is going to get the Medal of Honor [and] be an embarrassment," Kinney said. "They decided that the Medal of Honor should go not only to people who are brave, but pure."

Defense and service officials deny that the process has become politicized. The approach used to recognize acts of valor remains unchanged, Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen Lainez said. "Each recommendation is carefully considered based on the merits of the individual's actions, eyewitness accounts and other supporting evidence," she said. "The standard for the Medal of Honor is high, as one would expect." Commandant Gen. James Conway also said the standards haven't changed. But he was at a loss to explain why no living service member has been awarded the Medal of Honor in these past 7½ years of war. "The nature of the award isn't such that you have to be dead to receive it. That's never been the standard for awards. It's not the standard today," Conway said. "It's arguably happenstance that the first five out of Iraq or Afghanistan have been posthumous. But that's not the standard and that's not the way commanders are looking at it in the field."

Comparing medal statistics and heroes throughout the ages is difficult. It's like comparing athletes from one generation to another: Which was better, the 1960s Celtics of Bill Russell or the 1990s Bulls of Michael Jordan? Who was a better boxer, Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson? In sports, many factors muddy the waters of comparison: rules changes, more specialized physical training and increasingly bigger, faster and stronger athletes. Similarly, a variety of factors complicate valor comparisons: the evolution of the awards system, the proliferation of valor awards, variants of asymmetric warfare. Fred Borch, a retired Army officer and regimental historian for the Judge Advocate General's Corps who writes history columns for Military Times, noted that the vast majority of attacks on U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq result from improvised explosive devices. "It's pretty hard to be a hero against an IED," he said. Charles Mugno, director of the Institute of Heraldry at Fort Belvoir, Va., said the Medal of Honor essentially was the military's sole valor award until 1917. Today, there are two dozen valor decorations. "A lot of Medals of Honor were given out because there was no substitute," Mugno said. "If you look at the citations for [different campaigns], you'll see a significant difference in acts of valor and degree of valor."

The Hall of Valor database contains 3,467 Medal of Honor citations. To see how many have been awarded to the various services refer to <http://www.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/list.php?category=MilitaryBranches>. For a breakdown of awards by conflict refer to <http://www.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/list.php?category=ConflictPeriods>. For additional info refer to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society websites <http://www.cmoHS.org> & <http://www.homeofheroes.com/moh/history/society.html>. [Source: NavyTimes Brendan McGarry article 28 Mar 09 ++]



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Grandchildren: Zack, Jarrett & Tina

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| Lou Annacone (09) | Doris Franchino (*) | Nick Passanisi (14) |
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Mike Burns
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06-09



In Loving Memory of
Sgt. Lucille A. Mirsky, USMC W.R.
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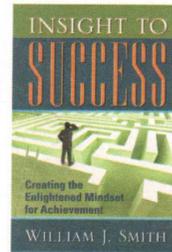
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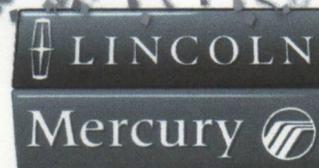
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MARINE CARE PACKAGE PROGRAM

All Detachment 755 Members, starting with the July meeting, we ask you to please bring two of the following items listed below for our Marines serving overseas. Most Requested Items Are:

Snacks and non-perishable food items, particularly tuna kits, beef jerky, canned fruits, nuts, coffee, canned meats and other ready to eat meals;

Undershirts (white, short sleeve); Socks (cotton, boot cut, black, or green—try military surplus stores); Magazines;

Sunglasses, goggle-style sunglasses, goggles; Cigarettes, Copenhagen and Skoal; Single-use cameras (disposable);

AT&T Global pre-paid Military Calling Cards (calling cards to work in Iraq and Afghanistan must be these specific cards);

Music Cds (new and used); Movie DVDs (new and used); Flashlights with Red lens; 72" bootlaces (brown or tan preferred);

Batteries (AA are most requested, then AAA); Disposable, instant hand warmers; Ziploc plastic bags;

Lotrimin AF or Tinactin for Athletes foot; Sun block, Aloe Vera; Eye Drops (to relieve dry eye, not redness); Blistex, Chapstick, Carmex; Aspirin, Motrin, Tylenol, Pain Relievers; Saline Spray / Drops for Sensitive nasal passages;

Q-Tips; Laundry Soap Tablets; Baby Wipes; Liquid Body Wash; Super Glue; Pre-sweeten flavored beverage mixes.

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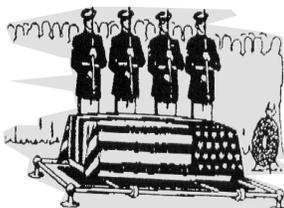
TAMARAC DETACHMENT 755



In Remembrance

of Tamarac Detachment Members who have answered the call

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Browne, Albert E.	06 Oct 1998
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Abramowitz, Norman	30 June 2006
Murphy, Bill	9 Dec 2006
Aiello, Joseph A.	23 Dec 2006
Palermo, Dorothy	14 Jan 2007
McGuire, Thomas	7 April 2007
LaPorte, Phillip	12 May 2007
Fessler, Jerry I.	23 Nov 2007
Leo, Donald R.	11 Jan 2008
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Pastor, Robert	08-09
Price, Betty & Rahl	04-10
Ruggiero, James	*** 02-09
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