

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



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Winter 2012

Please Tell Your Stories

Recently I had the opportunity to hear a Veteran tell his story to citizens at our local library. Clarence Pfundheller is a Pearl Harbor survivor. He began his account by showing us some film footage of the attack, narrated by a woman who was a child at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. There were excellent photos as well.

Clarence took us back to when he enlisted and told us about the ship that became his home – what he called the “newest battleship in the Navy at the time – a ship that had been built in 1919.” He laughed when talking about the peacetime Navy – called it a “wonderful experience” – and he told us about playing lots of baseball. Clarence remembers the good times of his service, as well as the worst times.

Clarence told us about the attack, how he remembered it went on for one hour and forty-five minutes and how all the smoke was hard on his eyes and throat. He told us about the Oklahoma turning over and the



Clarence Pfundheller



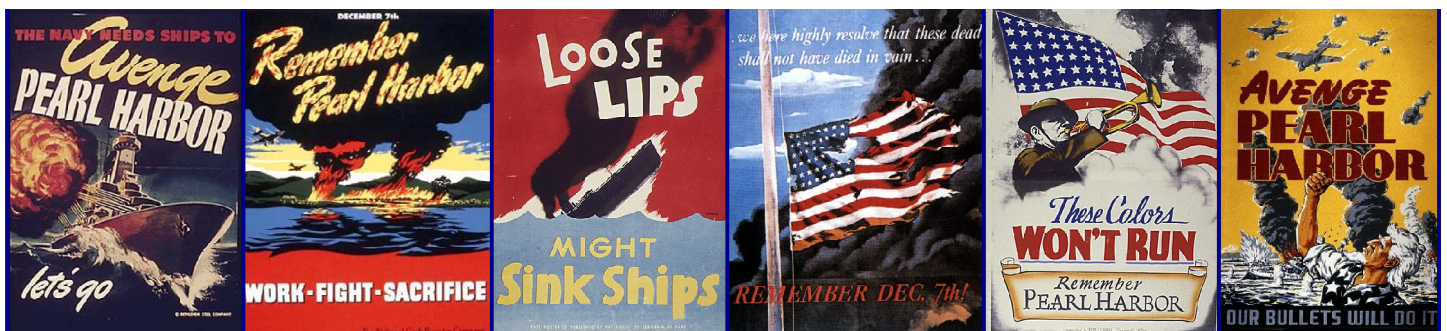
Arizona blowing up. He talked about all the oil and fire on the water. He told us how close the enemy was.

Clarence told us about his trip home at the end of his tour, spending a few weeks in the Philippines and then riding a transporter to the west coast. He was gone from home for five years.

Clarence ended by telling us of his recent trip back. A highlight for him on the trip was the 10 college students that went with him. They spent 3 days at Pearl Harbor and then visited some other locations, to include Hiroshima.

Clarence is a great inspiration. He continues to volunteer in his community, and he says he's “still swabbing the deck three days a week.” Because Clarence was willing to tell his story, those of us in attendance have a better understanding of what these Veterans experienced. I, for one, will be forever indebted.

— Director Jodi Tymeson



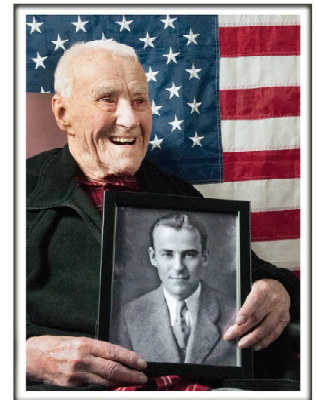
Honoring Iowa's Veterans

Featured Veteran: Floyd Teske

—submitted by Bill Schaefer

Floyd C. Teske was born July 10, 1906, on a farm north of Decorah. He was the oldest of three children. He will be 106 in July 2012! Floyd was living alone in Decorah until he came to the Iowa Veterans Home in 2007, when he was 100. He married when he entered the Army; he and his wife, the former Helen Holze, were married 32 years and had no children. He now has no near-living relatives.

Floyd entered the U.S. Army in May 1942 at age 36, and was discharged in October 1945. He told us during the photo session that his first Army job was as a truck driver, then he volunteered to learn to become a dental technician. Some of the battles and campaigns he was in included North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Holland, and Germany. His discharge document specifies that he was a TEC 5 MED DET 2831 ENGR C BN. His social worker at the IVH, Lisa Blabaum, said his records indicate that his occupation in Decorah was as a mortician/embalmer.



Floyd Teske, Age 105, February, 2012 Photo by Bill Schaefer

Floyd is hard of hearing, nearly blind, but sharp of mind when it comes to remembering the past. He has firm opinions about many things such as a deep respect for the English where he spent time before D-Day. The longer we talked to him, the more alive and spirited he became, answering our questions about his past and then asking us questions about ourselves. Floyd Teske is believed to be the oldest World War II veteran in Iowa.



Veterans History Project

The U.S. Congress created the Veterans History Project (VHP) in 2000 with a mission to collect and archive the personal recollections of U.S. wartime veterans and stories from homefront civilians who worked in support of our armed forces.

You can take part in this important project! Volunteer to conduct interviews and collect historical documents. Organize interview groups and teach others how to conduct interviews. Consider beginning with schools and scout groups, retirement communities, and churches.

Donated collections include war veterans' firsthand oral histories, memoirs, photographs, letters, diaries, and other historical documents from World War I through current conflicts.

By taking part in the Veterans History Project, you are contributing to the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. When you participate, you are making history. Visit www.loc.gov/vets to download an information kit, or call 888.371.5848 to request a kit.



The Faces of WWII, Clarke County



Adrian Fuller, Age 91, February, 2011 Photo by Bill Schaefer
from the
Faces of WWII Clarke County

Dr. Bill Schaefer, retired Grand View University Professor, who was recently featured in the last issue of this newsletter, has confirmed that the *Faces of WWII, Clarke County Iowa* photo exhibit will be featured at the Gold Star Museum, Camp Dodge, beginning May 1, 2012 and will run through August, 2012. Bill taught photography at Grand View University, Des Moines, from 1980-2009.

Dr. Schaefer is also embarking on a new photography project entitled *Notable Iowa Veterans*, a work intended to capture for posterity prominent Iowans who have served in the United States Armed Forces. "The goal is to show that military service lays the foundation for a life of service and success." He has already photographed Governor Bob Ray and has an impressive list of others that he has scheduled. **If you have a name you would like to suggest for consideration**, you may contact Bill at bschaefer57@hotmail.com or 515.979.3524. This project is expected to be on exhibit at the Gold Star Military Museum at a future date.



The Telling Project Comes to Iowa



Veterans are invited to share their experiences in a unique theatrical experience titled *The Telling Project*. The *Telling Project* produces "Telling," an experimental and innovative production in which military Veterans and their families, after extensive interviews, performance training, and rehearsal, stage the 'telling' of their stories of life in the military for their communities. The *Telling Project* promotes the belief that "the experiences of soldiers are a vital part of the nation's heritage, and as such must be both respected and understood." The project holds no political view regarding the military or its actions and rather promotes the belief that the experiences of soldiers are a vital part of the nation's heritage, and "as such must be both respected and understood."

The *Telling Project* has created full-length productions for live audiences numbering over 10,000 in places as diverse as Washington, D.C. and Starkville, MS. They have generated an archive of 350+ hours of in-depth interviews with veterans and their family members concerning their lives and the military. "Telling: Iowa City" was the 6th original production of *The Telling Project* and the first production in the Midwest.



On Veterans' Day 2009, the cast was honored to share the stage with First Lady Michelle Obama.

This is an opportunity for veterans and their families to tell their stories about their experiences in the military. The *Telling Project* and *Working Group Theatre* will work with veterans to create and stage this unique performance. Performance dates are tentatively set for March or April 2012. Those interested in sharing their experiences can set up an interview at the DMACC-Ankeny campus that will last approximately one hour. All interviews will be videotaped and archived.

For more information or to schedule an interview time, contact Nicole Shumate at nicoleshumate@yahoo.com, 515.822.5285, or Deborah McKittrick at dkmckittrick@dmacc.edu. Visit <http://thetellingproject.org>. The Iowa City production can be seen here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JpovtN2Hk8.

Veterans Memorial Reborn

Monday, January 9, 2012 marked the official ribbon cutting ceremony of the renovated Veterans Auditorium in Des Moines. While there was an abundance of dignitaries on hand, many Veterans organizations represented, politicians and citizens alike in attendance – all eager to extol the beauty of the new building, there were also a few veterans in attendance who had once been invited to the dedication of the *original* Veterans Auditorium...

When the cornerstone to Veterans Memorial Auditorium was laid in 1954, it was one of the largest arenas and exhibit halls in the country – comparable to the leading venues in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. When the arena opened on February 1, 1955 it was named to honor the World War II Veterans of Polk County. And very quickly it became part of our Iowa history – hosting presidents and presidential hopefuls, musicians, square dancers, car shows, and high school athletics.



Construction of Vets Auditorium 1953

But back in 1953, a young guy named Don Appell, who had recently graduated (thanks to the GI Bill) with a degree in Architectural Engineering from Iowa State University, contributed a small part to a very big project. These are some of his recollections (at age 87):

“The city of Des Moines put together the auditorium project as a joint endeavor that included a consortium of many of the architectural and engineering firms in Iowa. I was working for the firm of Tinsley, Higgins, and Lighter and they placed me in the office that housed the Vet’s design team. This was also where I met and developed a professional friendship with Carlisle Peterson. We eventually formed a partnership firm: Peterson and Appell Structural Engineers. Carlisle was one of the struc-

tural engineers for the project. Made of steel, the main structural arches spanned 141 feet – and at the time those steel arches were the largest frame structures in the United States. (This measurement also happened to be the measurements of the wing span of a B-29 – an airplane I worked on during the war while stationed for 2½ years in Kharagpur, India.) While preparing the site, they found that the southeast corner of the site had an area that was constantly wet – a real problem. I designed some special precast piles to be used as the footings. Apparently they worked pretty well! And don’t forget that back then there weren’t computers. This building was designed using a slide rule!”

Don was honored to attend the public opening of the “new” Veterans Auditorium in January. He feels that the designers succeeded in preserving the integrity of the building as a “memorial to veterans.” There are eight kiosks in the new memorial hall that present a

time-line of the thousands of Iowans in service from every conflict since 1846. The new convention center space has 27 meeting rooms, the state’s *largest* ballroom – at 28,640 square feet, a new outdoor plaza, loads of high-tech lighting, screens, projectors, and an abundance of stunning art. Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies will once again be held at Veterans Auditorium.

President and native son Herbert Hoover launched his 1932 re-election campaign at the old Des Moines Coliseum – the main venue in Des Moines for four decades. It was destroyed by fire in 1949 which set the stage for what was to become Veterans Auditorium. One of Hoover’s quotes can be seen on a panel in the new Memorial Hall:

“Every generation has the right to build its own world out of materials of the past, cemented by the hopes of the future.”



National Guard Celebrates 375th Birthday

The Iowa National Guard hosted an observance at the Gold Star Museum on December 13, 2011 in celebration of their 375th birthday. The Guard dates from the first muster of Citizen-Soldiers forming the Massachusetts colonial militia on December 13, 1636 in Salem, Massachusetts. The program began with a history of the National Guard and included period reenactors wearing uniforms representing the 172-year history of the Iowa National Guard.



Current and former members of the Iowa National Guard together with veterans of the armed services represent the 172 years of Iowa National Guard service to the community, state and nation.

— Photo by SGT Chad Nelson, ING

The Museum also held a sneak preview of its exhibit, "From Frontier Soldiers to Global Guardians: The History of the Iowa National Guard." The Iowa National Guard dates from January 9, 1839 and has provided 172 years of service to our community, state, and nation.

Museum hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Group tours are welcome.

Honoring Washington County Iowa's WWII Veterans

Over 262,000 Iowans served in World War II. It is estimated that we lose 1,200 veterans of WWII every day in America. In a race against the clock, a father and daughter team from Washington County, Iowa are gathering recollections and stories to be used in a book about World War II Washington County Veterans and their experiences during the war. They have begun their transcriptions and are working diligently to get them in print as soon as possible.



Cheyenne and Larry interview a Washington County Veteran

The project began with a granddaughter's interest in her grandfather's WWII service. Cheyenne Cuddeback-Miller's grandfather was a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne; he passed away in 2000. Cheyenne's interest eventually led her to a major in Military History at the University of Northern Iowa. Many years later, she and her father, Larry Cuddeback, began their interviews. Cheyenne recently reported on their project:

"Washington County, nestled in the SE corner of Iowa, is filled with cornfields and small town charm. Its residents are generally simple, kind folks that epitomize quiet rural living. But among the farmers, high school football players and insurance brokers are members of the "old breed" — the WWII Veterans — the Greatest Generation. Their stories of wartime sacrifice, bloodshed, loss and victory are currently being procured into a timeless document, meant to carry their legacies onto future generations.

Since March 2010, the father-daughter team of Larry Cuddeback and Cheyenne Cuddeback-Miller have embarked upon their own great crusade — with the goal of recording the stories of WWII Veterans in the Washington County area. Once the stories are put onto paper, they'll be compiled into a book (hopefully available by Fall 2012). As a "thank you" for his or her service, each veteran will be given a courtesy copy of the book. To date, nearly 110 veterans have shared their stories, which range from the sands of North Africa, the hedgerow country of France, the caves of Iwo Jima, to the mountains of Austria. Piece by piece, the story of WWII will be told through the eyes of Washington County Veterans."

Anyone wishing to help with the book project should contact Cheyenne Cuddeback-Miller at 319.461.0889 or email at ccuddeback@hotmail.com. You can also hear an interview with both Larry and Cheyenne on Iowa Public Radio: http://iowapublicradio.org/news/news_story.php?story=3193.

Making Sense of the American Civil War

Let's Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War series continues on March 15, 2012, 6:30 p.m., at the Franklin Library, 5089 Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. The second of five, the series and discussion will be based on selections from the anthology *America's War*. The series is made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association and follows the "Let's Talk About It model" — one that engages participants in a discussion of a set of common texts selected by a nationally known scholar for their relevance to a larger theme.

Upcoming discussions and dates are as follows:

Making Sense of Shiloh, March 29, 2012, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Library based on selections from *America's War*.

The Shape of War, April 12, 2012, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Library based on selections from *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James McPherson as well as selections from the anthology, *America's War*.

Making Sense of the American Civil War, April 26, 2012, 6:30 p.m., Franklin Library based on selections from *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James McPherson as well as selections from *America's War*.



President Taft speaks at Iowa's Soldier's Monument — built to commemorate Iowans who fought during the Civil War



National Cemetery Administration Commemorates the American Civil War

The National Cemetery Administration will host a series of commemorative events highlighting the historical heritage of more than half of its' national cemeteries that were created during the American Civil War. The first event was held at VA Central Office, with a presentation on the Bloedner Monument, believed to be the oldest surviving monument dedicated to soldiers of the Civil War. Topics included how NCA protected the fragile monument through conservation and relocation; and how a master stone carver created a replacement to continue honoring the soldiers from the 32nd Indiana Infantry with a new monument at Cave Hill National Cemetery in Louisville, Ky. NCA will hold additional events across the country through 2015 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, which began in 1861 and ended in 1865.

"National cemeteries were first developed in the United States during the Civil War. Due to mounting war casualties, on July 17, 1862, Congress empowered President Abraham Lincoln, 'to purchase cemetery grounds and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country.' This small but significant new presidential power was given in 'an act to define the pay and emolument of certain officers of the Army, & for other purposes.' This was the first U.S. legislation to state and solidify the concept of a national cemetery." [Source: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/history.pdf>]

Iowa's Keokuk National Cemetery in Keokuk, Iowa was one of the first 14 cemeteries to be officially established in 1862. According to an 1871 inspection report, just after the Civil War, there were 627 interments; 600 known Union soldiers and 27 unknown soldiers. Not mentioned in the report were the remains of eight Confederate soldiers buried at the national cemetery, who died in Keokuk as prisoners of war. The cemetery is currently the final resting place for the remains of over 4,000 American soldiers. In 1997 the Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Women's History Month

—from <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov>

March is Women's History Month and the VA is recognizing the contributions of women veterans as history makers. Watch new videos in the "Stories of Service" series (www.womenshealth.va.gov/stories.asp) and download posters and other resources celebrating Women's History Month. Read additional headlines about women veterans and VA health care, and stay tuned for updates throughout the month.

Did you know that women are the fastest growing group within the veteran population? Learn more about the changing face of women veterans and what the VA is doing to meet their health care needs.

This website also provides information on health care services avail-



**Celebrate Women's
History Month**

able to women veterans, including comprehensive primary care as well as specialty care such as reproductive services, rehabilitation, mental health, and treatment for military sexual trauma. You can also find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about women veterans health care.

At each VA Medical Center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager is designated to assist women veterans. She can help coordinate all the services you may need, from primary care to medical services to mental health and sexual abuse counseling. Women veterans who are interested in receiving care at the VA should contact their nearest VA Medical Center and ask for the Women Veterans Program Manager.

Note from the editor:

You may have noticed that this issue of the IDVA Newsletter has an abundance of articles and news briefs about World War II veterans. Although unintentional, neither is it a surprise. World War II veterans are very much on our minds. Of the 16 million American men and women in uniform during World War II, nearly 263,000 were Iowans. It is estimated that there are now approximately 22,800 WWII veterans in Iowa; their average age: 88. And as our World War II veteran population dwindles, officials, historians, and citizens are faced with trying to preserve and clarify the history that our WWII veterans lived - before they have left and are silent.

The Veterans History Project (page 2) encourages families to preserve the stories of their World War II veterans...many who may have come from - and returned to - ordinary small American towns, but whose stories are filled with extraordinary bravery, heroism, and emotion. The National VFW oversees a project that records interviews with WWII veterans and preserves them in the Library of Congress. Locally, AIB continues to compile first-person accounts of WWII wartime service on Veteran's Day.

You will find Iowans throughout the pages of this newsletter, who are taking up the call and giving local WWII veterans a voice, and in some cases - a face. There are things all of us can still do. We can listen to their stories and pass on tales of their greatness and inspiration to the next generations. We can make certain they are receiving all the benefits they earned and justly deserve. We can ensure that all of them who can - have the opportunity to visit their memorial in Washington, D.C. We can embrace these last years that they spend among us and honor them with patience, grace, and humility. And we can ask for their blessing by honoring the new veterans that have returned home - battle worn and weary as they once were.

Iowa's Fallen Heroes

Marine Corporal Zachary C. Reiff, 22, a Preston, Iowa native, died November 21, 2011 at a hospital in Germany from wounds suffered on November 18, 2011 while conducting combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. The anti-tank missileman was wounded while on foot patrol when he stepped on an improvised explosive device.



CPL Zach Reiff

Reiff was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, California. Zachary was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on December 9, 2008 and was injured by an IED in July 2010 while in the Helmand Province on his first deployment to the country. He recovered from his injuries and volunteered for a second tour.

Zach was born in Wichita, Kansas and graduated from Preston High School in 2007 where he played drums in the band and was a member of the wrestling team. His mother, who works for the school district, said that Zach had returned to Preston in September and spoke to several classes about his experiences as a Marine.

His personal service awards include receiving two Purple Hearts, Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with bronze star device. On November 17,

2011 he was given "NCO of the Quarter" and placed on Meritorious Service Board for Sergeant.

Zachary is survived by his parents, Matthew and Marcia Reiff; brother Kolby; sister Emily Reiff, maternal grandmother Lucille Hammond, nephew Brantley Zachary Reiff, all of Preston, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.



Marine Master Sgt. Travis Riddick, 40, a Centerville native, was killed January 19, 2012 in a helicopter crash while supporting combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Riddick, a CH-53 crew chief, was assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 — the "Red Lions," Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Also killed were five Hawaii-based Marines.

Squadron 363 deployed in August 2011 to southern Afghanistan for a seven-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their mission is to provide assault support, transport Marines and critical supplies, and equipment during expeditionary operations.

Riddick joined the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating from Centerville High School in 1990. He had just been promoted to Master Sergeant on January 1, 2012. He had served three tours of duty in Iraq and two in Afghanistan. This was to be his last tour. Riddick's father, John - also a Marine - said his son had "previously served on the president's helicopter squadron. He flew Presidents Clinton and Bush."



MSgt Travis Riddick

His awards include 6 air Medals, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, 4 Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, 7 Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals, 2 National Defense Service Medals, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, NATO Medal, NATO ISAF Medal, and Kuwait Liberation Medal.

Riddick is survived by his wife, Jennifer, six children, Levi, Charles, Matt, Jamie, Zachary, and Victoria, his parents Barbara and John Riddick, an older brother Tim, and a twin brother Troy.

News Briefs

Google Veteran Community Site

Google has recently unveiled a site that was made by some veterans, family of veterans and friends who work at Google. "We understand the challenges of serving, coming home and transitioning to civilian life. We've been there. Some of us are still figuring it out. Here are some free Google products we've gathered together that have made our lives easier. Hopefully, they can do the same for you." Go to: <http://www.googleforveterans.com>

PTSD Ruling Returns Benefits to Thousands of Vets

A federal court has ordered the Department of Defense to give a 50 percent disability rating to 2,000 service members who were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. The new order applies to service members who left the service before 2008, but had received lower disability ratings until now.

In most cases, veterans will receive back pay for missed retirement payments as well as medical charges they accrued since their discharge. Each veteran with a disability rating above 50 percent will qualify to purchase life insurance coverage through the Survivor Benefit Plan; lifetime commissary and military post exchange privileges; eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation; tax free retirement payments; and lifetime medical care for themselves, their spouse and their children up to age 18.

For a more detailed account of this ruling, visit: <http://www.military.com/news/article/ptsd-ruling-returns-benefits-to-thousands-of-vets.html> [Source: <http://www.military.com>]

Social Media

Strategy Enables Returning Vets to Engage with VA at the Local Level



The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all of its 152 medical centers are now actively represented on Facebook, the world's largest social networking site. "This event marks an important milestone in the overall effort to transform how VA communicates with veterans and provide them the health care and benefits they have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "...By leveraging Facebook, the Department continues to expand access to VA, and embrace transparency and two-way conversation."

The process that began with a single Veterans Health Administration Facebook page in 2008 has now produced over 150 Facebook pages, 64 Twitter feeds, a YouTube channel, a Flickr page, and the Vantage Point blog. Additionally, in June 2011, VA produced a Department-wide social media policy that provides guidelines for communicating with veterans online. The overall strategy is designed to help break down long-perceived barriers between the Department and its stakeholders.

"Veterans of all eras are depending on us to get the right information to the right person at the right time," said Brandon Friedman, VA's director of online communications, and a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. "With more troops returning home, we also have a responsibility to connect with the thousands of service members who have been – and will be – entering our system. They're using social media, so that's where we need to be. Facebook helps us do that."

The VA currently has over 345,000 combined Facebook subscribers. The Department's main Facebook page has over 154,000 fans and its medical centers have a combined subscriber list of over 69,000. The Department plans to continue expanding its Facebook presence while also focusing on bringing Twitter to every VA medical center as well. IDVA's Facebook site: www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Iowa-Department-of-Veterans-Affairs/187906691247715. For more information, please visit the following sites: **Directory of All VA Social Media Sites:** www.va.gov/opa/SocialMedia.asp; **VA Facebook Page Directory:** www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs?sk=app_7146470109.

News Briefs, Con't.

Burial Benefits and Regulations

Veterans who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces deserve a proper burial. Burial eligibility and allowances, however, are complicated and challenging, and often need the help of a benefit specialist to translate.

Briefly, VA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

The VA website explains the following topics related to burial and plot-interment allowances:

- ★ What are VA burial allowances?
- ★ Who is eligible? Conditions that must be met
- ★ How much does VA pay? Service-related death/Non-service-related death
- ★ How can you apply?
- ★ Related benefits

Additional and more detailed information can be found: <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/topics/indigent/index.htm>

VA's Home Loan Program Continues to Lead Mortgage Industry

Veterans have taken advantage of their home loan benefit in record numbers and as a result, VA loan originations have reached their highest total in eight years. Home loans guaranteed by the VA continue to have the lowest serious delinquency and foreclosure rates in the mortgage industry. According to the Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey, VA's foreclosure rate for the last 14 quarters and serious delinquency rate for the last 11 quarters have been the lowest of all measured loan types — even prime loans.

In 2011, VA guaranteed 357,594 loans — an increase of nearly 14 percent over last year. There are currently over 1.5 million active VA home loans.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki stated, "The continued strong performance and high volume of VA loans are a testament to the importance of VA's home loan program and to the skilled VA professionals who help homeowners in financial trouble keep their homes."

Veterans and service members facing mortgage obligation problems can call 877.827.3702 to speak with a VA specialist concerning foreclosure avoidance. For more information about the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, visit the program's home page: www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans. [Source: www.va.gov]

Veterans Crisis Line - Text Messaging

The Department of Veterans Affairs is expanding its efforts to prevent suicide through several new initiatives that increase the availability of services for veterans, service members and their families. The initiatives include a new, free, confidential text-messaging service in the existing *Veterans Crisis Line*, and the introduction of toll-free access from Europe to provide crisis help to veterans, service members and their families living abroad. Now, in addition to the Veterans Crisis Line and online chat (www.VeteransCrisisLine.net), those in crisis may text 83-8255 free of charge to receive confidential, personal, and immediate support. Veterans and members of the military community in Europe may now receive free, confidential support from the European Military Crisis Line, a new initiative recently launched by VA. Callers in Europe may dial 0800-1273-8255 or DSN 118 to receive confidential support from responders at the *Veterans Crisis Line* in the U.S. For more information, visit:

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention.

News Briefs Con't.

Mobile Vet Center in Cedar Rapids

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently deployed 20 additional Mobile Vet Centers from the production facility of Farber Specialty Vehicles to increase access to readjustment service for veterans and their families in rural and under-served communities across the county. These customized vehicles are equipped with confidential counseling space and a state-of-the-art communication package. They can also serve as part of the VA emergency response program. **One of the new vehicles will be based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.**

The new vans will expand the current fleet of 50 Mobile Vet Centers already in service. The Mobile Vet Centers expand the VA's reach to veterans, service members and their families – especially those living in rural or remote communities who are unable to visit a city-located Vet Center. More than 190,000 veterans and their families made over 1.3 million visits to VA Vet Centers in 2011. To find out more about Vet Center services, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.

Hire our Heroes

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with The Principal Financial Group, Iowa ESGR, Iowa Workforce Development, Department of Labor, Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Chamber Alliance, DMACC, and Pattee Design to promote “the hiring of military veterans to employers through awareness of the need, education on benefits of hiring veterans, and assistance in connecting to resources and simple tools.”

The partnership is dedicated to “promote the hiring of military veterans to employers through awareness of the need, education on benefits of hiring veterans, and assistance in connecting to resources and simple tools.”

Hire Our Heroes was introduced to the Central Iowa business community at the Greater Des Moines Partnership annual dinner on January 18, 2012 by Larry Zimpleman and Major General Timothy Orr. As part of phase one, an educational video was unveiled that encompasses: 1) awareness of the need; 2) a human face of the veteran; 3) benefits of hiring veterans; 4) employer testimonials; and 5) military leaders' appeal.

You can view this video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TGDtQJsuzU>. A second video is in the works. Stay tuned!

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 New Benefits for Unemployed Veterans

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) offers 12 months of retraining assistance to veterans who are:

- ★ Unemployed
- ★ At least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- ★ Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- ★ Not eligible for any other VA education benefit program
- ★ Not in receipt of VA compensation due to *Individual Unemployability* (IU)
- ★ Not enrolled in a federal or state job training program
- ★ Enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school

Visit www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP to learn more and read FAQs about VRAP. You may also contact Tom Beasley, consultant, Iowa Department of Education Veteran and Military Education: 515.281.3317 for information. Program begins on or after July 1, 2012.

News Briefs Con't.

Veterans Day On the Hill - 2012

January 18, 2012 marked the annual “Veterans Day on the Hill,” sponsored by the Iowa Veterans Coalition. Hundreds of Iowa Veterans visited the Iowa Capitol and had an opportunity to meet with their state legislators, Major General Timothy Orr, IDVA Director Jodi Tymeson, IVH Commandant David Worley, ICVA Chair Todd Jacobus, and key policy makers — among many others. Veterans also visited with vendors about veteran-related services, and welcomed old friends and colleagues.

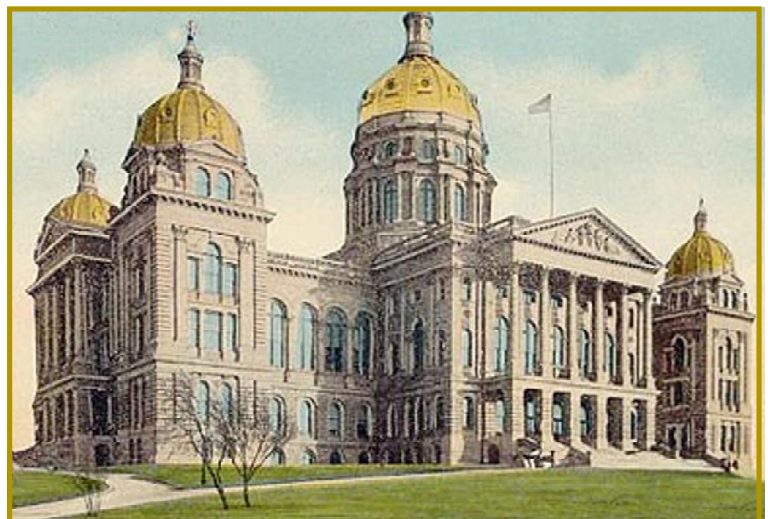
Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, Adjutant General of the Iowa National Guard, addressed a joint session of the Iowa House and Senate on the Condition of the Iowa National Guard. You may read the entirety of his remarks here: www.legis.iowa.gov/DOCS/Pubs/hjweb/PDF2/2012/01-18-2012.pdf, beginning on page 95.



Iowa Legislative Update

As of February 23, 2012, many bills are still working their way through the legislative process. There have been two bills of interest to the veteran community signed by the Governor. Senate File 2007 is a \$1.3 million supplemental appropriation to the National Guard Educational Assistance Program. Senate File 2018 is a \$3 million grant for the USS Iowa restoration process. A portion of the bill states, “The grant monies shall be expended for the limited purposes of hull and superstructure preparation and painting, ship repairs and improvements, transportation and towing of ship, pier, and dock preparation and improvements, and museum development for the purposes of receiving and berthing the battleship Iowa, BB-61.”

—Jodi Tymeson



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IACCVSO

FYI: The Iowa County Commission of Veterans Affairs (IACCVA) has changed its name. It is now the Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veteran Service Officers (IACCVSO).

IACCVSO recently held an executive meeting at IDVA's office. Jerry Hansen, current IACCVSO President, took the opportunity to present Elizabeth Ledvina with a plaque commemorating her service as president of IACCVA from 2007-2011. Congratulations and thank you!

IACCVSO Officers 2011-2013

Jerry Hansen, Montgomery County	President
Brett McLain, Story County	1 st Vice President
Paul Ladd, Boone County	2 nd Vice President
Louise Galbraith, Crawford County	Secretary
Patty Hamann, Cedar County	Treasurer
Sara Creamer, Muscatine County	Historian
Andrew Beaver, Louisa County	Sergeant At Arms
Mitch Holmes, Cass County	Chaplain
Elizabeth Ledvina, Tama County	Past President



Elizabeth Ledvina & Jerry Hansen

Statistics

IDVA's office frequently receives phone calls asking for veteran statistics, demographics, and other data. The VA's webpage site, the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, supplies an amazing and impressive amount of current data such as veterans population, expenditures, maps, reports, etc. You can access their site here: <http://www.va.gov/vetdata>.

Valentines for Veterans



L. to R. Dixie Benton (LIFT member), Dan Gannon (VA volunteer), Cheryl TanCreti (McLaren's Chapel), Patrick Doherty (volunteer), and Marcella Phillips (LIFT member).

McLaren's Resthaven Chapel, a valued leader in community outreach, joined other volunteers across the nation and supported the "Valentines for Veterans" project this February.

Students and teachers from Fairmeadows Elementary and Jordan Creek Elementary schools in West Des Moines participated in the "2012 Valentines for Veterans" project this year by designing over 600 valentines; volunteers delivered them to Iowa Veterans at the Central Iowa VA Health Care System, the Iowa Veterans Home, and the Iowa City VA Health Care System.

Cheryl TanCreti, Community Outreach Director at Resthaven Cemetery, and her volunteer team reported that it was a joy to see the smiles on the faces of the veterans as they received their Valentine's Day cards.

County News Briefs

Linn County

Sleep Out Raises \$20,000 for Nine Emergency Shelters

Linn County's 6th annual *Sleep Out* for the Homeless raised \$20,000 for area programs that provide emergency shelter and transitional housing for the homeless. The *Sleep Out* was sponsored by Linn County Veteran Affairs, Community Circle of Care, and First Presbyterian Church; approximately 364 community members participated in the event, including 194 who spent the night outside in cardboard boxes.

Organizers of the annual *Sleep Out* will present checks from the money raised by the 2011 *Sleep Out* to nine local programs. The following programs will receive a check from the money raised by the 2011 *Sleep Out*: Catherine McAuley Center, Catholic Worker House, Cedar House Shelter, Foundation 2 Youth Shelter, HACAP Transitional Housing, Mission of Hope, Salvation Army Emergency Lodging Program, Waypoint Services Madge Philips Center, and Willis Dady Emergency Shelter

The annual Linn County Homeless Data Summary Report shows the number of homeless persons served by Linn County emergency shelters and transitional housing programs has increased almost 30 percent over the last two years. Of the 5,802 persons served by local homeless assistance programs in FY11, half (50%) were children.

VA Opens New Cedar Rapids Outreach Center

The Iowa City VA Health Care System opened its new VA Outreach Center, located at 1535 First Avenue SE in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on February 24, 2012. The center will help homeless veterans and veterans at-risk of becoming homeless by providing a place where homeless veterans can wash their clothes, clean up, and receive assistance with housing support services, employment and job training, and obtaining VA benefits. The facility also has showers, a food pantry, clothing pantry, and other amenities. The new outreach center is modeled after one set up in Rock Island, Illinois in 2008, and in Des Moines, opened in 2011.

The opening of the new Cedar Rapids VA Outreach Center is one part of a complete VA mission to end homelessness among Veterans by the year 2015. Des Moines has a sister VA center located at 1223 Center Street, Des Moines.

Scott County

The next Quad Cities Honor Flight is scheduled for April 24, 2012. WWII veterans will have priority, but the hub is taking applications for Korean War veterans as well. A list of Guardians is already in place. For more information, contact David Woods: 563.388.3271.

Story County

Story County veterans will get the opportunity to visit the Washington D.C. via a Freedom Flight. Story County Director Brett McLain has reported that \$95,000 needs to be raised for the flight. The committee hopes to have the monies by July 2012 and a tentative fly-out date for October 2012. They are currently in the pre-planning phase and are still developing fund raising strategies.

The Freedom Flight committee would like to include WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans on this flight, and hope that all of the escorts will be veterans as well. The current plan is to fly in a 747 so 162 can be escorted to Washington D.C. Anyone interested in donating money or time should contact Brett McLain: 515.956.2626.

County News Briefs Con't.

Jones County

Jones County VA is holding their annual open house on Tuesday, March 20th from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. in Olin at the American Legion Hall, 102 E. 2nd Street, Olin, Iowa. There will be a lineup of speakers from IDVA, IWFD, ICVA, KWDDC. A light meal will be served. For more information, call: 319.462.5311.

Iowa Veterans Cemetery: Wreaths Across America

"To be killed in war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst that can happen... to be forgotten is the worst." —Pierre Claeysens (1909-2003)

December 10, 2011 marked the 20th anniversary of Worcester Wreath Company's wreaths being donated and placed on headstones at Arlington National Cemetery. Ceremonial wreaths were placed to remember all soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who served.

The IVC once again participated in the WAA ceremony on 12/11/11 beginning at precisely 11:00 a.m. and, in addition to the ceremonial wreaths, over 1,000 wreaths were placed on every



Iowa Veterans Cemetery — 12-10-11

headstone and columbaria plaza at the cemetery. This is the 4th year that the IVC/IDVA has participated in the ceremony, and the 4th year that Patrick Palmersheim volunteered to conduct the local WAA ceremony. Over 150 volunteers participated, including the Military Order of the Purple Heart, their families and friends, the Van Meter American Legion, the Knights of Columbus, and other families and friends — all of whom braved the winter weather of December.

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery reports that through March 5, 2012 there are:
Applications on file: 6,256 ♦ Veterans interred: 896 ♦ Interments: 1,066 ♦ *In Memory of Markers*: 35

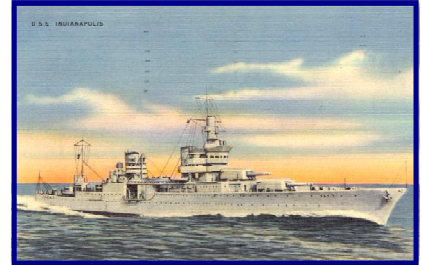
Iowa Veterans Home Addition

The Iowa Veterans Home recently moved 21 residents into their new Fox building. The building will eventually accommodate 180 new beds. The remaining beds will be occupied after the USDVA completes their survey and acknowledges that all standards have been successfully met. Final moving plans are set for April 6th. IVC has also started the design process for the Dack & Malloy renovation, the generator upgrade, and the transportation building.



Honoring the USS Indianapolis

On March 5, 2012, the Iowa House honored Iowans who served on the USS Indianapolis by introducing a Resolution honoring the Iowans who were killed in or survived the attack on the USS Indianapolis on July 30, 1945. A portion of House Resolution 108 is as follows:



WHEREAS, there were 30 Iowans on board the USS Indianapolis in the early morning of July 30, 1945; and WHEREAS, only two of the Iowans on board that morning, Seaman First Class Charles O. Wells of Camanche and Seaman Second Class Glen Laverne Milbrodt of Akron, survived the attack on the USS Indianapolis; NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, That the House of Representatives honors the lives and service of each of the Iowans who were killed in or survived the attack on the USS Indianapolis on July 30, 1945.



Upcoming Events

Plan NOW to attend the 2012 Career/Resource Expo

Sponsored by IowaWORKS Central Iowa and DMACC

- What:** 2012 Career Expo, sponsored by IowaWORKS Central Iowa and DMACC
- When:** Thursday, April 12, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Where:** FFA Enrichment Center (adjoining the DMACC Ankeny Campus)
1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023
<http://www.ffaenrichmentcenter.com/directions.aspx>
- Info:** Jeff Johnson Gloria Cano
IowaWORKS IowaWORKS
515.281.9708 515.281.9649
jeffrey.johnson@iwd.gov gloria.cano@iwd.iowa.gov

DMACC to Host Iowa Veterans Career Retreat

DMACC will host the first ever Iowa Veterans Career Retreat entitled, "Life After Military Service: Achieve Your Education & Career Goals" on **Wednesday, April 4** on the DMACC Ankeny Campus. The day-long workshop will bring together experts and unique resources to help veterans achieve their career goals.

Don Enright, a veteran himself after 22 years in the National Guard, knows there is a great need for this event and anticipates that this workshop will help veterans get the career they want and deserve.

Jobs coach and career expert Cassandra Halls will deliver the keynote presentation, entitled, "Stand Up and Stand Out. Getting Hired in Today's Economy." There will also be breakout sessions and a panel forum composed of veterans.

The retreat is free to all veterans and their family members and to active duty military personnel. Seating is limited, however; participants are asked to pre-register at: www.dmacc.edu/veterans/retreat/welcome.asp. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. For additional information, contact Don Enright, 515.964.6278; dlenright2@dmacc.edu.

Attention All Military Active, Retired, Reserve, and National Guard!



WHO: Are You Active Duty, Retired, Reserve, National Guard, or Medically Retired? Spouse? Widow?

WHAT: Do you have a current Military I.D. Card?

WHY: If not, you need to apply or renew! A Military I.D. Card is necessary to provide proof of identity and eligibility.

WHERE: Contact one of the Military I.D. Card centers nearest you from the list below or visit: <https://www2.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl>.

Iowa Army National Guard
Camp Dodge/Johnston, Iowa
515.252.4728

389th EN CBT BN (H)
Dubuque, Iowa
563.556.2255 ext 3802

2nd BCT 34th ID
Boone, Iowa
515.432.5079

132nd Fighter Wing
Des Moines, Iowa
515.261.8530

Armed Forces Center (Army Reserve)
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
319.297.8688 or 319.297.8683

196th MEB
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
605.357.2900, 2985

185th Air Refueling Wing
Sioux City, Iowa
712.233.0534

Rock Island Arsenal
Rock Island, Illinois
309.782.0596

114th FW South Dakota ANG
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
605.988.5845

Offutt AFB
Omaha, Nebraska
402.294.1110

67th Troop Command
Iowa City, Iowa
319.337.9572

103rd Expeditionary
Des Moines, Iowa
515.285.4692

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