OUR VETERANS

Veteran's News and Notes

By: Fred Langston, Legislative Affairs Officer, Campo VFW Post 2080

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The Creation of the Vietnam Veteran

"When the Lord was creating Vietnam Veterans, He was into His 6th day of overtime working on the first fully operational model when an angel appeared. The angel said to the Lord, "You're certainly doing a lot of fiddling around on this one." And God said, "Have you seen the specs on this order? A Nam Vet has to be able to run 5 clicks through the bush with a full pack on hi back, endure with barely any sleep for days, enter tunnels full of rats, spiders and the enemy all the while keeping his weapons clean and operable. He has to be able to sit in his foxhole all night during an attack, hold his buddies as they die, walk point in unfamiliar territory known to be VC infested, and somehow keep his senses alert for danger. He has to be in top physical condition existing on c-rats (rations) and very little rest. And he has to have 6 pairs of hands."

The angel shook his head slowly and said, "6 pair of hands....no way." The Lord says, "It's not the hands that are causing me problems. It's the 3 pair of eyes a Nam Vet has to have."

"That's on the standard model?" asked the angel. The Lord nodded."One pair that sees through elephant grass, another pair here in the side of his head for his buddies, another pair here in front that can look reassuringly at his bleeding, fellow soldier and say, "You'll make it"... when he knows he won't."

"Lord, rest, and work on this tomorrow." "I can't," said the Lord. "Not until I have a model that can carry a wounded soldier 1,000 meters during a fire fight, calm the fears of the latest FNG (f-----g new guy) and feed a family of 4 on a grunt's paycheck."

The angel walked around the model and said, "Can it think?" "You bet," said the Lord. "It can quote much of the UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice), understands 'non sibi sed patriae' ("Not for self, but for country."), knows what 'de oppresso liber' ("To Liberate the Oppressed") means, recite all his general orders, and engage in a search and destroy mission in less time than it takes for his fellow Americans back home to discuss the morality of the War and all the while, keep his sense of humor."

The Lord gazed into the future and said, "He will also endure being vilified and spit on when he returns home, rejected and crucified by the very ones for which he fought."

Finally, the angel slowly ran his finger across the vet's cheek, and said, "There's a leak...I told you that you were trying to put too much into this model." "That's not a leak", said the Lord. "That's a tear." "What's the tear for?" asked the angel. "It's for bottled up emotions, for holding fallen soldiers as they die, for commitment to that funny piece of cloth called the American flag, for the terror of living with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) for decades after the war, alone with its' demons with no one to care or help." "You're a genius," said the angel, casting a gaze at the tear.

The lord looked very somber, as if seeing down eternity's distant shores. "I didn't put it there," He said."

Author unknown - contributed by Doug Kotrbra)

New Redesigned VA Website

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rolled out the first phase of a large-scale renovation for its Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website. The first and most visible step of the renovation consists of changing the website's look. Some of the major changes include improvements in the navigational structure that provide consistency among all sites and consolidate major topics; a slide show section that showcases current VA events or hot topics; and a "Quick List" with links directly to important applications such as Veterans On Line Applications (VONAPP) and MyHealtheVet. To view the new version of the Website, visit www.va.gov.

Schools Defer Tuition Charges for Vets

According to most recent reports thousands of veteran students are still feeling the economic impact from delayed Post-9/11 GI Bill payments. The delayed benefit payments are affecting veteran's ability to pay their rent and buy food, books, and other essentials. In addition, the delayed benefit means that the colleges and universities are also not being paid. Many colleges and universities are doing what they can to help veterans on a case-by-case basis by setting up loan programs or deferring tuition charges. In addition, some schools have made it a standing policy to defer tuition charges for all veterans using their GI Bill benefits. One such school, the University of Phoenix, has had this policy in place since August of 2009. Although this does not help with the impact on personal finances, this deferment does help veterans avoid the added stress of unpaid tuition bills.

Do You Know Your VA Benefits?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a national survey of veterans, active duty servicemembers, activated National Guard and reserve members, and family members and survivors to learn if they are aware of VA services. The national survey will also collect important health care, benefits, employment, and demographic information that VA will use to inform policy decisions and improve benefits. VA expects approximately 10,000 veterans to complete the full-length survey. The data collection is expected to be finished by the end of February and the final report released by December 2010.

LtCol Chessani's Board of Inquiry Continues "Stand Up" Marine Officers Substantiate LtCol Chessani's Innocence

There was some good news in Board of Inquiry hearing taking place at Camp Pendleton, CA. Despite the obvious bias of their high command, "stand-up" Marine officers, Majors J Dinsmore and L McConnell, in strong and unequivocal testimony, substantiated LtCol Chessani's innocence. A long line of "stand up" field grade officers and enlisted men who served with LtCol Chessani are expected to testify as to his outstanding military character.

Major Dinsmore was LtCol Chessani's intelligence officer. He has served as an active-duty Marine for over 23 years. In yesterday's testimony, he informed Board members of the complexity of the daylong engagement in Haditha on November 19, 2005. He also informed the Board his intelligence assessment before Nov 19, 2005 indicated Marines were going to be attacked in Hadtiha that day. Follow-on intelligence after Nov 19, 2005 confirmed to Major Dinsmore and LtCol Chessani that the attack on November 19, 2005 was one they were expecting from foreign fighters—namely Syrians.

The bad news, as predicted, the government, in its efforts to disgrace and destroy LtCol Chessani, has consistently ignored the rules of fundamental fairness by introducing tainted evidence from other cases that had nothing to do with the allegations against LtCol Chessani, and which would never be allowed in court-martial proceedings.

Part of the evidence the government introduced is forensic reconstruction of where the Marines assaulted through residential structures from which they were fired upon. These Marines include Lance Corporals Tatum and Sharratt, who have since been exonerated. This evidence was refuted at earlier hearings. Furthermore, the government was allowed to introduce evidence clearly not relevant to whether LtCol Chessani was substandard in performance of duty or willfully negligent in not accurately reporting the day of the battle (Nov 19, 2005). Much of the problematic evidence being placed on the record comes from the enlisted Marines' cases, which do not involve issues before this board.

The Thomas More Law Center has been defending LtCol Chessani at no charge. The Law Center's attorneys, both former Marine officers, have teamed up with the detailed military attorneys. The misconduct allegations against LtCol Chessani claim he failed to properly report and investigate the Nov 19, 2005 Haditha incident. However, the indisputable evidence proves LtCol Chessani immediately reported the deaths of the civilian Iraqis to his superiors.

The Thomas More Law Center defends and promotes America's heritage and moral values. It supports a strong national defense and an independent and sovereign United States of America. It does not charge for its services.

Donations to the Chessani case: Thomas More Law Center at (734) 827-2001 or visit www.thomasmore.org.

(For further information on the Chessani/Haditha case contact Fred Langston)

A Veteran is someone who, at one point in his life wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America" for an amount of "up to and including my life." That is Honor and there are too many people in this country who no longer understand it.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" (Martin Luther King Jr.)
"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation." (George Washington)

"Freedom has a flavor for her defenders that the defended will never know"

Contact Fred Langston at fglangston@yahoo.com or 619-766-9109. For information about elected officials addresses and phone numbers. Please provide your nine digit ZIP code.

VFW Campo Post 2080

Mark your calendars - coming on the third Saturday of February are the Campo VFW delicious Steak Dinners with all the trimmings. Then beginning the first Friday in March their famous Rib Dinners will start. Watch The Messenger for more details or call the post at (619) 478-9212.

LetsSayThanks.com - Send a message to our troops

In three easy steps visitors can send a message of support to the troops:

1. Select a favorite postcard design, drawn by U.S. children, ages 6-14.
2. Enter your personal message.
3. Click "submit."

• www.LetsSayThanks.com features postcard designs from children across the country to choose from. The postcards, depicting patriotic scenes and hometown images, were selected from hundreds of entries to appear on our site.

• Visitors can easily choose from 10 pre-written messages or elect to write their own personalized message.

• Xerox works with partner Give2TheTroops, a non-profit organization formed to support the physical, moral and spiritual health of America's armed forces in combat zones around the world through the letters and packages prepared and shipped by volunteers, to deliver the cards to the troops.

• The postcards are produced using variable data printing capabilities of the Xerox iGen3 Digital Production Press. Xerox has worked with Premier Printing Partners, Mercury Print Productions, ColorCentric Corporation, SouthData, Inc., Quantum Direct and Xerographics to print the cards.

• The postcards are printed on Xerox 80# Cover Elite Gloss card stock.