

OUR VETERANS

Veteran's News and Notes



By FRED LANGSTON,
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CAMPO VFW POST 2080

Congress Nixes DoD's "October Surprise"

(Excerpted from an article by MajGen Wm Matz Jr, USA Ret)

If history teaches us anything, it is that we need to be on guard at all times to protect hard earned military benefits. Recently, I was shocked to learn of a DoD plan to raise hospital inpatient co-payments for retired service members, their family members, and survivors covered by TRICARE Standard. The

decision, announced Sept. 30th and slated to go into effect the following day, ran contrary to assurances previously given by President Obama and DoD leadership that TRICARE fees would not be increased in fiscal year 2010. I should point out that the announced increase was no small raise either -- DoD wanted an additional \$110 per day, a whopping 20 percent increase!

In an October letter to Defense Secretary Bill Gates I noted, "Raising inpatient rates 20 percent unfairly takes advantage of beneficiaries who by necessity are hospitalized for life-saving care. This type of behavior breaks a sacred trust with those who have worn this nation's uniform, and it should not be allowed to stand." Emails, letters and phone calls to Congress and the White House produced the desired effect. Within a week, Congress nixed the ill-thought out DoD plan through a provision in the FY 2010 National

Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Although I am pleased that Congress stepped in and ensured the promise was kept, the truth is it never should have gotten this far. It just goes to show that you can never let your guard down, political promises sometimes fall to political expediency, and it is important that {we} remain ever vigilant.

(A Fred Langston comment. It is to the credit of MaJGen Matz and others who so consistently keep a wary eye on the current administration and their never-ending negative bag-of-tricks. It is also worthy of note that this latest maneuver was conducted in the now typical closed door cloaked in secrecy fashion. Is this the way to conduct the people's business? ... Announce on Sept. 30 with an effectivity date the next day)

(Source: National Association of Uniformed Services Journal Nov/Dec

2109)

The VA Expands List of Agent Orange Related Presumptive Diseases

VA Sec Shineski has decided to establish a service-connection for Nam Vets with 3 specific illnesses based on evidence of an association with herbicides. Added to the list are: B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease. Used to defoliate trees Agent Orange left a legacy of suffering and disability that continues to the present. An estimated 2.6 million military in Vietnam were exposed. Previously listed were: Acute & Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Diabetes Mellitus, Hodgins Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Porphyria Cutenea Tarda, Prostrate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers. Additional info is available

at:<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/esposures/agentorange/>

VA Staffs Office for Survivors

The VA has staffed an office for survivors of Veterans, Wounded Warriors and Spouses. To strengthen the VA programs for survivors of the nation's veterans, the VA has staffed an office to serve as their advocate, with a charter that includes creating or modifying programs, benefits and services. It will monitor VA's delivery of benefits and will explore innovative ways of reaching survivors who are not receiving benefits for which they are eligible. For more info: 800-627-1000 or www.va.gov/

Third Infantry Division Seeks Members

The Society of the Third Infantry Division recently

held its 90th annual reunion. The unit is the oldest historical society in the Army. Soldiers from WWII to the present are members. Anyone who serves or served in the 3rd Infantry Division is eligible. For more info: Henry Burke 803-782-7517 - or - <http://www.war-foto.com/3rddiv.htm>

You are invited and encouraged to contact your elected officials about any legislation of which you have concern. Ask them to support that particular legislation and see that it comes up for vote. Also, if they have not already signed on as a cosponsor request that they do so. Request that they contact you expressing their position on the subject legislation. If you need information about your elected officials addresses, phone numbers etc. contact us and provide your nine digit ZIP code. Fred Langston at fglangston@yahoo.com or 619-766-9109.

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.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

GFWC Responds to Haitian Disaster

SUBMITTED BY ARLENE LENHART

The recent catastrophic earthquake in Haiti is estimated to have affected at least three million people, with a death toll in the tens of thousands. The pictures and videos are heartbreaking and unspeakably horrific. Water, food, shelter, medicine, and other basic life needs are in short supply. Already one of the world's poorest countries, the situation for women and children is especially concerning.

From generous gifts to small gestures, General Federation of Women's Clubs clubwomen have a significant history of generosity when natural or man-made disasters devastate communities. In an effort to assist the Haitian community in the aftermath of the recent earthquake, GFWC has

established a Haitian Disaster Relief effort through the GFWC Disaster Relief Fund. Funds collected will be provided to GFWC International Partners, CARE and UNICEF.

The collective impact of GFWC clubwomen working together to assist those in need demonstrates the true power of the Federation. All donations will be acknowledged and recognized. Donations may be made online at www.GFWC.org, over the phone with a credit card, or by sending a check in the mail to GFWC Headquarters.

For more information, go to www.GFWC.org. Contact GFWC Headquarters with any questions at 202/347-3168. Thank you for your support!

Veterans Deserve Our Gratitude

By TONY NEFF

I find it odd that an article like this is needed because of whom we speak. There are homeless veterans in our country and this is no way to treat the brave warriors who put their lives on hold to serve the call of their country. In the Viet Nam era I witnessed first hand a nation split on the ideological aspects of our involvement in the countries that were being overrun by communist forces. Free people were being victimized and conquered, American involvement began as a way of keeping the sides separate but ended up as one of protection for helpless people. The warriors of Viet Nam were slaughtered right along with the people we went there to protect. It was later learned that wars

being fought should be left up to the generals not politicians. The divided country did not welcome home these veterans; there were no parades, they were spat upon and called names. Yet these warriors began rebuilding their lives and some were able to make sense of it and some were not. The effects of war on returning men and women changed them. They will never be the same people they were, again. Many of the homeless veterans of today are from that era and if you served in combat during Desert Storm, the Iraq or Afghanistan Wars then you have been forever changed by your experiences in combat.

Combat veterans of this and other eras know how to assist you and are available to you at the Veterans

Village of San Diego, located at 4141 Pacific Highway or call (619) 497-0263. Father Joe has an ongoing program for veterans at Father Joe's Village on Imperial Ave and has 60 beds available exclusively for homeless veterans.

I am in contact with veteran John Plough at Father Joe's Village who helps gather information and attends meetings with fellow veterans, where they share stories and experiences. They also discuss the type of help and jobs available to them. It is said that to grow beyond a problem discussion and understanding is necessary to make sense of things.

Homelessness is not a crime; it is a crime that it happens. Many Veterans didn't make it all the way back to integrate with society and have led solitary and disillusioned lives since their combat experiences. My new friendship with John at Father Joe's has reminded me of how important it is to remember those who have served our country. The personal sacrifices and life changing experiences our returning veterans have given and lived are moments we need to show greater respect for.

In a letter I received from Richard Goodman, a career and services counselor at Father Joe's Village, says, "It has been a privilege to serve my fellow veterans in this capacity." Goodman works with veterans dealing with homelessness,

unemployment, employment training, and self help. As a career counselor he assists them in finding employment in order to foster their sense of independence. "By far the greatest reward is seeing veterans who were once homeless and on the streets find their sense of dignity and purpose. Their honored service to this country can not be overstated." Mr. Goodman goes on to state, "I would like to recognize the efforts of Father Joe's Village and those of other unique services in the San Diego area for their untiring support. I am but one of the many resources available to veterans and have found it an honor and privilege to serve. While I do not speak in any capacity for Father Joe's Village, as a career counselor employed to provide these services to our veterans, I speak as one independent voice that recognizes their commitment to our great country and value of their service."

In the grand scheme of things the debt owed to veterans is one of care and compassion. This work is alive and well in San Diego by many organizations and whenever you can, do what you can. Contribute money, volunteer at a stand down or read to a bedridden veteran at the hospital. Many gave their lives, others gave their hearts and souls to protect freedoms we enjoy daily. Remember the high cost of freedom!

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