



LOCK & LOAD



From the Presidents Desk:

Thanks to all who attended the November meeting. If you missed the meeting then you missed all the fun!

2011 Christmas Party December 10th, 7 pm at the American Legion Lounge.

Enough said.

John H. Howe

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V.V.A. Chapter 750 Board Members: John H Howe, Mike Isbell, Rod Kutz, Marie Mayo, Bob Hart, Fred Collins and George White.

THE NEXT CHAPTER 750 BUSINESS MEETING: OCT. 20TH, 1900 HOURS (7 P.M.), AT THE AMERICAN LEGION POST ON SOUTH STREET.

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Minutes 17 November 2011

Meeting called to order by President Howe at 7 P.M.

Pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for all POW/MIA'S and active duty personnel.

Invocation by Larry Grantz

Attendance: 19 Members, 3 guests - Jimmy Cowan, David Wells and David Mahon. One new member, Les Hurd. Welcome all.

Minutes were read and accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Committee Reports

Monument: No committee members were present. A discussion was held about working on the monument this spring. It was reported that the lights on the flags at monument are not working.

Membership: Current membership is 105.

Old Business:

The Poker Run, Rifle Raffle and the OU-Texas Game Raffle were a huge success. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make this happen.

Marie reported the names of the families receiving Thanksgiving cards.

The Christmas party will be held on the 10th of December at 7 P.M. in the American Legion Hall Lounge.

Our adopted family is Cody and Casey Durbin. They have one daughter, Addyson. Addyson is 3 years old and

loves dolls, teddy bears, hair bows, and dress up clothes for little girls. She wears a size 6 toddler. Cody is currently deployed, but will be home 5 December on leave. He will attend the party with his wife, Casey.

Marie has the names of the families for the Christmas gift cards.

Jerry Wheeler said that he will let us use the dining hall for the food this year, so we won't be so crowded.

Food list: Chapter will provide the meat and paper goods. John Howe will cook the meat.

Baked Beans - John Foster and Dennis Long. Scalloped potatoes - Doug Demming and John Wiles. Corn casserole - George White and Mike Isbell. Relish tray - Margy Privett and Jim Marston. Tossed salad - Marie Mayo. Cheese dip - John Hoogendorn. Bread and chips - Rod Kutz. Cake - Bill Sanders and Ken Luttrell. Pie - Jerry Johns, David Harris and Jim Kanelakos. Dessert - Allen Teten and Bill Manutel will bring surprise desserts. If you plan to attend and are not on this list, please bring a dish of your choice.

Jerry Wheeler asked that we not bring any alcohol to the party since the Legion does not charge us for the use of the rooms. Please honor this.

Jerry stated that the Legion is giving out food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas and their money donations

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are low. George White made a motion to donate \$200.00; 2nd by Mike Isbell. The motion carried. Please remember to support the legion on their Friday night hamburger and steak dinners and their breakfast on Saturdays. They help us. Let's help them.

A donation of \$200.00 was given to a local Ponca City woman who was a victim of domestic abuse with the approval of our board members.

New Business:

The wheel chair ramp for Simon Eagle will be built 26 November. After that we have 2 more ramps to build.

Mike Isbell gave a report on the state council meeting. All state offices will be open for election on the 6th of April, 2012. The next state meeting will be held at Saddleback Inn in Oklahoma

City. Anyone wanting to run for a state office is required to send a letter of intent with a copy of your DD214 form to Harold Cook, Box 616 Miami, OK 74354.

Mike Isbell spoke about organizing a TV raffle and putting out the poppy buckets to help raise funds for a kidney transplant for one of our VVA members. Discussion was held. Members voted to spend about \$800.00 for the TV. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

A discussion ensued about co-hosting a New Years Eve party with the American Legion and the Legion Riders. More will be discussed at the December meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 P.M.

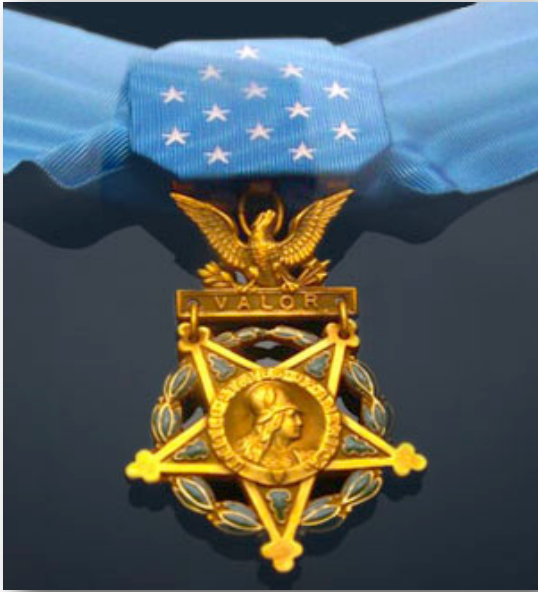
Next meeting will be held 15 December at 7 P.M. Plan to attend and bring a guest.

"A meeting is an event where minutes are taken and hours wasted."

JAMES T KIRK

"A meeting moves at the speed of the slowest mind in the room. (In other words, all but one participant will be bored, all but one mind underused.)"

DALE DAUTEN



McGONAGLE, WILLIAM L.

Rank and organization: Captain (then Comdr.) U.S. Navy, U.S.S. Liberty (AGTR-5).

Place and date: International waters, Eastern Mediterranean, 8-9 June 1967.

Entered service at: Thermal, Calif.
Born: 19 November 1925, Wichita, Kans.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sailing in international waters, the Liberty was attacked without warning by jet fighter aircraft and motor torpedo boats which inflicted many casualties among the crew and caused extreme damage to the ship. Although severely wounded during the first air attack, Capt. McGonagle remained at his battle station on the

badly damaged bridge and, with full knowledge of the seriousness of his wounds, subordinated his own welfare to the safety and survival of his



command. Steadfastly refusing any treatment which would take him away from his post, he calmly continued to exercise firm command of his ship. Despite continuous exposure to fire, he maneuvered his ship, directed its defense, supervised the control of flooding and fire, and saw to the care of the casualties. Capt. McGonagle's extraordinary valor under these conditions inspired the surviving members of the Liberty's crew, many of them seriously wounded, to heroic efforts to overcome the battle damage and keep the ship afloat. Subsequent to the attack, although in great pain and weak from the loss of blood, Captain McGonagle remained at his battle station and continued to command his ship for more than 17

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hours. It was only after rendezvous with a U.S. destroyer that he relinquished personal control of the Liberty and permitted himself to be removed from the bridge. Even then, he refused much needed medical attention until convinced that the seriously wounded among his crew had been treated. Capt. McGonagle's

superb professionalism, courageous fighting spirit, and valiant leadership saved his ship and many lives. His actions sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. (Captain McGonagle earned the Medal of Honor for actions that took place in international waters in the Eastern Mediterranean rather than in Vietnam.)

Senate Approves \$662 Billion Defense Bill

Ignoring a presidential veto threat, the Democratic-controlled Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a massive, \$662 billion defense bill that would require the military to hold suspected terrorists linked to al-Qaida or its affiliates, even those captured on U.S. soil, and detain some indefinitely.

The vote was 93-7 for the bill authorizing money for military personnel, weapons systems, national security programs in the Energy Department, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. Reflecting a period of austerity and a winding down of decade-old conflicts, the bill is \$27 billion less than what President Barack Obama requested and \$43 billion less than what Congress gave the Pentagon this year.

Shortly before final passage, the Senate unanimously backed crippling

sanctions on Iran as fears about Tehran developing a nuclear weapon outweighed concerns about driving up oil prices that would hit economically strapped Americans at the gas pump. The vote was 100-0.



"Iran's actions are unacceptable and pose a danger to the United States and the entire world," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said. "Iran supports terrorist groups, arms the killers of American soldiers, lies about its nuclear program, violates its citizens' basic rights and threatens Israel's security."

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The Senate's version of the defense bill still must be reconciled with the House-passed measure in the final weeks of the congressional session.

In an escalating fight with the White House, the bill would ramp up the role of the military in handling terror suspects. Defense Secretary Leon

Panetta and FBI Director Robert Mueller both oppose the provisions as does the White House, which said it cannot accept any legislation that "challenges or constrains the president's authorities to collect intelligence, incapacitate dangerous terrorists and protect the nation."

Hospital Official: VA 'Games' Patient Schedules

Department of Veterans Affairs officials came under fire in a Senate hearing Wednesday over the long wait times for vets who need mental health services, though a senior official denied VA hospitals are "gaming the system" to make it appear the situation is improving.

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairwoman Sen. Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat, pushed the issue after a VA hospital coordinator testified that vets were waiting a month or longer to be treated for post-traumatic stress, even though VA officials have said new patients are getting in within two weeks.

"Veterans in need of new and established patient appointments usually have to wait far longer than 14 days -- and often as long as two months -- before they can begin

evidence-based trauma-focused treatments," said Michelle Washington, coordinator of PTSD services at a VA hospital in Wilmington, Del. "Often, after such a delay, patients have lost the motivation for treatment and therefore cannot benefit from these highly effective treatments."

Washington, who appeared as a representative for the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents more than 200,000 VA workers, told the lawmakers she feared retaliation by VA management for appearing at the hearing.

"Nonetheless, I took the risk of testifying today because of the importance of speaking out about the growing barriers to providing mental health care to my patients," she said.

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“Like my colleagues, I work at the VA because of an intense dedication to serving this unique patient population, and their service-connected mental health conditions.”

Veterans advocates say delays in mental health care are especially destructive at a time when veteran suicides are on the rise, and when the population of veterans will only grow after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Paul Rieckhoff, head of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, told lawmakers in May that veteran suicide “is out of control. It’s [at] epidemic proportions right now.”

The VA has estimated that veterans account for about 20 percent of the roughly 30,000 suicides every year in the U.S.

The VA on Wednesday released data showing the number of vets seeking mental health care rose by more than 300,000 in recent years, to the point that the VA is now trying to provide psychological services to more than 1.2 million vets.

Murray and other lawmakers credited the VA with providing excellent care to vets in the system. The problem is that too many veterans are not getting in the door, they said.

Washington, who also relayed testimony from employees at other VA locations, outlined several ways that managers or supervisors manipulate appointment scheduling. In one example, clerks were told to label an appointment a “cancel” if the patient did not arrive within one minute of their scheduled time. When VA clerks don’t comply, they can be disciplined, Washington said.

Murray later asked Mary Schohn, director of mental health operations for the Veterans Health Administration, if she believed “that facilities are gaming the system and not fully recording wait times” for treatment.

“VHA does not condone gaming of any sort,” Schohn said. “I am not aware of particular facilities doing anything of the kind, and if I were, I would act immediately upon finding that out.”

Schohn said the VA is now auditing all its locations to make sure that patient schedule manipulation isn’t happening.

She also said the VA has a new performance contract that will hold its leadership accountable in a number of areas. One way is that it will track the percentage of new mental health patients who have had a full assessment and then started treatment within 14 days of seeking an

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appointment.

The contract also requires that Iraq and Afghan vets newly diagnosed with PTSD receive at least eight psychotherapy sessions within a single 14-week period; that patients discharged from a facility get a follow-up appointment by a mental health professional within seven days; and that any patient deemed at high risk for suicide must get four visits within 30 days.

North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, a Republican, called it "unacceptable" that veterans were not getting timely access to the care they needed, and criticized the VA for what he said was a string of reviews and surveys and policy papers. The providers want to be able to do their jobs, he said.

"They're focused on outcome and you're focused on process," Burr said.

Treasury Investigates Foreclosures on US Troops

The U.S. Treasury Department is investigating whether Bank of America, Wells Fargo and eight other major banks may have illegally foreclosed on about 4,500 active-duty servicemen and women.

Charlotte-based Bank of America disputes the charges, but has agreed to work with an independent contractor and review more than 2,400 foreclosures on homeowners who indicated they were eligible for relief under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

According to the Treasury's Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Wells Fargo has also agreed to review 871 foreclosures of homeowners who indicated they were eligible under the act, which postpones or suspends certain civil obligations to allow active-

duty service members to devote their attention to their military duty.

Rep Brad Miller, D-N.C., of Raleigh, is calling it a "flagrant disregard for a law that has been on the books continuously since the First World War."

"If you're wearing the nation's uniform, if you're deployed in harm's way in service of your country, you should be able to focus your entire energy to our nation's service without worrying what's happening in a courthouse back home," Miller said.

The review is part of a larger examination by the comptroller's office on about 4 million borrowers who may have been improperly foreclosed upon in 2009 and 2010.

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The nation's 14 largest mortgage servicers, including Citibank, Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo, agreed to review cases after the government found that some rushed the foreclosure process without proper review.

Bank of America officials said there is no basis for accusations that foreclosures on service members were handled improperly. Spokesman Dan Frahm said that 2,131 of the alleged foreclosures on service members were not completed, despite an independent consultant's findings.

"The data shared by the independent consultant simply confirms they are casting the widest net possible to ensure a large customer base is included in the review," he said.

Earlier this year, as part of a settlement with the Department of Justice, Bank of America agreed to pay \$20 million to

approximately 160 service members who were illegally foreclosed on between 2006 and the middle of 2009. Each service member received at least \$116,785 plus compensation for any lost equity, according to the DOJ.

Wells Fargo officials said Treasury's investigation doesn't indicate wrongdoing.

"These foreclosure actions will be reviewed by our independent consultant to determine if there was financial injury due to servicer error and, if so, the borrower may be eligible for compensation or other remediation," said Tom Goyda, a spokesman for Wells Fargo.

For service members overseas, worrying about family members fighting a foreclosure is a dangerous distraction, said David Porter, a Raleigh-based financial planner who works exclusively with military clients.

Porter said he has represented three National Guardsmen who had to fight foreclosures while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In one case, his family was receiving threatening letters while he was in Iraq," Porter said. "The family was worried they were going to be on the street the next week."

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Jeff Beets
Vice-President

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NOVEMBER LOCK & LOAD

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