

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Military Order of the Purple Heart
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MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART
CHAPTER 455

Winter Issue 2010

Volume VIII– No. 19

PURPLE HEART NEWSLETTER

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DENZEL WASHINGTON AT BROOK ARMY MEDICAL CENTER



The media (accidently”) missed this one!

The troops overseas would like everybody to know about Denzel Washington generosity.

Denzel Washington and his family visited the troops at Brook Army Medical Center, in San Antonio, Texas (BMAC) the other day. This is where soldiers who have been evacuated from Germany come to be hospitalized

in the United States, especially burn victims. There are some buildings there called the Fisher House. The Fisher House is a hotel where soldier’s families can stay, for little or no charge while their soldier is staying in the hospital. BMAC has quite a few of these houses on base, but as you can imagine, they are almost filled most of the time.

While Denzel was visiting BAMC, they gave him a tour of one of the Fisher Houses. He asked how much one of them would cost to build. He took his checkbook out and wrote a check for the full amount right there on the spot. The soldiers overseas were amazed to hear this story and want to get the word out to the American public, because it warmed their hearts to hear it.

Other Hollywood fluff make front page news with their ridiculous antics and Denzel Patriotism doesn’t even make page 3 in the Metro section of any newspaper.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

This is an insult and kick in the butt to all of us... Get mad and pass it on-I don't know how, but maybe some good will come of this travesty.

If the immigrant is over 65, they can apply for SSI and Medicaid and get more than a woman on Social Security, who worked from 1944 until 2004. She is only getting \$791 per month because she was born in 1924 and there's a "catch" 22".

It is interesting that the federal government provides a single refugee with a monthly allowance of \$1,890. Each can also obtain an additional \$580 in social assistance, for a total of \$2,470 a month.

This compares to a single pensioner, who after contributing to the growth and development of America for 40 to 50 years, can only receive a monthly maximum of \$1,012 in old age pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Maybe our pensioners should apply as refugees!

Consider sending this to all your American friends, so we can all be ticked off and maybe get the refugees cut back to \$1,012 and the pensioners up to \$2,470. Then we can enjoy some of the money we were forced to submit to the Government over the last 40 or 50 or 60 years. (article by Lou LaCivita)

BIKER BAR IN FLORIDA

I just moved down to Florida for the winter and I found the local biker bar to loaf at, and I fit right in with the bikers. Jim Lang Editor



DISABLED VETERANS SILVER DOLLAR COIN

When President Bush was in office he signed legislation that will honor disabled veterans with commemorative silver dollar coins for 2010.

The designs of the coins are to be "emblematic of the service of our disabled veterans who, have survived the ordeal of war, made enormous personal sacrifices defending the principals of our democracy."

Surcharge funds from the sale of each coin will help build a memorial for disabled veterans.

The *American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act*, [H.R. 634](#), was introduced in January of 2007 by [Rep Dennis Moore](#) and [Rep Mark Kirk](#).

The House in May and the Senate in June 2007 unanimously passed the bill.

The United States Mint will produce a maximum of 350,000 silver \$1 dollar [proof and uncirculated](#) coins that will be issued only in 2010.

A surcharge of \$10 per coin will go to the [Disabled Veteran's LIFE Memorial Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise funds necessary to build the [Memorial](#).

The Congressional Budget Office estimates at least 300,000 of the commemoratives will be sold, transferring \$3 million to the memorial foundation in 2012.

Scientists Say Scanner Can Detect PTSD In Veterans

Post-traumatic stress is estimated to afflict more than 300,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, but until now, it's been labeled a "soft disorder"-one without an objective biological path to diagnosis.

That may have changed this week, after researchers at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis VA Medical Center announced they'd found a distinct pattern of brain activity among PTSD sufferers.

The team used magnetoencephalography (MEG), a brain imaging method that measures how the brain processes information.

They scanned the brains of 74 U. S. veterans with PTSD, and 250 civilians without the disorder, and say that by spotting specific brain biomarkers, they managed to accurately diagnose PTSD sufferers with 90 percent accuracy.

MEG machines are a fast, sensitive and accurate way to measure electrical activity in the brain.

Whereas CT scans and MRIs record brain signals every few seconds, MEGs can do it by the millisecond, catching biomarkers and brain activity that the other tests inevitably miss.

The study could be a breakthrough for the military, which has been scrambling to address a surge in post traumatic symptoms among newly returning vets. Right now, troops are evaluated by mental health experts, but diagnosis is a crapshoot. Symptoms can take years to show up, and they vary from person to person, even among those exposed to the same traumas.

The Pentagon's already been pushing for more objective, systematized diagnosis tools, like a portable at home sleep monitors and genetic testing to detect PTSD vulnerability. They've even launched a program to create stress-mitigating pharmaceuticals.

Of course, a study of 74 vets is only a start. Next up, the researchers want to evaluate 500 vets, alongside 500 civilians, to further validate their findings.

And since PTSD is a complex disease, with new causes, symptoms and potential treatments popping up every week, it's hard to see how one set of biomarkers could pump out a definitive diagnosis for every tested veteran.

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Some PTSD symptoms, like depression and anxiety, are also highly personal-pretty tough to reduce to a single scan and an objective diagnosis.

Then there's the potential for the scans to affect how medical care is doled out-and paid for.

Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos, the lead researcher in the study, hopes the research will help speed treatment and simplify insurance coverage.

But unless the scans are subjected to major clinical scrutiny, PTSD treatment to those whose MEG scans match a set of biomarkers might mean some ailing vets slip through the cracks-a grim picture that's already a reality.

OPERATION BLANKET

Blankets donated at Sears stores throughout the state will go to homeless veterans. Sears has partnered with the AMVETS, one of the largest congressionally-chartered veteran's service organizations, for the program called Operation Blanket.

Donations may be made at any Sears store, which includes the one in Eastview Mall in Victor, through Feb. 18. In exchange for each donated blanket, customers will receive either a 20% or 10% coupon off the price of selected store items.

AMVETS will distribute the blankets to veterans through its thrift shops and veteran posts. Sears will also make a \$5,000 donation directly to AMVETS to benefit their programs.

WHAT IS A VET!

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag."

PROPOSED 28th AMENDMENT

For too long we have been to complacent about the workings of Congress and their self-interest special privileges. Many citizens had no idea that Congress members could retire with the same pay after only one term, that they didn't pay into Social Security, that they specifically exempted themselves from many of the laws they have passed (such as being exempt from any fear of prosecution for sexual harassment) while ordinary citizens must live under those laws. The latest is to exempt themselves from the Healthcare Reform that is being considered...in all of its forms. Somehow, that doesn't seem logical. We do not, nor should we have an elite that is above the law. I truly don't care if they are Democrat, Republican, Independent or whatever. This self-serving exclusiveness must stop.

This is good way to do that. It is an idea whose time has come.

Proposed 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution:

“Congress shall make no law that applies to the citizens of the United States that does not apply equally to the Senators and Representatives; and, Congress shall make no laws that applies to the Senators and Representatives that does not apply equally to the citizens of the United States.”

Militants Threaten To Execute U.S. Soldier

Militants in Afghanistan have threatened to execute the American soldier they've held since June if the U.S. does not release the Pakistani scientist convicted this week of attempted murder against U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, according to online reports coming out of Peshawar by PakTibune and Karachi News.

Bergdahl, 23, with the 1st Bat., 501st Parachute Infantry Reg., 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25 Infantry Div., based at Fort Richardson, Alaska, disappeared June 30. His disappearance set off an intense, weeks long manhunt that cancelled or diverted other military missions and resources to search for him in southeast Afghanistan and along the border with Pakistan.

Officials suspect militants might be holding Berg-
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Dahl in Pakistan. Accounts of his capture little more than seven months ago differ. When he first disappeared, military officials said he was captured after he fell behind while on patrol.

A U.S. military official in Kabul said Friday that the international Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan was unaware of the militant's demand, and he referred all questions to the Pentagon.

PakTribune quoted a militant commander, who claims to be involved in the abduction, as saying than Bergdahl admitted to participating in several raids in Afghanistan, and “since he has confessed to all charges against him, our Islamic court had announced death sentence for him,” the news outlet quoted the Taliban leader.

The Taliban have released two videos, the most recent on Christmas Day depicting Bergdahl, in combat uniform, saying Americans should not be fighting in Afghanistan.

UPDATE ON NEWSLETTER!

It's another year for the 455 newsletter and we are hoping it will continue into next year. 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 up coming 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 and 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 your 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.

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

**MIKE & VERONICA BLAZEVIK
ALVIN COLES
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 O'BRIEN
ROBERT & FLORENCE BUCHOLTZ
VANCE & MARGARET CARTER
DOMINIC & BETTY CERSOSIMO
PETER 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 GAMBONI
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
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.

MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS OF VIP SOLDIERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Ever wonder about the military careers of famous people such as politicians Spiro Agnew, Ronald Reagan or George Wallace? Or maybe NASA astronaut Neil Armstrong, cowboy movie hero Gene Autry or cartoonist Charles Schultz, to name a few?

The National Personnel Records Center has released a list of some 3,000 prominent former military service men and women whose service records may now be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

The list includes officers and enlisted men, Medal of Honor recipients, astronauts, test pilots, actors, politicians, artists, executives and government officials who became famous after their military careers, Brief and often inspirational biographical sketches are included.

The so called military VIP list was obtained under access to public records laws and may be downloaded at www.governmentattic.org/2docs/NPRC_VIP_List_2009.pdf. Copies of military service records for individuals on the list may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act from the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 63152-5100. Requests may also be faxed to (314) 801-9195.

Requests should mention that they're being made under the Freedom of Information Act. Requests for records of deceased individuals will usually result in more material than those of the living,



ONE LIGHT BULB AT A TIME

A physics teacher in high school, once told the students that while one grasshopper on the railroad tracks wouldn't slow the train very much, a billion of them would. With that thought in mind, read the following, obviously written by a good American.

Good idea....one light bulb at a time....

Check this out. I can verify this because I was in Lowes the other day for some reason and just for the heck of it I was looking at the hose attachments. They were all made in China. The next day I was in Ace Hardware and just for the heck of it I checked the hose attachments there. They were made in USA. Start looking.

In our current economic situation, every little thing we buy or do affects someone else-even their job. So, after reading this email, I think this lady is on the right track. Let's get behind her!

My grandson likes Hershey's candy. I noticed, though, that it is marked made in Mexico now. I do not buy it any more.

My favorite toothpaste Colgate is made in Mexico...now I have switched to Crest. You have to read the labels on everything.

The past weekend I was in Kroger. I needed 60 W light bulbs and Bounce dryer sheets. I was in the light bulb aisle, and right next to the GE brand I normally buy was an off-brand labeled, "Everyday Value." I picked up both types of bulbs and compared the stats-they were the same except for the price. The GE bulbs were more money than the Everyday Value brand but the thing that surprised me the most was the fact that GE was made in Mexico and the Everyday Value brand was made-in get ready for this the USA in a company in Cleveland, Ohio. The Bounce dryer sheets...yep you guessed it, Bounce cost more money and is made in Canada.

The challenge to you is to start reading the labels when you shop for everyday things and see what you can find that is made in the USA-the job you save may be your own or your neighbors! (article by Lou LaCivita)

Why You Should See “The Hurt Locker”

“What is this “Hurt Locker” movie, anyway?” you ask. It barely played in theaters when it opened last October, and yet nearly every critics group is touting it as a likely Best Picture Oscar winner.

Now that the film was due on DVD on Jan. 12, here’s your chance to catch up with it and see why it deserves all the buzz-or just enjoy it as the year’s most gripping action movie, or the most accessible movie yet made about the Iraq War.

In other words, you should see it because:
It’s really good.

Whether you prefer action or art-house fare, “The Hurt Locker” is for you. A story about a bomb-defusing squad on the streets of Bagdad, the film is a continuous nail-biter, with one expertly-staged confrontation after another. But it’s also and acute, well acted psychological study, with the soldier’s words and deeds explaining the character of the men who take on bomb duty. Whether they’re reckless adrenaline junkies or steel-nerved men without fear, “The Hurt Locker” reveals why war is addictive, both for these soldiers and for those of us who watch from a safe distance.

- * in 2007. While the gap between male and female life expectancy has narrowed since the peak of in 1979, the 5.1 year difference recorded in 2007 is the same as in 2006.
- * For the first time, life expectancy for black males reached 70 years.
- * The U.S. death rate fell for the eighth year in a row to an all-time low of 760.3 deaths per 100,000 population in 2007. This is 2.1% lower than the 2006 rate of 776.5 and about half of what it was 60 years ago in 1947.
- * Heart disease and cancer, the two leading causes of death, accounted for nearly half (48.5 percent) of all deaths in 2007.

Want to improve your longevity? In addition to getting exercise, regular medical checkups, and eating healthy food, researchers say that making time to travel and making new friends help to increase our longevity. Travel can increase longevity by helping people establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, says Dr. David Lipschitz

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy is up and the death rate is down, according to recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). From data collected in 2007, life expectancy for newborns reached a new high of 77.9, according to the latest mortality figures reported in Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2007. The figures are based on nearly 90% of all death certificates in the United States. The 2007 increase in life expectancy was the continuation of a long trend. Between 1997 and 2007, life expectancy increased by 1.4 years, from 76.5 years to 77.9 years. Other highlights of the report include:

- * The average 65-year-old senior can now expect to live another 19 years or so, to nearly age 84.
 - * Record high life expectancy was recorded for both males (75.3 years) and females (80.4 years)
- (continued)

TAPS!

SID SINGER
Jan. 13, 2010

Sid was the commander of the Jewish War Vets and director of the Veterans Place of Washington Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA



HALF BOY HALF MAN

The average age of the military man is 19 years. He is a short haired, tight-muscled kid who, under normal circumstances is considered by society as half man, half boy. Not yet dry behind the ears, not old enough to buy a beer, but old enough to die for his country.

He never really cared much for work and would rather wax his own car than wash his father's, but he has never collected unemployment either.

He's a recent High School graduate; he was probably an average student, pursued some form of sport activities, drives a ten year old jalopy, and has a steady girlfriend that either broke up with him when he left, or swears to be waiting when he returns from half a world away.



He listens to rock and roll or hip-hop or rap or jazz or swing and a 155mm howitzer.

He is 10 or 15 pounds lighter now than he was at home because he is working or fighting from before dawn to well after dusk.

He has trouble spelling, thus letter writing is a pain for him, but he can field strip a rifle in 30 seconds and reassemble it in less time in the dark.

He can recite to you the nomenclature of a machine gun or grenade launcher and use either one effectively if he must.

He digs foxholes and latrines and can apply first aid like a professional.

He can march until he is told to stop, or stop until he is told to march.

He obeys orders instantly and without hesitation, but he is not without spirit or individual dignity.

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He has two sets of fatigues: he washed one and wears the other. He keeps his canteens full and his feet dry.

He sometimes forgets to brush his teeth, but never to clean his rifle.

He can cook his own meals, mend his own clothes, and fix his own hurts.

If you're thirsty, he'll share his water with you; if you are hungry, his food. He'll even split his ammunition with you in the midst of battle when you run low.

He has learned to use his hands like weapons and weapons like they were hands.

He can save your life-or take it, because that is his job.

He will often do twice the work of a civilian, draw half the pay, and still find ironic humor in it all.

He has seen more suffering and death than he should have in his short lifetime.

He has wept in public and in private, for friends who have fallen in combat and is unashamed.

He feels every note of the National Anthem vibrate through his body while at rigid attention, while tempering the burning desire to 'square-away' those around him who haven't bothered to stand, remove their hat, or ever stop talking.

In an old twist, day in and day out, far from home, he defends their right to be disrespectful.

Just as did his father, grandfather, and great grandfather, he is paying the price for our freedom. Beardless or not, he is not a boy. He is the American Fighting Man that has kept this country free for over 200 years.

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.