

Veterans Tribune
C/O John Stewart
3979 North Buckhorn Drive
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9.11.2001

Lest We Forget...



*This
Issue
Featuring*



Navy History

Stories, Information, Humor, and More!!!

Managing Editor – John Stewart

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November - December 2010 VETERAN'S TRIBUNE



Dedicated to the Heroes of America – Our Veterans





Magazine of the U.S. Navy

The first "issue" of *All Hands* was printed as the *Bureau of Navigation News Bulletin* No. 1 (dated Aug. 30, 1922). Twenty years later, the title was changed to *Bureau of Naval Personnel Information Bulletin*. As America claimed "Victory in Europe" on the cover of June 1945, the magazine's new banner read, *All Hands*, and the name stuck.

They believe it's important to make the Navy's history, as documented in *All Hands*, accessible to everyone. In January 2003, they completed a two-year project to archive every back issue (more than 80 years worth) in Adobe Acrobat® format. Since June 2002, every new issue is being offered in both Adobe Acrobat® format and the interactive Macromedia Flash® format. You can read these issues at www.navy.mil.

I have included some stories from *All Hands* issues of the past in this issue of the Tribune.

Tales of North Korea (From 1951 All Hands Issue)

Then there was Lieutenant (junior grade) Carl Austin, USN, who dropped everything he had on a Red target, including "the kitchen sink." The flier had managed to get a real-live kitchen sink, had attached it to a 1000-lb. bomb slung to his AD *Skyraider*.

The loaded sink "sank" the target out of sight.

(From January 1951 All Hands Issue)

Coolness and a steady touch, plus plenty of tense advice from others, brought a temporarily blinded pilot safely back to his carrier in a feat of the Korean war.

Diving his F9F Panther at enemy troops, Ensign Edward D. Jackson, USN, suddenly found himself the victim of an aerial "booby trap"—cables strung by the enemy to catch low-diving planes.

One of the cables caught his right wingtip, shattering it, then whipped through the windshield and canopy, striking the pilot about the head. For nearly 20 seconds he was unconscious while his plane zoomed into a steep turning climb, recovering to find himself blinded by blood from facial cuts.

Feeling for his controls, Ensign Jackson slowed speed to cut down the wind rushing at him and radioed a wingmate, Ensign Dayl E. Crow, USN, for help. Ensign Crow radioed directions to head Jackson's plane out to sea where their carrier, USS *Philippine Sea* (CV 47).

The real test came in the landing. Lieutenant (junior grade) L. K. Bruestle, USN, tossed aside his hand signals and gave landing directions by voice radio. The landing was described as "normal."

Ensign Jackson reported he saw the flight deck for the first time when the flight surgeon climbed beside the cockpit and wiped the blood from Jackson's eyes.

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	-		x		+		-	+	-165
69		-524		110		272		-62	-37

Try to fill in the missing numbers.

Use the numbers 1 through 36 to complete the equations.

Each number is only used once.

Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation.

Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.



Navy to pay for deceased sailors' families to attend memorial services

By DAN BLOTTENBERGER
Stars and Stripes

BAMBERG, Germany — The Navy will now pay for families of deceased sailors to travel to unit memorial services for their loved ones, Navy officials announced Tuesday.

Under the new policy, eligible family members are entitled to round-trip travel and transportation allowances to attend one Navy-sponsored memorial service, at a location other than the burial site, for any sailor who dies while on active duty. The policy defines a memorial service as any command function, divine service or other religious service.

Eligible family members include spouses, children, parents, in-laws and siblings of the deceased.

Travel expenses are authorized to events in the continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. territories and the last permanent duty station or home station of the deceased servicemember, including overseas locations.

In addition to paying the family's travel expenses, the policy directs units to help with hotel and other travel-related arrangements, as well as providing unit escorts for the family. And it directs Navy units to ensure that the memorial service does not conflict with private funeral dates, or the dignified transfer of a servicemember's remains at Dover Air Force Base, Del.

The funding was authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2010. The Defense Department policy was enacted on May 11, but the Navy put out its announcement just this week.

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Retiring Air Force intel chief sounds alarm on American air superiority

By KEVIN BARON, Stars and Stripes

OXON HILL, Md. — The U.S. Air Force's former top intelligence officer warned a roomful of generals this week that the U.S. has lost its air power advantages and is dangerously ill-prepared to stop the gap-closing efforts of China and Russia.

Lt. Gen. David Deptula, a former F-15 pilot, challenged Defense Secretary Robert Gates' fundamental belief that U.S. air power vastly overmatches any foreign military. "For the first time, our claim to air supremacy is in jeopardy," Deptula told the Air Force Association's national convention on Monday.

At the same forum last year, Gates defended ordering a halt to the production of the Air Force's vaunted F-22, saying that by the time China produces a fighter comparable to the F-22, the U.S. will have more than

1,000 F-22s and F-35s.

The Air Force Association has openly opposed Gates' stance and this year Deptula came armed with a 15-minute bombastic video titled "Threats to 2010 Air Supremacy." His presentation attempted to reopen more than just the F-22 fight, warning that from surface-to-air defenses to air-to-air fighters, the U.S. was letting others catch up. These future threats, he said, are now current.

There is "a global revolution to modernize air defense systems," the video's narrator explained. Russia and China are deploying or building better surface-to-air missile, or SAM, systems that could one day prove too much for U.S. fighter aircraft.

Within the decade, it said, both nations could field fighter jets nearly comparable to the F-22. "When taken in total, our potential adversaries can create a nearly impenetrable box that our legacy fighters cannot enter, thus denying us our air supremacy," it said.

After showing the video, Deptula dismissed "the notion of overmatch in the realm of air dominance," a reference to the Gates position. It is unclear how much weight Deptula will be able to lend to those in the Air Force, or on Capitol Hill, clamoring to defend air power procurement programs. Gates frequently has said he wants the Pentagon to prioritize building a force and arsenal ready to meet the most current and plausible threats.

So far, Gates has been largely successful, and Deptula's presentation was riddled with worst-case scenarios.

"The dominance we've enjoyed in the aerial domain is no longer ours for the taking," Deptula said

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Corps Fighting the Battle Against Suicide

Marine Corps News|by Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Osborne

ARLINGTON, Va. -- At a rate of 24 deaths per 100,000 people, 52 Marines took their lives last year.

Having exceeded the rate of civilian suicides, as well as its sister services, the Corps initiated the Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program in hopes of reducing the number of suicides.

"Since we launched our new course, 'Never Leave a Marine Behind,' privates to sergeants now make up a smaller proportion of our suicides than they did previously," said Col. Grant Olbrich, section head of Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

The course is taught, trained and mandated to all Marine noncommissioned officers and the length of the course varies depending on the needs of the unit. The instructors of the course are fellow NCOs that have finished the Train-the-Trainer course and are certified for the training.

"We initially targeted our NCOs due to their unique position to impact their peers and the younger Marines they lead," Olbrich added.

The reason NCOs are in such an exclusive situation is because they work more closely with junior Marines and typically know them better, he said.

"It is very important to get to know your Marines. If you get to know them then you will know when they are getting out of character," said Brenda Ray, a health and education coordinator at Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Ga.

Olbrich said multiple stressors are usually a precursor to suicide or an attempt.

"If someone in your shop is having some difficulties, has experienced some significant loss in their life, or has demonstrated a desire to die, you need to take on the responsibility of getting them to a care-giving professional for an evaluation," said Cmdr. Charles R. Kessler, chaplain for Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C.

Depression could be a sign that somebody is considering suicide, but some people show a renewed sense of calm because they have come to terms with their problem, Kessler said.

He added that 75 to 80 percent of all suicides are related to depression, but there is no typical or common reason for someone to commit suicide.

Abusing alcohol or drugs, deliberately injuring themselves, extreme mood swings, giving away of personal possessions, talking about wanting to die and threatening suicide are all common signs that someone is suicidal, Kessler said.

The Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program has paired up with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors to help families who are victim to suicide.

"TAPS is recognized nationally as the leading provider of comfort and care to anyone who has suffered the loss of a military loved one," Olbrich said. "Our Casualty Affairs Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps and local chaplains from the unit are always available to assist grieving families."

The Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program is only one of many to help prevent suicide. Also available is the chaplain services, counselors, suicide hotlines, unit medical, chain of command and many more.

"Education is the key to prevention. We need to let Marines know that there is help," Ray said.

When the boogeyman goes to bed, he checks his closet for Chuck Norris.

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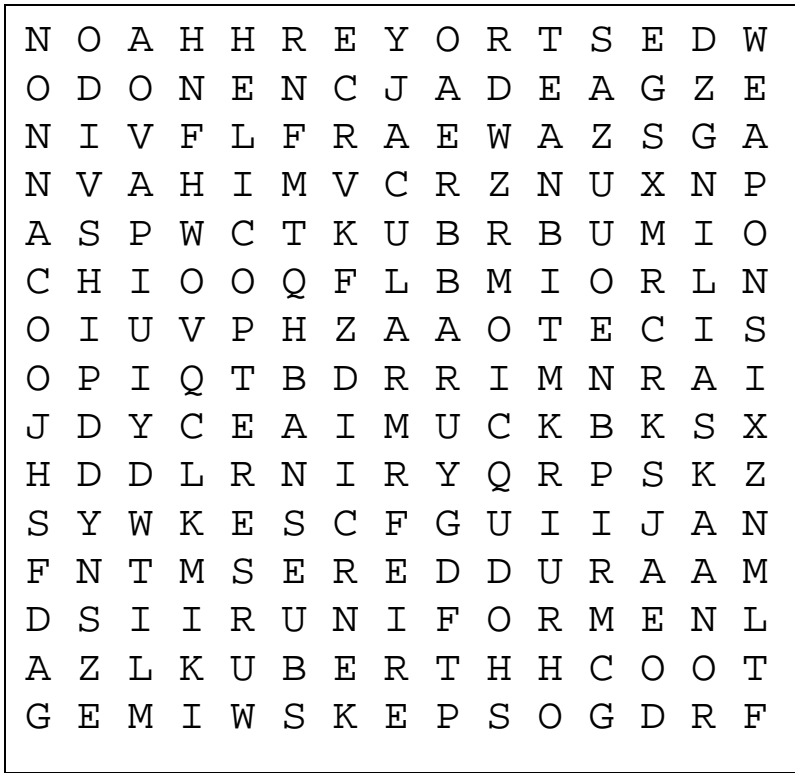
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- WEAPONS



Some special ops troops told to lose the beard

By JEFF SCHOGOL, Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — For Afghan men, beards are a sign of manhood. And that is why special operations forces tend to look like Grizzly Adams — to earn the trust of locals.

For special operations troops, the beards not only help bring them closer to Afghans, they also set them apart from the conventional forces who traditionally must keep stricter grooming standards.

But the higher ups have decided that at least some of the U.S. special operations forces should get better acquainted with their razors.

“Soldiers who work as training cadre and those in operational activities where we partner with Afghan Commando and other Coalition troops who are themselves mostly clean-shaven, are better prepared, and set a better example if they meet a traditional military appearance standard,” said Bob Coble, spokesman for Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan, via e-mail.

“A clean-shaven, ‘squared away’ appearance communicates membership in a disciplined and motivated team, important characteristics for soldiers in most military environments,” he added.

But special operations troops working with Afghan civilians “who see facial hair as proper for adult males” are still able to wear beards, Coble said.

There has been a long-standing struggle between special operations forces and the conventional Army about whether special operations troops can have beards, said Hy Rothstein, a retired Green Beret.

Having a beard helps them bond with Afghan men, regardless of the circumstance, said Rothstein, of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. But he acknowledged that sometimes troops abuse the privilege.

“All of a sudden you’ll see them start wearing baseball caps and mixed uniforms and all kind of weird stuff that angers conventional commanders, and there’s really no reason to take those additional liberties,” he said.

While special operations troops need to do a better job keeping up their appearance, the conventional forces also need to recognize that it helps if special operations forces have a beard, he said.

“That’s what Afghan men expect,” Rothstein explained. “You can say it’s very superficial, and it certainly is, but it’s still real.”

Rothstein retired as a colonel in 1999, but he has made several trips to Afghanistan since then and written a book about the country. He is also an outspoken critic of U.S. war strategy in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Conventional wisdom, whether on how to win in Afghanistan or about beards, has not been wise,” he said.

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Doctor’s Orders

Two campers are hiking in the woods when one is bitten on the rear end by a rattlesnake. “I’ll go into town for a doctor,” the other says.

He runs ten miles to a small town and finds the town’s only doctor, who is delivering a baby.

“I can’t leave,” the doctor says. “But here’s what to do. Take a knife, cut a little X where the bite is, suck out the poison and spit it on the ground.”

The guy ruins back to his friend, who is in agony.

“What did the doctor say?” the victim asks.

“He says you’re gonna die.”

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Virginia Wounded Warrior Program www.wearevirginiaveterans.org

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) is a legislatively mandated program operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Rehabilitative Services. It was established in 2008 in response to the growing need to improve and expand services to our nation's veterans and their family members whose lives have been touched by stress-related injuries or traumatic brain injury.

Their statewide program serves veterans of an era who are Virginia residents; members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service; and family members of those veterans and service members. Through an extensive network of local, federal and state partnerships, the VWWP can assist you in getting the answers you need regarding psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program is dedicated to helping you build resilience and cope with the challenges posed from a stress-related injury or traumatic brain injury. The team is focused on helping you feel like you again and to assist you and your family move forward with your lives. They provide services through five regional consortia of community services boards, brain injury service providers, and other public and private service providers who offer services across the Commonwealth.

Their goal is to make it easier for you and your family to find and get help. Support services are available both online and in person at local offices. They are also a proud partner of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Real Warriors Campaign, www.realwarriors.net and encourage you to visit their website.

Their newest campaign, "We are Virginia Veterans," is targeted to reach all eras of veterans

and their family members who may benefit from our program and draw strength from Virginia communities. Virginia is home to approximately 820,000 veterans; that means that one of every ten citizens is a veteran.

(From January 1951 All Hands Issue)

Now it's planes that holler when they get hurt and make their troubles known by themselves, almost.

It used to be that when a plane got into difficulties aloft the pilot had to notify the radio operator. The radio operator then had to operate his transmitter to inform the outside world of the emergency. All this **took** time - more time than was available, sometimes.

Now it's getting to be different. The people at the Air Force's Air Material Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, have developed something called an emergency keyer. With this device installed in his plane, the pilot need only touch a switch if trouble comes. The emergency keyer then takes over.

It automatically tunes the plane's radio transmitter to the emergency channel, sends out the plane's identifying call sign, signals "SOS" several times, then produces radio signals to help people locate the plane. The whole series of messages is repeated until the device is turned off or disabled. While this is going on, the crew, including the radio operator, can be preparing for an emergency landing or can be devoting their attention to the crisis in general.

Almost all AF aircraft will be equipped with the emergency keyer. It is designed to be used with all airborne transmitters.



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42-year-old 'grandma' graduates from one of military's toughest courses

By Rich Lamance

The Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal School at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida is one of the toughest schools in the military with a dropout rate that often exceeds 50 percent. But an Army specialist and 42-year-old grandmother from North Carolina, has proven that, when it comes to meeting tough challenges, age is sometimes just a state of mind.

Spc. Jennifer E. Moore has graduated from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal School where she has spent close to a year learning the delicate techniques of how to recover, evaluate, safely render and dispose of live ordnance.

For Moore, paying attention to the details of such things as ordnance identification, disarmament, transportation and disposal, as well as rigging principles, reconnaissance procedures, and nuclear, biological and chemical training can literally help save lives on the battlefield.

Moore entered the Army after graduating from high school in Charlotte, N.C., in 1986 and finished her first stint in 1990. She admits that the year-long training has been tough. "Training, for me, has been mentally and physically exhausting. There is so much you need to learn to make it through this school, and so little time to learn it," Moore said.

"The extreme heat and high humidity here in Florida added to the challenge when we had to perform EOD procedures wearing our protective clothing that included the bomb suit and chemical suit. However, the school has been one of the most awesome experiences of my life."

The Navy EOD school trains close to 2,000 students each year, from all branches of service, and while each person volunteers for a different reason, Moore at first had reservations. "I enlisted in the Army after a 19-year separation, and due to my high test scores, I figured I would have a long list of jobs available to me."

But Moore said that at the time she enlisted, the EOD specialty was the only one on the table. "I had wanted to come back into the Army for years, and EOD school was the only one available to me at the time. So, I took it. I decided to continue with the training and see if I liked it. I stayed in EOD because I love it."

Moore and many of her fellow students believe that the extensive training they endure will play an important part in their future, especially during upcoming deployments. "I'm hoping that the training I had here, along with my continued training in the field, will help me part of a team that has an impact in saving lives."

The 42-year-old grandmother says that while youth has its advantages in the military, much of her success lies in having the right attitude. "I have learned that age and gender won't stop you from finishing a tough school like this one. But a lack of will can. The most challenging part of this training, for me, was stepping out of the civilian world and into the ordnance world with absolutely no background. I have to say, that my favorite part of the course was dealing with nukes and weapons of mass destruction."

Moore says that while her family was supportive, early on they had definite reservations. "My family initially thought I was crazy to come to EOD school. They seem to have accepted it over time and look forward to having me back now that I've graduated. Of course, my friends still think I'm nuts."

Her first assignment is scheduled to be Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

Secretary Shinseki Announces \$41.9 Million to Help the Homeless

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has announced that 40 states will share more than \$41.9 million in grants to community groups to provide 2,568 beds for homeless Veterans this year.

The Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program provides grants and per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate new supportive housing and service centers for homeless Veterans.

The \$41.9 million is broken into two categories. About \$26.9 million will help renovate, rehabilitate or acquire space for 1,352 transitional housing beds. A second group of awards, valued at \$15 million, will immediately fund 1,216 beds at existing transitional housing for homeless Veterans this year. The awards will cover daily living costs based upon the number of homeless Veterans being served in transitional housing.

A key component of VA's plan to eliminate homelessness among Veterans within five years, the grants and per diem payments helped reduce the number of Veterans who were homeless on a typical night last year by 18 percent to about 107,000 Veterans within one year.

"These grants wouldn't have happened without the extraordinary partnerships forged with community organizers," said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. "These investments will provide transitional beds to Veterans who have served honorably, but for various reasons now find themselves in a downward spiral toward despair and homelessness."

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4. Have a back-up plan, because the first one probably won't work.
5. Be polite. Be professional. But, have a plan to kill everyone you meet.
6. Do not attend a gunfight with a handgun whose caliber does not start with a "4."
7. Anything worth shooting is worth shooting twice. Ammo is cheap. Life is expensive.
8. Move away from your attacker. Distance is your friend. (Lateral & diagonal preferred).
9. Use cover or concealment as much as possible.
10. Flank your adversary when possible. Protect yours.
11. In ten years nobody will remember the details of caliber, stance, or tactics...

They will only remember who lived.
12. If you are not shooting, you should be communicating your intention to shoot.

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Mantz is due to deploy again, although he's not sure if it will be to Iraq or Afghanistan. But in either case, he said, he's ready. And this time, he's giving himself another mission: to help his comrades deal with the stresses of war.

"I'm looking forward to it, especially knowing what I know about resilience," he said.



Army Capt. Joshua Mantz speaks with Iraqi children while on patrol near Sadr City, Iraq, about an hour before an enemy sniper attacked his unit and nearly killed Mantz, April 21, 2007. A military medical team brought him back to life. Courtesy photo

TATTOOS

A tattoo of a pig on one leg of a sailor and a rooster (cock) on the other is a charm against drowning.

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(From January 1951 All Hands Issue)

Greatly improved meals are in store for troops in the field due to a new ration developed by the Army Quartermaster Corps.

Called the "B" ration, it's a "kitchen" rather than an individual ration, and represents a complete revision of all canned, dehydrated, and otherwise processed food contained in this type ration during and since World War II. It will be used wherever Army and Air Force field kitchens are set up, but fresh foods are not available.

Among the improvements in the "B" ration is the elimination of canned, chopped meats such as meat and vegetable hash, corned beef hash, and stew meat and vegetables. These have been replaced with solid meats, bacon, corned beef, beef and gravy, boned chicken and turkey, ham chunks, luncheon meats, pork and gravy, Vienna sausage, salmon, and tuna. Tests show *that* solid meats lend themselves to more variety in preparation, are more palatable, and by eliminating fluids save a quarter-pound per ration. This reduces the weight of 10,000 rations by 2,000 pounds. A sample menu covering 15 days has been issued by the Quartermaster Corps. It shows how each proposed meal should be prepared to take fullest advantage of the 96 different items supplied in the "B" ration. These rations are patterned to provide 4,200 calories per man per day-600 more calories per day than is prescribed for an active soldier by the Surgeon General of the Army. The increased caloric content of the new ration is intended to give additional heat and energy required by troops in strenuous battle or field conditions, and in cold weather.

If Chuck Norris were to give birth.. it wouldn't be to a child... it would be to a Bowflex.

(continued from previous page...)

They had pumped 30 bags of blood back into the soldier to save him. The surgeon had even pulled soldiers out of the field to ensure there was enough blood.

Mantz was medically evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center here. The day he got out of the intensive care unit, the psychological intervention began. Clinical psychologists came to see him bedside, sometimes two or three times a day. They asked him if he remembered what happened, each day asking for more details.

As his body mended, Mantz also began to heal emotionally. Talking early and often can help to ward off the emotional impact of devastating events, he said. "If you don't talk about it, you'll never be able to learn from it," Mantz said. Most importantly, he said, it's vital to look back objectively. Otherwise, he explained, there's a tendency to self-blame, even when not at fault.

"It's important to realize what you could and could not control, what you were able to do and not do," he said. "It gives you a different perspective."

Mantz said he's also found it helpful to focus on the positive. Looking back on the day he was injured, rather than dwell on the loss, he focuses on the fact that his soldiers carried out a medical evacuation under extreme stress without a hitch.

After just four months, Mantz felt physically and emotionally recovered enough to return to Iraq.

His family and friends tried to sway him, but he was set on going, he said. He not only wanted to rejoin his soldiers, but also needed to know he was emotionally healed enough to continue on in his job.

A third benefit revealed itself upon his return. Mantz found out the medical team that saved his life, including surgeon Dr. Dave Deblasio, was still in Iraq. He decided to pay them a surprise visit to thank them in person. "It was a very emotional moment, like a reunion," he said. His medical records were hanging on the wall in the clinic, serving as a reminder of the medical miracle that brought Mantz back.

Mantz finished out his deployment as an executive officer

while word of his miraculous return from the dead spread, garnering him national attention upon his return.

While he'll always be grateful for the early medical intervention that saved him, he said, he's intent on spreading the word about the importance of early psychological intervention as a preventive measure. He's since spoken to thousands of troops, offering a message of resilience, and to countless family members of lost loved ones, offering a message of hope. To the troops, he stresses the importance of speaking early and often, and urges line leaders to keep an eye out for signs of trouble in their troops. To families, he explains what those final moments of life were like for him.

One mother he met had lost her son to a roadside bomb. It had severed his legs, and he died shortly after. She worried that her son, who was a mountain climber, had lost his will to live the moment he lost his limbs. Mantz explained to her how the survival instinct had kicked in for him after he was wounded and how desperate he felt to live, no matter what the impact of the injury. He said he saw the closure in her eyes.

That moment, he said, was his first response to a personal question that had been nagging at him since his recovery: "Why am I still here?"

Mantz offered to have his story documented for the Real Warriors campaign in hopes of reaching even more people. The campaign is sponsored by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, and features stories of servicemembers who sought psychological treatment and continued successful military and civilian careers.

He offers a new twist to the campaign. Rather than stressing the importance of seeking help after experiencing emotional issues, he emphasizes the importance of early intervention as a preventive measure.

(continued on next page...)

Guadalcanal Veteran Sorry He Wasn't In Better Condition

(from 1951 All Hands issue)

"I wish to God they had been twice as tough in conditioning me..."

So writes a naval doctor who had once "crabbed and griped" when he was put through a rigorous physical-fitness program before being assigned abroad. Why did a *doctor* need all that conditioning? But he didn't gripe about his physical condition after he got over, and found himself with the Marine group which invaded Guadalcanal. In an article forwarded to the director of training, First Naval District, he describes the necessity for a toughened, hardened physical constitution for anyone engaged in modern warfare:

"Only men who had been well-conditioned and were in good physical shape could stand up under the grueling conditions which existed at the time of the landing and the following days.

"The tropical diseases were rampant and those *in poor physical condition* picked these up more rapidly, necessitating evacuation, in some cases, out of the area.

"A few men from time to time broke under the strain. It was always those who were in poorer physical shape. It finally came my turn to be evacuated and then it was that I wished I, personally, had been a *tougher, better physically conditioned officer* than I was. . . . I am firmly convinced that an even more strenuous program of physical toughening and hardening will pay dividends in fewer men being evacuated. . . ."



"Throughout days and nights we were subjected to repeated bombings and attacks. This meant long hours of work and lack of sleep. . . . We had an improvised surgery in a tent on the shore. . . . All our work was done in the light from flaming ammunition and gasoline. Even if we had had electric lights we wouldn't have turned them on as the Japs were still over us. . . . My chief pharmacist's mate was wounded. . . . My corpsmen did not flinch once although under fire for the first time. Two corpsmen circulated among the fighting men, taking their pulses and looking for signs of shock. . . . Plasma infusions were given. Some of the boys had three and four during the first 24 hours."

"During the trip to New Caledonia the less toughened and hardened individuals began to show signs of weariness and neurotic symptoms. . . . With men sleeping in three-tier pipe berths down to the third and bottom holds, disease would have been rampant if they had already not been in good physical condition. . . . Under these trying conditions personal hygiene is an absolute necessity, although twice as difficult to accomplish."

"If I had my training period to live over again, now that I have come back from the Solomons, I would spend all available time in strengthening and conditioning myself."

"To you officers and men who would better serve your country at home and on foreign soil, prepare yourselves to be physically able to do so! Regardless of hardships involved, the end justifies the means!"

Chuck Norris invented black. In fact, he invented the entire spectrum of visible light. Except pink.

Tom Cruise invented pink.

Aah, the Golden Years!

SPECIAL POEM FOR OLDER FOLKS

A row of bottles on my shelf
Caused me to analyze myself.
One yellow pill I have to pop
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.
A little white one that I take
Goes to my hands so they won't shake.
The blue ones that I use a lot
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.
The purple pill goes to my brain
And tells me that I have no pain.
The capsules tell me not to wheeze
Or cough or choke or even sneeze..
The red ones, smallest of them all
Go to my blood so I won't fall.
The orange ones, very big and bright
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.
Such an array of brilliant pills
Helping to cure all kinds of ills.
But what I'd really like to know.....
Is what tells each one where to go!

KEELHAUL

An extreme punishment given in which an offender was tied hand and foot, with heavy weights attached to his body. He was lowered over the ship's side and dragged under the ship's hull. If he did not drown, which was usually the case, then barnacles usually ripped him, causing him to bleed to death.



POST 9877 OFFICERS

Commander - Milton Carson

Sr. Vice Commander - Cameron Angus

Jr. Vice Commander - Larry Brooks

Quartermaster/ Adjutant - Phillip Steege

Chaplain - James Staples

Surgeon – Richard D. Tyree

Service Officer – Norman Ryan Jr.

Membership Chairman - John Hurst

1 Year Trustee - Preston Cunningham

2 Year Trustee - Lester Hamilton

3 Year Trustee - Jessie Minnis

Sergeant at Arms - Jessie Minnis

Still having a bad day? True Story Follows

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen shaking frantically, almost in a dancing frenzy, with some kind of wire running from his waist towards the electric cooker. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a handy piece of wood, breaking his arm in two places.

Up to that moment, he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

Soldier Turns Brush with Death into Message of Hope

By Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2010 - Army Capt. Joshua Mantz was dying on a hospital bed in Iraq. Just moments earlier, a sniper's bullet had severed a femoral artery in his right thigh, causing massive blood loss. As the medical team strove to save him, Mantz struggled to take each breath. He felt the blood creep from his legs to his stomach to his chest -- a telltale sign of a catastrophic injury -- and knew the end was near.

He began repeating the names of his mother and two sisters in his head, over and over, and then had his last thought -- a prayer: "Please take care of them." He felt a deep peace and took one last breath. Everything faded to black, and he died.

Fast-forward three years and Mantz is a healthy, fit 27-year-old on his way to work at Fort Riley, Kan. With an even pace and ready smile, there are no visible, or invisible, traces of the wound that killed Mantz three years earlier, or of the massive efforts that brought him back to life.

The incident could have crippled Mantz, not only physically but also emotionally. But early intervention saved him on both fronts, he said.

Three years earlier, Mantz was serving on his first deployment after his 2005 graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. That day, April 21, 2007, had started off with a humanitarian mission in a small Iraqi community near Sadr City that Mantz had vowed to help. His unit had just dropped off some supplies when they were diverted to another part of the sector.

On their way there, a rocket-propelled grenade shot past their Bradley fighting vehicle. The soldiers then noticed a suspicious vehicle driving slowly near the Bradley and stopped the car for a search. As Mantz questioned the driver in Arabic -- he had majored in the language at West Point -- Army Staff Sgt. Marlin Harper, the senior scout of the platoon, conducted an explosives test. Mantz did a quick visual sweep of the area and grew

concerned when he saw the unit was in open terrain and dangerously exposed. He called out to Harper, "Move to the other side of the truck."

That's when the sniper fired off an armor-piercing round. The round passed through Harper's left arm, exited out his chest, and entered Mantz's right thigh, severing his femoral artery.

The scene shifted to slow motion as Mantz slid into shock. He heard nothing but the muted shot, like a low thud, and then his voice calling out for a medic. He looked at Harper, saw the shocked expression on his face and watched as he collapsed to the ground.

Mantz's world suddenly sped into high gear. Unaware of the severity of his injury, he dragged the 250-pound soldier, who felt "light as a feather," to safety and then began administering first aid.

He called for his medic again but had trouble speaking. He passed out momentarily as the medic approached.

The 19-year-old medic rushed to aid Mantz; it was too late for Harper. They raced to the aid station about 10 minutes away while Mantz lay in the Bradley, feeling weak and extremely sick.

"At that point I made it my goal to make it to the aid station," he said. "I was in the hardest workout of my life, and I was determined to finish it."

That's when Mantz arrived at Forward Operating Base Loyalty -- and flatlined. The medical team fought valiantly for 15 long minutes to bring him back. They refused to give up until they found a weak pulse.

"It just proves that our military medical teams will fight for the lives of soldiers with the same ferocity and valor as soldiers in the battlefield," Mantz said. "They'll stop at nothing to save a life."

Mantz woke up two days later in the Green Zone, without brain damage and with his leg intact.

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SCIENCE

Science had-a fruitful year in 1943. Here are some of the highlights:

Rocket cannon, rocket-driven gliders, sound-chasing torpedoes. Powders to kill mosquitos and lice. Plastics to glue metal to metal. Radio power. Demerol, morphine substitute. Vaso sulfa for the common cold. Air and seasickness pill. Penicillin’s new uses. Acridines, new synthetic medicines that work like sulfas and penicillin. Several cancer-inhibiting chemicals, one chemical causing cancer. Meaty yeast with animal protein values. Tri-ethylene glycol to purify air, bromine to purify water in pools. New ways of making alcohol. Hand-made stone. New dust to kill grain weevils. New magnetic-electrical compass. New explosives. Water used to supplement gasoline in fighter planes. Navy’s high-temperature steam. Cooking lamps, new fluorescent lamps, new radio lamps. Urea to render wood pliable. Cotton leather. New oils. Chemical sponge for binoculars. Waterproof papers. Chemical to make sea water sweet. Sea-water markers of glow-chemicals. Shark repellent. Triptane to raise motor power 50 per cent.

AGRICULTURE

American agriculture reached a production peak in 1943 which may stand for many years. Despite serious shortages of skilled manpower, inadequate machinery, less favorable weather than last year and short supplies of fertilizer, insecticides and other materials, farmers surpassed the record 1942 output. Twenty-five per cent of this year’s production was set aside for direct war uses, such as the armed forces and lend-lease. Because of the enormous demand, it was necessary to institute rationing of some important food products, like meat, butter, cheese, canned and processed fruits and vegetables. Agriculture’s record production brought farmers the highest cash income on record-\$19,700,000,000 compared with \$16,177,000,000 in 1942. This income was about four times as large as the 1932 depression low point. Agriculture played a spotlight role in government activities. Administration efforts to combat inflation by means of price ceilings and food subsidies ran into sharp opposition from several national farm organizations and a powerful farm

bloc in Congress.

FINANCE, INDUSTRY

Industry, business and finance all reflected the impacts of war in 1943. President Roosevelt called for \$100,000,000,000 in war spending in the fiscal year ending next June. Production went 50 per cent above 1942. Payrolls, employment, hours worked went to new records. Huge consumer incomes created inflationary pressures that found partial outlet in record savings and retail spending even after more taxpayers than ever before paid taxes at an annual rate of more than \$40,000,000,000. But taxes couldn’t pay all the costs; although the government borrowed nearly \$40,000,000,000 in war loan drives, the national debt bounded past the \$170,000,000,000 mark. The trend in stocks was upward, although the mark wavered late in the year on “peace” rumors.

LABOR

Organized labor’s fortunes and influence suffered sharp reverses in 1943. Trend toward government restraints unions became evident, largely as a result of wartime strikes and demands which labor critics considered excessive. Strike idleness rose from 2,365,532 man days in the first six months of 1942 to 7,550,000 in the first six months of 1943. The spring coal strikes were largely responsible for the increase.

THE ARTS

No great book, no great music, and no great painting came out of 1943, although much fine work in every field can be found. For the first time in war, the military services deliberately used the arts as morale builders. Young painters were encouraged, and professionals were commissioned, or engaged, to record the war. Hundreds of professional musicians traveled millions of miles to entertain soldiers, sailors and marines. Although there were books by service men, most wartime fighters lacked the time for long books. Army-Navy book purchases ran into millions, and each month the cream of the home crop was reprinted in special “overseas” edition of approximately 50,000 each. The home front never had a more prosperous music season..

Some people wear Superman pajamas.
Superman wears Chuck Norris pajamas.

Military retirement system broken, board says

By LISA M. NOVAK, Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The military retirement system is unsustainable and in dire need of repair, according to an influential Pentagon advisory board.

The Defense Business Board — tasked by Defense Secretary Robert Gates to find ways to reduce the DOD budget — says annual Treasury Department payments into the system will balloon from \$47.7 billion this year to \$59.3 billion by 2020.

The 25-member group of civilian business leaders suggests that the Defense Department look at changing the current system, even hinting at raising the number of years troops must serve before being eligible for retirement pay.

The current system “encourages our military to leave at 20 years when they are most productive and experienced, and then pays them and their families and their survivors for another 40 years,” committee chairman Arnold Punaro told board members at their quarterly meeting late last month.

Making troops serve longer before receiving pay does not sit well with some servicemembers.

“No rational person would put up with 20 years of the hardships that you’re forced to endure if it wasn’t for the brass ring at the end of it all called instant retirement,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Ethan Gurney, an electronics technician based in Naples.

It’s not really fair to compare military service to the civilian work force, said Gurney, who, at 38, is only a few months from retirement.

“The continuous deployments, living conditions, remote and hazardous duty stations are unique to the military,” he said. “This isn’t a civilian company, so any civilian model that you use to compare to the military is impertinent. To do so is irresponsible at best.”

The talk of changing the military retirement system isn’t new.

The 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, released in 2008, said the current system is inequitable, inflexible and inefficient. Mainly, the benefit does not vest until 20 years of service, so only a small fraction of the force ever receives retirement pay. Furthermore, personnel who reach 10 years of service have a strong incentive to remain in the military to receive retirement benefits, the review stated.

As a possible fix, the review recommended the DOD test a plan that would calculate retirement pay based on a servicemember’s time in service and salary. The benefit would be payable at age 57 for those with 20 years of service and at 60 for those with less than 20 years. Under the plan, in which troops would be vested after 10 years, the DOD would annually contribute up to 5 percent of basic pay to the servicemembers’ retirement, similar to many civilian business plans.

The idea of a 30-year retirement with a possible pay-in by servicemembers is a more equitable possibility, according to Nathaniel Fick, chief executive officer for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank.

In a May column on Foreign Policy’s website, Fick, a former Marine, slammed the current retirement system saying, “Advances in medicine, lengthening lifespan, and the shift to a service economy in this country ... make me wonder — as a taxpayer — why we’re paying 38-year-olds as they embark on their second full career.”

According to Fick, the focus should instead be on front-loading benefits for new recruits since few new servicemembers have retirement benefits on their mind when they sign up.

Better benefits could help in recruiting, according to Navy Career Counselor Carmen Sepulveda, who is assigned to Navy Recruiting District New England, which is responsible for overseas recruiting in Europe.

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Sepulveda said most of the potential new recruits in Europe — children of military families stationed here — are interested in the educational benefits and work experience.

“The retirement isn’t that much of a selling point. They’re thinking about their parent’s retirement, not their own,” she said. “But when you look at retention, at a second or third enlistment, that’s where the retirement is a big deal.”

But the prospect of a 30-year end point for a pension could adversely affect retention, said Chief Petty Officer Jose Fiallos, a Navy career counselor based in Naples.

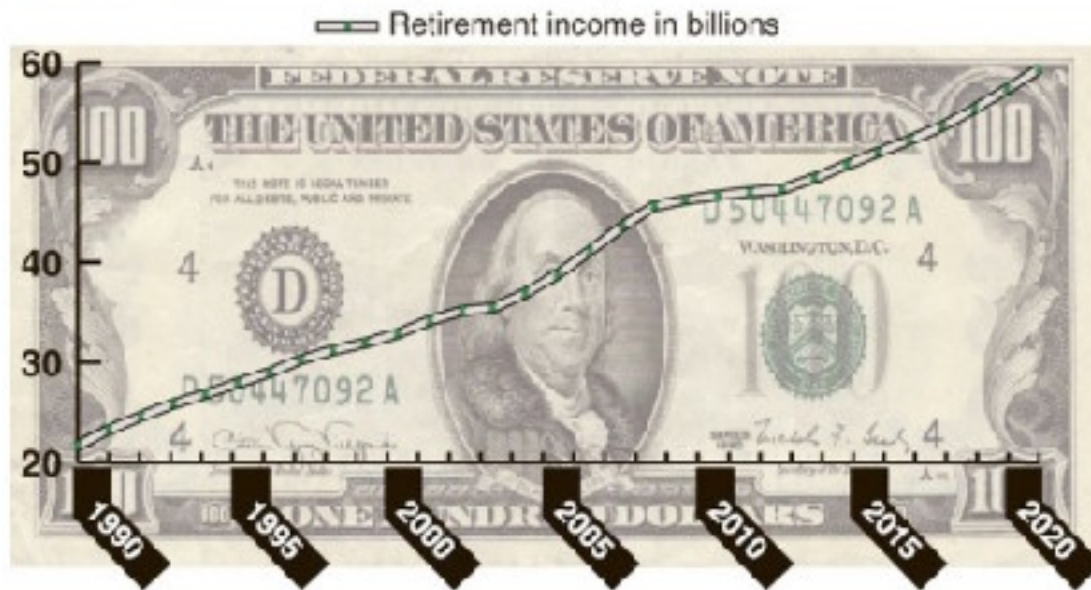
“There are already so many hurdles to get to 20 years because the Navy is so competitive,” Fiallos said. “I think a 30-year time-in-service requirement to get to retirement would most definitely have a negative impact on retention.”

In October, the board will make its final recommendations to the secretary of defense. And Ethan Gurney will be preparing to trade in his uniform for civilian clothes, looking forward to collecting his pension.

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Paying too much to retired troops?

The Defense Business Board says the amount the Treasury Department pays in military retirement benefits will increase 24 percent over the next 10 years. A look at how much has been paid in recent years:



SOURCE: Defense Business Board

Stars and Stripes

Gates: Time has come to re-examine future of Marine Corps

By KEVIN BARON, Stars and Stripes

SAN FRANCISCO — After nearly a decade of constant warfare and with a new commandant arriving shortly, the time has come to redefine the purpose and size of the Marine Corps, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Thursday.

“After the surge ends in Afghanistan, they’re probably going to reduce some,” Gates said during a visit to California. “They’ve gotten too big.”

Gates told the crew of the destroyer USS Higgins in San Diego that while the Navy would not likely continue to downsize, the Marine Corps is on its way to a reduction. The Marines have grown to 202,000 people from 175,000, he noted. Marine Corps leaders have said they want a smaller force.

In a speech to the Marines' Memorial Association in San Francisco, the secretary said he has asked the Navy secretary and Marine leadership to focus this year’s Force Structure Review, which all services undertake, “to determine what an ‘expeditionary force in readiness’ should look like in the 21st century.”

For Marines, the legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan has been forged fighting door-to-door down urban streets, in desert wadis and through mountain passes — far from the shorelines Marines have been trained to invade.

Top Marine Corps leaders, including outgoing Commandant Gen. James Conway, for years urged the Pentagon to allow the service to return to its amphibious roots and stop employing them as a “second Army.”

The last Marine did not leave Iraq until early this year, long after the commandant called for their removal from that country. Both wars, Conway frequently notes, have created a generation of Marines who have trained and fought but never stepped foot on a ship.

On Thursday, Gates said he’s recognized “an anxiety” about the future of the service, particularly “the perception being that they have become too heavy, too removed” from their roots.

But he noted that while the historic image of Marines remains etched in massive beach landings, in reality and in law the service is tasked to carry out “such other duties as the president may direct.”

In the past 60 years, Marines have fought in Korean mountains, Vietnamese rice paddies and now, he recounted, the “urban alleys of Anbar province and the dusty, rugged Helmand province of Afghanistan.”

“Looking ahead, I do think it is proper to ask whether large-scale amphibious assault landings along the lines of Inchon are feasible,” Gates said, referring to the Marine invasion during the early days of the Korean War that turned the tide against North Korea.

It also calls into question what weapons and equipment Marines should carry into battle. Current anti-ship missiles, he said Thursday, may require Marines to debark from ships up to 60 miles from the shore. Already one pet acquisition project of the Corps, the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, is under scrutiny.

“We clearly need to have amphibious capability,” he said, “the question is ... how much.”

Finding the right tools for the job will depend on how the military plans to use the Corps.

“In Iraq, Marines — as is often the case — were handed some of the roughest real estate and saw some of the most brutal and deadliest fighting of the conflict,” Gates said. “Places like Fallujah and names like [Maj. Douglas Alexander] Zembiec and [Cpl. Jason] Dunham will take their place in Marine Corps history along with the legends of the past,” naming two Marines who died in that battle, the latter a posthumous Medal of Honor recipient.

Gates said he did not want to “preclude” the discussion and it will be up to the incoming commandant, Gen. James Amos, if confirmed by the Senate, to undertake that “intellectual effort.”

“Ultimately,” said Gates, “the maritime soul of the Marine Corps needs to be preserved.”

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Veterans more likely to avoid foreclosure with VA-backed loan

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- Mortgage loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to have the lowest rate for serious delinquency and foreclosures in the industry.

"The continued high performance of VA loans is due to the dedication of VA's loan professionals, the support of our partners in the mortgage industry and most notably, the responsibility of our veterans and their desire to maintain home ownership," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "VA is making good on its promise to help veterans achieve the American dream of owning a home."

There are currently about 1.3 million active home loans that have been obtained using VA's Home Loan Guaranty Program. The program makes home ownership more affordable for veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and eligible surviving spouses by permitting low or no down-payment loans and by protecting lenders from loss if the borrower fails to repay the loan.

According to the Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey, VA's foreclosure rate for the last eight quarters and serious delinquency rate for the last five consecutive quarters have been the lowest of all measured loan types, even prime loans.

Much of the program's strength stems from the efforts of VA employees and loan servicers nationwide, whose primary mission is to "ensure all veterans receive every possible opportunity to remain in their homes, avoid foreclosure, and protect their credit from the consequences of a foreclosure," added Secretary Shinseki.

Depending on the situation, VA's loan specialists can intervene on a veteran's behalf to help pursue home-retention options such as repayment plans, forbearances and loan modifications. When home retention is not an option, sometimes VA can help arrange a sale, or a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure, both of which are better options for veteran borrowers than foreclosure.

Since 1944, when home-loan guaranties were first offered under the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18.8 million home loans worth \$1.06 trillion.

To obtain more information about the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, veterans can call VA at 877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/veteran.asp.

VA Simplifies Access to Health Care and Benefits for Veterans with PTSD

VA streamlined its process to provide health care and disability compensation for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register in July 2010. The new rule, which applies to Veterans of all eras, will simplify the process for a Veteran to establish service-connection for PTSD by reducing the evidence needed to support a claim. While each claim will be evaluated and require confirmation by a VA psychiatrist or psychologist, the new process is expected to allow for faster and more accurate decisions to help connect Veterans to medical care and other benefits available through VA. More than 400,000 Veterans with PTSD currently receive VA compensation benefits. PTSD is an anxiety disorder with symptoms that include recurrent thoughts of a traumatic event, emotional numbing, hyper-alertness, anxiety, and irritability. For more information, go to www.va.gov or call **1-800-827-1000**.

Chuck Norris invented DVD's so that we may enjoy Walker and Lone Wolf McQuade whenever necessary.

Machine gun-toting robots deployed on DMZ

By JON RABIROF, Stars and Stripes

DEMILITARIZED ZONE, Korea — Security along the DMZ has gone high-tech, as South Korea has quietly installed a number of machine gun-armed robots to serve as the first line of defense against the potential advance of North Korean soldiers.

The stationary robots — which look like a cross between a traffic signal and a tourist-trap telescope — are more drone than Terminator in concept, operated remotely just outside the southern boundary of the DMZ by humans in a nearby command center.

Officials refuse to say how many or where the robots have been deployed along the heavily fortified border between the two Koreas, but did say they were installed late last month and will be operated on an experimental basis through the end of the year.

South Korean military officials will then decide how many, if any, robots they want complementing the soldiers who man the area adjacent to the 2.5-mile-wide DMZ, which stretches 160 miles across the peninsula.

"The robots are not being deployed to replace or free up human soldiers," said Huh Kwang-hak, a spokesman for Samsung Techwin, the manufacturer of the SGR-1 robot. "Rather, they will become part of the defense team with our human soldiers. Human soldiers can easily fall asleep or allow for the depreciation of their concentration over time," he said. "But these robots have automatic surveillance, which doesn't leave room for anything resembling human laziness. They also won't have any fear (of) enemy attackers on the front lines." South Korea Ministry of National Defense spokesman Kwon Ki-hyeon said his agency is overseeing the project so he could not comment on the DMZ robot experiment. He referred questions to Samsung Techwin.

Huh said no government officials would talk about the robots: "This experimental project is highly classified." However, he said he was free to discuss how the SGR-1 robots operate and talk in general about their use.

A couple of experts on Korean relations said they did not see the deployment of the robots as the start of any new era of indiscriminate killing by remote control. Rather, they called the SGR-1 experiment the next logical step in making sure the DMZ continues to be an effective buffer against North Korean aggression.

"I am still a strong believer that nothing beats the humans' ability to monitor," said Kim Byungki, an international relations professor at Korea University in Seoul, but the DMZ robots will allow the South Korean military to compensate "for the existing weaknesses of what humans can do."

David Garretson, a Seoul-based professor of international relations at the University of Maryland University College, said it is unlikely "all this sci-fi stuff" will lead to a war in which "you let the machines fight it out and whichever machine wins, wins the war." "I'm kind of ambivalent," he said. "The main thing is, it is going to happen anyway. Technology is going to march forward and it is just a question of how human beings are going to handle it."

When the robots' heat or motion detectors sense a possible threat, an alarm goes off in the form of a siren or signal on the screen at the command center. The operator then uses the robots' video and audio communication equipment to talk with anyone identified by the SGR-1 before deciding whether to fire the 5.5-milimeter machine gun.

"The robots, while having the capability of automatic surveillance, cannot automatically fire at detected foreign objects or figures," Huh said, when asked whether a North Korean defector might accidentally be shot. Commanders make the final decisions to open fire.

"The SGR-1 is essentially a protection technology which will serve and protect our human soldiers against enemy attackers in their dispatched danger zones," he said. "The SGR-1 can and will prevent wars."

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U.S. Forces Korea spokesman David Oten declined comment on the robots other than to say they are not deployed inside the southern half of the DMZ, which is under the control of the U.S.-led United Nations Command. The South Korean military has primary responsibility for everything south of the DMZ's southern boundary.

Huh said the robots cost about \$200,000 each, and a set of them have been deployed at the DMZ. He declined to say how many robots are in a set. It takes less than a day to set up each robot, and it takes a minimum of two people -- an operator and commander -- to operate each set of robots.

Similar armed robots have been used by the South Korean military on an experimental basis in Afghanistan, Iraq and along the west coast of South Korea, near the DMZ, officials said. The robots can identify targets more than two miles away in daylight, and more than a mile away at night, and can shoot a target as far as two miles away. They are also capable of firing rubber bullets as a warning.

Kim said the robots can only help South Korea, given the heightened tension with the North in the wake of the March 26 sinking of the Cheonan warship and the deaths of 46 South Korean crewmen. The South said a North Korean torpedo took down the Cheonan, while the North denied any involvement in the sinking.

"There is a need for strengthened monitoring and reconnaissance, and a need for much more military and intelligence awareness in the DMZ in respect to possible provocations," Kim said.

Whether the robots are going to be a long-term addition to the security at the DMZ, he said, "will depend on the performance of the system. Performance is highly subjective."

Garretson agreed: "It all really depends on how well the darn thing works."

Translator Kim Taery contributed to this report

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A set of SGR-1 armed robots have been set up near the southern boundary of Korea's Demilitarized Zone on an experimental basis to see how well they complement the soldiers that keep an eye on the heavily fortified border between the North and South. The robot, using heat and motion detectors, can identify and shoot a potential target more than two miles away.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMSUNG TECHWI

I heard via rumor control that Post member John Hurst recently broke a hip. John claims to be 90 years old, acts like a 22 year old and it probably around 128 years old. If I know John, as most of the country does, he was chasing some young filly around the bedroom in the hopes she would buy a poppy (John's nickname is Poppy).

Next time you see John, say hello to Poppy.

Get well Poppy.

John The Editor

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in person. They didn't expect you to walk again. Your spinal canal is 60 percent compromised and with the loss of feeling that you have in your legs, it wasn't looking good."

He was released from the Walter Reed Warrior Transition Battalion in early December and returned to Alaska where he was attached to B Company Warrior Transition Battalion.

He continued to heal, qualified and competed in the inaugural Warrior Games in May at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., along with Sgt. Allen Marley, also from Fort Wainwright's WTB, who won a silver medal in the air pistol contest.

"It was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Being able to go to the training center and live and train there for a week. It is something most anyone in the world would want to be able to experience and I got to do that," LaFountain said. "Being able to participate in the first Warrior Games was extremely inspiring. One of the best parts of these games is showing Soldiers that they still have the opportunity to do things that they loved to do before."

LaFountain, a platoon sergeant and crew chief, returned to work June 1.

"Before I was a squad leader and before I got injured I was an assistant platoon sergeant. I'm doing my job," LaFountain said. "I don't get up so much on aircraft, fixing as I did before, because I have other responsibilities. I managed to receive a temporary up slip so that I can fly. We are waiting for word back from Fort Rucker..." about the permanent clearance."

"I've had two flights so far," LaFountain said. "It was good." He said it wasn't scary getting back on a helicopter, but it was exciting.

"It came back amazingly well, it was like second nature. The unit has always supported me. I kept in contact with them while I was in Walter Reed," LaFountain said. "They would send me e-mails. It was a good morale booster. I would send pictures.

They would print them and post them." His goal was always to come back to his unit, but he had to sell the idea to his platoon sergeant, his first sergeant and commander who had their doubts because of his injuries.

"To me, it never really entered my mind, hey I am not going to walk again or hey I am not going to fly again," LaFountain said.

"Once the accident happened, the morale of the company went down, but he stepped up," said 1st Sgt. Gary Sanders, A/1-52nd, 16th CAB. "He sent us a picture of him standing up, on a walker, moving around. As soon as we posted that, morale of the troops went straight through the roof."

"He won't take credit, he won't say 'I did something', but he did," Sanders said. "He said 'look team; I'm still here in the fight. I am trying to get back in the fight.' He inspired us."

Needless to say, things are looking up for Sgt. Justin LaFountain. "It's good to be home," he said.

BELL BOTTOM TROUSERS

Commonly believed that the trousers were introduced in 1817 to permit men to roll them above the knees when washing down the decks, and to make it easier to remove them in a hurry when forced to abandoned ship, or when washed overboard. The trousers could be used as a life preserver by knotting the legs and swinging them over your head to fill the legs with air.

Chuck Norris once went to a Yankees – Red Sox World Series game.

Chuck Norris won.

Soldier returns to unit, duty less than a year after helicopter crash

By Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

FORT WAINWRIGHT, Alaska -- Less than a year after a helicopter crash in Iraq that left one Soldier dead and several others, including himself, critically injured, Sgt. Justin LaFountain has returned to his unit.

"It's awesome to be back at work" said LaFountain, A Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, 16th Combat Aviation Brigade. The incident happened Sept. 19, 2009, in Balad, Iraq, when the Black Hawk helicopter was returning to base in bad weather. LaFountain recalls that it happened during the landing. They were flying about 100 to 150 feet above the ground at a "pretty good clip."

He was in the back, watching what he thought was heat lightning. He remembers thinking 'oh, we got this, we are gonna make that'. When they got closer he "started to feel uncomfortable. A couple of seconds later..."

The details get a little fuzzy after that. He remembers the left side of the aircraft came to the ground first. He remembers seeing some sparks and hearing a metal scraping noise. "It was all really pretty quick. We kind of bounced and came back up," said LaFountain. "I thought 'go-around'... Go-arounds are free as we say."

"Then the right side of the aircraft hit," LaFountain said. "I remember the starting of the rolling action, the dynamic, and one second later I lost consciousness. I believe it is because my head contacted the ceiling of the aircraft. I don't know."

"My next memories were of waking up and seeing a dust cloud around me. At that point it really wasn't coming to me. I was having the impression that I was having a bad dream," he said.

When he came to again he remembers being triaged by a female medic on the accident site. He had no idea of the extent of his injuries and told her to go

over and help the others who were on the aircraft. He told her they needed her and all he needed was some Icy-Hot for his back. He would come to find out that he needed more than Icy-Hot.

He was treated at Balad Hospital that night and medically evacuated to the U.S. Army Hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, the next day. He recalls joking with the captain who was putting him on the aircraft that "only in the Army would I be in a Black Hawk crash last night and today you would put me on another aircraft."

LaFountain was at Landstuhl for only a day before being put on another aircraft and sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he was met by his father and his grandmother. His wife Raechel arrived a few days later.

LaFountain spent the next several weeks at Walter Reed undergoing surgery and physical therapy. He was treated for a burst fracture in the L-5 vertebrae, a skull fracture, a mild to moderate traumatic brain injury and a corneal abrasion on his left eye.

"It wasn't until I got into physical therapy that I really started nailing down details. I had my surgery on a Thursday afternoon; on Friday morning my physical therapist and occupational therapist came in, they were amazed" when he could stand up using a walker and stand on one leg, and then the next. LaFountain remembers being disappointed that they wouldn't let him try to walk but that just that little bit of movement "took a lot out of me," he said.

He still didn't understand their excitement when the next day he walked to the door and back. "What's the big deal, I am supposed to be able to walk."

He recalls a conversation with his physical therapist, after becoming an outpatient. "I don't understand what you guys are so excited about, I'm up, I'm walking. This is what people do, this is what Soldiers do." It was then he finally understood the extent of his injuries. LaFountain said, "She told me no, I don't think you understand. On paper you look a lot worse than you do

(continued on next page...)

Former Vietnam POW Speaks at Submarine Base Kings Bay

By Stacey Byington, Trident Refit Facility Public Affairs

KINGS BAY, Ga. (NNS) -- CAPT Leo Hyatt, USN (Ret.), held as a Vietnam prisoner of war (POW) for more than five and a half years, was the keynote speaker at the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay POW/MIA commemoration, held Sep. 20 at the Subase Chapel.

On Aug. 13, 1967, during a high-speed photo reconnaissance operation over a railroad bridge just south of the China border, then Lt.Cmdr. Hyatt and his radar/navigation officer, Wayne Goodermote, were shot down by a barrage of fire from 37mm anti-aircraft guns.

At the time, Hyatt was attached to Reconnaissance Attack Squadron 12, homeported at Naval Air Station Sanford in central Florida, flying RA-5C Vigilante missions over North Vietnam off the aircraft carrier USS Constellation (CV 64).

"I wasn't supposed to get shot down because I was good," said Hyatt.

He had already piloted 33 high-speed reconnaissance missions, but he told his audience that he believed, given the nature of the mission he was about to fly, that he probably wouldn't make it back to the aircraft carrier.

Hyatt suffered a dislocated and broken shoulder during the ejection from his aircraft at nearly 850 mph, and was shot while trying to evade capture on the ground. His injuries were never treated by the North Vietnamese. Within a couple of days of his capture, he was taken to the Hoa Lo Prison (commonly known as the "Hanoi Hilton"), where he was tortured.

"You were tied up," said Hyatt. "Your arms were lashed behind your back. The ropes come across your elbows. Your feet are shackled to a bar, and you are literally turned into a suitcase. It hurts. You can't breathe. This went on for about three days – day and night."

13 After one particularly brutal session, he tricked his captors into believing that he was telling them future

targets.

"If they took anti-aircraft guns to all the places I told them, they burned up one heck of a load of fuel. I didn't know any targets."

When he was finally thrown back into a cell, he was in very bad shape medically. He credits his first cellmate, Air Force Capt. Ed Atterberry, with saving his life.

"He cleaned me up and gave me water to drink," said Hyatt. "I put him in for the Air Force Cross, but he never got it. He made an unsuccessful escape attempt a couple of years later, and they killed him."

Hyatt was released with the third load of POWs on St. Patrick's Day (March 13) 1973. He had been held as a POW for 2,040 days. After months of medical treatment he continued his career going on to command several Navy units. He retired in 1985 after 28 years of active duty.

Shortly after his release Hyatt said, "The 67 months of captivity will never be redeemable for me. However, it was a small price to pay to help guarantee the freedom of millions of people in South Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia."

"While I was in captivity, I was surrounded by men who displayed such fantastic fortitude, honor and devotion to country that it was impossible to be otherwise. God bless them, our country and those Americans who believe in America and do not spend their every breath criticizing her and trying to tear her apart."

Other notable Navy POWs held at the Hanoi Hilton with Hyatt included Rear Adm. Jeremiah Denton (held 2,766 days); Vice Adm. James Stockdale (held 2,713 days); Capt. Jerry Coffee (held 2,566 days); and Capt. John McCain (held 1966 days). Cdr. Everett Alvarez was the first American sent to the prison, and he was held captive for 3,113 days (more than eight and a half years).

Chuck Norris can believe it's not butter.

The 'Sara' Challenges Truk

From All Hands issue 1944

Big Carrier Destroys 49 Planes, Sinks Two Warships in 30-Day Tour of Pacific

The Jap fleet definitely doesn't want to slug it out, even when a U. S. task force buzzes around the powerful naval base at Truk Island. That's the opinion of Capt. John H. Cassady, USN, commander of the USS *Saratoga*, who took his giant carrier within striking distance of Japan's "Pearl Harbor" but was unable to lure the enemy fleet into combat.

For a ship which the Japs have "sunk" several times, the *Saratoga* proved a very lively ghost during her 12,500-mile tour of the Southwest Pacific in November. In 30 days the carrier's flyers shot down 25 Jap planes, probably downed 23 others, destroyed 24 planes on the ground, sank 2 warships, damaged 12 others and strafed many more.

Captain Cassady detailed the operations of a carrier task force, which included the *Saratoga*, another smaller Carrier, two cruisers and from four to twelve destroyers. This force raised havoc with Japanese shore installations and shipping from Bougainville to Tarawa, with side-trips toward Truk as a decoy.

The month's action started 1 November, when the task force struck twice at Buka and Banis, on the northwest shore of Bougainville Island. Two more attacks on the 2nd rendered the airfields unserviceable, destroyed 8 to 10 Japanese planes on the ground and silenced anti-aircraft installations.

The next stop on its itinerary was the nbw-famous raid on Rabaul, major Jap naval base on New Britain Island. In the first air attack, on 5 November, the *Saratoga* launched 22 dive bombers, 23 torpedo planes and 54 fighter escorts. To meet this attack the Japs sent up from 75 to 100 Zeros. Instead of "breaking off and getting mixed up in dog-fights," Captain Cassady said, the young fighter pilots stuck to their assignment of escorting the dive bombers and torpedo planes. As a result, our losses were "surprisingly low" while the Rabaul harbor was left a shambles of smoking and wrecked cargo vessels and warships. Captain Cassady praised especially the fine work of enlisted rear-seat gunners in this action.

Six days later several other carriers teamed up with the *Saratoga* to give Rabaul another aerial plastering. From Rabaul the task force steamed toward Nauru Island and gave it a dose of the same medicine by moonlight. In four concentrated attacks two air strips were destroyed.

"We were sent on several guinea-pig runs near Truk," said Captain Cassady, "to try to get the Japs to poke their noses out, but they stayed behind their harbor nets. We went into areas where they normally run air patrols, but I don't know whether we were picked. After raiding the Nauru airfields, to prevent planes from taking off there to interfere with the landing at Tarawa, the *Saratoga* steamed 400 miles to the east and stood guard at Tarawa for a week. Her planes gave fighter support to the Marine landing and engaged in antisub patrols.

Study Finds Dementia Link

A new study has linked post-traumatic stress disorder to dementia later in life. While the findings of the study do not prove that PTSD causes dementia, they did show that combat PTSD is linked to dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The study was conducted by the VA Medical Center in Houston and is published in the September edition of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

VA Publishes Final Regulation on "Presumptive" Illnesses for Gulf War and Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans

WASHINGTON - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register that makes it easier for Veterans to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in Southwest Asia (including Iraq) or Afghanistan.

"This is part of historic changes in how VA considers Gulf War Veterans' illnesses," said Secretary Shinseki. "By setting up scientifically based presumptions of service connection, we give these deserving Veterans a simple way to obtain the medical and compensation benefits they earned in service to our country."

The final regulation establishes new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia beginning on or after the start of the first Gulf War on Aug. 2, 1990, through the conflict in Iraq and on or after Sept. 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

The final regulation reflects a determination of a positive association between service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan and nine diseases and includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with these diseases: Brucellosis, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella Burnetii* (Q fever), Malaria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Nontyphoid *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

With the final rule, a Veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan and that he or she had one of the nine diseases within a certain time after service and has a current disability as a result of that disease, subject to certain time limits for seven of the diseases. Most of these diseases would be diagnosed within one year of return from service, through some conditions may manifest at a later time.

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

The decision to add these presumptives was made after

reviewing the 2006 report of the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (NASIOM), 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. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan Veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are also prevalent in that country.

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.

While the decision to add the nine new presumptives predates VA's Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force (GWVI-TF), the overarching responsibility of the GWVI-TF is to regain Gulf War Veterans' confidence in VA's health care, benefits, and services and reconfirm VA is 100 percent committed to Veterans of all eras. The GWVI-TF began in fall 2009 and is not a static, one-time initiative but will continue to build on its work with annual reports issued every August. The group's focus centers on unanswered Gulf War Veterans' health issues, improving access to benefits, ensuring cutting edge research into treatments, and to make sure Veterans' concerns are heard and addressed. This includes continuing to solicit Veterans, experts, advocates and stakeholders to share their views to better inform the important work of the GWVI-TF. The GWVI-TF Report can be found at www.VA.gov.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable 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.

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.

SMOKING LAMP

Sea dogs who sailed the wooden ships endured hardships that sailors today never suffer. Cramped quarters, poor unpalatable food, bad lighting and boredom were hard facts of sea life. But perhaps a more frustrating problem was getting fire to kindle a cigar or pipe tobacco after a hard day's work. Matches were scarce and unreliable, yet smoking contributed positively to the morale of the crew, so oil lamps were hung in the fo'c'sle and used as matches. Smoking was restricted to certain times of the day by the bos'un's. When it was allowed, the "smoking lamps" were "lighted" and the men relaxed with their tobacco. Fire was and still is the great enemy of ships at sea. The smoking lamp was centrally located for the convenience of all and was the only authorized light aboard. It was a practical way of keeping open flames away from the magazines and other storage areas. In today's Navy the smoking lamps have disappeared but the words "smoking lamp is lighted in all authorized spaces" remains a carryover from our past.

Apprehensive

Prior to a night jump, a sergeant sat down next to a lieutenant fresh from jump school. The lieutenant looked a bit pale so the sergeant struck up a conversation.

"Scared, Lieutenant?" the sergeant asked.

"No, just a bit apprehensive" he replied.

"What's the difference?" the sergeant asked.

The lieutenant replied, "That means I'm scared with a university education."

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Double amputee takes charge of Wounded Warrior Program

by Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- The U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program gained a new director Tuesday -- one who has a lot in common with those he'll be leading.

Lt. Col. Gregory D. Gadson, a West Point graduate, lost both of his legs to a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2007. Despite nearly losing his life, Gadson went on to complete two graduate degrees and recovered with assistance from the Wounded Warrior Program, which he is now responsible for.

The Wounded Warrior Program, nicknamed AW2, is the official Army program that assists and advocates for the most severely wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, veterans, and their families.

"It's all about the Army making good on its promise to never leave a fallen comrade," said Brig. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, commanding general for the Warrior Transition Command, which AW2 falls under.

Gadson replaced AW2 director Col. James S. Rice, who spent three years at the post. Jokingly, Rice handed Gadson his Blackberry smartphone during the handover ceremony.

"I think having been wounded and having grown up in the AW2 program, it's given me a certain lens that not many have had ... I have that patient perspective and hopefully I can communicate those experiences to make the organization better," Gadson said.

Gadson made a splash in national media in 2008 when the New York Giants adopted him as a good-luck charm and source of inspiration, taking them all the way to the Super Bowl.

Gadson, who played football at West Point with Giants wide-receiver coach Mike Sullivan, received a visit from Sullivan during his recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. When asked if there was anything he needed, Gadson asked Sullivan to see the Giants play when they came to Washington. When the Giants came to town, Sullivan took him up on his request and asked

Gadson to say a few words to the team before the game. They won, breaking the Giants out of a losing streak.

Gadson continued to attend Giants games and motivate the players all the way up to the Super Bowl, which Gadson and his family were invited to attend. The Giants called him their inspiration, but Gadson said he was the one who felt honored to be included as part of the Giants' team.

Since then, Gadson has also been recognized for being the first person to receive the latest version of battery-powered "bionic" prosthetic knees, called Power Knees.

Cheek, who had advocated for Gadson to replace Rice in the position, was emotional during the change-of-authority ceremony.

"Wow, what a day for the Army," Cheek said choking back tears, "because the Army Wounded Warrior Program brings home today one of their own. What a great message that sends ... it tells our wounded warriors that 'if it's possible for him, it's possible for me.'"

Gadson said he is honored and humbled to be selected, yet maintains that he plays a small part in a bigger picture.

"This is not about me, this is an opportunity to continue to serve those who have made huge sacrifices for our nation, and we owe that to them," Gadson said. "If I allow myself to think about it, I can become emotional, because I know where I was three years ago, and this certainly wasn't on the horizon at that point for me."

Starboard

The Vikings called the side of their ship its board, and they placed the steering oar, the "star" on the right side of the ship, thus that side became known as the "star board." It's been that way ever since. And, because the oar was in the right side, the ship was tied to the dock at the left side. This was known as the loading side or "larboard". Later, it was decided that "larboard" and "starboard" were too similar, especially when trying to be heard over the roar of a heavy sea, so the phrase became the "side at which you tied up to in port" or the "port" side.

VA officials explain health care reform impact

Many veterans have questions about the new health care reform law. The Veterans Health Administration offers the following information about the law and its impact on VA medical care. Nothing in the new law changes anything about VA health care.

The law contains many complex provisions, including many reforms to the practices of the health insurance industry.

Nothing in the new law changes anything about the Veterans' health care program.

Enrolled Veterans may still rely on VHA for their health care in the same manner as before the enactment of the new law.

Beginning in 2014, everyone will be required to have health care coverage.

The law requires that every individual must have some form of health care coverage. The coverage must meet a minimum standard so that everyone will be able to have a minimum level of care.

Congress wrote into the law a provision that says the Veterans' health care program, administered by VHA, meets the standard for health care coverage. Enrolled veterans do not have to purchase additional coverage.

Because the veterans' health care program meets the standard under the law, veterans enrolled in the VA health care program do not need to obtain additional health care coverage.

Veterans may continue to purchase additional cover-age if they wish, but the law does not require them to do so.

This document addresses only the most pressing questions that have been raised. VHA officials will provide additional information about the new law as it develops.

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Strong Man

Three guys were talking in the local bar. The manager was so sure that its bouncer was the strongest man around that it offered a standing \$1,000 bet that no could beat him. The challenge was that the landlord would squeeze a lemon until all the juice ran out into a beer glass, then hand the lemon to the customer. Anyone who could squeeze even one more drop out of the lemon would win the money.

Over the years many people had tried this, truck drivers, weightlifters, karate masters, and all had failed. Then one day this geeky little fella with heavy black rimmed glasses came into the bar and asked if he could try the challenge. After the laughter had subsided the landlord said that it was only fair that the man be given a chance at the bet, so he picked up a lemon and started squeezing. Once he was done he handed the remains to the little man who promptly squeezed out 4 more drops of juice onto the bar!

Everyone looked on in amazement as the landlord handed over the prize and asked "What do you do for a living that has given you such strength? Are you a lumberjack, weightlifter, what?" "No" the man replied, "I work for the IRS."

(continued from previous page...)

"I know my dad is proud of the things I have accomplished here," Anwar said.

Leaving this country in a better condition than when the U.S. military came here seven years ago was one of many goals set by Anwar and his unit.

"We made sure the Iraqis had everything the needed for the elections," Anwar said. "Things are not perfect here, but this country is on track toward a better future."

Anwar's unit is part of the last combat brigade to leave Iraq.

"Even though we are considered the young Iraqi generation, the men and women who served here and gave the ultimate price did not do it in vain," Anwar said. "We have defended our country and now brought closure to this war in Iraq."

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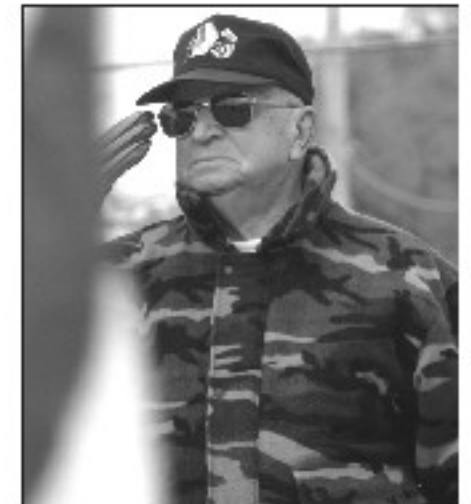
Should I salute or place my hand over my heart?

Public Law 110-181 states that persons present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute.

All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headgear with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.

Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

To clarify, retirees may salute or place their hand over their heart to render respect to the U.S. flag.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Josh Plueger

Soldiers who saw start of war as youth make up 'Iraq generation'

By Spc. Luisito Brooks,

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq (Army News Service) -- As U.S. forces were preparing to cross the Iraqi desert to invade an area controlled by a powerful dictator in March 2003, Mitchell Anwar was busy constructing a special gift for his dad in Mr. Morris' seventh-grade wood shop class in Olympia, Wash.

"I remember when I was 13, and I made a gun rack for my dad at school ... when I came home to give it to him, I saw on the television President Bush telling Saddam we were going to invade Iraq," Anwar said. "I thought it was cool, the U.S. was going to this country to help these people (defeat) such a bad person."

Anwar said he knew then that he wanted to serve his country, and one day he would end up in the same places he saw on his television.

Many younger servicemembers in today's military are a part of what is being called by many Soldiers as the Iraq generation -- a relative term describing young servicemembers who were in their adolescence when U.S. forces invaded Iraq, and now serve in the military and have deployed to Iraq themselves. The latest members of the Iraq generation just completed a two-day convoy from Baghdad to Kuwait, as the journey of the last combat brigade leaving Iraq comes to an end.

"It was interesting growing up during this time of war in the Middle East," Anwar said. "When I was 13 years old, every time the news was on, the headlines read 'Iraq,' 'War' or something like that."

Now, Spc. Anwar is a 20-year-old infantryman with Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and is currently finishing a year deployment in Iraq.

Soldiers of the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team have just completed a yearlong tour supporting U.S. Division-Center area of operations in and around Baghdad, assisting, training and advising the Iraqi

Security Forces.

In March 2003, about 3,000 miles across the country from Olympia -- in Salem, N.Y. -- Spc. Brett Saunders, now an infantryman from the Manchus Battalion, was playing baseball for his local little league team.

"I knew only a little about the invasion at the time," Saunders said. "I really didn't think I would ever join the Army or deploy to Iraq."

Saunders said one day after graduating from high school, he decided the best thing for him to do was to serve his country.

"All I knew when I joined on Sept. 11, 2008, I was going to deploy," Saunders said. "When I got to my unit was when I realized the crucial part we would play during the deployment by providing support for the Iraqi national elections."

For Anwar, this deployment has been an experience he will never forget, not only because of the knowledge gained, but also because of a tragic personal loss.

"I am proud to be called the Iraq generation right now and that's because this was something that my late father wanted me to do," Anwar said. "He was a huge influence in my life."

During his return from mid-tour leave, Anwar received word that his father had passed away due to heart failure.

"I got the news while returning from my mid-tour leave," he said, biting his lip. "I had just seen him."

Anwar said he could not believe what he was hearing from the officer standing in front of him, giving him the tragic news.

Anwar's Family played a major part in his choice to join the Army, but his biggest supporter was his father, Adnan Anwar, who served in the Washington Army National Guard for eight years.

(continued on next page...)


Seven bases received new names in January:

-- Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base became Joint Base Lewis-McChord, led by the Army;
-- The Navy's Anacostia Annex and Bolling Air Force Base here became Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, led by the Navy;
-- Naval Station Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, became Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, led by the Navy;
-- Charleston Air Force Base and Naval Weapons Station Charleston, S.C., became Joint Base Charleston, led by the Air Force;
-- Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, Alaska, became Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, led by the Air Force;
-- Lackland and Randolph Air Force bases and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, became Joint Base San Antonio, led by the Air Force; and
-- Langley Air Force Base and Fort Eustis in Virginia became Joint Base Langley-Eustis, led by the Air Force.

Five others became joint bases in October when:

-- Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek and Fort Story in Virginia became Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, led by the Navy;
-- Fort Myer and the Marine Corps' Henderson Hall in Virginia became Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, led by the Army;
-- Andrews Air Force Base and Naval Air Facility Washington, in Maryland, became Joint Base Andrews, led by the Air Force;
-- McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, all in New Jersey, became Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, led by the Air Force; and
-- Navy Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base in Guam became Joint Region Marianas, led by the Navy.

Although it is not common knowledge, there are actually three sides to the Force: the light side, the dark side, and Chuck Norris.



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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

VA TO REVIEW CASES OF NEARLY 17,000 “BROWN WATER” AND OTHER VIETNAM VETERANS PREVIOUSLY DENIED AGENT ORANGE BENEFITS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following oversight requests from Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii), the Department of Veterans Affairs has agreed to review the cases of nearly 17,000 “Brown Water” and other Vietnam Era veterans who claimed disabilities related to Agent Orange. VA had previously denied a number of claims without properly determining whether veterans served in Vietnam’s inland waterways (“Brown Water”) or otherwise served in locations where veterans may have been exposed to herbicides, such as Agent Orange.

“I commend VA for responding to data showing that many Navy vessels thought to have stayed at sea actually traveled into the inland waters of Vietnam. As a result, veterans who served on these vessels are eligible for the same benefits as Vietnam veterans who served on land. I urge veterans and advocates to visit the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee website to determine if evidence of ships in inland waters or service on the perimeter of Air Force bases in Thailand entitles them or someone they know to health care and benefits,” said Senator Akaka.

Akaka successfully urged VA to reconsider cases in which claims by Vietnam veterans potentially exposed to Agent Orange were denied without obtaining relevant military records, such as deck logs. These claims had been held in abeyance by VA while litigation was pending concerning so-called “Blue Water” veterans and their exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides, and were subsequently denied.

Akaka discovered that many of these veterans actually served in so-called “Brown Water” or inland waters of Vietnam, and should have received the same presumption of service-connection as veterans who had “boots on the ground” in Vietnam. By law, VA presumes that veterans who served in inland waterways were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides. Any of those veterans who suffer from certain diseases, and their survivors, may qualify for monetary benefits and health care.

With this review, certain veterans who were previously considered “Blue Water” veterans will have their claims re-evaluated for evidence of “Brown Water” service, or evidence of service in other locations where VA acknowledges that herbicides may have been used, such as the perimeter of Air Force bases in Thailand.

Mojave Desert War Memorial Lawsuit Update

The Liberty Institute has filed a motion in district court to intervene in the Mojave Desert War Memorial lawsuit on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of California and VFW Post 385. The VFW installed the approximately 7-foot-tall cross in 1934 as a tribute to Soldiers who fought and died in World War I. It had existed there in some form or another until the cross was stolen in May. Photographs of the original memorial and the destruction are available in the press room at www.putthecrossback.com.

When Chuck Norris falls in water, Chuck Norris doesn't get wet. Water gets Chuck Norris.

Pentagon needs special office for suicide prevention, says report

A new report has said that suicide prevention programs currently being used by the military are not working, and that an office for strategy and planning is not being used most efficiently.

To fight the all-time high suicide rates, the Pentagon is being asked to create a new high-level office to manage a centralized system that would provide care and benefits to member of all four branches.

Over 1100 soldiers killed themselves from 2005 to 2009, and numbers are already rising this year. The biggest increases have been in the Army and Marine Corps, whose members are the most widely used in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The task force commends the armed forces for the suicide prevention initiatives it has undertaken and knows of no other employer that has focused as much attention and resources on suicide prevention," said the report by a 14-member panel comprised of military and civilian doctors, social planners and suicide experts.

"However, the task force found that the current vast expansion of suicide prevention initiatives across the services was developed rapidly and separately by each service for immediate execution."

It said that programs "could benefit from re-engineering," as, among other issues, cases overlap or are not treated evenly.

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Plum Duff (from a 1944 news article)

In the more frugal seafaring days, and even more recently during the last war, meatless Thursdays were observed throughout the Navy.

The early seaman referred to such a day as "Banion Day," (a term derived from a caste of Hindu merchants and traders who, by their religion, abstained from eating meat.

Closely associated with 'Banion Day was Plum Duff, a flour and. water pudding with raisins or currants added and usually boiled in a bog. It was served to compensate for the absence of a meat ration for the day. Variations of this mixture still are an item of sea and shore menus, but as a dessert rather than a meat substitute.

Plum Duff, as a name, is supposed to have originated years ago when an' Irish cook found a new recipe for a plum or raisin dough pudding and tried it out on the crew.

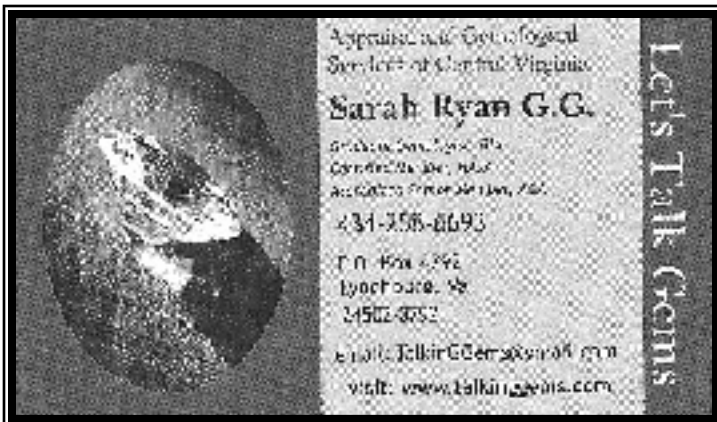
When asked what the dish was, the cook answered, "Duff-here it is in the book."

"But," objected an erudite seaman examining the page, "that's not duff, it's dough "d-o-u-g-h!"

"Well, I'd like to know!" countered the cook rather testily. "If r-o-u-g-h spells ruff, and t-o-u-g-h spells tuff, then d-o-u-g-h spells duff!"

And, in tradition, duff it has remained.

Chuck Norris will never die....He will live on in our hearts and in our Bowflexes.



Navy looking to rid ranks of underperforming sailors

By SANDRA JONTZ, Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy will review the records of some 9,500 senior enlisted sailors starting later this month, the first step in an effort to purge underperforming troops from its ranks and trim the overall force.

On Sept. 20, the Navy will convene its performance-based board for continuation, an 81-member panel that will review the records of active-duty and reserve sailors' with more than 19 years' service.

The board will consider the careers of about 6,000 active-duty chiefs, senior chiefs and master chiefs, and about 3,500 reservists.

According to a Navy message, the board will base its decision on a number of factors, including: documented misconduct resulting in nonjudicial punishment, or civilian offenses; negative evaluations; loss of security clearances; failed leadership courses, and poor fitness performances.

Navy officials said they did not know how many sailors potentially could face discharge.

"We have absolutely no idea yet. There is no quota whatsoever. This is absolutely ... performance-based," said Capt. Leo Falardeau, assistant commander of Navy Personnel Command for career progression.

The board will focus on sailors' performance within the last five years or since advancement to their current grade - from E-7 through E-9 - according to a Navy release issued last month.

Active-duty members whose records are flagged will be permitted to reach the 20-year mark, then will be honorably discharged and receive full retirement benefits. Those in the reserves who have not yet earned enough qualifying years for retirement will be allowed to take action to try to get extra qualifying years of service, such as completing certain training courses, said Master Chief Petty Officer Doug Vance, sponsor of the E7-E9 advancement selection and enlisted continuation boards. This is the second-straight year the board has convened.

Last year, the panel reviewed the records of 5,800 active-duty senior enlisted personnel. Of those, 150 were deemed unfit and not permitted to continue service, Falardeau said.

The Navy board will have three weeks after it convenes to review the records and send its recommendation to the Chief of Naval Personnel. Once approved, the board will notify commanding officers of those senior enlisted personnel not selected to continue service. Commanders then have a week to notify those individuals; and shortly thereafter, a list of E7-E9 sailors permitted to continue service will be published on the Navy's BUPERS (bureau of personnel) command website.

The Army last year reviewed the records of 19,000 senior noncommissioned officers in a similar force-slimming effort. Of those, 45 were asked to retire. But 15 fought it, arguing that they were valuable Army assets despite any previous incidents. A panel of their peers usually agreed: 12 of the 15 were allowed to remain on active duty. The remaining three were forced to retire, however.

Two of the original 45 cases that were flagged were deferred because investigations were still under way.

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Study Links Disease, Agent Orange Exposure

Results of a new study presented recently at the International Thyroid Congress show that Vietnam War-era veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange have three times the prevalence of Graves' disease compared with unexposed veterans. The study also showed that diabetes was two times as common in Agent Orange-exposed veterans accord to Ajay Varanasi, MD, an endocrinology fellow in the department of medicine.

Veteran recalls battle leading to Medal of Honor

By Senior Master Sgt. David Byron
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- In 1968, a battle raged where heroes arose only to be unacknowledged for 18 years. Proper recognition occurred during a White House ceremony Sept. 21 when Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Etchberger was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor after saving three of his men in a battle that failed to make headlines at the time because of its then-highly classified nature.

Retired Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Daniel was one of the Airmen Chief Etchberger saved during the battle at the Lima 85 radar site.

The mission, named Heavy Green, was to provide radar information and assistance to U.S. aircraft bombing military targets in Hanoi, Vietnam, its surrounding areas and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The radar site, located on a hilltop in Laos, was not officially acknowledged until 1986 because Laos was considered a neutral country during the Vietnam War, despite U.S. and North Vietnamese forces often operating there.

Sergeant Daniel said that although the mission was to guide bombers on long-range strikes, as time went on the radar crews were forced to direct an increasing number of bombing runs closer to their own location.

The North Vietnamese army had discovered the site's location and made a concerted push, including building roads to bring in heavy artillery, to launch attacks against the site.

On the evening of March 10, 1968, the radar crew experienced a lull in guiding bomber missions and decided to take a dinner break. Sergeant Daniel had the additional duty as cook for his shift.

"I asked them what they wanted for dinner, and they all said steaks, so we went down to the barbecue pit and fired up the grill," he said. "We hadn't started cooking yet, and [Air Force Lt. Col.] Bill Blanton came up and said, 'Fellows, we need to have a little get-together up in the equipment.'"

Colonel Blanton told the team that the North Vietnamese army had surrounded them and the situation looked dire, Sergeant Daniel said. While calling in evacuation helicopters was a possibility, that option was rapidly disappearing as darkness approached. A flight out the following morning would be more likely.

"We took a straw poll of everybody that was there," Sergeant Daniel said. "We decided to just go ahead and drop bombs all night, and in the morning, detonate all the equipment and get out on choppers at first light."

As it turned out, they did not have as much time as they had thought. During the meeting, the North Vietnamese army began its attack. The first artillery round hit the barbecue shack.

"It was a good thing we were at that meeting and not having dinner," Sergeant Daniel said.

The radar team split into two crews. One team would pull the first shift manning the equipment, the other would return to the sleeping quarters, rest and prepare to relieve the first team. The sleeping quarters and bunker were located next to the barbecue shack.

"I said I wasn't going to stay in quarters or the bunker," Sergeant Daniel said. "They already hit there and had the range down on that. I said we should go down over the side of the hill, where we went to write letters. Nobody would find us down there."

On one side of the hill was a ledge where the Airmen often sat to compose letters or tapes to send home. It was 10 to 15 feet below the top of the hill, with a nearly 3,000-foot straight drop below. The five-man crew decided to take cover there.

The five Airmen started hearing small-arms fire and grenades going off on the hilltop, Sergeant Daniel said. "Shortly thereafter," he added, "someone caught a glimpse of us and started

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emptying their rifles at us."

In the first volley of gunfire, two members of the team were hit, one fatally. The crew returned fire with their M-16s. After the next exchange, two were dead and two others had been wounded. Chief Etchberger was the only one not wounded.

During lulls in the gun battle, the enemy began tossing grenades down on the ledge.

"If I could reach them, I'd pick them up and throw them back on top of the hill," Sergeant Daniel said. "If I couldn't reach them, I'd take the butt of my rifle and kick them off over the edge of the mountain."

When one grenade landed outside both his own reach and the reach of his rifle, Sergeant Daniel said, he rolled the dead body of a comrade over on top of it.

Roughly 15 yards separated Sergeant Daniel and Chief Etchberger. Sergeant Daniel had a radio near him, and as the attack continued, the chief directed him to call in an air strike on the top of the hill. Throughout the night, a succession of aircraft unloaded their ordnance, both bombs and bullets, on the hill.

At daylight, three members of the team still survived on the ledge. An Air America helicopter spotted them and hovered, lowering a sling. Chief Etchberger broke cover, exposing himself to the enemy, and closed the gap between himself and his wounded colleagues.

"[Chief Etchberger] scooted me on over and got me on that sling," Sergeant Daniel said. "After I was up, he got [Capt. Stan Sliz] up on the sling."

After the two survivors were aboard the helicopter, the chief began to secure himself to the sling. Before he could go up, Staff Sgt. Bill Husband, who had been playing dead atop the hill, dashed to the ledge. The chief locked arms with him, and they rode the sling together and boarded the helicopter.

As the helicopter began to climb, a North Vietnamese soldier emptied his weapon into the underside of the

aircraft. Chief Etchberger was mortally wounded and died during the evacuation flight.

"[Chief Etchberger] was one hell of an NCO," Sergeant Daniel said. "He knew the equipment. ... He knew how to handle people. ... He knew what to do and how to do it. You were eager to follow the man, to do what he wanted you to do."

The Heavy Green mission began with volunteers, briefings and sworn statements of secrecy at the Pentagon in 1967. For those involved, the White House Medal of Honor presentation and the Pentagon Hall of Heroes induction ceremony Sept. 22 will provide closure to the mission.

"It's only fitting," Sergeant Daniel said, "that we're back in the Pentagon to finish it up and put an end to it, right where it started, 43 years ago."

Name the Dummy

A young boy enters a barber shop and the barber whispers to his customer, "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you."

The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?"

The boy takes the quarters and leaves.

"What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!"

Later, when the customer leaves, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store.

"Hey, son! May I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?"

The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game is over!"

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Come Join Us! VFW Post 9877 meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Amherst Library.

Editor's One Way Blog

Snakes, alligators, mosquitoes, big hairy spiders, roaches bigger than small alligators, and fire ant mountains galore. Guess where I have returned to? Yep, the Sunshine State of Florida. Next to living in Virginia, it is a wonderful place (except for those big hairy spiders).

We made a decision several months ago to move back to the area where we lived for over 10 years after retiring from the military. This past year has been one of pure hell but we somehow survived a family tragedy at a level beyond imagination. Additionally, I suffering a stroke this Spring and my wife has been ill over the past several months and we found just this week that it may be more serious than was deemed by many doctors seen in the past few months. I ask for your prayers in her long, difficult recovery. Too, we were leaving our daughter and family behind. It is terrible to wave that final goodbye to the grandchildren, never knowing at our stage in life whether we will see them again. It was a major decision to move but I think we all knew a fresh look on life was needed to recover from our year of hell and despite the heartbreak we made the move and we are now settling into the new home alongside many, many critters. As example, I went to a VFW post meeting a few weeks ago and wore a Vietnam Vet hat I'd kept in the closet here. Wore it for about 2 hours before taking it off for the meeting prayer. As it sat on the table, out crawled a scorpion. Ah Florida!

For those of you interested to know if the cheap home prices you've read about truly exist in Florida, believe me they are more than true. It is unbelievable to see what happened to the economy down here. Though not the lowest percentage in Florida, our county has a current 14% unemployment rate. Homes that once sold for \$450,000 are now around \$185,000 but there are many sitting empty and overgrown because nobody is buying.

Living on military retirement kinda makes things tight and we searched long and hard for a new home. Finally, after months of searching we found the home of our dreams and are getting settled into Florida living. I must say we found paradise as long as hurricanes keep turning up the coast.

I will continue bringing you the Tribune as long as you want me to do so. It may not seem like it but you can trust me when I say it is a lot of work. However, I've always believed that no matter how many veterans read it the

effort is more than worth it. I know Post 9877 numbers are shrinking as we old guys start fading away but you can be assured it is being read by people all over the world from our website. Plus, I still print copies at my own expense to hand out to local veterans I meet along he way and I place them in local veterans office waiting rooms for those sitting with so much time on their hands as they deal with the system.

I never, ever, receive a complaint regarding our Tribune. At least from nobody that still survives. Actually, the complements are aplenty and it is why I work so hard in providing you the best material I can from my limited abilities.

There is a young lady up in Washington, D.C. that works for Stars and Stripes as the Personal Assistant to the CEO. As you know I use a lot of information from Stars and Stripes in the Tribune and their staff has been nothing but supportive in my being able to support our veterans and families. I am always expressing my appreciation to her but the impact would be significantly greater to hear it from some of you. I would like you to take the time and send a short thank you card and note to her in appreciation of supporting our veterans. Address it to:

Stars and Stripes Central Office
Attention: Jen Stepp
529 14st, NW, Suite 350
Washington, D.C. 20045

Well, that's about it from down here in sunshine land. But, I could use a few things. Money. Fly swatters. Mosquito spray. Viagra (heck, I could make millions off of it down here in blue hair land).

Anyway, Mother Stewart and I are starting to smile again and I hope the next year is just a wee bit better. Putting together the Tribune for you always makes me smile and I hope we keep smiling together for a long time to come. It can, however, only be accomplished from donations and ads. Please help us by getting involved. God bless each of you and our troops in harms way.

*Your Editor
John Stewart*

State-operated veterans cemeteries to provide outer burial containers at cost

RICHMOND —Legislation passed by the 2010 General Assembly will offer veterans and their families the option to purchase outer burial containers – a concrete enclosure in which a casket is placed – at cost at Virginia 's two state-operated veterans cemeteries. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery is located in Suffolk and the Virginia Veterans Cemetery is located in Amelia. The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery is under construction in Southwest Virginia near Dublin .

House Bill 479, sponsored by Delegate Bill Carrico, will bring services provided by the two existing state-operated veterans cemeteries closer in-line with the services offered by national cemeteries, which provide outer burial containers at no cost. HB 479 was passed unanimously by the General Assembly and was approved by Governor Bob McDonnell on April 11, 2010. A third state-operated cemetery is under construction in Southwest Virginia near Dublin . The construction grant provided by the National Cemetery Administration, a division of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, for construction of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery includes funding for 2,700 preinstalled outer burial containers. When the new cemetery opens in 2011, most veterans and their family members will be provided an outer burial container at no cost. In limited cases, such as when a veteran or family member has an oversized casket, an outer burial container will have to be purchased.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), which operates the veterans cemeteries, has applied for a \$5.8 million grant to retrofit the cemeteries in Suffolk and Amelia with preinstalled outer burial containers; however, it could take two years or more for the grant to be awarded. As an interim measure, HB 479 enables the Commonwealth to provide outer burial containers and placement services to veterans and their families at cost. While an outer burial container is required, it does not have to be purchased from the Commonwealth. Veterans will still have the option to purchase an outer burial container and placement services from their funeral home or other source.

DVS will start providing the outer burial containers on August 30. They will cost \$400.

Service members who were honorably discharged qualify for burial in a Virginia state-operated veterans cemetery. A grave site, opening and closing of the grave for the veteran, placement of a government grave marker, and perpetual care of the site are provided to the veteran at no charge. Veterans' spouses and eligible dependent children may be interred for a small fee, currently \$300.

For more information about the outer burial containers provided by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, visit www.VirginiaforVeterans.com and click Cemeteries.



Chuck Norris owns the greatest poker face of all-time. It helped him win the 1983 world series of poker despite him holding just a joker, a 2 of clubs, a 7 of spades, a green number 4 from Uno, and a monopoly 'get out of jail free' card.

Retired Soldier remembers 9/11 Pentagon attack

By Matthew Hickman (OCA, ARNews)

WASHINGTON -- "It suddenly dawned on me that I had been at the point of impact only minutes before the plane hit the building," said Walter Wood. "I was in shock, bitter with anger that someone had attacked and killed my friends."

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Wood was working for the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel when terrorists flew American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon killing 125 employees on Sept. 11, 2001.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about it," he said.

Wood was watching television coverage of the attacks on the World Trade Center with colleagues, thinking this is what Americans must have felt during Pearl Harbor. Minutes later there was a large explosion.

"We felt the building move, and at that point and time we knew that we had been hit," he said.

Wood and his coworkers evacuated the Pentagon. He tried calling his family, but couldn't get through. He looked up and saw Air Force jets responding to the attack. A Pentagon police officer told Wood to move away from the area because another plane was headed for the building.

It was only later that Wood realized what had actually happened, however, and how close he was to being in the jetliner's path of destruction. Wood had been talking with friends in the Pentagon corridor that was destroyed. Five minutes after he left that corridor, everybody he just talked with was gone forever.

He would never again see Sgt. Maj. Larry Strickland, the senior enlisted advisor to the DCSPER, who was cleaning out his desk, preparing for retirement; or Spc. Chin Sun Pak, who had recently started her stint at the Pentagon; or Max Bielke, a retired master sergeant who had the distinction of being the last official combat Soldier to leave Vietnam.

"Twenty-six coworkers perished that day," Wood said.

Three months later Wood retired from the Army, but the healing process started before then. Immediately after 9/11 the Army provided therapeutic teams to identify stress and

depression in employees.

"It was a great effort upon the part of medical command to be able to give us those types of services because it did help us heal," Wood said. "There were people that you could go and talk to at any time. You were encouraged to seek them out, and you were encouraged to speak to them about what you were feeling."

Leadership and resolve from Teri Maude also helped Soldiers and Army civilians stay focused. Maude lost her husband, Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Maude, DCSPER, in the 9/11 attacks, but gathered the strength to talk with displaced Pentagon employees about their duty and thank them for their support.

"I could only imagine the enormous amount of will that it took for her to do this," Wood said.

The healing process continued for Wood after his retirement. He was part of a team that built 125 shadow boxes that would hold American flags, flown over the Pentagon, to be delivered to families. And one year after he left active-duty service, he returned to the Pentagon as a civilian to work in the same area that was devastated on 9/11.

"My wife asked me why I would go back in," Wood said. "The reason I had done it was because if I was so scared as to not go back into that part of the building, then whoever had mounted the terror attacks on the Pentagon would have won."

President Barack Obama is scheduled to speak at the Pentagon Memorial Sept. 11. He will be speaking to the families that lost loved ones during the attack on the Pentagon nine years ago. Wood will be spending the anniversary with his friends and family, thinking about the sacrifices of those that have pledged to defend America.

"9/11 means thinking of those that went before me, for the veterans that have fought in the Global War on Terrorism since that day," Wood said. "It means not giving up, it means being there for Soldiers and families, and everybody that is associated with our efforts as an Army."

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environments can be absolutely critical."

The types of environments he cited warranting particular emphasis in terms of research are resilient cyber domains, operations in GPS-denied environments and electromagnetic spectrum warfare.

The first volume of the Technology Horizons report has been cleared for public release.

"This is meant to have an enduring value to the Air Force," Dr. Dahm said in closing. "This report has, I believe, a balanced, very credible science and technology vision for the Air Force. It is not just about a bunch of technologies that can be opportunities. It goes much, much further to map out those opportunities to the strategic and fiscal environment we will face."

How to Request Military Service Records or Prove Military Service

Military personnel records can be used for proving military service, or as a valuable tool in genealogical research. Most veterans and their next-of-kin can obtain free copies of their DD Form 214 (Report of Separation) and other military and medical records.

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Service number
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Dates of service
Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If you suspect your records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, also include:

Place of discharge
Last unit of assignment
Place of entry into the service, if known.
All requests must be signed and dated by the

veteran or next-of-kin.

If you are the next of kin of a deceased veteran, you must provide proof of death of the veteran such as a copy of death certificate, letter from funeral home, or published obituary.

If there is an emergency or deadline associated with your request, please explain this in the "Comments" section of eVetRecs or in the "Purpose" section of the SF-180 so that we fully understand the situation and we will do our best to meet your priority.

If your request involves a burial in a National Cemetery operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the cemetery staff will work directly with us to obtain the required records for the service. If your request involves funeral services provided by a non-VA/private provider, the next of kin may fax the request (including signature of the next of kin) to us at 314 801-0764. If your request involves the burial of a Marine Corps veteran, you may contact the USMC Liaison Officer at 314 538-3155.

You can mail or fax your **signed** and **dated** request to the National Archives's National Personnel Record Center (NPRC). Most, but not all records, are stored at the NPRC.

NPRC Mailing Address:

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
Tel **314-801-0800**

Military personnel and health record information is usually **free** for veterans, next-of-kin, and authorized representatives. If your request involves a service fee, you will be notified as soon as possible.

The knights facing each other at King Arthur's table disagreed a lot, because they were diametrically opposed.

Chief scientist describes future technology

by Daryl Mayer
88th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio -- "Humans today are still more capable than machines, but by 2030 that is absolutely not going to be the case anymore," said Dr. Werner Dahm, the Air Force Chief Scientist, in describing one of the conclusions he reached during the Air Force's first in-depth look at future technology in more than a decade.

The man charged with providing independent, objective scientific advice to Air Force leadership was at the Air Force Association Technology Symposium Aug. 26 to make a presentation titled 'Technology Horizons: A Vision for Air Force Science & Technology During 2010-2030.'

The report gives an informed analysis of how the world of science and technology will develop during the next 20 years and identifies candidate technologies that offer the greatest potential return for limited investment dollars.

"I would argue that the Air Force, perhaps more than any other service, is absolutely critically dependant on science and technology and, as a consequence, the broad set of debates that occur to help us make the best investment choices and the best programming decisions to advance those technologies is also absolutely critical," Dr. Dahm said.

More than a year in the making, this report follows in the legacy of Dr. Theodore Von Karman's 1945 report to Gen. Hap Arnold, 'Toward New Horizons: Science, the Key to Air Supremacy,' that laid the foundation for the post-World War II Air Force. It has been 15 years since the Air Force last made a concerted effort to chart the future of science and technology.

One of the initial challenges, Dr. Dahm said, was that to field a desired capability in 2030, the programming and acquisition processes must start years earlier. The report identifies new technologies that could be developed during the first 10 year step, and then from those technologies, asks what new capabilities could be fielded in the second 10 year step.

"Out of that set of possible capabilities, we have to hold those up against the likely strategic environment the Air Force is going to be facing in 2030, as well as the fiscal constraints the Air Force is going to be operating under," Dr. Dahm said.

Choosing from that list of possible capabilities and

targeting technology investment dollars is the true challenge.

"The effort here is to take a visionary, but credible, approach to identifying those science and technology areas that are disproportionately valuable," Dr. Dahm said. "If those 30 (potential capability areas) actually span a broad enough set across the service core functions, then we could be fairly sure that the technology areas that underlay those 30 (potential capability areas) are good candidates for investment."

From this process, Dr. Dahm briefly covered three of the report's major findings.

The first, he cited, is a greater use of highly adaptable, autonomous systems to achieve both improved capability and the benefit of reducing manpower costs.

"We are not talking about simply more or better remotely piloted aircraft, although that is certainly part of it, but we are talking autonomy writ large," he said.

However, the influx of autonomy will bring along the challenge of proving that autonomous systems are not only effective in the lab but will perform the way they should under every imaginable scenario.

The second finding Dr. Dahm presented spoke to the rapid evolution of technology to a state beyond natural human capacities.

"In our lifetimes, we are going to cross through that point where the human will increasingly become the weakest link, and so we will move to having the human be augmented in some ways with technology," he said.

It is not just a matter of building better interfaces between humans and machines, he said. In fact by 2030, man and machine will be coupled in such a way where it is difficult to tell where one starts and the other ends.

Lastly, Dr. Dahm stated the Air Force must focus a greater fraction of science and technology investments on research to support increased freedom of operations in contested environments.

"Today, we generally operate in permissive environments, but that will not be the case in 2030," he said. "Technologies that can support the Air Force's ability to operate in those kinds of contested

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The Cork

Two terrorists are in a locker room taking a shower after their bomb making class, when one notices the other has a huge cork stuck in his butt "If you do not mind me saying," said the second, "that cork looks very uncomfortable. why do you not take it out?"

"I regret I cannot", lamented the first terrorist. "It is permanently tucked in my butt."

"I do not understand," said the other.

The first terrorist says, "I was walking along the beach and I tripped over an oil lamp. There was a puff of smoke, and then a huge old man in an American flag attire with a white beard and top hat came boiling out. He said, "I am Uncle Sam, the Genie. I can grant you one wish."

I said, "No sh**?"

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Quotes of the Month February 1944

Rear Admiral W. H. P. Bland,
USN:

"Even our merchant ships today are much better armed than some of our fighting ships in the last war."

Assistant Secretary of the Navy
Ralph Bard:

"Our carrier planes off Wake Island brushed off with ease an attack by Jap land-based planes with no interruption of our own bombing. The theory of armchair strategists that no carrier force can withstand landbased air attack should be reconsidered."

General H. H. Arnold:

"The war is built around the gasoline engine and it is our production which is giving us superiority. It will not be long before every city and town in Germany will be hit from the air."

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Face of Defense: Guardsman Beats Odds to Serve

By Army Sgt. Matthew Nedved
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan- Army Spc. John Hanson, who has a form of cerebral palsy, spent 11 years fighting to join the military. He never gave up and now he is a soldier serving in Afghanistan.

Hanson still faces the everyday challenges of cerebral palsy – a condition that can affect brain and nervous system functions such as movement, learning, hearing, seeing and thinking. As a member of the Sioux Falls, S.D.,-based 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, Hanson's condition doesn't restrict his ability to perform and support the mission of his unit in Afghanistan.

"When people saw me, they saw something that was not normal and they figured that I was exactly that," said Hanson, of Sioux Falls. "Instead of finding out what I could do, they assumed I couldn't do anything – until I proved them wrong."

As a member of the 196th, Hanson serves as the office manager for the directorate of resource management on Camp Phoenix, which provides construction, commodity and service contract management and funding oversight for 11 military bases in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul.

"I am so impressed by John's determination and dedication to serve," said Brig. Gen. Theodore Johnson, the 196th's commander. "He plays an important role in the resource management directorate and it's an honor having him on the 196th's team."

However, Hanson's journey to being able to serve in Afghanistan was not an easy task. During his first attempt to join the National Guard in 1995, he was denied eligibility by a physician at the Military Entrance Processing Station.

Hanson is affected by a specific type of cerebral palsy known as spastic diplegia, a form that impacts the lower extremities with little to no effect to the upper body. Hanson knew it would be difficult to join the military with the physical limitations his condition caused to his legs and feet. However, he was determined to join, and

continue the long line of military service within his family.

"I wanted to feel a part of something that is not only a great organization, but also part of my family," Hanson said. "My father was in the National Guard, my uncle was in the Air Force, one grandfather was a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, and another served as a Marine. Call it not only a sense of duty and honor, but a way to live up to the example set by the people who surrounded me."

After being denied by the military doctor, Hanson persisted, and worked with several civilian physicians to improve his mobility and become medically eligible – enduring surgeries and physical therapy – never giving up on his dream.

"After every time I went to MEPS, and I was stopped, I worked at that one roadblock until I found a way to push over it and pass it," said Hanson. "It took lots of support from family, friends and co-workers. They all knew it was a dream of mine to wear the uniform of the U.S. Army and I was going to do whatever it takes."

Hanson said his determination to serve also was influenced by veterans in his home community.

"The [American] Legion hall in my small hometown of Badger, S.D., is named after my great-uncle that was lost at sea after the Dec. 7, 1941, attacks," he said. "Along with that, I grew up surrounded by the World War II veterans in town; the stories and the camaraderie was another big driving force to be a part of the military."

Finally, in 2006, Hanson was able to join the ranks of the South Dakota Army National Guard by working with his two civilian physicians and the MEPS doctor. Hanson's doctors were able to prove he was medically fit for duty, and eventually, the initial medical disqualification was overturned.

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"It's about trusting the man to your left and right, and knowing that he will do the right thing and watch your back," he said. "That's what I was doing for him [Gould] and he did the same for me. I wouldn't be here today if not for him."

Gould said it was the closeness his team shared that enabled them to risk their lives for each other.

"When you have the camaraderie that we have, the actions become instantaneous," Gould said. "The cohesion that is built within the team is key."

It is that camaraderie and familiarity within the team that allows its members to perform such acts of heroism. Whether it was Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Clouse running into the kill zone of an ambush, while he himself was wounded, to provide medical aid to a wounded teammate; or Sgt. 1st Class David Nunez remaining in a vehicle engulfed in flames in order to discard explosives and ammunition, to prevent secondary explosions and ensure others were not hurt or killed.

"Where on earth do we get men like these?" Kraft said. "They're here among us today. How fortunate, proud and humbled we are to be in the true company of heroes. We know full well the tremendous cost that comes with that kind of devotion, and we will never forget the sacrifice."

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Agent Orange Registry Statistics: As of March 2010

The Agent Orange Registry began in mid-1978 to respond to the health-related concerns of Vietnam Veterans. The examinations are available free of charge to all eligible Veterans. If you would like to schedule a registry exam, contact an Environmental Health (EH) Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center. A listing of EH Coordinators is available online at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/eh_coordinators.asp.

Initial Examinations-----502,056
Follow-up Examinations----- 57,353
Total (Initial & Follow-up) -----559,409


For more information about the Agent Orange Registry, go to www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/registry.asp.

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7th Special Forces Group Soldiers receive Silver Stars for battlefield valor in Afghanistan

By Sgt. Tony Hawkins, USASOC PAO

FORT BRAGG, N.C. (USASOC News Service, Aug. 17, 2010) -- Thunderous applause filled the John F. Kennedy Auditorium here as seven Soldiers, decorated with the nation's third highest honor, took the stage at the conclusion of a 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) valor award ceremony Aug. 16.

The Soldiers were each awarded the Silver Star for heroic acts of valor displayed during the group's deployment to Afghanistan from 2007-2008. One of the medals was posthumously awarded to Sgt. 1st Class David Nunez, which was presented to his brother, Spc. Rene Nunez of the 82nd Airborne Division.

"[These men] laid it all on the line and risked absolutely everything they care about in life for the sake of the mission at hand, and their partner and Afghan forces teammates on their left and right," said Col. James Kraft, 7th SFG (A) commander. "Ladies and gentlemen, that's true honor."

Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland, commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, was the host of the ceremony. He spoke of the pride and honor he felt in leading the men and women of Army Special Operations.

"Every day in Iraq, Afghanistan and in other countries around the world, American Special Operations Soldiers routinely and consistently exhibit enormously powerful acts of valor and courage on the field of battle," Mulholland said.

As each of the seven Soldiers took the stage to be presented with a medal, vignettes were read about the astonishing actions they took to stop the enemy and protect their comrades.

"When confronted with danger in the fog and friction of close combat, without hesitation you went to the sound of the guns," Kraft said. "You took care of business first rather than taking care of yourself. Each

of these Soldiers has a story to tell, but quite frankly, they're too modest to tell it."

Kraft spoke of the uncommon valor the men exhibited in the heat of battle, though he said words alone could not do them justice.

"Though, mere words cannot adequately express and describe one's willingness, one's decision to charge a numerically superior enemy force," he said, "or to maneuver into the jaws of a sophisticated enemy ambush to recover his Afghan brothers. To continue forward at all cost when hit by enemy fire, or to continue to engage the enemy and protect the lives of his teammates, even when engulfed in flames."

However, if you were to ask one of these Soldiers if they had done anything special, the typical response would be, "I was just doing my job."

"I didn't really think about doing it, I just did it," said Staff Sgt. Mario A. Pinilla, a Special Forces communication sergeant with 1st Battalion, 7th SFG (A), referring to his actions on Aug. 20, 2008. "If I had to do it again, I definitely would."

While conducting a combat reconnaissance patrol in the Khaz Oruzgan district of Afghanistan, his team, ODA 7134, was ambushed by anti-Afghan forces. During the ensuing firefight, Pinilla sprinted 75 meters across open terrain into incoming enemy fire to a wounded teammate, Staff Sgt. Daniel Gould, a SF engineer sergeant, who was pinned down. When Pinilla reached his teammate, he dove in front of him, providing his own body as cover for his wounded comrade as he proceeded to suppress the enemy ambush line.

After 10 minutes of returning fire, Pinilla suffered two gunshot wounds and was critically wounded. His teammates fought to return him to safety, all the while Pinilla continued to return fire with his 9-mm Beretta handgun. Due to the severity of his wounds, he was evacuated from the battlefield and eventually to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he began a slow recovery process.

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"I can not speculate how [my doctors] came to their reasoning. I think the fact that they have known me and have been a witness of the progress and achievements I have made my entire life might have had something to do with it," Hanson said.

"Let's just say the feeling I had when I graduated from South Dakota State University after four years was nothing compared to the feeling the day I went to MEPS and took my oath of enlistment," he added.

Along with serving in the National Guard, Hanson also works back home in Sioux Falls as a firefighter, paramedic and a rescue scuba diver.

"Specialist Hanson is always upbeat and ready to do whatever needs to be done," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul Carroll, a member of the 196th. "When working with others

he knows how to keep things fun and yet still get our job done to the highest standard."

"I think the only issues I really had [with people,] was them 'judging a book by its cover,'" Hanson said. "I'm just glad to show them that no matter what, if you put your mind to it and work at it, any dream can come true."



Army Spc. John Hanson fires a P8 pistol at Camp Alamo, Afghanistan, while competing in the German military's schutzenschnur, or shooting competition, July 30, 2010. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder

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Something to ponder.....

Alcohol doesn't make you fat...

It makes you lean...

On tables, chairs and random ugly people.

What is the favorite game on Navy ships?

Seaman Says.

Sgt. Maj. Bradley A. Kasal

From Marines Magazine (edited for brevity)

On Nov. 13, 2004, while serving as the company first sergeant for Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Kasal accompanied members of 1st Section, Combined Anti-Armor Platoon, during the Battle of Fallujah. Kasal and another Marine came under heavy rifle fire and were both severely wounded in the legs, immobilizing them. When insurgents threw grenades in an attempt to eliminate the wounded Marines, he rolled on top of his fellow Marine and absorbed the shrapnel with his own body. Kasal then refused medical attention and evacuation until the other Marines were attended to. Although his wounds were severe, Kasal continued to direct Marines and shout encouragement until the building was clear. On May 1, 2006, Kasal was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on that fateful day.

Marines magazine: Why did you decide to join the Marine Corps?

SGT. MAJ. KASAL: I came from a military family. However, they all served in the Army. I wanted to serve in order to make a difference and be a part of the solution. I chose the Marine Corps because I wanted the best and because of its reputation as the "first to fight." It's a brotherhood.

In 2004, you participated in the Battle of Fallujah and a photo of you during that operation has graced walls Corpwide. How does it feel to know your actions and that image of you continues to inspire this generation of Marines?

Honestly, I love motivating and inspiring Marines. That's what leaders do. However, I don't like to be revered or looked at as a hero. I was a Marine amongst many heroes.

What has been the most challenging aspect of recovering from the injuries you received in November 2004?

There's been many. But, the greatest was what I call the fear of the unknown. For a long time it was suggested to amputate my right leg. However, out of stubbornness I said "No, I'm keeping it." But the fear of the unknown was that I had medical professionals telling me to amputate, that I'd never walk again otherwise. I never knew if my battle to keep it would work out in the end, or if the doctors would end up being correct. That's a

tremendous emotional burden to carry for over a year.

Was there anything you had to tell yourself to help you walk into the "House of Hell"?

Yes, there were three Marines down and wounded and they needed help. Pretty simple.

What compels you to continue serving?

Marines. Gotta love Marines. Where else can you get paid to be around such great Americans?

What do you enjoy most about leading Marines?

Making a difference. To see that young Marine who you just helped become better. How could you not want to teach somebody something new every day and watch them grow?

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned that you feel is important for young Marines to know?

Be proud of who you are and what you represent. America expects more from her Marines as warriors on the battlefield and as ladies and gentlemen off of it. It's a privilege and an honor to serve beside your fellow Marines and never take that for granted as someday in the blink of an eye it could be over.

You have been hailed a modern day hero, who do you emulate?

Simple, the Marines I've served with. I'm a sergeant major today because of the men I've served with – the leaders who groomed me and gave me opportunities, and the young Marines who made me look good every day. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am.



Family member cites father's recovery at ceremony

By Elaine Wilson
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- A small crowd gathered in the shadow of the Pentagon Sept. 17 to honor the nation's missing servicemembers and to reaffirm America's commitment to bringing them home.

Seated among the servicemembers, dressed in colorful dress uniforms, was a group of family members who had traveled here to attend the National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony. Some wore hats bearing the names of their POW/MIA organizations, and others proudly displayed the names of their missing loved ones on white badges.

Colleen Shine's black dress stood out in the sea of color, but her attitude was anything but mournful. She brought a message of hope to the ceremony.

Ms. Shine was 8 years old when she was told her dad, an Air Force pilot, was gone. Lt. Col. Anthony Shine was flying an A-7D reconnaissance jet over the border of Laos and Vietnam on Dec. 2, 1972, when he vanished, she later found out. He was just two months into his second tour in Vietnam.

Her mother, Bonnie, was left with three children and countless unanswered questions. Over time, three generations of the Shine family came together to bring light to the POW/MIA issue.

"I remember being a kid on the playground handing out POW/MIA flyers," Ms. Shine recalled.

The family lived with the uncertainty of Anthony Shine's fate for 14 years. Finally, in 1987, Ms. Shine was told of a crash site that was possibly linked to her father, and a helmet that may have belonged to him.

Ms. Shine said she made three trips to Vietnam to find answers. Villagers had scavenged the site, and

remains had either been washed away or eaten by animals, she said. But she was able to find pieces of an aircraft and, in a nearby village, a helmet bearing her father's name.

Her efforts prompted government experts to conduct a more extensive investigation, and in 1996, Ms. Shine finally got the answers she'd been wanting for more than two decades. Remains matching her father's DNA had been found.

His burial at Arlington National Cemetery, 24 years after he'd gone missing, brought much-needed closure to the Shine family. And his recovery demonstrated to all families of missing servicemembers that "answers are possible," she said.

Over the years, the technology to locate and recover missing troops has advanced greatly in scope and sophistication, and 600 people now labor to achieve a full accounting of every missing servicemember.

At the ceremony, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates noted that in the past year, Defense Department teams have accounted for 66 formerly missing Americans, including 15 from the Vietnam War, 16 from the Korean War, 34 from World War II and one from World War I.

The nation's ongoing commitment to this issue is due, in part, to family members and other citizens banding together to establish advocacy groups, Secretary Gates said. "They help ensure that the U.S. government does everything it can to find MIAs and help POWs during their captivity," he added.

Ms. Shine joined the National League of POW/MIA Families years ago to ensure the issue stays prominently in the public eye. The organization works toward a full accounting of the more than 1,700 Americans still listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

"I feel proud to be a part of this organization," she said. "My commitment and my family's commitment to this issue will be lifelong. And I'm proud to promote days like today so our servicemembers know we have their back when they go to war."

You know you've been in Iraq too long when ...

Every woman that reports to your unit starts looking attractive.

Every guy that reports to your unit starts looking attractive.

When you start humming with the Arabic song playing on the radio on the shuttle bus.

The contractors have more fire power than the Military combat units. (This is true.)

You take the time to add your lines to this list.

You walk an extra 6 blocks to eat at the KBF (contractor run) dining facility to have the exact same food they are serving in your dining facility because you think it tastes better.

When mortars land near your compound and you roll over in bed and think, "Still way off, I got another 5 minutes."

Driving around in SUV's with weapons pointed out the windows and forcing cars off the road seems very normal to you.

You can put your body armor and helmet on in the dark in under 5 seconds.

When you can actually talk to people in the United States on a cell phone, yet you can't get people on their cell phone a block away.

When you actually get excited to get a package that contains 3 pair of socks, 12 bars of soap, and a Victoria's Secret Catalog.

You're in the Army and you start saying Oorah.

You're in the Marines and you start saying Hooah.

One, two, three...

On his 74th birthday, a man got a gift certificate from his wife. The certificate paid for a visit to a medicine man living on a nearby reservation who was rumored to have a wonderful cure for erectile dysfunction.

After being persuaded, he drove to the reservation, handed his ticket to the medicine man. The medicine man slowly, methodically, produced a potion, handed it to him, and with a grip on his shoulder, warned, "This is powerful medicine. It must be respected. You take only teaspoonful, and then say '1-2-3.' When you do that, you will become more manly than you have ever been in your life, and you can perform as long as you want."

The old man was encouraged. As he walked away, he turned and asked, "How do I stop the medicine from working?"

"Your partner must say '1-2-3-4,'" he responded, "but when she does, the medicine will not work again until next full moon."

The old man was very eager to see if it worked so he went home, showered, shaved, took a spoonful of the medicine, and then invited his wife to join him in the bedroom. When she came in, he took off his clothes and said, "1-2-3!"

Immediately, he was the manliest of men.

His wife was excited and began throwing off her clothes, and then she asked, "What was the 1-2-3 for?"

And that, boys and girls, is why we should never end our sentences with a preposition, because we could end up with a dangling participle.

Joan Virginia Lingerfelt
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A Fine. Fun Dining Experience

Female drill sergeants walk same path to respect

By Vince Little, The Bayonet

FORT BENNING, Ga. -- Sgt. 1st Class Malease Cross is nearing 20 years in the military and the mother of three teenage daughters. Staff Sgt. Mary Nelson has deployed twice to Iraq, while Staff Sgt. Maria Nanita, who's been to Afghanistan, felt her Army career was in a rut.

The three women are Reservists from Birmingham, Ala., assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry Regiment - a basic combat training unit for the 192nd Infantry Brigade. They're also the only female drill sergeants on Sand Hill.

Company leaders said they go on the same runs and rucksack marches as the men. The 3 a.m. wakeups and 18-hour workdays are no different, either. And after arriving on Fort Benning this past spring with the rest of the battalion, they earned the respect of peers and Soldiers alike.

"They hold their own, same as the male drill sergeants," said 1st Sgt. Ricardo Polk, B Company's first sergeant. "They're very professional dealing with the privates, well-versed in what they do. They continue to impress me all the time."

Among the trio, Nelson - a member of the Army for eight years, including seven on active duty - has been a drill sergeant the longest, finishing the school at Fort Jackson, S.C., in June 2009. Cross and Nanita first put on their hats in February.

Being a woman in such a male-dominated profession has the occasional challenge, they said. However, there's no distinction when it comes to interaction with trainees, all of whom are male.

"In the transition from civilian to military, the respect factor is there," Nanita said. "It's a shock for them whether it's a male drill or a female drill. You have to establish it early: 'I'm the drill sergeant, you're the private. I'm not your mom, girlfriend or wife.'"

"You may have one who might disrespect you when they first show up, but you've got to nip it in the bud ... You definitely have to let them know, 'I'm here to teach something you don't know, and while you're here, you will

respect me.' And it goes both ways."

Parameters are set up during in-processing to avoid awkward situations, too. For instance, the women aren't allowed in company bays during shower or personal time, and the male Soldiers can't walk around in just a towel if the female drill sergeants are in the living areas.

"We let them know the do's and don'ts right away," Cross said.

While the unit's internal dynamics are the same, Nelson said some active-duty drill sergeants across Sand Hill seemed a little skeptical at first about working with female counterparts.

"But we're not your average female group, so I think we all mesh well together," she said.

In basic training, Soldiers are divided into four categories for morning PT. Cross runs with the A group.

"I'm always pushing myself to be better," she said. "As a female, you have to push yourself a little farther - on ruck marches, runs and physical activities - so the privates will say, 'If she can do it, I can, too.'"

Cross, a senior drill sergeant who spent a dozen years on active duty, said she joined the Army Reserve to spend more time with her family. After being promoted to sergeant first class, she was offered the position of drill sergeant.

"I've always loved training Soldiers," she said. "This is just another form of training and leading Soldiers - in a different capacity ... It's all about mentorship, guiding and being a role model."

Nanita said she'd been in the Army Reserve about six years but thought her military career needed a boost. A former sergeant major urged her to become a drill sergeant.

She and Nelson both have a child at home, and

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they said the job has many similarities to parenthood.

"It's a very rewarding job and can be very demanding," Nanita said. "You're a caretaker; we make sure the Soldiers are OK. We're with them from the time they wake up till they go to sleep at night, and everything in between."

"The only differences: With a child, you're teaching them how to survive in the real world; here, we teach them how to survive in combat."

Polk conceded he was among the skeptics upon learning there'd be women serving under him as drill sergeants - but they erased his reservations almost immediately, he said.

"They took charge and moved on," Polk said. "They've been a real asset to my unit. It makes me proud to know we're the only unit at Fort Benning with female drill sergeants, and they're just as strong as my male drill sergeants."

Study Links Disease, Agent Orange Exposure

Results of a new study presented recently at the International Thyroid Congress show that Vietnam War-era veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange have three times the prevalence of Graves' disease compared with unexposed veterans. The study also showed that diabetes was two times as common in Agent Orange-exposed veterans. Ajay Varanasi, MD, an endocrinology fellow in the department of medicine at the University of Buffalo, and other researchers participated in the study.

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Smart Kid

Three kids come down to the kitchen and sit around the breakfast table. The mother asks the oldest boy what he'd like to eat.

"I'll have some damn French toast," he says.

The mother is outraged at his language and sends him upstairs. She asks the middle child what he wants.

"Well, I guess that leaves more damn French toast for me," he says.

She is livid, and sends him away.

Finally she asks the youngest son what he wants for breakfast.

"I don't know," he says meekly, "but I definitely don't want the damn French toast."

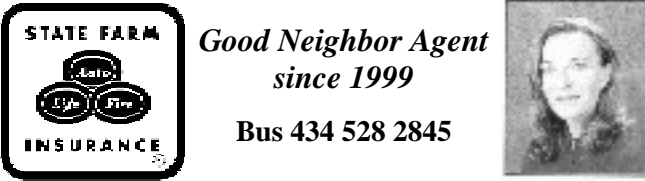
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Gunnery Sgt. Nick Popaditch From Marines Magazine (edited for brevity)

When the Marines arrived to Firdos Square in Baghdad to pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi people came out to cheer and celebrate. Among those who were all smiles was Gunnery Sgt. Nick Popaditch, a tank commander who was serving with 1st Tank Battalion. Just before the statue was yanked down, an Associated Press photo, entitled "Cigar Marine," captured the success of the Marines and gratitude of a nation.

One year later, Popaditch was at it again, only this time in the notorious insurgent infested city of Fallujah, Iraq. On April 7, 2004, a hissing rocket propelled grenade was fired at the tank he was riding in while he was manning the machine gun atop. The RPG struck the hatch his upper body was peering out of and exploded next to his head. His helmet blew off and he dropped inside the turret. Popaditch's Marines drove him back to safety. The explosion caused Popaditch to lose his right eye, and deterred his hearing.

Popaditch received the Purple Heart and was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during his deployment.

Marines magazine: What are you all about today?

Gunnery Sgt. Nick Popaditch: Once a Marine, always a Marine. I live by the same exact value system as I did when I was in the Marines. I use these values every day.

What was happening when the "Cigar Marine" photo was taken?

We had just arrived to Baghdad and the Iraqis started to celebrate. I mean, people were literally in the streets celebrating with smiles on their faces - they were happy to see us. I think it was a key moment because it signified an alliance, us and them, to get rid of their dictator. My (commanding officer) came over to my tank to use my (field) radio. He handed me the cigar he was smoking while he spoke on the radio. I began to smoke the cigar and enjoy the view of the celebrating people. That's when the photo was shot. It was an

indeed a genuinely good moment.

Not many people can get struck in the head by a rocket propelled grenade and live to tell the story. Do you feel blessed or lucky being able to walk away from the attack?

I feel both blessed and lucky. I was surrounded by a lot of good Marines, and they kept me alive. I have them and my body armor to thank.

What has motivated you to continue to succeed and prosper when faced with limited vision?

Like I said; 'once a Marine, always a Marine.' The Marine Corps has always taught me to overcome adversity. As soon as we step on those yellow footprints, we're thrown in an environment where we must overcome many adversities. I've been put against many challenges before and I have come out successful because of what the Marine Corps has trained me to do. When I was wounded, I maintained that ethos, because I know that's the only way I can get through the challenges that I faced afterward.



Air Force villages offer assistance, care

By Jan Schubert, Air Force Villages

Madelyn walks every morning in the Texas sunshine, serenaded by songbirds – a ritual that precedes a healthy breakfast with old friends. Bonnie awakens each morning to warmth and a glass of fresh orange juice – the perks of living in Florida.

These women share a common bond, although they've never met. They are both widows of retired Air-men. Both have suffered extreme financial stresses. Madelyn's husband, a retired Air Force major, died at home after a lengthy and costly illness that devastated their savings and forced Madelyn to sell her home to pay medical bills. Bonnie's husband, a retired AF sergeant, died in his 40s, leaving his wife to raise three children by herself on a small fixed income.

Today, Madelyn and Bonnie are over 80 – too old to work and unable to afford a retirement home. Frequent military moves left them with-out careers, home equities, retirement plans or any significant assets. Madelyn and Bonnie could have fallen through the cracks of elder poverty.

Fortunately for Madelyn, Bonnie and thousands of other Air Force widows over the years, they are able to live in comfort and security, surrounded by a network of friends and caring staff in retirement communities that are supported by their Air Force family. They are living out an Air Force motto: Taking Care of Our Own.

Madelyn lives at Air Force Village in San Antonio

which provides a comfortable and secure home to retired Air Force officer widows in need of financial assistance. AFV was the dream of the Air Force officers' wives' clubs and was brought to fruition by Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay and his wife, Helen. The first contribution of \$9 grew to more than \$1 million, launching the dream to reality.

Since opening in 1970, AFV has provided financial assistance to more than 500 widows who have outlived their resources. More than 1,200 retired military commissioned and warrant officers and their spouses call AFV home – but widows in need are always afforded priority. While the majority of AFV residents live independently in apartments and private homes, they have access to a full continuum of health care at AFV – from assisted living to skilled care to dementia care.

Bonnie resides at Air Force Enlisted Village (AFEV) in Shalimar, Florida – which includes Teresa Village in Fort Walton Beach, Florida; Bob Hope Village in Shalimar; and Hawthorn House – a 64-unit assisted living complex on the Bob Hope Village campus that offers continued independence with a licensed nurse on staff 24 hours a day.

For more information about either of these communities, visit their respective Web sites at www.airforcevillages.com and www.afenlistedwidows.org.

(Editor's Note: To protect the identity and dignity of the widows we serve, the names Bonnie and Made-lyn are pseudonyms.)

Chuck Norris is the only person to win an Olympic Gold Medal in swimming without ever getting wet.

One time, Chuck Norris stubbed his toe, and destroyed the state of Ohio.

Chuck Norris' chest hair has chest hair.

The Agent Orange information below has been updated as of July 2010. For additional updates, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

Presumptive service-connection means that VA acknowledges that a condition is service-connected. Veterans who served in Vietnam who have one or more of these conditions do not have to show that their illness(es) is (are) related to their military service to get disability compensation. However, claims must still be filed by these Veterans to be considered for disability compensation.

Conditions* Recognized for Presumptive Service-Connection for In-Country Vietnam Veterans

Acute and Subacute Peripheral Neuropathy: A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of exposure to Agent Orange and resolve within 2 years after the date it began. **AL Amyloidosis:** A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs.

Chloracne (or similar acne form disease): A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to certain chemicals (those that contain chlorine, hence the term chloracne). Under VA's rating regulations, chloracne (or other acne form disease similar to chloracne) must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of exposure to Agent Orange.

***All chronic B-Cell Leukemias (previously this category included only chronic lymphocytic leukemias. It is now expanded to include other chronic leukemias affecting cells such as hairy cell leukemia):** A type of cancer that affects white blood cells.

Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2): A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin. **Hodgkin's Disease:** A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia.

***Ischemic Heart Disease:** A disease characterized by reduced supply of blood to the heart that leads to chest pain.

Multiple Myeloma: A disorder which causes an overproduction of certain proteins from white blood cells.

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue.

***Parkinson's Disease:** A motor system condition with symptoms that include a trembling of the hands, imbalance, and loss of facial expression.

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda: A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of exposure to Agent Orange.

Prostate Cancer: Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men.

Respiratory Cancers: Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus.

Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma): A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues.

***On March 25, 2010, VA published a proposed regulation that will establish chronic B-cell leukemias (including chronic lymphocytic leukemia, hairy cell leukemia, and others), Parkinson's disease, and ischemic heart disease as associated with Agent Orange exposure. Eligible Vietnam Veterans who have filed claims may receive disability compensation for these diseases when the regulation is final.**

Conditions Recognized in Children of Vietnam Veterans **Spina bifida:** A neural tube birth defect

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that results from the failure of the bony portion of the spine to close properly in the developing fetus during early pregnancy.

Disabilities other than spina bifida in the children of women Vietnam Veterans: Covered birth defects include a wide range of conditions. Eighteen defects are specifically included and others not specifically excluded are covered. For more information, contact a Veteran Service Representative at **1-800-827-1000**.

Covered birth defects include, but are not limited to, the following conditions:

- 1. achondroplasia
 - 2. cleft lip and cleft palate,
 - 3. congenital heart disease,
 - 4. congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot),
 - 5. esophageal and intestinal atresia,
 - 6. Hallerman-Streiff syndrome,
 - 7. hip dysplasia,
 - 8. Hirschsprung's disease (congenital megacolon),
 - 9. hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis,
 - 10. hypospadias,
 - 11. imperforate anus,
 - 12. neural tube defects,
 - 13. Poland syndrome,
 - 14. pyloric stenosis,
 - 15. syndactyly (fused digits),
 - 16. tracheoesophageal fistula,
 - 17. undescended testicle, and
 - 18. Williams syndrome.
- These diseases are not tied to herbicides, including Agent Orange, or dioxin exposure, but rather to service in Vietnam.

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Snoring Dog

A marine has a dog that snores. Annoyed because she can't sleep, his wife goes to the vet to see if he can help. The vet tells her to tie a ribbon around the dog's testicles and he will stop snoring. "Yea right!" she says. A few minutes after going to bed, the dog begins snoring as usual. The wife tosses and turns, unable to sleep. Muttering to herself, she goes to the closet and grabs a piece of red ribbon and ties it carefully around the dog's testicles. Sure enough, the dog stops snoring! The woman is amazed.

Later that night, her Marine husband returns home drunk from being out drinking with his buddies. He climbs into bed, falls asleep and begins snoring loudly. The woman thinks maybe the ribbon might work on him. So, she goes to the closet again and grabs a piece of blue ribbon and ties it around her husband's testicles. Amazingly, it also works on him! The woman sleeps soundly.

In the morning, the marine wakes up from his drunken stupor and stumbles into the bathroom. As he stands in front of the toilet, he glances in the mirror and sees a blue ribbon attached to his privates. He is very confused, and as he walks back into the bedroom, he sees the red ribbon attached to his dog's testicles.

He shakes his head and looks at the dog and whispers, "I don't know where we were ... or what we did ... but, by God, we took first and second place!"

That others may live (edited due to space limitations) by Chief Master Sgt. Ty Foster AFSOC Public Affairs

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. (AFNS) -- When one of your own falls to enemy fire, it hits everyone in the family like a gut check. Make no mistake, the special tactics Airmen of Air Force Special Operations Command are family.

Most of the time, these quiet professionals spend their days readying for war -- honing their bodies and minds for their next deployment. But when one of their brothers is wounded or killed in action, they rally en masse to serve their fallen brother's family and render honor to their dead. Senior Airman Daniel Sanchez, 23, was a combat controller in the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron family. He arrived in Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province in July for his first deployment. He served as a joint terminal attack controller assigned to a U.S. Army special forces team. He loved his job. He was good at it -- calling in close-air support for the team and their Afghanistan National Army partner forces, he leveraged air assets to provide early warning, protect friendly forces and prevent enemy ambush. In five short weeks of deployment, he'd already been in five combat operations. His team and their Afghanistan National Army partner forces were providing security for a national election polling site Sept. 16 in the vicinity of the Kajran district. Shortly after Airman Sanchez' team's arrival, they came under fire. An enemy insurgent infiltrated the ANA partner force shot and killed the 23-year-old combat controller. An ANA soldier subsequently shot and killed the enemy fighter. When news of Danny's death reached the 23rd STS, their focus, their mission, was taking care of family. They marshaled their forces to travel to Danny's hometown of El Paso, Texas, to attend to Danny's grieving family and bury their brother-in-arms. Simultaneously, they planned a reverent memorial service to honor Danny's service and uplift his memory. More than 500 Airmen packed into Freedom Hangar here for the memorial service Sept. 28. A pair of empty combat boots stood in front of an inverted M-4 rifle topped with a Kevlar helmet. The monument was flanked on the stage by shadowboxes adorned with memorabilia. Overlooking these silent inanimate tributes, an immense U.S. flag stood vigil looking out over a sea of blue uniforms and red berets. Danny Sanchez joined his brothers who had given their last full measure in service to our nation: Captains Derek Argel and Jeremy Fresques, Staff Sgts. Casey Crate and Tim Davis and Senior Airman Adam Servais. During the ceremony, Airman Sanchez was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with valor, the Purple Heart Medal, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with gold border. It was not easy, but one by one, red beret-wearing men took the stage to face a teary-eyed audience to offer testimony and tribute. "Every time, special tactics (Airmen have) wrapped

our arms around the family of our fallen brother and given them the support they needed to endure this hardship," said Maj. Chris Larkin, the 23rd STS commander. "Each time the mighty warriors in the two-three have come together with incredible poise and strength. "I think that strength emanates from the tight knit family of special tactics and AFSOC, and it has enabled the family and our unit to endure these losses and emerge stronger and more capable. I know that today is no different." The major continued, emotionally moved by the outpouring of support, encouraging everyone with his reverent words. "Daniel is physically gone, but, because he was a warrior and a combat controller, his memory will never be lost," he said. "Let us remember Daniel and cherish the memories we share for having had the opportunity to know, work with and befriend a guy like Danny. His ever-present smile, his positive attitude and the influence he had on those around him are the things that I will remember." Staff Sgt. Dale Young, a combat controller with the 23rd STS, read a letter from Lt. Col. Parks Hughes, Danny's deployed commander at the 21st Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron.

"Danny was just 14 years old on (Sept. 11, 2001) but he knew the history of special tactics in this war, and he aspired, as we all do, to live up to the legacy established by those who have gone before us," Colonel Hughes said. He recognized the priority role combat controllers fulfill in the responsible employment of airpower. "That's no small load to bear, and we ask young men like Danny Sanchez to carry that load every day," he said. "As a 23-year-old Airman on his first deployment, Danny did so flawlessly."

In his letter, Colonel Hughes described why Danny was much more than an Airman and a special operator. He was a warrior-servant of the finest tradition. By volunteering for the combat control career field, Danny knew that he was volunteering to place himself in harm's way in service to the nation. He did so willingly, and he did not ask for anything in return. He was driven to confront the enemies of our nation face-to-face in the dark of night in far-away places around the world. He was compelled to brave great danger in order to free the oppressed and to ensure that the citizens of our great country do not live in fear of an attack on our soil. Danny Sanchez was a warrior-servant who paid the ultimate price while ensuring that millions of Americans, most of whom will never know the sacrifice he made, can sleep safely in their beds at night and enjoy the freedoms that they too often take for granted. The colonel posed a simple question in his letter, "Where do we find men such as this?"

Only in America.

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to over-flowing and the emptiness remains a lifetime. Because of the group Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), my family and I have found out we are not alone in any of this. There are also mothers like myself who watch their child's spirits slowly die while trying to live. The child we gave life to now is a child in which life doesn't exist.

When my son was in Iraq the first time, I actually had people tell me that this wasn't as bad as wars in the past because there are not that many soldiers dying!! I didn't know how to respond to such ignorance – I just sat and stared at them wondering how that would console a mother whose child just died. I have written and spoke out against congressmen who make callous remarks about soldiers' lives being expendable and have met with representatives to talk about ending the wars.

War is wrong and I have yet to be convinced otherwise. I will continue to write and speak out for I want my grandchildren to read what I have written and spoken, so that maybe their generation will see war for what it is and search other ways to solve our world's problems. I wish for them that war becomes just a word and peace a way of life. Mothers' tears should only be shed for the pure joy of life not because of its destruction.

By Susan Handle Terbay



Store Sign

Sign in a store window:

WE WOULD RATHER DO BUSINESS WITH 1000 AL-QAIDA TERRORISTS THAN WITH ONE SINGLE AMERICAN SOLDIER!

This sign was prominently displayed in the window of a business in Philadelphia. You are probably outraged at the thought of such an inflammatory statement. However, we are a society which holds Freedom of Speech as perhaps our greatest liberty.

And after all, it is just a sign.

You may ask what kind of business would dare post such a sign.

Answer: A Funeral Home

(Who said morticians had no sense of humor?)

Disability Compensation (Service Connection)

Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to veterans who are disabled by injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service. The service of the veteran must have been terminated through separation or discharge under conditions that were other than dishonorable. Disability compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of dependants, and is paid monthly. The benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax. The payment of retirement pay, disability severance pay and separation incentive payments known as SSB and VSI (Special Separation Benefits and Voluntary Separation Incentives) also affects the amount of VA compensation paid.

U.S. Treasury changes savings bond program

CLEVELAND (AFRNS) -- The Department of the Treasury has changed its policy concerning the issuance of paper savings bonds through payroll savings plans. After September 30, the U.S. Treasury will no longer issue paper savings bonds to federal employees through payroll deduction. I

In anticipation of this change, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service discontinued bond allotments July 31.

People can still purchase savings bonds and other Treasury securities through a deduction from their retired pay by creating a TreasuryDirect account. TreasuryDirect is a secure and reliable online system that allows people to purchase Series EE and I savings bonds, Treasury bills, notes, bonds and Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities.

To continue using payroll deduction, people must open a TreasuryDirect account by visiting www.treasurydirect.gov. On the TreasuryDirect home page, click "TreasuryDirect" under the "Open an Account" menu on the right side of the page. After following the instructions, people will get a unique account number they you can use to review the Treasury securities available for purchase.

Once their account is created, a retiree can tell DFAS to

establish a TreasuryDirect deduction. They must indicate they want to start a TreasuryDirect allotment, the monthly amount to deduct from retired pay, the month in which the deduction should start the allotment and their Social Security number. An allotment may be set up through myPay online at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>, or via mail. Mail requests to:

DFAS U.S. Retired Military Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130

Retirees may also call the Retired and Annuitant Pay Contact Center at 800-321-1080.

One advantage to the TreasuryDirect deduction over the previous paper savings bond deduction plan is the ability to monitor account activity online.

Paper bonds are still available for purchase through participating financial institutions. Bonds that DFAS is currently holding for safekeeping for customers are already in an electronic format and will not be affected by this change.

The Treasury expects to save \$400 million in taxpayer money and cut the use of 12 million pounds of paper over the first five years the change is in effect. (Courtesy of DFAS)

Definition (Political Correctness)

Specifically, there is an annual contest at the University of Arkansas calling for the most appropriate definition of a contemporary term.

This year's term was "Political Correctness."

The winner wrote:

"Political correctness is a doctrine, fostered by a delusional, illogical minority, and rabidly promoted by an unscrupulous mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of cow dung by the clean end. "

A Mother's Tears

Reflection of a mother of a soldier/veteran of Iraq/Afghanistan wars

“It is now some years later and most remember where they were that day and what they were doing. For me that day was more than a horrific event. That day changed my life forever, the aftermath and events to come weigh heavily on my soul, and will until judgment day. I lost a piece of myself that day and later a piece of my soul.” (From “The Crying of Souls” written by my son reflecting on 9/11)

Over 30 years ago I gave birth to a son. His arrival came in the middle of the night with great anticipation. The delivery team of doctor and nurses were wagering on whether I was having a boy or a girl. For me it didn't matter – I wanted this life out of my body but more I wanted this life to be healthy. After my final push a healthy baby was placed in my arms and tears of joy flowed as I looked into the face of a beautiful gift of life.

My son became was one of those who I refer to as ‘squishy babies’ – he was just so cuddly and snuggly. To say he was cute isn't just a mother's statement – he was and it was this ‘cuteness’ that saved him many times from trouble or got him into it. I found this fifth child of mine to be one of my greatest challenges as a mother accompanied with many tears of frustration. He became a young man who would try anything with little fear and could respond to an emergency with level headedness and courage. As he grew into his teens the challenges were on every level. When he was around 21 he went to a recruiter and came home to tell me he joined the army. Later he told me that he made this decision because as he watched his friends go down a path of drugs and lives of no prospects and he wanted something different for himself and felt the military was where he could achieve his goals. I was facing mixed feelings of dread of having a child in the military and yet being proud of a son who saw two paths and chose one that

could save him and my tears of pride outweighed my tears of fear.

We are not a military family and I have protested wars for most of my life but at that time when he joined, we were not in any particular war and my hopes was that maybe he could find himself, find a career - find a way to use his gifts and talents. He thrived in his life as a soldier – and when he came home from boot-camp walking down the airport ramp my heart burst with pride and tears of seeing my son now a young man, content within his choice. When I was in labor, my prayers were for a healthy baby and now my son seemed healthy and happy with his decision and I was okay with that.

Then 9/11 happened and life forever changed for military families. While the President at that time told the American people to ‘go back to normal life’ - ‘to go shopping’ – that he would take care of things, for those in the military life would never be normal again and spending time shopping wasn't even an option. I found my days in constant state of tears knowing deep down that at some point my son was going to be sent somewhere into a war because of the attack. There were acquaintances who had no sons or daughters in the military tell me that I worry too much – that things will be fine. When I spoke out against the possibility of going to war in Iraq, and my tears of what our country was about to do, I was told by others that I was unpatriotic, that I was clueless about the horror of terrorism. No I was not clueless I knew what the cost of war was going to be first hand.

The day my son called to say good-bye as he was going to Iraq my heart broke and the tears flowed. My body was gripped in fear and I began to hold my breath as I did when he was a toddler running through the house – fearing he would fall or hit his head – or as he grew older and went out the door – holding my breath until he would return safely to our home. Now he was going to war –into a horror that I could not stop and could only hold my breath and pray that he would return – safe and healthy.

That day my son changed. He had three

deployments – two in Iraq and the last in Afghanistan. It was in Afghanistan that my son experienced the horror of war at its peak. He almost died twice and he also experienced more the deep destruction of his soul as he killed others, as he watched children become pawns in a war of adults, and as he picked up body parts of his buddies and held a soldier as life seeped and exhaled out of his body. Along with all of this, his wife completely fell apart and he asked the family to have her come live near us until he came home. We had no idea of the extent of her breakdown and within a couple of months of moving near us, she took the children and ran away to meet with a man she met on-line. The youngest in our family were lost to us for 10 weeks and my son in warzone was thrown into the pit of despair, unable to come home to find his family. A young man, who took the oath to defend his country, was helpless in defending his family. My son was hurting and I lay helpless every night in tears unable to take away his pain as I did when he was little. Eventually we did find the children, and we were able to bring them back and keep them safe with us.

My son finished his time in Afghanistan and requested and received an honorable discharge. He came home to take care of his children. I was relieved that my son was home from the war and he could no longer be sent back into the throws of hell. Little did I realize that while my son left the war behind him, the war has not left him. When he first got home, he was his old self – crazy, funny and wanting so much to find normalcy in his life and being with his family again. His marriage had ended but he had his children and that seemed to be all that he needed. He got a good job and decided to go back to school to get a degree – looking into possibly EMT work or working at a VA center. However after awhile the dark remnants of the war started to immerge and he became argumentative, explosive, angry, and even hateful.

He no longer laughed or joked. Family gatherings became events for arguing and hateful rhetoric. He had rage against anyone he felt were whiners or complainers; commenting at times with phrases of ‘they think they have it tough, try looking into the fact of someone you killed.’ Or, ‘they think they

have it tough, try holding a friend's body together.’ He was angry at the world and rightly so but his anger became misdirected. He and I went to a social worker at the VA because the family kept telling my son that he has issues and he could not see what we were talking about. It was a good session as I talked about how it was like walking on egg shells around my son – never know what would trigger his outbursts. I cried as I stated how I missed ‘my son.’ Tears filled my son's eyes when he listened.

I had hoped that was the beginning of healing for him but in actuality he has never sought help again because he deems himself ‘okay.’ How could any human being be okay after what he has experienced? The radio and talk show racist commentators who make their money spewing hate now feed into my son's anger and it helps him justify such feelings and hate for everyone.

My son was raised Catholic, steeped in tradition of family life. Our family is very diverse and because my children's father is full-blooded Lebanese, they themselves along with their father have had to deal with racism, profiling, and vile comments because they are of Mid-eastern culture. My son ignores what such hate does to his family and pursues his own racist, hateful comments of others. It rips at my heart because he is becoming the total antithesis of his upbringing. He was taught tolerance and acceptance now he has no compassion, does not care for anyone and cares little about others' pain. He looks for ways to start arguments.

I find my tears flowing more and more as I watch my son ‘die’ while alive. I cannot imagine the horror my son, my child has experienced in war; no mother ever wants her child to experience desecration of life or decisions that war forces humans to make. So many mothers in our world scream into their pillows at night for the shear pain of losing a child to war. Their tears could fill rivers

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