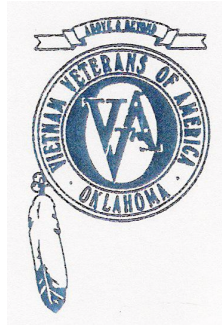


Vietnam Veterans of America



A Monthly Newsletter

May 2007

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From the Presidents Desk:

Thanks to all that showed up for the April 19th meeting. Participation in our monthly meetings means a healthier chapter for us all. The more people attending, the fresher the ideas.

The election of new officers was held during the April 19th meeting. I wish to thank all the members for their renewed confidence in my leadership by reelecting me as President. Swearing in of all officers will take place during May 17th business meeting.

Keep in mind that we will be hosting the State Council Meeting on June 2, 2007, at the Econo Lodge and we will be needing **lots** of help to make it a success!!

Be sure and visit the Hospitality Suite located in the Econo Lodge Lounge. Beer and soda will be furnished at no cost. Mixed drinks will be available for purchase

Chapter Business Meeting:

The next Chapter 750 business meeting will be held at the American Legion Hall on South Street May 17th at 1900 hours (7pm). Your attendance is greatly appreciated.

Football is a mistake. It combines the two worst elements of American life. Violence and committee meetings.

George F. Will (1941 -)

One of Our Own!



Sergeant Jeremy Erin O'Mealey

One of our own, Sergeant O'Mealey, a Ponca City native, is currently serving in Iraq. Jeremy joined the Army in February 2003, graduating from Basic Training at Ft. Sill in May of 2003. After Graduating from Advanced Infantry Training at Ft Sam Houston, he was assigned to Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii.

Jeremy's next tour of duty was Khandahar, Afghanistan from April, 2004 until Mothers Day 2005. His current tour in Iraq be-

gan in July, 2006 and we all hope for speedy and health return.

Please take time to let Jeremy know that we are proud of his service.

O'Mealey, Jeremy
HHB3/7 FA
Unit 70089
APO, AE 09338

Armed Forces Day Breakfast

Sponsored by the
American Legion
Alfred Little Standing Buffalo
Post 38
May 19, 2007
Ponca Tribal Affairs Building
Dining Hall
White Eagle, Oklahoma

Come and enjoy breakfast with our comrades in arms.....

For more information call

Delbert A. "Smokey" Cole at
(580) 762-5818 (office) or
(580) 762-7831 (home) or
(580) 401-3890 (cell)

Five Missing WWII Airmen are Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of five U.S. serv-

icemen, missing from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are 1st Lt. Cecil W. Biggs, of Teague, Texas; 1st Lt. William L. Pearce, of San Antonio, Texas; 2nd Lt. Thomas R. Yenner, of Kingston, Pa.; Tech. Sgt. Russell W. Abendschoen of York, Pa.; and Staff Sgt. George G. Herbst of Brooklyn, N.Y.; all U.S. Army Air Forces. Pearce was buried April 27 in Louisville, Ky.; Herbst will be buried June 8 at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.; Biggs will be buried June 9 in Teague, Texas; Abendschoen's funeral is June 13 at Arlington; and Yenner will be buried July 30 at Arlington.

Representatives from the Army met with the next-of-kin of these men in their hometowns to explain the recovery and identification process and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the secretary of the Army.

On Sept. 21, 1944, a C-47A Skytrain crewed by these airmen was delivering Polish paratroopers to a drop zone south of

Arnhem, Holland, in support of "Operation Market Garden." Soon after departing the drop zone, the plane crashed and there were no survivors. The Germans opened the dikes in the region where the plane crashed and flooded the area before any remains could be recovered.

When Dutch citizens returned to their homes in Arnhem the next year, they recovered remains from the Skytrain's wreckage and buried them in a nearby cemetery. A U.S. Army graves registration team later disinterred the remains which were reburied as group remains in 1950 at the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Kentucky.

In 1994, a Dutch citizen located more human remains and other crew-related materials at a site associated with this C-47 crash. They were eventually turned over to U.S. officials.

Among dental records, other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA in the identification of the remains of these five

men. The remains that could not be attributed to a specific individual have been buried with the first set of group remains at the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO Web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

Humvee Doors Trap Troops



WASHINGTON - Doors that jam shut during an attack are an unintended consequence of the Pentagon's effort to add armor to Humvees transporting U.S. troops in Iraq.

Due to the jamming problem, records show the Army must fix the doors of some 18,000 armored Humvees that serve as

the main troop transport vehicle, USA Today reports.

One quick fix to the problem is to weld hooks to the Humvee doors so another truck can rip them off with a cable and release the troops.

"Every Humvee outside (a fortified base) will have a hook," says Lt. Col. William Wiggins, an Army spokesman at the Pentagon.

The Army plans to spend \$284 million this year on Humvee armor kits to protect U.S. troops from makeshift roadside bombs.

Improvised explosive devices are the No. 1 killer of U.S. troops in Iraq, causing 70 percent of injuries and death.

Air Force Fleet Wearing Down



LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. - The Air Force's fleet of warplanes is older than ever and wearing out faster because of heavy use in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the service's top combat commander.

Gen. Ronald Keys, who leads the Air Combat Command, points to cracked wings on A-10 attack planes and frayed electrical cables on U-2 spy planes. Compared to 1996, the Air Force now spends 87% more on maintenance for a warplane fleet that is less ready to fly, Air Force records show.

They also show that as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, Air Force and other military aircraft are flying more missions in harsh environments.

Keys said he's concerned that policymakers will only pay attention when a plane either crashes on takeoff or over a city "because a wing falls off."

"I don't want to write a letter, or have my successor write a letter, 'Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith, your son or daughter are dead because the wing fell off on takeoff. We knew it was going to fall

off, we just didn't know when.' That's kind of what we're getting down to," Keys said.

Arcing wires near fuel tanks recently forced the Air Force to ground its fleet of 33 U-2 spy planes in March for at least a day, Keys said.

The average Air Force warplane is 23.5 years old compared with 8.5 years in 1967. In 2001, the average plane was 22 years old.

VA CLAIMS TAKE ABOUT 6 MONTHS

Veterans filing disability claims with the Veterans Affairs Department wait for an average of almost six months for a response, about six times longer than is typical in the private sector.

Pending disability claims with the VA take an average of 177 days to process, according to VA records. For some, the wait time is almost a year.

And for veterans appealing a decision on a claim, the average wait time is 657 days.

For people filing disability claims with insurance companies, about 75 percent to 80 per-

cent of claims are handled within 30 days, said America's Health Insurance Plans, a trade organization. Federal law requires disability claims with private insurers to be settled within 45 days, although extensions of 30 days or longer are possible.

"The backlog issue is not going to go away until the federal government rolls up its sleeves and takes a serious look at expediting the resolution of claims," said Luz Rebollar, a national service officer with AM-VETS who guides veterans through the VA claims process.

The biggest factor in the growing backlog is the increased number of veterans using the system. The VA processed almost 775,000 claims last year, pushing the backlog total to about 600,000.

With the VA expecting 800,000 claims this year, in part because of the thousands of troops returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan, the problem is poised to get worse before it gets better, said Dan Bertoni, the Government Accountability Office's acting director of education, work force and income se-

curity issues.

"We had a claims system that didn't work well in peacetime, and it's certainly showing strain now," Mr. Bertoni said.

The VA issues more than \$24 billion in benefits annually to more than 2.7 million veterans. Basic benefits range from \$115 to almost \$2,500 per month.

The VA says it's unfair to compare processing times with that of the private sector because the department must prove that the injury or ailment was service-related -- a complex process that includes many hurdles beyond its control.

The types of injuries suffered by troops, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, also are difficult to evaluate. These claims can involve post-traumatic stress disorder and environmental and infectious disease risks.

And claims are becoming increasingly complex, as veterans include more potential disabilities per request than in the past, with each requiring a separate evaluation and rating, the VA says.

Lawmakers Urge GI Bill Extension



Veterans who want to take advantage of the Montgomery [GI Bill](#) but have found their eligibility has expired may soon get a second chance with new legislation introduced on Capitol Hill last week.

In an effort to extend the time veterans have to take advantage of their GI Bill benefits, Washington Democratic Senator [Maria Cantwell](#) introduced the GI Bill for Life Act that would eliminate the 10-year time limit placed on GI Bill benefits.

The GI Bill for active duty servicemembers and veterans is a "pay to play" benefit that requires each servicemember to make a \$1,200 non-refundable contribution up front. In return for the contribution they can use their entitlement-up to \$1,075 per month for 36 months-to help pay for educa-

tion, apprenticeship, and job training.

The catch is the GI Bill automatically expires 10 years after the veteran leaves active duty service. It's this "use it or lose it" aspect of the GI Bill that has left many veterans feeling misled and cheated.

According to the Department of Veteran Affairs reports, nearly 30 percent of eligible veterans are unable to use any of their education benefits and most eligible veterans are only able to access a portion of their GI Bill before the 10-year limit is reached.

"GI Bill benefits should not come with an expiration date," Cantwell said in a May 1 press release announcing the bill. "When our servicemembers leave the military, family obligations, work commitments and economic difficulties often get in the way."

Many veterans postpone going to school due to several factors including, employment constraints, family obligations, illness and disabilities associated with military service. In many cases 10 years have pass and they simply lose their benefits.

One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.

[Agatha Christie](#) (1890 - 1976), *Autobiography* (1977)

Please support VVA Chapter 750 by renewing you membership today.

Thanks

Rod Kutz, Memebership

<p>Membership Renewal Options</p> <p>1 Year \$20</p> <p>3 Years \$50</p> <p>A DD214 is requested for all memberships and is required for Life Memberships.</p> <p>Life Membership Schedule</p>	<p>Make checks Payable to:</p> <p>VVA Chapter 750</p>
<p>Age <= 49 \$250</p> <p>50 - 55 \$225</p> <p>56 - 60 \$200</p> <p>61 - 65 \$175</p> <p>>= 66 \$150</p>	<p>Please mail checks to:</p> <p>VVA Chapter 750 Attn: Membership P.O. Box 1625 Ponca City, OK 74602-1625</p>