

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Camp Dodge – Building 3465, Johnston, IA 50131  
515-252-4698 800-838-4692 <https://va.iowa.gov>

## Winter/Early Spring 2014

### Attend the Veterans Career Fair Thursday, April 24, 2014 Freedom Center - Camp Dodge

The Iowa Business Council and Home Base Iowa – along with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and the Central Iowa Building Trades, are partnering to create career opportunities for active duty military, members of the National Guard and Reserves, military spouses, and veterans of all ranks and levels of experience. Many of the participating career fair employers have current openings that need to be filled immediately.



April 24, 2014:

9:30 am - 11:00 am

Candidate support:

Resumé review, mock interviews, and coaching

11:00 am - Noon

FREE Candidate lunch

Noon - 4:00 pm

Career Fair

Camp Dodge - Freedom Center  
7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Johnston, Iowa

*A partial listing of participating companies include:*

Principal Financial Group, Blue Bunny, Wellmark, Hy-Vee, Alliant Energy, Iowa Bankers, HNI Corp, Pella Windows, John Deere, Rockwell Collins, Casey's, DuPont Pioneer, Wells Fargo, and members of the Central Iowa Building & Construction Trades Council (Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Plasterer & Cement Masons, Electricians, Elevator Constructors, Glaziers, Ironworkers, Laborers, Millwrights, Operating Engineers, Painters, Plumbers & Steamfitters, Roofers, Sheet Metal Workers).

For additional information, contact Jill Joseph, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs:  
515-727-3442 or [jill.joseph@iowa.gov](mailto:jill.joseph@iowa.gov) or visit [www.homebaseiowa.org](http://www.homebaseiowa.org).

## Veteran Employment

### Goal Set to Hire 2,500 Veterans

The Iowa Business Council recently announced their support of Governor Terry Branstad's *Home Base Iowa* initiative. The Iowa Business Council is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose membership includes major Iowa employers.

The *Home Base Iowa* Initiative was founded to serve as a comprehensive source for job services available to veterans. The initiative group is a private-public partnership led by the Iowa military community, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and the office of Governor Branstad; their mission is to make Iowa the state of choice for military men and women as they begin their journey to civilian careers.

Iowa Business Council member companies touch one in six Iowans and represent all of Iowa's major industries - from manufacturing and bioscience to finance and technology. Cumulatively, Iowa Business Council members employ nearly 250,000 people in all 99 Iowa counties.

Individuals, businesses, or Iowa communities interested in learning more about *Home Base Iowa* should contact: 855-942-4692 or [homebase@iowa.gov](mailto:homebase@iowa.gov). (Source: Governor's press release, 1-27-14)



*Home Base Iowa* is a private-public partnership to raise \$6 million to advertise Iowa as the place to work for military veterans and service members. In addition to promoting Iowa, the initiative will help connect veterans with open job positions in the state.

Mike Ralston, the president of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry, said many of the association's member companies have had difficulty finding qualified workers. "Recruiting veterans to Iowa would bring the skills those companies require."

### Greene County Becomes First Home Base Iowa Community

The Governor's office has recently designated Greene County as the first *Home Base Iowa* community in the state. This designation expands the *Home Base Iowa* initiative to 53 total businesses with a goal of hiring over 2,900 veterans.

By being named a *Home Base Iowa* community, counties and cities will mark themselves "veteran friendly" – giving them a competitive edge when recruiting. Ken Paxton, executive director for the Greene County Development Corp., said the county developed an incentive package that includes a three-year property-tax abatement, financial aid for moving expenses, and a website that veterans can use to automatically fill out a job application for the 30 businesses joining the county's effort.

Paxton also reported the county expects many new job openings in the upcoming months. John Deere and Scranton Manufacturing should see 800 to 1,000 new positions. He would like to attract at least 200 to 300 veterans during the next two years. [Source: *Des Moines Register*, 2-25-14.]

## Upcoming Events

# ArtsShare

University of Iowa Arts Share brings graduate student artists to perform and work in communities throughout Iowa. For the last 9 years, Arts Share has been connecting Writers' Workshop graduate students and chronically and mentally ill people in Iowa to conduct both one-on-one and group creative writing classes through the Patient Voice Project. In 2014, Arts Share is interested in expanding this work to of-



fer writing classes to Iowa veterans. Through grant support, Arts Share is able to conduct these classes free of charge. To learn more about Arts Share and the Patient Voice Project, visit <http://artshare.uiowa.edu> and <http://artshare.uiowa.edu/pvp/index.html>. Individual veterans or organizations interested in participating should contact: [artshare@uiowa.edu](mailto:artshare@uiowa.edu) or 319-335-1618.



## Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day Commemorates 50-Year Anniversary

On May 7, 2014, Iowa Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day will hold a special ceremony this year in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War (officially proclaimed May 28-2012 – November 11, 2025 as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War.) The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs is one of 5,402 members of the Vietnam War Commemoration Commemorative Partners Program. Partners participate in the Commemoration by planning and conducting events and activities that recognize the Vietnam Veterans and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice.

This year the remembrance on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, will begin at 11:00 am (instead of the previous 12:00 pm starting time). The ceremony will be held at the Vietnam Memorial located on the south side of the State Capitol. Along with many honored guests, attendees, and musicians, AmVets Post 2 will open their doors for a luncheon following the ceremony; DAV will fund the free lunch.



For additional information on the national commemoration – including other commemorative events, history and education, an interactive time-line, the commemorative partner program, photos, videos – visit: <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>.

For more information about the May 7<sup>th</sup> ceremony, contact Dan Gannon (VVA): [gannonobx@aol.com](mailto:gannonobx@aol.com), 515-991-5257, or Jill Joseph (IDVA): [jill.joseph@iowa.gov](mailto:jill.joseph@iowa.gov), 515-727-3443.

<http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/subscribe>

follow on Twitter: @VietnamWar50<sup>th</sup>

Like on Facebook /VietnamWar50<sup>th</sup>

Commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War Proclamation**COMMEMORATION OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE VIETNAM WAR****BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA****A PROCLAMATION**

As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, we reflect with solemn reverence upon the valor of a generation that served with honor. We pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who left their families to serve bravely, a world away from everything they knew and everyone they loved. From Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon and countless villages in between, they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoon, fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans. Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

As a grateful Nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots—their names etched in black granite—who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know. We draw inspiration from the heroes who suffered unspeakably as prisoners of war, yet who returned home with their heads held high. We pledge to keep faith with those who were wounded and still carry the scars of war, seen and unseen. With more than 1,600 of our service members still among the missing, we pledge as a Nation to do everything in our power to bring these patriots home. In the reflection of The Wall, we see the military family members and veterans who carry a pain that may never fade. May they find peace in knowing their loved ones endure, not only in medals and memories, but in the hearts of all Americans, who are forever grateful for their service, valor, and sacrifice.

In recognition of a chapter in our Nation's history that must never be forgotten, let us renew our sacred commitment to those who answered our country's call in Vietnam and those who awaited their safe return. Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the Federal Government will partner with local governments, private organizations, and communities across America to participate in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War—a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging missions we have ever faced. While no words will ever be fully worthy of their service, nor any honor truly befitting their sacrifice, let us remember that it is never too late to pay tribute to the men and women who answered the call of duty with courage and valor. Let us renew our commitment to the fullest possible accounting for those who have not returned.

Throughout this Commemoration, let us strive to live up to their example by showing our Vietnam veterans, their families, and all who have served the fullest respect and support of a grateful Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to honor our Vietnam veterans, our fallen, our wounded, those unaccounted for, our former prisoners of war, their families, and all who served with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written over a horizontal line.

## Harvesting Our Potential



## NEWS

### IOWA FEMALE MILITARY VETERANS INTERESTED IN FARM CAREERS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN ON-FARM MENTORSHIPS

Iowa's female military veterans who are interested in exploring careers in sustainable agriculture are invited to participate in a new project sponsored by Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN).

Mentorship applications are currently being accepted for 8 on-farm mentorships in 2014. Mentees will spend 10 weeks working with an established female farmer in Iowa operating the type of farm the mentee is interested in starting, such as fruit and vegetable, livestock, orchard and other diversified crop farms. They will learn skills related to production, harvest, post-harvest handling, and marketing. Start dates are flexible, ranging from early spring to fall. **The application period will remain open until mentorships are filled.**

WFAN will pay mentees a stipend of \$50/week to help offset expenses. Mentor farms will offer a compensation package including an hourly wage and in some cases room and board. Reliable transportation is recommended.

To learn more about the program, visit WFAN's Harvesting Our Potential program page at <http://wfan.org/our-programs/harvesting-our-potential> and click on Female Veterans. The application form is available at this link: <http://wfan.org/on-farm-mentee-application-2014>.

Find other opportunities through this program like the Farm Dreams workshop on March 22 and upcoming peer networking events.

For more information contact Leigh Adcock at [leigh@wfan.org](mailto:leigh@wfan.org) or 515.460.2477.

## Capitol Events

Veterans Day on the Hill - January 22, 2014



Photos by Robert Nandell

## IDVA News

IDVA staff member, Bob Steben, was honored on the big screen as the *Iowa Wild* “Veteran Hero of the Game” on December 26, 2013. Congrats!



*Bob Steben, Executive Officer, IDVA*

IDVA introduces Chad Cohoon as a member of the cemetery crew. Chad began as a part-time cemetery employee, and is now working full-time. Welcome!



*Chad Cohoon, IDVA Cemetery Maintenance Worker*

## Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery reports that through March 1, 2014 there are:  
 Applications on file (still living): 6,796    Interments: 1,858  
 Veterans interred: 1,517    Dependents interred: 341

Iowa Veterans Cemetery Facts:  
 Caskets: 572    Cremations: 1,230    *In Memory of* markers: 56  
 States represented: 37    From Iowa: 1,671

## County News

### – from Bremer County

Bremer County VA has produced a terrific presentation for their Board of Supervisors. In addition to the monthly updates that they supply to the Bremer County Commission on veterans affairs, they also provide the Bremer County Board of Supervisors with monthly and annual updates. This year they wanted to give the taxpayers of Bremer County the opportunity to see what they present to their leadership.

Neal W. Jarnagin stated, “2013 was a tremendous year for Bremer County Veterans Affairs. Thanks to the Board of Supervisors, the Bremer County Commission on Veterans Affairs, our community partners, the multiple donors and you, the veteran and family members, we have seen growth that until this point has been unprecedented. We would like to take this opportunity to fondly look back on 2013, but to also let you know that 2014 is expected to be even more grand! Changes are occurring almost daily with more benefits available to veterans and their family members, more outreach to those who can’t get to the office, coordinating care with VA providers and their patients, and far too many other things that can’t be listed in one email. So, browse the articles and let us know how you think we’re doing. We couldn’t have come this far without you!” View the presentation here:

[http://prezi.com/y8sdf1z7bluq/2013-in-review/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/y8sdf1z7bluq/2013-in-review/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

## County News Con't.

### – from Cherokee County

Cherokee County is holding its 9<sup>th</sup> annual Veteran Appreciation Day on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm at the Cherokee Fair Grounds, 200 Linden Street (South 59 Highway), Cherokee, Iowa. IDVA Executive Director Bob King will be the guest speaker. Setup will begin at 8:00 am. This year's theme will be World War I (1914-1917) and World War II (1941-1945). Veteran Affairs offices, businesses, military groups, and service organizations are invited to participate. VA representatives will be in attendance along with free music and food!

### – from Monroe County

Monroe County set a goal last year to identify all living World War II veterans who reside in the county. With help from the County Assessor's office, Legion membership, and some local veterans' knowledge, they identified 40. To honor and celebrate their service, the Monroe County Veterans Affairs office is serving a dinner for the WWII vets and their surviving spouse (or a family member or guest). The event will be held on May 1, 2014 and begins at 5:00. The dinner is free for the veteran and \$7.00 for a guest. RSVP the county office: 641-932-5622.

### – from Pottawattamie County: Veterans Affairs Office to be Built

Citizens in Pottawattamie County have voted to build a new veterans office in downtown Council Bluffs. The Veterans Affairs Office is currently located in a 1,600 square foot office in an annex building near the County Courthouse.

The new 6,300 square-foot building will include an office for each of the four case workers, two private meeting rooms, a computer data room, wider hallways, and a waiting room where veterans could view informational veteran videos and literature. Additionally, there will be a space that could be used by other community organizations.

County officials will begin working immediately with architects on final designs. Proposed locations are: south-east corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street & 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and northwest corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Construction should begin this Spring. [Source: Tim Rohwer, *Nonpareilonline*]

### – from Muscatine County

Muscatine County will hold a Veterans Benefits Fair on Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00 to 6:00 (approximate end time) at the Muscatine Community College.

For more information, contact Sara Creamer, VA Administrator, Muscatine County: 563.262.4162 or [screamer@co.muscatine.ia.us](mailto:screamer@co.muscatine.ia.us).

## In Memoriam

We are sorry to report the passing of two Iowa County VA directors this month.

Tom Crosby, age 74 of Williamsburg, Iowa, died Thursday, March 6, 2014 at his home. He served in the U.S. Navy for 6 years, stationed in San Diego and Seattle. He worked with several veteran service organizations and most recently was the director of the Iowa County Veterans Affairs office. He was a member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, the American Legion and numerous other veteran organizations.

John McCormick, age 65 of Forest City, Iowa died Friday, March 7, 2014 at the Muse Norris Hospice Inpatient Unit in Mason City after a long battle with cancer. He served his country in the U.S. Navy from 1969 to 1973. He was a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion.

Our sincerest condolences to their families and friends of both of these dedicated veterans.

## Education News

### G.I. Bill Comparison Tool Beta

About This Tool:

VA is making it easier to research colleges and employers approved for the GI Bill. Answer just a few questions about yourself and the school/employer you are considering. You'll receive an estimate of your GI Bill benefits and some information about the facility's value and affordability.

<http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool>

The screenshot displays the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: VA > Veterans Benefits Administration > Education and Training > Comparison Tool. The main heading is "Education and Training" with a sub-heading "Choosing a School". A horizontal process flow includes: EXPLORE YOUR CAREER (CareerScope), COMPARE SCHOOLS (GI Bill Comparison Tool), CHOOSE A SCHOOL (Decision Guide), APPLY FOR GI BILL (VONAPP), SUCCEED IN SCHOOL (Educational Counseling), and FIND EMPLOYMENT (Career Center). The "GI Bill® Comparison Tool Beta" section is highlighted in orange. It contains a "Calculate your benefits and research approved programs." sidebar and an "Eligibility" form with fields for "Cumulative Post 9-11 Active Duty Service" (set to 36+ months: 100% (includes BASIC)) and "Military Status" (set to Veteran). Below is a "School / Employer Information" section with a search box and a "Taking all online classes?" checkbox (set to No). A "Benefit Estimator" section shows a table with a dollar sign icon:

<b>Tuition / Fees:</b>	\$ / year
<b>Housing Allowance:</b>	\$ / month
<b>Book Stipend:</b>	\$ / year

At the bottom, there are links for "About this Tool", "Feedback", and "Accessibility", along with a "return to top" link.

## Education News Con't.

### Military Exchange License for Teachers

Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds recently announced removal of barriers for qualified veterans and military spouses who want to teach in Iowa

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has created a new military exchange license for veterans and military spouses who have teaching credentials but face new licensure requirements when they move to Iowa. Military families move every few years for employment, and spouses who are teachers must relicense and meet new requirements with each move to a new state.

The new license ties in with the Branstad-Reynolds administration's *Home Base Iowa Initiative* to recruit veterans to Iowa. The announcement came on the same day as the Iowa House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee passed House Study Bill 616, an Act relating to professional and occupational licensure of veterans and the spouses of veterans.

About 70 percent of out-of-state residents who apply for teaching licenses in Iowa must take additional coursework to meet the state's licensure standards.

"The Home Base Iowa Act that Governor Branstad and I have proposed would direct all licensing boards to take action similar to what the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has done," said Reynolds. "We know members of the military and their spouses will bring a wide array of skills and knowledge to Iowa. Continued action like this will ensure our service members and their spouses are able to land the career that meets their qualifications."

The new military exchange license enables veterans and military spouses to teach up to three years without taking any additional college courses. The license also is offered at a reduced cost of \$85 instead of \$210. The military exchange license is a three-year license. After three years, the license can be converted to a one-year license, giving license-holders full authority to teach while they take the required classes. Once the requirements are met, the license can be converted to a regular Iowa teaching license.

Eligible applicants must have completed a teacher preparation program through a college or university and must have been a licensed teacher in another state. Teachers who completed an alternative teacher preparation program outside of a college or university and are not eligible for full licensure will be granted substitute licenses. [Source: Office of the Governor, 2-13-14]



### Automation Speeds Benefits Processing for Post 9/11 GI Bill Students

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decreased the time it takes to process requests for GI Bill and other education benefits for returning students by nearly 50 percent compared to fiscal year 2012. VA attributes the faster process in large part to improved claims automation that uses rules-based, industry-standard technologies to deliver Veterans' benefits.

Under Secretary for Benefits, Allison A. Hickey stated, "This automation has not only improved education benefits processing, it has allowed us to shift resources to other priorities, like improving timeliness of disability compensation decisions. It's a great example of how technology is helping us to transform the way we do business and better serve Veterans."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill builds on the great legacy of the original GI Bill, giving Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and

*Continued on page 11*

## Education News Con't.

*Continued from page 10*

their families the opportunity to reach their educational goals, find a good job, and improve their lives. The automation technology, part of VA's Post-9/11GI Bill processing system called "Long Term Solution" (LTS), was implemented in September 2012. This technology has more than 1,700 calculations and rules that support benefits delivery for eligible veterans, service members, and dependents. Up to six distinct payments per beneficiary can be calculated automatically per term, including: housing, books and supplies stipend, tuition and fees, and Yellow Ribbon payments.

In addition, a variety of different types of education and training programs are supported by the automated technology, including: graduate, undergraduate, non-college degree, correspondence, licensing and certification, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training.

The improvement in timeliness was achieved despite a 27 percent increase in incoming education claims - 3.4 million in fiscal year 2013 compared to 2.7 million the prior year. Currently, VA is processing initial claims for new students in an average of less than 20 days, and supplemental claims for returning students in less than 8 days, down from 33 days and 16 days respectively since LTS was first fielded. For more information about VA education benefits, visit [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill). [Source: VA Public Affairs, 1-29-14]

## Local News and Updates

### Bubba Sorenson Partners with Iowa Lottery

The Iowa Lottery hopes to raise \$2 million for the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund with a new scratch game that includes a chance to win a custom-painted Victory motorcycle. The \$31,000 motorcycle features a tank painted by artist Ray "Bubba" Sorenson II, best known for his Freedom Rock paintings on a boulder near Greenfield.

The game, called "Ride to Riches" carries cash prizes up to \$1,000. Losing tickets may be entered online at [www.iotaltery.com](http://www.iotaltery.com) for a chance to win the motorcycle through a raffle drawing scheduled for late March.

Sorenson's artwork adorns the bike's gas tank. It features an eagle with red, white and blue banners on each side. Painted into the banners is the saying, "All gave some, some gave all," most frequently attributed to Howard Osterkamp, a Korean War veteran from Ohio.

Lottery profits have generated more than \$14 million for the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund since 2008.



Bob King, Bubba Sorenson, and Iowa Lottery CEO Terry Rich unveil the motorcycle



IA Commission of Veterans Affairs members Dan Gannon & Darlene McMartin; IDVA Executive Director Bob King

## Local News and Updates Con't.

### Des Moines Vet Center Open House & Ribbon Cutting

The Des Moines Vet Center recently celebrated its new home with an Open House and Ribbon Cutting on February 19, 2014 at their new location in West Des Moines. The Vet Center has been an integral part of the Department of Veterans Affairs since 1979, "providing readjustment counseling and referral services to military men and women who served in any combat zone, and to those who have been sexually traumatized or harassed while serving on active duty. Services are also available to veterans' family members for military-related issues, and bereavement counseling is provided to the families of service members who died while on active duty status."

The Open House program included remarks by Judith Johnson-Mekota, Director of the VA Central Iowa Health Care System; Joan Cutler, GWOT Veteran; Clarence Slaughter, Manager, Central Region 2 Vet Centers; Terry Brandstad, Governor of the state of Iowa and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds; Col. Robert King (Ret.), Executive Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

The Des Moines Vet Center is now located at: 1821 22nd Street #115, Des Moines, IA 50266. Contact information is: 515.284.4929 or 877.927.8387



### The Legion d'Honneur

On Saturday, January 18, 2014, Mr. Clarence Lippert of Des Moines, was presented with the Legion of Honor medal by the Honorary Consul of France, Mark Schlenker. The ceremony was held at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge, with congratulations from Governor Terry Branstad, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, Deputy Adjutant General Steve Altman, and nearly 100 family and friends.

Lippert served in three of the four main campaigns fought to liberate France,. He fought at Normandy, including landing on Omaha Beach. Altman said Lippert spent 282 days in a direct combat environment in his nearly 3 years of service in France, Belgium, and Germany. He is a 60+ member of AmVets Post 2.

Upon presentation of their military file, U.S. veterans who risked their life during World War II to fight on French territory, may be awarded this distinction. Those selected are appointed to the rank of Knight of the Legion of Honor. The Legion of Honor medal is not awarded posthumously.

To be eligible for this outstanding award, the veteran has to fit strict criteria: Interested veterans of all the different armed forces must have fought in at least one of the 3 main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Provence/Southern France or Northern France. Actions having taken place in Belgium, Germany, Italy or any other neighboring European country are not taken into consideration.

The French Legion of Honor was first established by Napoleon Bonaparte in May 1802. Created to honor extraordinary contributions to the country, the Legion of Honor is France's highest distinction bestowed in France and is divided into five categories: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand Officier (Grand Officer) and Grand Croix (Grand Cross). The highest degree of the Order of the Legion of Honor is that of Grand Master, which is held by the sitting President of the Republic.

Other notable individuals receiving this award include General Dwight D. Eisenhower, General George Patton, Sergeant Audie Murphy, and General Douglas MacArthur.

To hear an interview with Clarence Lippert – recorded on 11-9-12 at AIB College of Business in Des Moines for the Veterans History Project, Library of Congress, visit: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.87975/transcript?ID=mv0001>.

## Local News and Updates Con't.

### Veterans Medals Presentation

Senator Tom hosted a medals ceremony on Sunday, March 9, 2014 at the Iowa Gold Star Museum in Camp Dodge. Senator Harkin presented medals to three veterans:

James Rupp of Waukee served in the United States Army from June 6, 1944 to June 6, 1946 as an infantryman in the mortar section. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, the Expert Badge with Rifle Bar, and the Honorable Service Lapel pin.

Bob Fessler of Cumming, served in the United States Army from December 5, 1966 to December 4, 1968 as an artillery man before being promoted to gunner. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Infantry Badge First Award, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Expert Badge with Pistol Bar, Sharp Shooter Badge with Auto Rifle Bar, and the Marksman Badge with Mortar Bar and Rifle Bar.

Duane Otto of Nevada, served in the United States Army from June 15, 1970 to December 24, 1971 as an artillery man before being promoted to gunner, and the Iowa National Guard from April, 1982 to February, 2003 when he retired as Sergeant First Class. Otto was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Combat Infantry Badge, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Expert Badge with Auto Rifle Bar and Grenade Bar, Driver and Mechanic Badge, Army Aviation Badge Master, and Army Aviation Badge Basic. He earned a Purple Heart when he was hit by shrapnel during combat shortly after arriving in Vietnam.

Harkin stressed the importance for families to have these heirlooms to pass down from generation to generation, and said he was happy to see so many grandchildren present at the ceremony. [Source: Harkin office; *Des Moines Register*.]



L to R: Senator Harkin, Bob Fessler, Duane Otto, James Rupp

## Veteran History

### Chaplain George W. Prioleau

### One of First African American Officers of Spanish American War



In 1895, Chaplain George W. Prioleau became one of a handful of African American “Buffalo Soldiers” commissioned as officers within the U.S. Army. He was given the rank of Captain. These new officers served in segregated units, just as their Civil War predecessors – the United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) – did, where white men typically held officer positions, but they made a difference despite the world of racism that they worked in.

George Prioleau was born around 1856 to slave parents, L.S. and Susan A Prioleau, in Charleston, South Carolina. As a teenager he became active in the A.M.E. church and later attended Wilberforce University, graduating with a Bachelors in Divinity in 1884. He then served as pastor in several Ohio A.M.E. churches, got married, and taught in the Theology Department at Wilberforce University. On April 25, 1895, President Grover Cleveland appointed him as Chaplain of the U.S. Army’s 9th Cavalry at the rank of Captain and that year Payne Theological Seminary conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity.

#### FIRST COLORED OFFICERS.

BOSTON, May 16.—To-day, when Gov. Wolcott signed the commissions of Capt. William J. Williams, Lieut. William Hubert Jackson, and George Braxton of Company L, Sixth Massachusetts United States Volunteers, he was the first Governor in the history of the United States to place in the hands of colored men commissions as officers in the army of this country. Capt. Williams is the first known colored man in this country to go into the army from the militia service, or, as far as known, in any service with a Captain's commission. So, too, it may be said of Lieut. Jackson, that he will ever have the distinction of being the first colored man to enter the army with a First Lieutenant's commission.

The one colored company in Massachusetts is the only one thus far that has been mustered into the Volunteer Army from the militia service, and this fact gives the company and its officers a distinction such as no other company in the United States will have. It is, besides, the only colored company in the United States attached to a white regiment, and its course throughout the present difficulty with Spain will be watched with interest.

Up to to-day, when the commissions of the Sixth Regiment were signed by the Governor, the list of colored officers in the army stood on the army list as follows: John Young, Second Lieutenant, Tenth Cavalry, detailed as he is still as military instructor at Wilberforce University, Xenia, Ohio; Allen Allensworth, Captain and Chaplain in Twenty-fifth Infantry; T. G. Steard, Captain and Chaplain, Twenty-fifth Infantry; G. W. Prioleau, Captain and Chaplain, Ninth Cavalry; W. J. Anderson, Captain and Chaplain, Tenth Cavalry.

He replaced the Army’s first African American chaplain, Henry V. Plummer, at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, during the Sioux Wars and served his unit largely in the American West before and after the Spanish American War. During the Spanish American War and in 1907-1909 he was stationed at various camps in the Philippines which included Nueva Caceres, Santa Mesa, and Manila. He crossed the Pacific Ocean six times – four times with his regiment and twice on detached service – and served with the 9th Cavalry for nearly 21 years. In November 1915, he was transferred to the 10th Cavalry, then to the 25th Cavalry, where he was promoted to Major. He retired in 1920.

In retirement, he helped found the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles and during his long career as Army chaplain, he generously helped support several churches. In 1927 he fell from a ladder while painting the church and died. He was buried in the cemetery of the Pacific Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (VHA origins), known today as Los Angeles National Cemetery. [Source: Darlene Richardson, Historian, Veterans Health Administration (10B2D)]

NAME		RANK	COMPANY	U.S. Regiment, Detachment, or Post	DATE OF DEATH
Prioleau, George W		Chaplain (Major)	25th U.S. Inf., Retired		July 16, 1927
NAME OF CEMETERY		CITY	STATE		
Pacific Branch, Nat'l Home for D.V.S.		Sawtelle,	Calif.,		
TO BE SHIPPED TO:		PERMANENT ADDRESS:		DATE	
Governor, Soldiers' Home, Los Angeles County, via Sawtelle, Calif.		Soldiers' Home, Calif.		JAN 2 0 1928	
DO NOT WRITE HERE		Address:		Date:	
FEB 6 1928		Soldiers' Home, Calif.		JAN 2 0 1928	
This application is for the VETERAN'S grave of a Soldier. It is understood the same will be furnished and delivered at the burial place or elsewhere pending approval, freight prepaid, and agreed to will be promptly returned and not to be given again.		State whether soldier, sailor, marine, Army nurse, etc.		197662	
From: JUC 10 1930		197662		197662	
Shipped: JUC 10 1930		197662		197662	

**Camp Dodge Staff**

Robert King  
Executive Director  
[Robert.King@iowa.gov](mailto:Robert.King@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3444

Bob Steben  
Executive Officer  
[Bob.Steben@iowa.gov](mailto:Bob.Steben@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3438

John Halstead  
Benefits Specialist  
[John.Halstead@iowa.gov](mailto:John.Halstead@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3439

David Heim  
Benefits Specialist  
[David.Heim@va.gov](mailto:David.Heim@va.gov)  
515-362-7350

Jill Joseph  
Outreach Coordinator  
[Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov](mailto:Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3442

Missy Miller  
Trust Fund Administrator  
[Missy.Miller@iowa.gov](mailto:Missy.Miller@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3443

Mari Mielke  
Administrative Assistant  
[Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov](mailto:Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3440

Bob Betz  
Clerk Specialist  
[Bob.Betz@iowa.gov](mailto:Bob.Betz@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3441

**Cemetery Staff**

Keith Blum  
Cemetery Superintendent  
[Keith.Blum@iowa.gov](mailto:Keith.Blum@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

Mindy McGregor  
Cemetery Representative  
[Melinda.McGregor@iowa.gov](mailto:Melinda.McGregor@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

Shane Laycock  
Cemetery Foreman  
[Shane.Laycock@iowa.gov](mailto:Shane.Laycock@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

Jeanna Hampel  
Cemetery Assistant  
[Jeanna.Hampel@iowa.gov](mailto:Jeanna.Hampel@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

Chad Cohoon  
Cemetery Maintenance Worker 2  
[Chad.Cohoon@iowa.gov](mailto:Chad.Cohoon@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs  
7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Camp Dodge - Building 3465  
Johnston, IA 50131  
<https://va.iowa.gov>  
515-252-4698 Local Phone  
800-838-4692 Toll Free  
515-727-3713 Fax

