

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



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515-252-4698 800-838-4692 <https://va.iowa.gov>

## Fall/Winter 2013

### One-of-a-Kind Motorcycle with Veterans Theme Will Be Up for Grabs in Lottery Promotion to Support Iowa Veterans Trust Fund

A one-of-a-kind motorcycle custom painted by a well-known Iowa artist will be up for grabs in a lottery promotion this winter to support the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund.

The Iowa Lottery, which has raised money for veterans' causes since 2008, is teaming up with artist Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II on the motorcycle project. It will be the first time that Sorensen, the artist best known for his annual artwork on the huge "The Freedom Rock®" boulder near Greenfield in western Iowa, has painted a motorcycle.

"We were lucky enough to work with Bubba back in 2009 to produce 'The Freedom Rock' instant-scratch game and we're thrilled that he's agreed to lend his talents to this motorcycle project with us," said Iowa Lottery CEO Terry Rich. "We can't wait to see the artwork he'll dream up when he custom paints the bike. And we're excited to give it away as part of our efforts to raise money for Iowa veterans and their families. Someone will win a true piece of art."



The one-of-a-kind motorcycle from Victory® Motorcycles in Spirit Lake won't be finished and assembled until late December, so there are no sneak peeks available of it just yet!

But here are the details about how you can have a chance to win the motorcycle, valued at an estimated \$30,000, in the lottery's upcoming "Veterans Victory" promotion:

- Promotion entry period: noon on Jan. 6 through noon on March 3.
- What to enter: any nonwinning ticket in the \$1 "Ride to Riches" instant-scratch game, which hits the market Jan. 6. (Each nonwinning ticket in the game will be good for one promotion entry.) All proceeds from the sale of Ride to Riches tickets will benefit the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund.
- Where to enter: [www.ialottery.com](http://www.ialottery.com). You'll need to join or already be a member of the lottery's free VIP Club, then key in the entry number from the front of a nonwinning Ride to Riches ticket along with the ticket number on the back.
- Drawing for motorcycle: Tuesday, March 4. The winner will be announced that day if possible, or no later than Wednesday, March 5.
- How winner will be notified: The lottery will send an email to the winner's VIP Club member email address. The winner's name and city of residence also will be posted on the lottery's website.

The Lottery and Sorensen will unveil the Veterans Victory motorcycle for the first time during a special event at 11 a.m. Jan 6 in the atrium at Capital Square, 400 Locust Street in downtown Des Moines. Anyone who would like to see the work of art on wheels is invited to attend! The lottery also is making arrangements for the motorcycle to be outside the Statehouse on the circle drive on January 22 for the 2014 Veterans Day at the Capitol.

Since its first games to benefit the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund debuted in July 2008, the Iowa Lottery has raised more than \$14.1 million for the IVTF and thanks its players for their continued support of this noble cause.

## Iowa Veterans Cemetery

### Korean Monument Dedicated at Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, and an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. A new monument honoring veterans of “The Forgotten War” was recently dedicated in September at Iowa Veterans Cemetery. The memorial recognizes the 325,000 U.S. soldiers who served in the Korean War. The Pentagon recently revised the number of Korean War battle deaths at 33,652 and other deaths - from illness, accidents, and other non-battle causes at 3,262. That total includes 507 Iowans.

Ron Langel, a former medic in Vietnam and also the American Legion Post commander in Dedham led the fundraising effort for a memorial, after learning that the Veterans Cemetery didn’t have one, according to a report in the *Des Moines Register*. The project cost about \$10,000 and was funded by American Legion members from across Iowa.



*Members of the 341st/560th Division held a reunion in Iowa during September and visited the new Korean Monument at IVC.*

The Korean War Veterans Memorial was placed next to other memorials in a dedicated section of the cemetery. More than 500 Korean War veterans attended a reception at the Van Meter American Legion facility to celebrate the monument and honor Korean War veterans.

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery reports that through December 1, 2013 there are:  
 Applications on file (still living): 7,639    Interments: 1,779  
 Veterans interred: 1,457    Dependents interred: 322

### Free Korean War Commemorative Books for Iowa’s Korean War Veterans



Iowa Korean War veterans (or one representative per family of a Korean War veteran) are invited to receive a *free* hardbound copy of *Korea Reborn: A Grateful Nation Honors War Veterans for 60 Years of Growth* – a commemorative gift produced in cooperation with the Republic of Korea and the United States.

The book was published in 2013 by *Remember My Service Productions* and was funded by an alliance of South Korean public and private organizations ; it honors those U.S. service members who bravely served during the Korean War.

Books are available at the Iowa Gold Star Museum (515-252-4582) or the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (515-252-4698), or your county veterans office. Distribution is limited to 5,000 books.




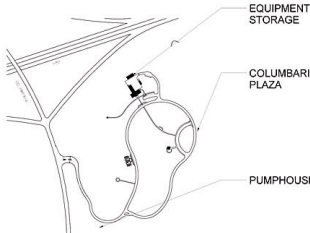
## Iowa Veterans Cemetery

### Iowa Veterans Cemetery Expands

Construction work is going well at Iowa Veteran Cemetery. The contractors still anticipate major completion — as scheduled — in early January.

### IMPROVEMENTS TO THE IOWA VETERANS CEMETERY





**EQUIPMENT STORAGE**


- 900 SF ADDITION
- SUPPLY LOFT

**COLUMBARIA PLAZA**

- NEW ACCESSIBLE PLAZA
- 3 WALLS
- 960 NICHES
- 6 BENCHES
- FLOWER VASE RECEPTACLE
- WATERING STATION

**IMPROVED IRRIGATION**

- NEW PUMPHOUSE
- IMPROVED WATER QUALITY



**Iowa Veterans Cemetery Facts:**

Caskets: 514    Cremations: 1,130    *In Memory of* markers: 55

States represented: 36    From Iowa: 1,528    Highest Ranking Officer: MAJ GEN Evans

Veterans who served in more than 1 war period: 70    Vietnam Veterans: 533    WWII Veterans: 422





**Iowa Veterans Cemetery Con't.**  
**Iowa Veterans Cemetery Expands Con't.**





## Iowa Veterans Cemetery Con't.

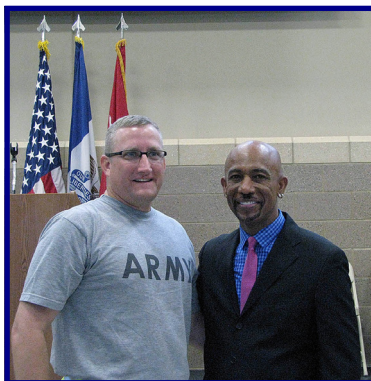
### Iowa Veterans Cemetery Expands Con't.



## Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

### Montel Williams Visits Camp Dodge

The Iowa National Guard and Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center presented the Adjutant General's free 5k/3k Fun Run/Walk and Health Fair on August 21 at the Freedom Center at Camp Dodge. Television talk show host Montel Williams was the guest speaker. Some of IDVA's staff and members of the Iowa Veterans Commission were lucky enough to attend, and were inspired by William's ferocious accounts of dealing with chronic illness and health.



*Todd Jacobus & Montel*



*General Orr, Greg Hapgood, & Montel*



*Missy Miller & Montel*

Montel Williams enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1974 after his high school graduation. In 1975, he was selected as the first African-American Marine to attend both the Navy Preparatory School in Newport, RI, and then the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. Williams graduated from the Naval Academy in 1980 with a degree in general engineering and a minor in International Security Affairs.

He left active duty service in the U.S. Navy with the rank of lieutenant, and received the Navy Achievement Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Navy Commendation Medal. Williams later served in the U.S. Navy Reserve and retired as a lieutenant commander after 22 years of military service. [Source: Gregory Hapgood, Iowa National Guard]



**Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Con't.**  
**Veterans Celebrate Their Day at the Iowa State Fair 2013**



*Governor Branstad & Dignitaries*



*Oskaloosa Veterans*



*Master of Ceremonies IDVA Director Bob King*



*Joint Color Guard*



## Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Con't.

### Veterans Day 2013 – Iowa Veterans Cemetery



*Guest Speaker Governor Terry Branstad & IDVA Director Bob King*



*Standing room only...*

This year's Veterans Day ceremony at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery drew one of the biggest Veterans Day crowds so far since the opening of the cemetery...in spite of very disagreeable weather!

The 2013 Veterans Day ceremony at IVC included posting and retiring of colors by the Civil Air Patrol/Air Force auxiliary; the national anthem sung by Megan Hartwig; invocation and benediction by Chaplain (Colonel) Dean Baer (Ret); welcome by IDVA Executive Director Colonel Robert King; Guest Speaker the Honorable Terry E. Branstad, and the sounding of taps by Gloria Doyle.



### Correctionville, Iowa Honors Veterans

Seventy-two veterans of the Vietnam War joined 52 other U.S. military veterans in a parade that wound through Correctionville, Iowa on Saturday, September 27, 2013. The well-attended parade was a welcome home ceremony conducted nearly four decades after the end of fighting in Vietnam.

The American Legion Auxiliary of Correctionville, Iowa sponsored the homecoming celebration at River Valley High School in Correctionville. At the conclusion of the parade, the Northwest Iowa American Legion Riders formed a flag line on both sides of the sidewalk, leading into the high school, where a 1:00 p.m. ceremony featured addresses by former Department of



*Colonel Robert King addresses veterans at Correctionville event*

Iowa American Legion Commander Lyle Schaffer and Col. Robert King, executive director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs.

The memorial segment of the program honored Iowans listed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall with a reading of those names accompanied with photographs of those veterans.

## County News

### – from Monroe County

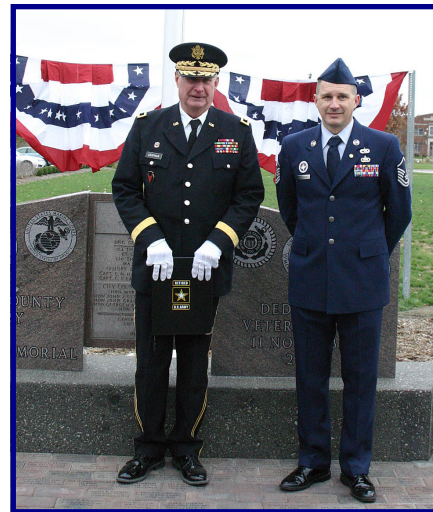
Progress continues on the  
*Welcome Home Soldier Monument* in Albia



### – from Johnson County

Dedication of Johnson County  
Armory and Veterans Memorial

The Iowa City Dubuque Street Armory was built in 1937. It was originally intended to provide for the needs of units Troop I, 113<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and Company G, 136<sup>th</sup> Medical Regiment. Johnson County military historian Major Gen. Robert Sentman said a military unit has lived in the Johnson County area since the Civil War, but the unit did not have a permanent home until the armory was constructed in 1937. Sentman said it was the last armory in Iowa to have horse stalls for the 113<sup>th</sup> Cavalry unit housed there. (Source: *Johnson County Gazette*) Both the 113<sup>th</sup> and the 136<sup>th</sup> were deployed to North Africa during World War II.



Major General Robert Sentman and  
Johnson County VA Director Gary Boseweiler

The Iowa National Guard was displaced in 2008 when the building was flooded and the structure could not be saved. On November 11, 2013, county officials and local veterans gathered to dedicate a *new* Johnson County Armory and Veterans Memorial. The new armory was built in 2009 on Melrose Avenue. The Veterans Memorial was installed at the site of the old armory on Dubuque Street in Iowa City.

Johnson County Veterans Affairs' Director Gary Boseweiler said the memorial recognizes not only the armory's history but also honors local veterans. For more information contact the Johnson County Veterans Affairs office: 319.356.6049, [gbosenei@co.johnson.ia.us](mailto:gbosenei@co.johnson.ia.us).



## County News Con't.

### – from Dallas County

Ed Vos, Dallas County VSO, reports that an estimated 600 people attended the 2013 Dallas County Veterans Fair. Over 29 organizations participated. Ed completed 218 D.O.T. Veteran Drivers license forms; 336 cookies, 26 gallons of coffee, and 6 gallons of iced tea were consumed! Great event and an incredible job!

### – from Boone County

The Boone County Board of Supervisors announced on November 13 that they had hired a new County Veterans Affairs Administrator. Kevin Brown, USMC, will start his new Boone County position on December 2, 2013, and will be working 30 hours per week. Kevin is currently employed with the Military Order of the Purple Heart at the Federal Building in Des Moines. He looks forward to working with veterans by assisting them with county, state, and federal benefits. Kevin's new email will be: [veterans@boonecounty.iowa.gov](mailto:veterans@boonecounty.iowa.gov).

And thank you to Brett McLain for all of his efforts and work to support Boone County veterans during the past 161+ days since Paul Ladd was tragically killed.

Welcome aboard, Kevin!

### – from Winnebago County

Winnebago County Director Jack Caputo will retire December 31, 2013 after 13 years of service. Thomas Coffman, a 24-year navy veteran, will replace him. Thomas had 15 years in active duty and 9 in the reserves. He is a combat veteran of Afganistan, SCD, and has an extensive medical background. Coffman will assume the director title January 1, 2014.

Welcome, Thomas!

### – from Story County

View a slideshow of great photos from the October 1, 2013 Story County honor flight: 150 Story county veterans from WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War enjoyed a trip of a lifetime in Washington, DC.

[Source: Greg Eckstrom, Editor, *Boone News-Republican*]

[www.inisites.com/boone/Slideshows/FF13/index.html](http://www.inisites.com/boone/Slideshows/FF13/index.html)

### – from Decatur County



Forty-three veterans and friends boarded a bus on Wednesday, September 25, for a day-long tour of the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Van Meter and the Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge. The Decatur County Veterans Affairs Office coordinated the event. Transportation was provided courtesy of Central Decatur Schools; Jack Trowbridge graciously donated his time to drive the bus. Lunch, catered by Hy-Vee in Johnston, was provided courtesy of Cowl-Scott American Legion Post #80, Grand River Lions Club, Charles Ladd American Legion Post #215 and Jack Tapscott/Lamoni VFW Post 6283.

### – from IACCVSO

An enthusiastic group of Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veteran Service Officers participated in the annual Veterans Parade at the Iowa State Fair and volunteered to work in the VA booth. Dana Evans (Cherokee County) arranged for the use of the military vehicle.



## County News Con't.

– from Poweshiek County



During the Veterans Day supper at Memorial Hall in Montezuma on November 11, 2013, local World War II veterans were presented with *Quilts of Valor* pieced and quilted by the “Crazy Cut Ups” quilt guild. Shown are (front row from left) Dan and Beulah Thompson representing Ray Thompson, Les Byers, Jack Lang and Cletus Miller; (back row) John Gorsuch, Dale Watts, Ron Arnaman, Frank Wheeler, and Dick Bowers. Quilts were made for ALL veterans in Poweshiek County. Veterans, families, and other well-wishers packed Memorial Hall for the annual program, which also featured speakers Boyd Sparks and Al Rabenold. The event was sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary and the VFW Auxiliary. Photo by James Jennings [Source: *Montezuma Record*, 11-13-13]



## – from Sac County



On October 20, 2013, a large crowd gathered in Sac City, Iowa to dedicate the Sac County Freedom Rock. On hand was the artist, Ray “Bubba” Sorensen, who is noted for his first “military” rock on Iowa Highway 25 in western Iowa.

In Spring 2013, Sorensen began a mission to paint a Freedom Rock in each of Iowa’s 99 counties. He has completed projects in recent months in Sioux County, Pocahontas County, and now, Sac County on Sac City’s Main Street. Stories from Sac County veterans inspired the images for the seven items depicted on the rock.



## Federal News and Updates

### Backlog of Disability Claims Reduced

The Department of Veterans Affairs reported that they have made significant progress in reducing the backlog of disability compensation claims – from 611,000 to 400,835 – since peaking in March. Since the VA launched its initiative to eliminate the oldest claims first in April 2013, the VBA has completed 93% of those older claims.

In the coming months, VBA will continue its effort on further reducing the backlog, still focusing on those claims that have been pending the longest. They reported they will continue to prioritize disability claims for homeless veterans, those experiencing extreme financial hardship, the terminally ill, former Prisoners of War, Medal of Honor recipients, and veterans filing Fully Developed Claims (FDC).

Regardless of the status of their compensation claims, veterans who have served in combat since November 11, 1998, are eligible for five years of free medical care from the VA for most conditions.



### VA Offers Dental Insurance Program

VA is partnering with Delta Dental and MetLife to allow eligible veterans, plus family members receiving CHAMPVA, to purchase affordable dental insurance beginning November 15, 2013.

More than 8 million veterans who enrolled in VA health care can choose to purchase one of the offered dental plans. This three-year pilot has been designed for veterans with no dental coverage, or those eligible for VA dental care who would like to purchase additional coverage. Participation will not affect entitlement to VA dental services and treatment.

Also eligible for the new benefits are nearly 400,000 spouses and dependent children who are reimbursed for most medical expenses under VA's CHAMPVA program.

There are no eligibility limitations based on service-connected disability ratings or enrollment priority assignment. Coverage will begin Jan. 1, 2014 and will be available throughout the United States and its territories.

For more information on the VA Dental Insurance Plan, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip) or contact Delta Dental at 1-855-370-3303.



### 10-Year Anniversary of My HealtheVet

In recognition of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of My HealtheVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)), the Department of Veterans Affairs is urging all veterans and servicemembers to access VA health care information and services online.

My HealtheVet is a website that offers veterans secure access to portions of information in their VA health care records anywhere and anytime. Its web-based tools give users greater control over their care and wellness, helping them become active partners in their health care. It also allows veterans to save, print, and share their health care information using the VA Blue Button, refill VA prescriptions online, and track their health activities.

If you are not yet enrolled, visit [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

## Federal News and Updates Con't.

### VA Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

The VA Vocational Rehabilitation staff will have a counselor at Camp Dodge on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They will be located in the old Credit Union building across from the AAFES store (the same building where ID cards are issued). Staff will provide information regarding VR&E as well as see clients.

For additional information contact Scott Silvay, Employment Coordinator, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: 515.525.8080, [scott.silvay@va.gov](mailto:scott.silvay@va.gov), [www.vetsuccess.gov](http://www.vetsuccess.gov).



### VA Central Iowa Health Care System Appoints new Director

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Judith L. Johnson-Mekota as the new director of the VA Central Iowa Health Care System (VACIHCS).

Ms. Johnson-Mekota has served more than 20 years in health care leadership positions within the VA. She most recently served as Deputy Network Director of the VA Midwest Health Care Network - VISN 23, Eagan, Minnesota.

Ms. Johnson-Mekota holds a Master Degree in Nursing Administration from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa and an undergraduate degree in Nursing from Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

With five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), the VA Central Iowa Health Care System provides health care to approximately 33,644 veterans with an operating budget of \$237M. The health care system has a teaching hospital providing a full range of patient care services with state-of-the-art technology, as well as education and research. Comprehensive health care is provided through primary care and long-term care in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics and extended care.



### Veterans Outreach Project: Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS)

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of the President have set a goal to end homelessness among veterans by 2015. With help from AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, the dedicated staff at CISS works daily towards achieving that goal through programs aimed at reducing homelessness among veterans.

The Central Iowa Shelter and Services mission is to *provide free shelter and meals to homeless adults regardless of physical or emotional conditions, and to facilitate their move toward self-sufficiency*. The mission of the Veterans Outreach Project is to *help home-*

*less veterans out of poverty by connecting them to education, employment, and transportation in order to facilitate their move toward self-sufficiency and to raise awareness of the need within the community*. To further that end, they now have a new 42,000 square foot facility that contains 150 emergency beds, 19 rooms for veteran transitional housing, and 38 Project-Based Section 8 efficiency apartments.

The Community Resource and Referral Center is a “one-stop shop” where veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can get connected to stable



## Local News and Updates

### Home Base Iowa Initiative



—from a press release issued by the Governor's office on November 12, 2013

Governor Branstad today launched an innovative new public-private partnership called Home Base Iowa – an effort that will match military veterans with jobs available across Iowa.

Home Base Iowa will raise private funds to support national targeted marketing efforts to veterans, including in-person outreach, a social media campaign and outreach through military publications.

Former Congressman Leonard Boswell and Casey's General Stores CEO Bob Myers will co-chair the effort.

“We'll be calling upon the business community to partner with Home Base Iowa to help us meet our goals of increasing employment in this state, decreasing veterans' unemployment, and recruiting high quality individuals to Iowa.”

Several hundred thousand veterans will leave the service over the next few years, while having a higher unemployment rate nationally. Gov. Branstad notes that in his travels to Iowa's 99 counties, he's heard from companies that are ready to hire, but struggle to find workers with the right skills.

“We repeatedly hear from employers that they are ready to hire,” said Branstad. “We've made significant investments in developing the skills of Iowa's workforce - through education reform, increased support for community colleges, the STEM initiative, and Skilled Iowa. However, this skills gap still exists. Home Base Iowa is a public-private partnership which will recruit veterans to come to Iowa to work, to become part of our communities - to be Iowans.”

Branstad made the announcement during his weekly news conference, held at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge in Johnston.



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*Veterans Outreach Project continued from page 12*

housing and supportive services. Service providers are available in one location so that veterans can simultaneously make contact with several providers located all in the same facility.

In addition to food and shelter, CISS also provides a weekly primary health care clinic, DMARC food pantry, clothing closet, computer lab, laundry facilities, individualized case management, group counseling, life skills instruction, and referrals to other community services and benefits. Additional services for veterans include drug/alcohol treatment, education, employment, financial (VA benefits, public aid, social security et al.), legal aid, medical/physical health (treatment and/or disease management education), and community resource and referral center. The veterans per diem program is transitional housing for eligible male and female veterans provided in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veteran Administration. At CISS it consists of 19 single bed dormitories. A veteran is eligible to reside in a room for up to 24 months. During their residency they are assisted with supplemental case management, job training, housing placement, and resources. In addition to their own room, clients receive daily meals and access to showers, donated clothing, and laundry facilities.

For more information, contact: 515.284.5719 and/or visit [www.centraliowashelter.org](http://www.centraliowashelter.org).

## Local News and Updates Con't.

### Notable Iowa Veterans - Part 2

A new photo exhibit was unveiled at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge on November 8, 2013 as part of a Veterans Day program. The new exhibit is the second installment of an earlier photographic project by Grand View College Professor Emeritus Bill Schaefer, that honors the “significant military and civilian accomplishments of Iowa’s veterans statewide.”

Schaefer noted that the goal is to show that “military service lays the foundation for a life of service and success.” In 2012, starting with former Governor Bob Ray, he photographed 40 notable Iowa veterans on a volunteer basis in cooperation with the Gold Star Military Museum. This second installment includes an additional 35 notable Iowa veterans, including IDVA’s Executive Director, Colonel Robert King.

The following criteria was used to choose the veterans:

1. Contributions in the U.S. Armed Forces at the national, state, or local level
2. Professional achievement in government, business, education, law, or other professions
3. Accomplishment in athletics, music, or entertainment
4. Representative of people who have affected the lives of others in a positive manner

The exhibition will hang through October, 2014 at the Gold Star Museum. Admission is free. Museum hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

### Veteran Finds Success as Simpson College Football Player

Check out the feature story posted on Simpson College’s website written by Bryan Geelan. The story features a 24-year-old Army veteran and a Simpson College football player named Clay Finley.

“Finley isn’t your typical college junior, but he is a perfect example of how Simpson College helps transfer students find their success.” Find out more here: <http://simpson.edu/success-story/clay-finley-15/>

### Hy-Vee Raises Money for Veterans

Hy-Vee has announced that it is launching a major initiative to raise money and sponsor events to help military members and veterans and their families. The program called “Hy-Vee Homefront”, began November 6-16 in conjunction with Veterans Day. Customers were offered the opportunity to round up their purchases to the nearest dollar or desired dollar amount. The proceeds will benefit Hy-Vee Homefront organizations. Hy-Vee has pledged to match all customer donations up to \$100,000.

“Hy-Vee Homefront is another way for us to say, ‘Thank you’ to those who have served our country, and bring much-needed attention to organizations that are doing outstanding work on behalf of veterans in our local communities,” said Hy-Vee Chief Executive Officer Randy Edeker.

Hy-Vee has long been an active supporter of veterans and military families, sponsoring Honor Flights for veterans to Washington, D.C., providing thousands of free breakfasts to veterans on Veterans Day, and backing other veterans activities.

Three veterans organizations that support military members returning from active duty will benefit initially from Hy-Vee Homefront. These include *Hope for the Warriors*, *Operation First Response*, and the *Puppy Jake Foundation*, which has been established to provide service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress syndrome and other disabilities. [Source: *Des Moines Register*]



## Local News and Updates Con't.

### Meet: The Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa

The Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa has a mission: To empower veterans to thrive in Iowa Agriculture. Why? Consider these facts:

1. Forty percent of veterans are from rural areas.
2. The unemployment rate for young veterans returning from active duty is over 20%.
3. There are more than three times the number of farmers over the age of 55 than below age 35.
4. Twenty-eight percent of Iowa's land is owned by someone over the age of 75.
5. The high cost of land, fuel, and other inputs prohibits young farmers – often even those from farming families.
6. Returned veterans are accustomed to and seeking jobs with a purpose.
7. Returning veterans are starting families and can contribute to rural development.
8. Veterans have a desire to serve.

The Farmer Veteran Coalition has a vision to

1. Assist military veterans to develop, grow, and succeed as Iowa's next generation of farmers and agribusiness leaders;
2. Connect military veterans with resources and networks of information, programs, and organizations to help them transition to agricultural careers;
3. Identify collaborations and resources between agribusiness, farming, education, and military communities;
4. Promote opportunities for all military veterans in all sectors of Iowa's agricultural economy.

To further their mission and vision, the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa has programs and resources for veterans aspiring to farm. They provide guidance to veterans seeking employment in agriculture and rural areas, and are a network for sharing experiences, disseminating resources, and identifying collaborations.

On Saturday, December 14, 2013, the **Farmer Veteran Coalition of Iowa will hold its first annual conference**. It will be held at Easter Seals Iowa, 401 NE 66th Avenue in Des Moines, beginning at 8 am – 5:30 pm. A reception will follow. Hear from more than two dozen experts, including: keynote speaker Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Mark Rasmussen, Director, Leopold Center at ISU, and Col. Robert King (Ret), Executive Director IDVA. Attendance is free, but space is limited. For more information, call 515-661-8459 or email [info@IowaFarmerVeteran.org](mailto:info@IowaFarmerVeteran.org). Visit their website: [www.Iowafarmerveteran.org](http://www.Iowafarmerveteran.org).

#### Breaking News: December 3, 2013

*Newman's Own Foundation* today announced that it is committing \$7 million in grants over three years to support United States military men, women, and families through its "Honoring Those Who Serve" program. The grants will be awarded to more than 50 nonprofit organizations that help military personnel, veterans, and their families successfully manage deployments and the transition from active duty to civilian life.

The *Newman's Own Foundation* grants, which are being awarded over three years – 2012-2014 – will help military service organizations across the country that deal with issues such as health, housing, education, career development, and family support. Some of the "Honoring Those Who Serve" grantee recipients include:

**Farmer Veteran Coalition assists veterans with starting sustainable agriculture businesses. Their grant submission proposed to put on a set of two workshops in 2014 and provide follow-up telephone counseling to Iowa women veterans who want to explore farming as a career. Congratulations!**

For additional information about this project, contact: Leigh Adcock, Executive Director, Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, 515-460-2477, [www.wfan.org](http://www.wfan.org).

## Education News

### University of Iowa Makes the Top Ten for Veterans

*U.S. News & World Report* has recently ranked the University of Iowa among top 10 best colleges for veterans. The UI ranks sixth among 234 national and regional institutions. This is the first time *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked best colleges for veterans.

To qualify for the *Best Colleges for Veterans* ranking, schools had to be certified for the GI Bill and participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program (federal initiatives that aid veterans with tuition and fees). They also had to be part of the Service Members Opportunity Colleges Consortium.

Available resources for veterans on-campus at the University of Iowa include the GI Bill Certification Office and the Military and Veterans Student Services Office – part of the UI Chief Diversity Office – where veterans can access assistance in areas that range from childcare to employment and mentoring.

“We really want to help folks develop the soft skills they need to get a job, and create a university culture that demonstrates we care and understand,” says Allen Roberts, UI military and veteran education specialist.

There are currently about 600 veterans enrolled at the UI, around half of whom are married with children. Many have never seen combat.

All of the *Best Colleges for Veterans* scored high marks when it came to graduation rates, faculty resources, reputation, and other indicators of academic quality in the 2014 edition of *U.S. News Best Colleges*.

The nine other schools ranked in the Top 10 are Pennsylvania State University-University Park (ranked No. 1); Tulane University and the University of Texas-Austin (tied at 2); Syracuse University (4); Texas A&M University-College Station (5); Indiana University-Bloomington, Marquette University and Miami University-Oxford (tied at 7); and the University of Vermont (10). [Source: <http://now.uiowa.edu/2013/11/us-news-ranks-ui-among-top-10-best-colleges-veterans>]

### Online Skill-Building for Transition from Military to College

Student Veterans of America (SVA) and Kognito Interactive have announced a partnership to provide institutions of higher education with a suite of online, skill-building simulations that prepare faculty, staff, and student veterans to recognize and address challenges that student veterans may face as they transition from military to college life. These challenges include social isolation, cultural disparities, academic difficulties, and mental-health issues such as PTSD, depression, thoughts of suicide, and TBI.

In each *Veterans on Campus* simulation, users enter a virtual practice environment and engage in a series of challenging role-play conversations with emotionally responsive and fully animated virtual students who realistically portray student veterans struggling with the adjustment to college life. The user’s task in each conversation is to help the virtual student through the challenges he or she faces and build the student’s motivation to actively resolve those challenges.

“By providing users with practice speaking with virtual student veterans, the *Veterans on Campus* trainings build the skills and confidence individuals need to engage in similar conversations in real life,” said Kognito’s Co-Founder and CEO Ron Goldman.

To learn more about the *Veterans on Campus* programs and view demos of the trainings, visit [www.studentveterans.org/veterans-on-campus-support-training](http://www.studentveterans.org/veterans-on-campus-support-training).



## National News

### National Governor's Association Assists with Veterans' Employment

To assist states in easing veterans' transition from military service to civilian life and meaningful employment, the National Governors Association (NGA) today announced the selection of six states—Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, Virginia and Wisconsin—to participate in the Veterans' Licensing and Certification Demonstration Policy Academy.

Each state will develop a plan to help service members leaving the military gain the necessary civilian credentials in three of the five following occupations (which all require state-level credentials): truck drivers, police officers, EMTs/paramedics, licensed practical nurses, plus one healthcare occupation of the state's choosing based on its particular needs.

"As thousands of heroic men and women return home from overseas, it is our job to make their transition back to civilian life as smooth and successful as possible," said Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton. "This policy academy will help states learn from one another. I am grateful Minnesota will have this opportunity."

Selected states also will work to reduce the number of unemployment insurance claims and the length of time for which veterans draw benefits. Finally, they will study ways to reduce costs associated with veterans receiving credentials.

An NGA policy academy is a highly interactive, team-based, multi-state process in which a number of states develop and implement an action plan to address a complex public policy issue. Participating states receive guidance and technical assistance from NGA staff and faculty experts, as well as consultants from the private sector, research organizations and academia. [Source: NGA (National Governors Association, [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org))]

### Google Maps Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington National Cemetery is one of the most famous cemeteries in the United States...more than 400,000 veterans have been laid to rest there since the 1860s, when the location became a burial ground specifically for US soldiers. Those interred at Arlington include John F. Kennedy, William Howard Taft, George S. Patton, Medgar Evers, Dashiell Hammett, Joe Louis, Robert F. Kennedy, Glenn Miller, Audie Murphy, Ruby G. Bradley (1907-2002, Colonel and, with 34 medals, one of the most decorated women in U.S. military history), and James Parks, freedman, the **only person buried at Arlington Cemetery who was born on the grounds.**

Google has announced it is mapping this hallowed burial ground. Using the *Street View Trekker* backpack, which is equipped with a 15-lens camera system that pops out of the top of the wearable pack and constantly records images, Google employees are walking the paths of the cemetery collecting images.

Google began its project to map the cemetery by collecting millions of photos and stitching them together to re-create the feeling of strolling the iconic burial ground. Online users will be able to zoom in close enough to read some grave markers, zoom out for panoramas, or experience a 360-degree view. Once Google has finished mapping, internet travelers can visit Arlington with a click of their mouse.

The images will be available to the public in May for the cemetery's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, honoring the day when Pvt. William Christman became the first soldier buried there, in Section 27.

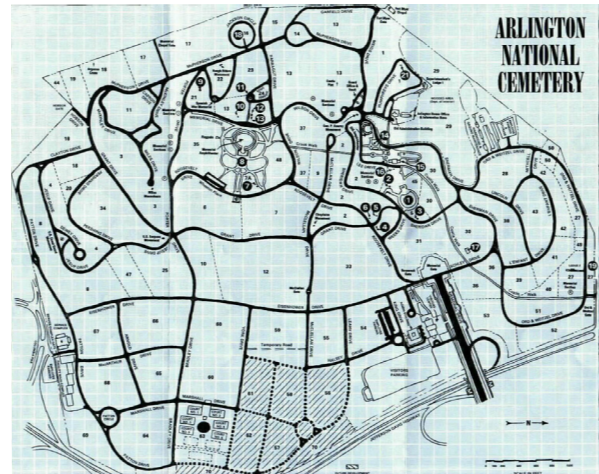
Arlington National Cemetery provides online access to photos of its 400,000 above- and below-ground burial sites. Google's images will be less granular and will capture only the gravestones close to where its Trekker passes,

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the company said. Given the 27 to 30 burials a day at the cemetery, Google won't be able to display new burials and seasonal changes. Lynch said cemetery officials will work with Google on updates. [Source: *The Washington Post*]

For additional information about Arlington Cemetery, visit: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/21/us/arlington-national-cemetery-fast-facts/>



## Doolittle Raiders Honored

The Air Force hosted the famed Doolittle Tokyo Raiders' final toast to their fallen comrades during an invitation-only ceremony November 9, 2013 at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. The ceremony was attended by three of the four living Doolittle Tokyo Raiders. On April 18, 1942, 80 men achieved the unimaginable when they took off from an aircraft carrier on a top secret mission to bomb Japan. These men, led by Lt. Col. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle, came to be known as the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders.

The April 1942 air attack on Japan, launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet, was the most daring operation yet undertaken by the United States in the young Pacific War. The raid caused negligible material damage to Japan, only hitting non-military targets or missing completely – Doolittle thought immediately after the raid that the loss of all his aircraft would lead to his being court-martialed, rather than honored – but it succeeded in its goal of helping American morale and casting doubt in Japan on the ability of its military leaders. [[www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/wwii-pac/misc-42/dooltl.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/wwii-pac/misc-42/dooltl.htm)]



B-25 taking off from USS Hornet for the raid



Crew No. 1 on deck of Hornet; Lt. Col. Doolittle f. row left



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