

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Military Order of the Purple Heart
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Pittsburgh, PA 15206



MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART
CHAPTER 455

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PURPLE HEART NEWSLETTER

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MAY 31, 2010

MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum
presents “the”
Memorial Day Celebration
Monday, May 31, 2010 10am—4pm

FREE Admission

10:30 War on Terrorism Memorial Ceremony
Remembering PA Military who made the ultimate sacrifice and those still defending freedom
1:00 Patrioteer Challenge (open to public ages 13+) Wear your best patriotic outfit, participate in Drill exercise and answer a patriotic question. Winner will be named Miss or Mr. Soldiers & Sailors, Win a \$1000 Savings Bond & March in the Veteran’s Day Parade.
Registration Required

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The Only Thing Harder Than Being A Soldier
"IS LOVING ONE"



VETS MISSING OUT ON BENEFITS

Only a fraction of wounded veterans who could get better benefits have applied in the two years Congress, acting on concerns the military was cutting costs by down playing injuries, ordered the Pentagon to review disputed claims.

As of mid-March, only 921 vets have applied out of the 77,000 the Pentagon estimates are eligible, according to numbers provide The Associated Press by the Physical Disability Board of Review. The panel was created in 2008 but started taking cases in Jan. 2009.

More than 230 cases have been decided, about 60 percent in favor of improving the veterans benefits, while an additional 119 cases were dismissed as ineligible. Advocates and even the board members themselves want the review panel to do a better job of getting the word out.

ARMED FORCES DAY
May 15, 2010

FLAG DAY
June 14, 2010

SOCIAL SECURITY

BENEFIT FACTS

- * Full retirement age is 66 for people born between 1943 and 1954. For each subsequent year, eligibility is increased by two months. For 1960 and later, the age is 67.
- * Nine out of 10 people age 65 and older receive benefits, which represent 40 percent of the elderly.
- * The average monthly benefit for retired workers is \$1,159. The maximum benefit at age 66 in 2010 is \$2,346 a month.
- * The annual limit for earnings is \$14,160 to remain eligible for benefits. After that, \$1 in benefits will be deducted for each \$2 earned for someone under the normal (or full) retirement age.
- * In 1935, the life expectancy of a 65-year-old was 12 1/2 years. Now it's 18.
- * There are currently 3.2 workers for each beneficiary. By 2034, there will be an estimated 2.1 workers.
- * Tax revenues for the program are expected to fall below costs in 2016; and the trust fund is expected to be exhausted in 2037.
- * For more information go to socialsecurity.gov.

NURSING HOME CARE

The VA owns and runs 132 nursing home facilities, and contracts with another 2,500 private homes in locations where it doesn't own one. Congress had mandated that the VA find a place for those veterans with disability ratings of 70 percent or higher. Vets with lower disability ratings are eligible as well, but they could be placed on a waiting list because of limited availability in many areas. Most states also operate veteran's nursing homes, some with more lenient admission requirements.

COURT TO CONSIDER PROTESTS AT FUNERALS



The U.S. Supreme Court is entering an emotionally charged dispute between the grieving father of a Marine who died in Iraq and the anti-gay demonstrators who picket military funerals with inflammatory messages like: "Thank God for Dead Soldiers."

The court agreed to consider whether the protester's message, no matter how provocative or upsetting, is protected by the 1st Amendment or limited by the competing privacy and religious rights of the mourners.

The justices will hear an appeal from a Marine's father to reinstate a \$5 million verdict against the protesters after they picketed outside his son's funeral in Maryland four years ago. Members of a Kansas-based church have picketed military funerals to spread their belief that U.S. deaths in Afghanistan in Iraq are punishment for the nation's tolerance of homosexuality.

The funeral-protest dispute was one of three cases the court said it would hear in the fall 2010.

The protest lawsuit stemmed from picketing by members of the fundamentalist Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., outside the funeral for Marine L/Cpl Matthew A. Snyder in Westminster, Md. He died in March 2006 when his humvee overturned.

Other signs carried by church members read, "America Is Doomed," "God Hates the USA/Thank God for 9/11," "Priests Rape Boys" and "Thank God for IEDs," a reference to the roadside bombs that have killed many U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The corporal's father, Albert Snyder, sued Mr. Phelps, his daughters and the church and won a verdict of more than \$11 million for emotional distress

and invasion of privacy. The judge reduced the amount to \$5 million, but a federal appeals court threw out the verdict.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the signs contained "imaginative and hyperbolic rhetoric" protected by the 1st Amendment.

Shirley Phelps-Roper, a defendant in the lawsuit and one of Phelps's daughters, said she is pleased the case is going to the Supreme Court. "We get to preach to the conscience of doomed America," she said in an interview. "I am so excited that I can't tell you how good it is."



UPDATE! ON PROTESTS AT FUNERALS

It is unbelievable that the appeals court is ordering the father of the dead Marine, Albert Snyder to pay \$16,510 in court cost to Westboro and its pastor, Fred Phelps.

The attorney for Albert Snyder says the donations pouring in to his client will go toward court costs, and any unused money will be given to military veterans.

Albert Snyder of York, Pa., is suing an anti-gay church that picketed the funeral of his son, who died in a vehicle accident in Iraq. The Westboro Baptist Church contends U.S. military deaths are God's punishment for tolerance of homosexuality. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case.

An American Legion spokesman say the veterans group has collected more than \$12,000 in donations for Mr. Snyders defense.

GOD IS BUSY

If you don't know GOD, don't make stupid remarks! A U.S. Marine was attending some college courses between assignments. He had completed missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the courses had a professor who was an avowed atheist, and a member of the ACLU.

One day the professor shocked the class when he came in. He looked to the ceiling and flatly stated, GOD if you are real then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you exactly 15 min, the lecture room fell silent. You could hear a pin drop. Ten minutes went by and the professor proclaimed, "Here I am GOD, I'm still waiting."

It got down to the last couple of minutes when the Marine got out of his chair, went up to the professor, and cold-cocked him; knocking him off the platform. The professor was out cold. The Marine went back to his seat and sat there, silently.

The other students were shocked and stunned, and sat there looking on in silence. The professor eventually came to, noticeably shaken, looked at the Marine and asked, "what in the world is the matter with you?" "Why did you do that?" The Marine calmly replied, "GOD was to busy today protecting American's soldiers who are protecting your right to say stupid stuff and act like an idiot. "So He sent me.

AGENT PURPLE

Agent Purple is the code name for a powerful herbicide and defoliant used by the U. S. military in its Herbicidal Warfare program during the Vietnam War. The name comes from the purple stripe painted on the barrels to identify the contents. It was one of the so-called "rainbow herbicides" that included the more famous Agent Orange.

Agent Purple is chemically similar to the better known Agent Orange, consisting of a mixture of the herbicides 2,-D and 2,4,5-T. It was later discovered that Agent Orange and Purple had been contaminated with varying levels of tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (TCDD), a dioxin that is a toxic and persistent substance, as a side effect of the manufacturing process of 2,4,5,-T. Agent Purple is reputed to have

three times the dioxin levels of Agent Orange, 45 parts per million as opposed to 13 parts per million in Agent Orange.

Agent Purple was used only in the earliest stages of the spraying, between 1962 and 1964. Only small amounts were sprayed in total.

UPDATE ON NEWSLETTER!

So far this year we are behind in collecting for the newsletter. We are now asking our members again to support our boosters and send **\$6.00** and we will list your name and your spouse name for the upcoming year **2010**. If you can afford to give more you will be listed as a special booster as you can see for this year if it wasn't for the **boosters** and **special boosters** we would not be able to continue the newsletter.

We also are asking anyone that would like to place an ad in our newsletter it would be greatly appreciated, the price for the ad would be **\$25.00**. The newsletter will still be printed quarterly again and we would like to continue the newsletter in **2010** with your support. If you are interested in helping our chapter please send your money to the address at the top of the newsletter also make your check out to MOPH Chapter 455.

I would also like to add, that if any member would like to put something of interest in the newsletter or a picture I will do my best to get it in as soon as possible.

MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION

(continued from page 1)

Live Entertainment

Soldiers & Sailors own

U.S. Troops Youth Reenactment Drum Corps

Beer & Soft Drinks

Food Booth by Pittsburgh Barbeque Co

Bring blankets and chairs and picnic on our lawn

Veterans Military Remembrance Activities

Unveiling of Military Collage (*add your picture!*)

Children's Activities

Visit www.soldiersandsailorshall.org

BOOSTER'S - JAN. 1, 2010 TO DEC. 31, 2010

MIKE & VERONICA BLAZEVIK
 JOHN & CATHERINE COLLINS
 WAYNE DONALDSON
 CHARLES & IRENE HALL
 WILLIAM & LINDA HYSLOP

SPECIAL BOOSTER'S

JOHN & CAROLYN ABRAM
 DAVE & JANET ALDEN
 JOHN & JOAN ALDEN
 EDWARD & SUSAN BARKER
 LT. & MRS. GEORGE BIGELOW
 CONRAD BLACK & MARILYN OBRIEN
 ROBERT & FLORENCE BUCHOLTZ
 VANCE & MARGARET CARTER
 DOMINIC & BETTY CERSOSIMO
 PHILLIP CERUSSI
 HARRY CLARK
 JAMES & RENAE COSTABILE
 ANDREW & DOROTY CHEROK
 MICHAEL & MICHELE CUMMINGS
 GREG & BARBARA DALEY
 JOHN & LINDA DENK
 HOWARD & EDNA EICHNER
 RAY & PEARL FRITZ
 LOU & GLORIA GAMBOGI
 JOHN & DONNA GOCHNOUR
 SCOTT & MAUREEN HAVELKA
 NICOLE & SHANNON HAVELKA
 EMIL HOSKO
 IRA C. HOUCK JR.
 JOHN & DOROTHY HRIBAR
 GEORGE HUMMER
 LENNY KASUBICK
 JOE & LOIS KENNEY
 BROCK KEPHART
 JAMES & JULEEN KEPHART
 DENNIS & MARSHA KING
 LARRY KUSHNER
 WAYNE & KAREN LAMPING
 LOU & DOLLY LaCIVITA
 JAMES & BETSY LANG
 MICHAEL LASKOWSKI JR.

MASSARO CORPORATION
 STEVE MASSARO
 JOE MLINAC & DONNA MADEJA
 CHARLES MANCUSO
 OLIVER McCLELLAND
 COL. ALEX & MOLLY McCLINCHIE
 HARRY McCracken
 DARRYL MERRISON
 JAMES PELLA & MICHELE HANSON
 MICHAEL & MICHELE RATWAY
 ERNIE & NANCY RIVERS
 STANLEY & MARY ROZANKSKI
 CHESTER & M. JANE SATTIAUX
 SID & BARBARA SINGER
 ROBERT & PEGGY SMITH
 MARK & NANCY SUTTON
 TERRY & RUTH SWIDELL
 LARRY & MARY UPLINGER
 ROBERT & RUTH VANCE
 NICHOLAS VIGLIONE
 ED & JOAN VOGEL
 ED & CHERYL WERLE
 JOHN & PATTY WRIGHT

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CHAPTER 455 MEETINGS

Our meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month at the VA Hospital at Highland Drive at 10:00 am sharp. Our office is in building one, 6th floor, room 6023W. Recently we have been having our meetings on the 2nd floor in room 2010W in building one because we have more room. After the meeting a lunch will be provided. If you need more information please call at 412-954-5166 and ask for Jim or Dan.



BLIND MARINE RE-ENLISTS

After all he's been through, the only regret Cpl. Matthew Bradford says he has now is not being able to return to combat duty in Iraq.

Bradford, 23 made Marine Corps history, becoming the first blind double amputee to re-enlist. In keeping with service tradition, Bradford was honorably discharged and allowed to say a few words as a civilian before re-enlisting.

"Sign me up, sir" he told Lt. Col. David Barnes, who administered the oath of enlistment, extending Bradford's military career by another four years.

The outdoor re-enlistment ceremony was held a few hundred feet from the Center for the Intrepid, dedicated just 11 days after Bradford was seriously wounded in Iraq.

It was at the cutting-edge rehabilitation center, funded with \$50 million in private contributions, that he began his arduous and painful journey in June 2007 to learn to walk again with prosthetic limbs.

He'll soon leave Fort Sam Houston to work with other wounded Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C. At the Intrepid Center, he had memorized the number of steps it took to get wherever he was going in the third-floor physical therapy department. The center became his "comfort zone," said his mother, Debbie Bradford.

"He's got to grow past it," she said. "He knows he can always come back."

So with a brief ceremony, delayed by about 20 minutes after the post was on lockdown for a visit by Vice President Joe Biden, Bradford's new phase of duty began. He said he wants to stay in the Marines "for as long as I can."

A rifleman, he was on patrol in Al Anbar province and trying to help clear an area of roadside bombs when one of them exploded right under him the afternoon of Jan. 18, 2007.

Bradford lost his eyesight, and he had a fractured right hand and fragmentation wounds to the lower abdominal area. But what he said he hated the most was losing his legs. He required amputations below the knee on the right leg and above the knee on the left.

During President Bush's visit at the Intrepid Center in Nov. 2007, Bradford caught the president's attention while climbing the center's 35-foot artificial wall.

"Good man, isn't he?" Bush said, according to news reports.



Chapter 34 of Greene County
 Proudly Presents: 1st annual
 Car Show @V.F.W.Post 3491
 Carmichaels, Pa.15320

Proceeds to help
 Veterans@
 Aspinwall
 VA. Hospital
 Pittsburgh
 Pa.

Trophies

Dash
 Plaques
 to First
 40 Cars

Best of Show
 Ladies Choice
 1st 2nd and 3rd place



Date: June 6th 2010

Time: 10:00 A.M-
 3:00.P.m. Trophies
 Awarded @3:00 P.M.

Entry
 Fee is
 \$10.00

Chinese Auction
 Food & Refreshments
 Music

50/50
 Drawing

Not responsible for
 accidents, loss or damage

Contact: Frank Smith 724-627-8682
 If no answer..724-833-3556

A LITTLE KNOWN VETERAN'S BENEFIT FOR LONG TERM CARE

A little known veteran's benefit for long-term care expenses is available to war time veterans and their spouses. But the benefit is being overlooked by thousands of families, industry observer say.

The Special Pension for Veteran's "Aid and Attendance" pays up to \$1,644 a month, \$19,736 annually, toward assisted living, nursing homes or in-home care for veterans 65 and older who served at least 90 days and one day during wartime-stateside or overseas. Veterans and their spouses can receive up to \$23,396 annually and spouses of deceased veterans, \$12,681. Yet, an estimated \$22 billion a year goes unclaimed, said Don Soard, a volunteer with Operation Veteran Aid in Oklahoma City. In 2007, only 134,000 seniors nationwide received the benefit, which was established in 1952. "Literally hundreds of thousands don't even know about it" Soard said. "Due to incomplete information, many disqualify themselves on income assets or find the paperwork too burdensome."

Soard helps families complete the necessary forms, so that approval comes in four to six months. The process is streamlined for vets who are blind or have memory issues and widows with medical needs, he said. Most applicants qualify and payments are retroactive, Soard said. The few who are denied on excessive liquid assets can seek financial advice to qualify, he said. Soard started his volunteer mission two years ago, following the deaths of two family members who served in WWII. "If they'd known about this benefit, they'd have a much better quality of life in later years," he said. "Without it, many vets are forced to go on Medicaid."

For more information, call 1-800-827-1000.

NOTE:

We are asking our members to submit an outstanding Patriot who has donated a lot of time and energy in helping our veterans. The Patriot name will be listed in our Department MOPH newsletter. We would like to get at least one Patriot for each quarterly newsletter.

Please submit a picture and a brief history of the Patriot.

THREE PRESIDENTS

What did Hoover, Truman, and Eisenhower in common?

Back during The Great Depression, President Herbert Hoover ordered the deportation of All illegal aliens in order to make jobs available to American citizens that desperately needed work...

Harry Truman deported over two million illegal's after WWII to create jobs for returning veterans.

In 1954, President Eisenhower deported 13 million Mexican Nationals! The program was called "Operation Wetback." It was done so WWII and Korean Veterans would have a better chance at jobs. It took 2 years, but they deported them!

Now...if they could deport the illegal's back then-they could sure do it today. If you doubts about the veracity of this information, enter Operation Wetback into favorite search engine and confirm it for yourself.

Reminder: Don't forget to pay your taxes...12 million Illegal Aliens are depending on you!

Our chapter 455 ladies auxiliary held a Saint Patrick's Day Party at the Veterans Hospital at Highland Drive in 2010.

Pictured L to R-Clair, Anna Mae, Mike, Sherry, Dan, and Beverly.

