

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

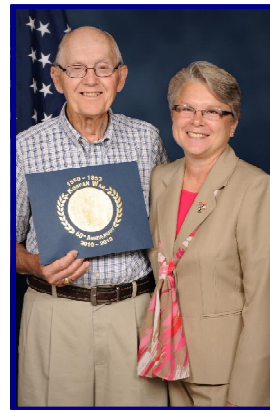


Camp Dodge, 7105 NW 70th Avenue, Building 3663, Johnston, IA 50131
515-242-5331 800-838-4692 <https://va.iowa.gov>

Summer 2012

Honoring Korean War Veterans

My husband and I were honored to spend time with many Korean War veterans at the Knapp Center at Drake University on July 14. The Department of Defense sponsored this 60th Anniversary Recognition Ceremony and the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum staff, board, and volunteers did lots of work to make this event a real success. Also crucial to the success of this event was the Iowa National Guard and the Korean War Association Tall Corn Chapter #99. John and I were able to assist with the photos that were taken prior to the event, so we had a chance to visit with many of these veterans and their families. We enjoyed watching them enjoy the day.



Many honored guests made remarks during the program, and then a small group (symbolizing all Korean veterans) received certificates. A beautiful red rose wreath was placed and TAPS was played. The ceremony was concluded by the Korean United Methodist Church presenting a traditional Korean performance of music.

Over 630 Korean War veterans attended this ceremony with approximately 3,200 total attendees. Thank you to all who helped to make this a great event for Iowa's Korean War veterans – and to those veterans – you are not forgotten!

— Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director, IDVA



photos by Jolesch, courtesy of Iowa Military Gold Star Museum

Iowa's Fallen Heroes

Army Sergeant James L. Skalberg, Jr., 25, an Emerson, Iowa native, died June 27, 2012, while serving on active duty in the city of Maidan Shahr, Wardak Province, Afghanistan. Skalberg died of wounds suffered when the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle he was driving was struck by an improvised explosive device. Also killed was 24 year-old 1st Lt. Stephen Parasnicki of Lexington, Virginia.

Skalberg was assigned as a canon crew member to Battery B, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Army, Fort Bliss, Texas. The soldiers are part of the "Bulldog" Brigade that deployed from Fort Bliss in September 2011. They are the first BCT with 1st Armored Division to serve in Afghanistan. The Bulldog Brigade conducted more than 100 air assaults, more than 1,000 combat missions and patrols, and captured over 100 high value targets.

James was born on December 5, 1986 and grew up in Emerson, Iowa. He graduated from Nishna Valley High School in 2005, where he participated in basketball, football, and track. He attended Peru State College in Peru, Nebraska, where he also played football before enlisting in the military. He joined the U.S. Army in February 2007 and was initially stationed in Baumholder, Germany. He was deployed to Iraq in 2008-2009.



Sgt. James Skalberg, Jr.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart (posthumous awards), Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Achievement Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Driver's Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Combat Action Badge.

James is survived by his wife, Jessica Skalberg and son, Carter — both of Red Oak, Iowa; his parents James and Kelli Skalberg, Sr.; sister Spring Skalberg; and grandparents Bonnie and John Stephens and Karen Brewer.



Army Sergeant Michael E. Ristau, 25, from Cascade, Iowa, died July 13, 2012, while serving on active duty in Qalat, Zabul Province, Afghanistan. Ristau was killed when the vehicle he was riding in was attacked by an improvised explosive device. Two other soldiers were injured in the blast — one seriously.



Sgt. Michael Ristau

Ristau was assigned as an infantryman to the Company B, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, U.S. Army, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. He deployed to Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team in 2006-07 and deployed to Afghanistan in December 2011. He was one of 160 soldiers in the Battle Company Project.

Ristau graduated from Lincoln's Challenge Academy in Rantoul, Illinois in 2004. He enlisted in the Army in July, 2004.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star and Purple Heart (posthumous), Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal (with Bronze Service Star), Iraq Campaign Medal Ribbon, NATO Medal (posthumous), Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and Combat Infantryman Badge.

Michael is survived by his wife, Elizabeth and sons, Hyle and Bradley Ristau; his parents Randy and Suzanne Ristau; sister Halie Ristau; brothers Christopher Powers, Jesse Carrier; grandmother Gertrude Meyer; and grandfather Vernon Thomas.

[Source: Gregory Hapgood, *Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer*]

Iowa's Fallen Heroes, Con't.

Memorial funeral services for Lt. Col. Dennis Lee Eilers, 27, were held on June 30, 2012, in Tipton, Iowa. Eilers died December 24, 1965 when his AC-47 aircraft (nicknamed "Spooky") sent out a "mayday" signal while flying over Laos in the southern province of Savannahket – an area that was heavily bombed during the war because of its location on the Ho Chi Minh supply route that supplied Vietcong communist guerrillas in southern Vietnam. Two days of searches turned up nothing. He was initially declared MIA, but that status was changed to KIA in 1977.



Lt. Col. Dennis Eilers

It took officials nearly thirty years to identify Eilers' crash site. The burial comes after remains were recovered in 2010 and 2011 by joint U.S./Laotian search teams. Examiners used dental records, personal items, and circumstantial evidence to conclude that the remains were those of the six crew members.

Dennis was given military honors for a symbolic burial in the Tipton Masonic Cemetery by the Tipton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2537 and the Tipton American Legion Post #123. The remains of the 6 crew members were buried in a single casket and laid to rest with full military honors in the Arlington National Cemetery on July 9, 2012. The Air Force gave all six posthumous promotions. The other Air Force servicemen were: Col. Joseph Christiano, Col. Derrell Jeffords, Chief Master Sgt. William Colwell, Chief Master Sgt. Arden Hassenger, and Chief Master Sgt. Larry Thornton.

Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery reports that through August 1, 2012 there are:
Applications on file: over 6,846 ♦ Veterans interred: 1,046 ♦ Interments: 1,268 ♦ *In Memory of Markers: 36*

Veterans Laid to Rest

On June 29, 2012, the cremains of 21 veterans and two of their spouses were laid to rest at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. The national "Missing in America Project" (MIAP) discovered the remains at a Des Moines funeral home and Iowa MIAP coordinator Bill Lauchlan arranged for their proper burial. The cremated remains had been unclaimed by family members for years.

Those honored served in four wars, beginning with World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and as members of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps – and included eight Iowans from Ames, Council Bluffs, Guthrie Center, Marshalltown, Traer, and West Des Moines.

A large contingent of American Legion riders from across the state escorted the remains – carried in an Iron Hearse – from Sacred Heart School in West Des Moines to the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. VFW Post #738 provided the firing detail; Air Force Chaplain Doty presided; and the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy performed the honors. All of the remains are interred in Section 2 of Iowa Veterans Cemetery. Over 300 veterans and friends of veterans gathered to pay their respects.

IVC also assisted with the burial of seven veterans discovered by MIAP in a ceremony held in 2009. For information on the Missing in America Project, visit their website at: www.miap.us.



Ceremony Honor Guard

Honoring Iowa's Veterans

2012 Governor's Volunteer Awards

Six Governor Volunteer Award (GVA) ceremonies were held around the state of Iowa during the month of June honoring several hundred volunteers in the state of Iowa. The Governor's Volunteer Awards program was created in 1982, with inaugural awards presented in 1983. What began as a small program only available to state government agencies has expanded over the years and now provides all Iowa nonprofit, charitable, and government organizations with an easy way to honor their volunteers with a prestigious state-level recognition award. The Governor's Volunteer Award program is coordinated by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and the Governor's Office.

Several hundred volunteers are recognized each year with awards in one of several categories: Individual, Group, Length of Service, or Disaster Volunteer.

"I am very pleased to honor those who have given the precious gift of their time to make a difference and enrich lives in communities all across Iowa," said Governor Branstad. "I never tire of meeting volunteers and hearing about the wonderful accomplishments they contribute to making this state great."

"Iowa is currently ranked 2nd in the nation for its state volunteerism rate, which is most certainly a direct result of the devotion of Iowa's volunteers."

— Governor Branstad



American Legion Post #403 Van Meter



Marshall County Veterans Affairs

Group Governor's Volunteer Award, nominated by Iowa Veterans Cemetery:
American Legion Post #403, Van Meter

Individual Governor's Volunteer Award, nominated by Marshall County Veterans Affairs Commission:

Bergeson, Greg, Marshalltown; Chariton, Norman, Albion; Colwell, Charles, Marshalltown; Depew, Glen, Marshalltown; Finders, Gordon, Marshalltown; Graham, Leslie, Marshalltown; Heng, David, Marshalltown; Hibbs, Robert, Marshalltown; Kinney, Jerry, Marshalltown; Lang, Duane, Marshalltown; Lowe, James, Marshalltown; Paul, Lavern, Marshalltown; Phipps, Laurel, Marshalltown; Pitzen, Melvin, Marshalltown; Stevenson, Richard, Marshalltown; Zitzow, Richard, Marshalltown.

Individual Governor's Volunteer Award, nominated by Iowa Veterans Cemetery:

Bode, Paul, West Des Moines; England, David, Urbandale; Ferguson, Tom, West Des Moines; Hagedorn, Dennis, West Des Moines; Heithoff, La Verne, West Des Moines; Lyle, Mark, West Des Moines; Pieper, David, West Des Moines; Richards, Larry, West Des Moines; Sepic, Tom, West Des Moines; Szalay, Robert, West Des Moines; Till, Roger, West Des Moines.

continued on page 5

continued from page 4

Individual Governor's Volunteer Award, nominated by Linn County Veterans Affairs Commission:
Trimble, Theresa, Keystone

45 Year Individual Length of Service Award, nominated by American Legion, Guthrie Post #470
McDougall, Thomas, Melvin

Individual Governor's Volunteer Award, nominated by Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commission:
Leibrand, Ruth, Forest City, IA; Whiteis, Carol, Forest City

For a complete list of the 2012 volunteer awards, visit: <http://www.volunteeriowa.org/awards>.



David England



Theresa Trimble



Ruth Leibrand



Carol Whiteis



Tom McDougall

And WHAT a Parade!



See more photos on IDVA's webpage: <https://va.iowa.gov>

Welcome to Your New Home!

The USS Iowa was launched on August 27, 1942, with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in attendance. The Iowa was commissioned on February 22, 1943 with Captain John McCrea in command. It sank its first ship about 2 years later. There was a reason it was nicknamed, "The Big Stick." The Iowa stretched nearly 3 football fields (887 feet long and 175 feet high). Its main battery consisted of nine 16"/50 caliber Mark 7 guns – capable of hurling 2700 pound armor-piercing shells 24 miles across the horizon. Her secondary battery consisted of 20 5"/38 caliber guns in twin turrets, which could fire at targets up to 12 miles away.



President Franklin Roosevelt was aboard the Iowa when he made his way to North Africa to attend the Tehran conference with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin. The leaders planned D-Day at that meeting.

After World War II, the Iowa served in the Korean conflict. In the early 1980s, the Reagan Administration used the ship as part of its Cold War-era strategy.

The USS Iowa earned 11 battle stars before being decommissioned for the last time in 1990. It was mothballed in a Northern California port until 2011, when



the Iowa was donated to the Los Angeles-based non-profit *Pacific Battleship Center* and was permanently moved to the Port of Los Angeles at Berth 87. The battleship underwent a \$7 million restoration; of that amount, \$3 million came from the state of Iowa. It will be years, however, before the ship is fully explorable.

The battleship was opened to the public on July 7, 2012 to serve as a museum and memorial to battleships. Among those in attendance at the rededication were Governor Branstad and Senator Tom Harkin. They were joined by hundreds of veterans and former USS Iowa crew members – as well as a great-granddaughter of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Official website: <http://www.pacificbattleship.com> More info: <http://www.uss Iowa.org/general/html/detail.htm>

News and Updates

Restoration of Iowa Civil War Memorial at Vicksburg

Iowa furnished twenty-eight infantry, two artillery, and two cavalry regiments to the Civil War campaign at Vicksburg, Mississippi. The campaign began in November of 1862, and became the place where more Iowans served together at any one time, and where more Iowans served than any state except those from Illinois and Ohio; it is also the place where 1,800 Iowa soldiers died.

*“This was our first baptism of blood.”
— History of the Thirty-Fourth Iowa*

Congress established Vicksburg National Military Park in 1899 “to commemorate the campaign, siege, and defense of Vicksburg and to preserve the history of the battles and operations conducted on the ground where they fought.” A monument honoring the Iowans who fought and died there was dedicated on November 16, 1906. (The construction was completed in 1912.) Governor Albert Cummins, General Grenville Dodge, and a delegation of 150 Iowans were present for the dedication. The monument itself is 64 feet wide and 29 feet high. There are 6 bronze relief sculptures and a large equestrian statue. There is also a bronze plaque listing the 28 Iowa infantry regiments, the 2 cavalry regiments, and the 2 batteries present at the siege of Vicksburg.

The monument is located near the positions of the Iowa 21st and Iowa 22nd who led “the heroic charge” on May 22, 1863. There are also 59 bronze tablets marking the positions of the various regiments on the siege line. (For more on this, visit: <http://www.iowacivilwarmonuments.com>)

It has been nearly 150 years since the Union victory at Vicksburg. The Iowa memorial has suffered gradual neglect and the inevitable markings of age. State Senator Dennis Black was designated by the Iowa Legislature and Governor Terry Branstad to research the memorial’s condition. “It is really sad we have not kept better care of our state memorial. The foundation is chipped, the stone is blackened with mold and mildew, and the memorial needs tuck pointing. Being in Mississippi, it’s out of



Iowa Monument — Vicksburg, Mississippi

sight, out of mind,” Black said.

This year, the Iowa Legislature approved an appropriation of \$320,000 to Iowa’s Department of Cultural Affairs for the preservation and restoration of the Iowa Civil War Memorial (HF 2465, Sec. 88). Monument restoration will begin this fall and is expected to be completed in time for the rededication ceremony of the monument in late May 2013 in conjunction with the Vicksburg National Military Park sesquicentennial event.

For further study:

- ♦ <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1870121366588944770#> - video of Civil War veterans at Iowa monument in Vicksburg, Mississippi
- ♦ http://wfcourier.com/news/local/iowans-see-restoration-of-vicksburg-monument/article_aadb211b-df54-52e0-978f-7588adee0618.html#ixzz20tBbY1EH
- ♦ <http://www.historynet.com/battle-of-vicksburg> - a compelling account of the battle
- ♦ <http://www.iowacivilwarmonuments.com/cgi-bin/gaarddetails.pl?1224092289>
- ♦ http://www.iowanationalguard.com/Museum/IA_History/CivilWar.htm
- ♦ <http://www.nps.gov/vick/historyculture/iowa-state-memorial.htm>

News and Updates, Con't.

Iowa DOT Receives Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) has received a \$1.51 million *Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative* grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Iowa DOT's grant was part of \$29 million in grants awarded to 64 projects in 33 states and the Northern Mariana Islands. FTA received 81 eligible proposals requesting \$41 million for this second round of the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grants, "reflecting a strong demand for the program." In FY2011, FTA awarded \$34.6 million for 55 veterans' transportation projects around the country.

The purpose of the federal initiative is to strengthen transportation choices that serve those who have served their country. The DOT believes that enhancing veterans' and military families' awareness of, and access to transportation choices in their communities, is integral to successfully reintegrating these men and women and their families.

The Obama Administration has committed roughly \$1 billion a year in discretionary resources to help communities around the nation build and expand light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and other forms of public transportation to connect American families — including our nation's returning veterans — with jobs, education, medical care, and other vital services.

The Iowa DOT's application was a collaborative effort involving multiple project partners. The project will improve access to information about veterans' transportation options, aging resources, disability services, and human and social services for all Iowans.

The grant will also be used to survey veterans' transportation options available in Iowa — culminating in the creation of a database that covers all 99 Iowa counties. The objective is to combine the veterans' transportation database with pre-existing information and referral databases from the Iowa 211 system, and the aging statewide-comprehensive database.

This newly-created database is intended to serve as a one-call/one-click resource. In addition, it will allow veterans, persons with disabilities, persons older than 60, and others to more easily access information about transportation and other human service resources. Additionally, a smartphone application will allow information to be accessed quickly and conveniently.

Another aspect of the project involves the purchase of ridesharing software, which will be used to establish a state-wide "rideshare" system. The system will link persons interested in sharing a ride to a common location. Ridesharing will also allow veterans and others to economically and conveniently travel to their jobs, medical appointments, or other destinations.

The project will be invaluable in enhancing the mobility of all Iowans — including veterans, older Iowans and persons with disabilities.

For more information on public transit, visit the Iowa DOT's website at www.iowadot.gov/transit.

[Sources: Brent Paulsen at 515-239-1132 or brent.paulsen@dot.iowa.gov, and Federal Transit Administration]



News and Updates, Con't.

Processing of Retroactive Agent Orange Claims Nearly Complete

In 2010 the VA amended its regulations to include ischemic heart disease, hairy cell and other chronic B-cell leukemias, and Parkinson's disease to the list of diseases presumed to be related to the herbicide Agent Orange used in Southeast Asia.

On June 19, 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that nearly 230,000 claims have already been processed (through June 2012) for the three newest Agent Orange-related conditions, including over 150,000 claims required to be adjudicated under the order of the U.S. District Court in the Northern District of California.

Given the complexity of the historical casework, the VBA allocated its most experienced rating staff (approximately 37%) to process Agent Orange claims. The VA processed over 1 million disability claims in each of the last 2 years...an unprecedented number.

The VA has established a website, www.fastrack.va.gov, to assist veterans in filing claims for the three new conditions related to the effects of Agent Orange exposure. Its intent is to guide veterans through automated, program-assisted menus to capture the information and medical evidence needed for faster claim decisions. Potentially eligible veterans include those who were exposed based on duty or visitation in Vietnam or on its inland waterways between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1971; exposed along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971; or exposed due to herbicide tests and storage at military bases within and outside of the United States.

For additional information, visit: https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1020 or contact your nearest veterans benefit specialist.



Go Red for Women: Fight Heart Disease in Women Veterans



The Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Heart Association have entered into a formal agreement to raise awareness of heart disease and strokes among women veterans and service members, and wives of veterans and military members. Both organizations are partnering in an effort to raise awareness among America's female veterans of heart disease – ***the number one killer of women***. By combining efforts, they hope to maximize their resources and improve communication of the *Go Red for Women* messages to women veterans and military audiences.

Currently, there are over eight million women in the U.S. living with heart disease; only one in six believes that heart disease is her greatest health threat. *Go Red for Women* will provide additional opportunities to increase awareness of women's number one killer among military women – active, veterans, and military wives.

The VA will focus on educating women veterans about their cardiovascular disease risks through the use of *Go Red for Women* online resources. These include "Go Red BetterU," (<http://www.goredforwomen.org/betteru/index.aspx>) a free online nutrition and fitness program, and "Go Red Heart Match," (<http://www.goredforwomen.org/heartmatch/Default.aspx>) a database that allows women to connect with others who share similar experiences.

For more information, visit: www.womenshealth.va.gov, or call 1-888-My-HEART or visit *Go Red for Women*: <http://www.goredforwomen.org>.

News and Updates, Con't.

Refund Schemes Related to Military Disability Compensation

This document provides information regarding phony refund schemes related to military disability compensation.

Emails are being sent to individuals, including military members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by Defense Finance and Accounting Services. Although the email appears to come from DFAS and displays a .mil email address, it is *actually from a non-government email account*.

The emails indicate that individuals who are receiving disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs may be able to obtain additional funds from the IRS. These emails are **not** issued by DFAS.

The email indicates that individuals receiving VA disability compensation can receive additional funds from the IRS by sending copies of VA award letters, income tax returns, 1099-Rs, Retiree Account Statements, and DD 214s to a retired Colonel at an address in Florida.

These schemes can be quite costly for victims. Promoters may charge exorbitant up front fees to file these claims and are often long gone when victims discover they've been scammed.

Taxpayers should be careful of these scams because, regardless of who prepared their tax return, the taxpayer is legally responsible for the accuracy of their tax return and must repay any refunds received in error, plus any penalties and interest. They may even face criminal prosecution.

To avoid becoming ensnared in these schemes, taxpayers should beware of any of the following:

- ♦ Fictitious claims for refunds or rebates based on false statements of entitlement to tax credits
- ♦ Emails from unfamiliar senders asking for personal information
- ♦ Internet solicitations that direct individuals to toll-free numbers and then solicit social security numbers or other personal information

If you receive a notice from the IRS, respond immediately. If you believe someone may have used your SSN fraudulently, please notify the IRS by responding to the name and number printed on the notice or letter. You will need to fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039.

IRS.gov links for additional information:

- ♦ 2012 Dirty Dozen list of tax scams [<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=254383,00.html>]
- ♦ Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft [<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=251501,00.html>]

[Source: Kevin.Secor@va.gov]

Do not send your personal information or copies of your tax returns & 1099s to the individual listed in the email.

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information.

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information such as your name, Social Security number, or other identifying information, without your permission – to commit fraud or other crimes.

Sharing your personal information could result in a financial loss to you.

News Briefs

Vet Center Combat Call Center

1-877-WAR-VETS is a 24/7 confidential call center where combat veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issues they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The call center is staffed with combat veterans from several eras as well as family members of combat veterans. More information can be found here: www.vetcenter.va.gov/media/Call-Center-PSA.asp.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Veterans Crisis Line

A reminder that the Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified and compassionate VA responders through a confidential hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans (and their loved ones) can call **1-800-273-8255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day. For more information and options, visit: <http://veteranscrisisline.net>.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

\$600,000 Awarded to Assist Iowa Veteran Families Find Housing

Senator Tom Harkin today announced that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded two Iowa organizations with a combined total of \$609,713 through the *Supportive Services for Veteran Families* (SSVF) Program.

Grantees, which include private, non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives, will provide supportive services to very low-income veteran families' living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Harkin stated: "This funding is an important step toward aiding Vet-

eran families and to ending the problem of homeless veterans."

Details of the grants are as follows:

Primary Health Care, Inc. — \$362,170 to provide service to approximately 150 participant households in Marshall and Polk Counties.

Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. — \$247,543 to serve approximately 125 participant households in Scott County, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Redesigned Transition Assistance Program Announced

President Obama has recently announced the launch of the redesigned Transition Assistance Program developed by an interagency team from the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Education, and Homeland Security as well as the Office of Personnel and Management and the Small Business Administration.

The revamped program, entitled *Transition GPS*, is the first major overhaul of the transition assistance program for military members in nearly 20 years. The effort began in response to a call from President Obama in August 2011 to ensure all service members are "career ready" when they leave the military.

Transition GPS will help military members apply their experience to additional training, formal education, and develop successful civilian careers. "One of our fundamental responsibilities as a government is to properly prepare and support those serving in our military so they are career ready as they transition back into civilian life. With this new initiative, we can better ensure veterans receive the care, benefits and employment services they have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. "This collaborative effort will have an impact well beyond this current generation of individuals returning from combat."

[Source: U.S. Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/releases>]

Check it Out

Honor a Veteran

Iowa Secretary of State Matt Schultz has initiated a new program to honor veterans. *Honor a Veteran* is a program that honors the sacrifices that veterans have made throughout history to protect our freedoms and our right to vote. Honor a veteran by leaving a per-



sonal message for a military member. If you post a message on the site, you'll receive a lapel pin. You can also honor a veteran by wearing your pin on election day.

Check out the website:

<http://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/uocava/honoraveteranindex.aspx>

The 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration

The Department of Defense is assisting in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War with a series of events, activities, and programs over the course of several years. "Events will honor veterans and their families, recognize contributions and sacrifices made on the home front, provide Americans with a clear understanding and history of the Vietnam War, and recognize the contributions of civilian



organizations to the war effort."

Visit the Commemoration interactive website that provides additional information on the various programs, activities, events, and the Commemorative Partners program. Sign up for their newsletter or facebook page:

<http://www.vietnamwar50th.com> and <http://www.facebook.com/VietnamWar50th>.

Post a Photograph on Vietnam Virtual Wall

Have you visited the *Vietnam Virtual Wall*? It's a site full of information, history; a place to leave a remembrance, view memoriams, obtain name rubbings, and a place to upload a photograph.



The Virtual Wall has issued a national call for photos — a campaign to collect a photograph for each of the more than 58,000 men and women whose

names are inscribed on *The Wall*. Collected photographs will be used in the *The Wall*'s education center. Iowa's link has 337 photographs from 853 lives lost in Vietnam. For more about how to add a photograph to the collection, visit

www.thevirtualwall.org, call 202.393.0090, or send an email for additional information to: vvmf@vvmf.org.

ESGR's Website

Check out the ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) website for up-to-date information on employer support for



the guard. You can also sign up for their newsletter. Visit: <http://www.iowaesgr.org/index.html>.



Correction: In the Spring 2012 IDVA Newsletter, the editor mistakenly used the phrase, "Congressional Medal of Honor." It should have read, "Medal of Honor."

Page 6: Flyover photo by Patrick Doherty; Viewing stand photo by COL, AUS Ret., Beaverdale Post 9127Page 6:

Upcoming Events

4th Annual AIB Veterans History Project: Friday, November 9, 2012

AIB College of Business will hold its annual Veterans History Project honoring veterans by archiving their military stories. This event includes a ceremony, private interviews with each veteran, and a luncheon.

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and those veterans who participate will receive a DVD and transcript of their interview. Copies of the transcriptions will be placed in the archives at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum in Johnston, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Donated interviews (and other items) are housed in a preservation environment within the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. Within a 6-month processing period, all donated materials are available to researchers, scholars, students, Congress, authors, filmmakers, and anyone else visiting the Library.

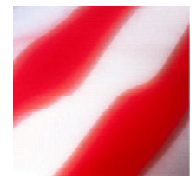
The *Veterans History Project* (VHP) website, www.loc.gov/vets contains an individual webpage for each veteran who contributes. This page includes service history and other information about each veteran. Currently, about ten percent of VHP's collections are digitized so that anyone with internet access may view them online.

If you are interested in being interviewed for the AIB Project, please contact Kris Mattoon at 800.444.1921, or mattoonk@aib.edu. Sign up deadline is October 12, 2012.



County News Briefs

Marion County – Mike Kuhn



Robert Gee is retiring from the Marion County Commission of Veteran Affairs September 1st. Bob served for over 19½ years on the Commission and enjoyed helping veterans in Marion County. We wish Bob the very best as he moves to Colorado to live closer to his son and be a part of the veteran community there.

CPT Jodi Marti has been appointed by the Marion County Supervisors to fill out the remaining term being vacated by Mr. Gee. We welcome Jodi to the Commission and to the Association.

Linn County – Don Tyne

Linn County will hold **Vets Stand Down 2012** on September 7, 2012, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Stand Down will be held at Veterans Memorial Stadium – 1240 26th Avenue Court SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The Five Seasons Stand Down connects homeless or near-homeless veterans and non-veterans to services that assist them in transitioning to community living. These service “connections” take place in a respectful, caring, and friendly environment.

To volunteer, donate, or for additional information, contact Don Tyne, Director, Linn County Veterans Affairs: 319.892.5160 or info@VetsStandDown.org.

Scott County – David “Woody” Woods

The Quad Cities Honor Flight has scheduled a special Gold Star Flight leaving for Washington DC on Sept 20th. Fifty Gold Star families members will serve as Guardians on this trip. Scott County VA director David Woods stated, “This is a flight of composed of families who have already paid the extreme price, so there will be NO charge for those Gold Star members. The flight will include mostly Korean War Veterans who are eager to see their memorial.”

Camp Dodge Staff

Jodi Tymeson
Executive Director
Jodi.Tymeson@iowa.gov
515-242-5331

Bob Steben
Executive Officer 1
Bob.Steben@iowa.gov
515-242-0153

John Halstead
Veterans Benefits Specialist
John.Halstead@iowa.gov
515-242-5327

David Heim
Veterans Benefits Specialist
David.Heim@va.gov
515-362-7350

Jill Joseph
Administrative Assistant
Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov
515-242-0033

Missy Miller
Administrative Assistant
Missy.Miller@iowa.gov
515-242-0027

Mari Mielke
Secretary
Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov
515-242-5331

Bob Betz
Clerk Specialist
Bob.Betz@iowa.gov
515-242-0160

Cemetery Staff

Keith Blum
Cemetery Superintendent
Keith.Blum@iowa.gov
515-996-9048

Mindy McGregor
Cemetery Representative
Melinda.McGregor@iowa.gov
515-996-9048

Shane Laycock
Cemetery Foreman
Shane.Laycock@iowa.gov

Jeanna Hampel
Cemetery Assistant
Jeanna.Hampel@iowa.gov
515-996-9048

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

7105 NW 70th Avenue
Camp Dodge - Building 3663
Johnston, IA 50131
<https://va.iowa.gov>
515.242.5331 Phone
800.838.4692 Toll Free
515.242.5659 Fax

