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FEBRUARY, 2010 POST NEWSLETTER

FROM THE COMMANDER

February 19, 1945 is the anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima. October is the 65th anniversary of Ipswich VFW Post 1093. I mention both because in its initial years, and beyond, our Post has been honored to have survivors of this battle as members. The Marines 5th Corps landed two divisions abreast on the southeast landing beaches of Iwo Jima, the 5th division landed on the left and the 4th division landed on the right with the 3rd division remaining in reserve. My Dad's brother was a machine gun section leader with the 1st battalion, 5th marines with the first wave of troops onto the island. As everyone knows the flag raising at Iwo Jima became Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize winning photograph of the battle. The surviving Marines and corpsman who raised that flag provided the basis for the most successful War Bond drive of the war. The battle lasted for 36 days and resulted in more than 26,000 American casualties, including 6,800 dead. Of the 20,000 Japanese defenders, only 1,083 survived. A total of Twenty-Seven Medals of Honor were awarded, many posthumously, to Marines and sailors which was the highest number awarded from any single operation during the war. My uncle never forgot the horrors of that battle. However, in spite of the Iwo Jima experience, he joined his home town Marine Corps Reserve Unit when he returned from the Pacific. When the Korean War started he, along with his home town unit were dispatched to Korea to join Chesty Puller at the Chosen Reservoir along with many more survivors from the Battle of Iwo Jima.. I know of at least two of our Post members who were also at the Reservoir, Edwin Surpitski and Nicholas George. Each year survivors of Iwo Jima hold a reunion at different locations. This year the Iwo Jima Association of America is hosting a 65th reunion in Arlington, Virginia and our Post will be hosting a banquet in Ipswich celebrating our 65th anniversary.

Bill Duke, Commander

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY POST MEETING

Since Chaplain Bill Hurley is travelling, Jake Burrridge reported that Bernie Richardson, Jerry Hovey and Nick Markos were injured or sick. Letters of appreciation were received from the families of Emile Saulnier and Lawrence Adams for Post participation in their funerals. Commander Duke reported that the post entry, Daniel Ducette, had won the Voice of Democracy contest. VOD Chair (and Jr. Vice Commander) Bob Metz will accompany the student and her teacher to the Mass. Dept. awards dinner and they will be received at a post meeting at a later date and given appropriate recognition. Jr. Vice Commander Chad Freeman (Programs and Events Chair) reviewed planning for a Military Memories Day to be held on Armed Forces Day as well as an Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Convention on July 24th similar to last year's successful event. Concerning the Military Memories Day he noted that Comrade Rich Barbato is donating a substantial amount of historic military equipment to the post which will be included in that event. Commander Duke noted that the Post's 65th anniversary would occur this year asked Chad Freeman to plan an event in honor of this occasion. Jake Burrridge, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, reviewed changes discussed in the proposed scholarship program and it was subsequently voted that family members of all VFW Post 1093 members in good standing would be eligible for post scholarships. It was also voted that the Post award \$50 attendance awards to 2 Ipswich graduating High School students, a boy and a girl to be nominated by the School. It was also voted that appropriate recognition be given to 30 and 40 year post members.

SPECIAL NOTE: Chad Freeman, as noted above, is charged with making the arrangements for our Military Memories Day which will be held with Armed Forces Day. At one time each branch of the military had their own day of celebration. But, on August 31, 1949 then Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced the creation of Armed Forces Day. President Harry Truman also announced the holiday in a presidential proclamation on February 20, 1950. All branches of the military were asked to celebrate on this day and they complied on the first Armed Forces Day which is held the third Saturday in May. Chad needs the help of all comrades. Our first Memories Day was a big success and this year will be even bigger and better with your help so let Chad know you will help by displaying your favorite souvenirs, helping to set up the displays, whatever. Do it now. Become a member of the team.



TAPS

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEPARTED COMRADES - MAY THEY REST IN PEACE



O God, Father of us all, we offer this final earthly tribute to our beloved comrades who have passed on.

Nick Markos

COMING ELECTION OF POST OFFICERS

Nominations for new Post Officers will be announced by the Nomination Committee in March. Elections and appointments done in April. all post members who wish to serve are encouraged to please let the Adjutant know. prior to the March Post meeting. Also, nominations will be accepted from the floor just prior to election action at the April meeting.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO VETERANS

VFW Presents Legislative Goals

The VFW presented its Top 5 legislative goals this week (1/22) at a House Veterans Affairs Committee roundtable. The issues we want Congress to highlight this year are the claims backlog, employment and training, oversight of VA health care, and military-to-veteran transition issues, to include education. Committee members acknowledged that the VA claims backlog is among their top priorities, and they intend to hold oversight hearings on viable fixes to the critical problem. The VFW's 2010 legislative priority goals can be viewed at <http://www.vfw.org/PR/Legislative/2010PriorityGoals%20PROOF.pdf>.

New Federal Job Site Launched

The Office of Personnel Management launched a new website this week to help military veterans and their families find employment with the federal government. FedshireVets.gov will become the main source for employment information for both veterans and hiring officials. View the site at <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>.

VA to Delay Increase in Prescription Copayments

VA officials this week announced they are delaying an increase in veterans' out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals until June 30. The scheduled \$1 increase—from \$8 to \$9 per 30-day supply of medicine for nonservice-connected conditions—will be reevaluated so that VA can consider how the increases are calculated. During this period, VA will also keep \$960 as the maximum annual out-of-pocket payment for pharmaceuticals for nonservice-related conditions. The \$960 cap will not apply to veterans in priority groups seven and eight. The yearly maximum out-of-pocket payment was scheduled to increase to \$1,080. There are no copayments associated with the treatment of conditions related to military service. The freeze is considered temporary. Some increases may take affect this summer unless a new way of calculating co-payments is found and implemented.

TRICARE for Gray Area Reserve Retirees

A provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for 2010 will soon offer "gray area" reservists the opportunity to purchase TRICARE health care coverage. Qualified members of the Selected Reserve are eligible to purchase premium-based coverage under TRICARE Reserve Select, but retired National Guard and Reserve personnel are ineligible for TRICARE until they reach age 60. The new provision will allow retired reservists who are not yet age 60 ("gray-area" retirees) to purchase TRICARE Standard or Extra coverage. The new program will differ from Reserve Select in its qualifications, premiums, copayment rates and catastrophic cap requirements. The provision requires premium rates to equal the full cost of the coverage, whereas Reserve Select members pay only 28% of the cost of the coverage. The new program is being tentatively called TRICARE Retired Reserve, and the Defense Department said qualified gray-area retirees should be able to purchase coverage by late summer or early fall. More information on the program will be made available on the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil>



VFW Joins in Haiti Humanitarian Effort

Kansas City, MO., Jan. 15, 2010 -The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is assisting in humanitarian efforts in Haiti by providing U.S. service members — with relatives currently located in Haiti — with the funds necessary to purchase airline tickets to the devastated island, so that they may locate, assist or make burial arrangements for relatives affected by the recent earthquake. Funds also may be used to help provide sustenance or other necessities to sustain life.

VFW National Commander Tommy J. Tradewell Sr.:

Bucking automatic weapons "fire storm," 27;th took heavy casualties. As one GI told it, "If you rose a foot off the ground, you got hit." Photo taken during the Battle of Dau Tieng or Dong Minh Chau (Code named "Operation Attleboro" in late 1966.



VFW eMembership - Member Tools

If you have a computer then VFW eMembership is for you. Go to <http://emem.vfw.org/> and sign on. You will find a toolset that helps our membership interact with the VFW National Headquarters for general membership tasks. Want a few examples? Since the inception of the eMembership tool 110,849 comrades have used the site to change their address, 12,963 members have paid Life Dues, there have been 59,100 requests for a duplicate membership card, 205,038 members have arranged for continuing payment of annual dues, and there have been 34,572 transfers with 78,461 deceased comrades reported. The site is particularly useful for Post Quartermasters and the QM's of 6,435 have found the site useful.

In addition you will find a few referrals you might not expect as for example: Since your pet is a member of your family, don't you want the financial freedom to do everything medically possible in the event of a catastrophic sickness or accidental injury? With VPI Pet Insurance, VFW members can extend or save the life of their family pet. Whether dog, cat or bird, VPI has a policy for you. To learn about protecting your pet or to obtain a free quote, call **1-877-738-7874** or you will be directed to an appropriate web site.

There is also a forum where it is possible to ask question pertaining to any aspect of the VFW experience and you will get an authoritative answer. Perhaps you are just in the mood to purchase an item that will demonstrate your VFW affiliation or replace that worn flag out on the porch.....there is a Quick Link to the VFW Store. So next time you boot go to <http://emem.vfw.org/> and sign up. It would also be a good idea to bookmark the site for future reference.

VFW Pays Tribute to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans



KANSAS CITY, Mo., Jan. 18, 2010 – VFW magazine's latest special publication, **To War and Back: Afghanistan and Iraq – A New Generation of Veterans**, is now available. The magazine's editors created **To War and Back** to honor the sacrifices of today's warriors. This special publication deals with matters of critical concern, including the latest information on TBI, PTSD, the GI Bill, medical care, medals, memorials and other relevant issues. The booklet contains information you won't find anywhere else. Compact chronologies chronicle combat in both wars from their beginnings through 2009. All Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Cross and Navy Cross recipients are compiled on two convenient pages. Also, find employment resources especially for veterans, and read how families cope with the strains of wartime. To preview the booklet online, please visit

www.vfwmagazine.org/towarandback.html. Copies are perfect for overseas deployment and welcome home ceremonies.

To order **To War and Back**, [fill out this form](#) and mail to the address below or contact Shontaye Davis in the Membership Department at: National Membership Department, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111

Phone: (816) 756-3390 (816) 756-3390 E-mail: membership@vfw.org

Fax: 816-968-2728

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

Created in 1947 the Voice of Democracy (VOD) scholarship program is an audio-essay contest for high school students in grades 9-12 that annually provides more than \$3 million in scholarships. The first place winner, who competes with all the first-place VFW Department winners, receives a \$30,000 scholarship that is paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. Besides competing for the top scholarship prize, as well as other national scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$16,000 each Department's first-place winner receives an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., March 6-10, sponsored by Target. The VOD program is designed to foster patriotism by allowing students the opportunity to voice their opinion in a three to five minute entry based on an annual theme.

Post VOD Chair Senior Vice Commander Bob Metz accompanied this year's District 10 winner Danielle Doucette who was sponsored by our Post to the District awards ceremony. She will be visiting a post meeting for an additional presentation.

The 2010-2011 Theme is: Does My Generation Have a Role in America's Future.

2010 NATIONAL CONVENTION

This year the National Convention will be held in Indianapolis, IN from August 21 to 26. This is an opportunity to join with VFW comrades in a fraternal gathering while demonstrating support for all that the VFW represents. Contact Commander Duke or the Adjutant for reservation information.

In 1798, Congress created the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. The Marine Corps Emblem was adopted in 1868. In 1883 The Marine Hymn was first heard, and the motto : “SEMPER FIDELIS” (Latin: Always Faithful) was adopted. Below...Marines in 1866



U.S. Sailors load humanitarian supplies onto a Navy HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., at Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 18, 2010, to be taken into the city for distribution. Department of Defense assets have been deployed to assist in the Haiti relief effort following a magnitude-7 earthquake that hit the city Jan. 12, 2010.

RECENT LEGISLATIVE UPDATES OF INTEREST TO VETERANS

1. FY 2011 Budget Released: The Administration on Feb. 1 released its budget requests for Fiscal Year 2011, which begins Oct. 1. VFW Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell applauded the increases provided for the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense and Homeland Security, saying, "The president's vision tracks with key VFW legislative goals that advocate for a strong and secure America, and for ensuring that those who serve in uniform are properly cared for by a grateful nation." Budget highlights include:

For VA:

- \$5.2 billion to provide specialized care for PTSD and TBI injuries, and other mental health programs
- \$3.3 billion in Information Technology funding to automate GI Bill and disability claims processing, as well as to create a single electronic military service and medical record to ease the transition of military personnel into the VA
- \$2.5 billion for VA Medical Center construction and improvements
- \$800 million to help reduce veterans' homelessness
- \$250 million to improve access to care for veterans residing in rural areas
- \$218 million to increase women veterans' care
- In addition, \$50.6 billion was requested in Advanced Funding for FY 2012 (this includes expanding healthcare eligibility to some Category 7 & 8 veterans by 2013)

For DOD:

- \$30.9 billion for military medical care
- \$12 billion for military family support programs that include counseling and other services for families dealing with deployments, and childcare and youth programs
- \$250 million for PTSD, TBI, and mental health research and treatment programs

For DHS:

- \$4.6 billion to strength U.S. border security
- \$4 billion to bolster state and community emergency first responder programs
- \$1.6 billion to expeditiously identify and remove illegal aliens who commit crimes
- \$788 million to modernize transportation system security screening equipment and processes
- \$150 million to procure and deploy next-generation biological, radiological and nuclear detection equipment

To read the VFW national commander's press release, with links to more information about the government FY 2011 budget submission, go to <http://www.vfw.org/index.cfm?fa=news.newsDtl&did=5371>.

2. VFW Testifies on VA Budget: As one of four coauthors of the Independent Budget (IB), the VFW testified Thursday before the House VA Committee on the new FY 2011 VA budget proposal. The IB is now in its 24th year, and its recommendations capture the full picture of what VA needs to care for veterans. VFW is responsible for the construction portion of the IB, and testimony centered on major and minor VA construction projects, to include a concern that ongoing funding is needed to complete the numerous projects under construction, as well as those being planned. View the recorded webcast on the House VA Committee website at <http://veterans.house.gov/>.

3. House VA Subcommittee Hearings: The FY 2011 budget submission was not the only topic of discussion among House VA Committee members this week.

- **The Subcommittee on Health** reviewed VA's Project HERO program, which is a pilot program designed to improve the purchasing of contract care for veterans who need a specialized service or who reside in extremely rural areas. VA currently spends more than \$2 billion annually on contracted care, but there is no consistent process. The committee had just recently learned VA was implementing more HERO pilot programs in VISNs 8, 16, 20 and 23. Subcommittee Chairman Michael Michaud (D-ME) stressed the need for more transparency, and asked VA provide improved access, quality and cost effective care, and to keep those in the veterans' community (mainly VSOs) informed and involved in the on-going process.
- **The Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs** discussed the status of the Veterans' Benefit Improvement Act (P.L. 110-389). VFW supported the passage of the legislation in 2008, as it provides provisions designed to modernize VA's claims processing system, to include expediting ready- to-rate claims and providing veterans a claims checklist to ease the paperwork process. The law also created the Disability Advisory Commission. Improving the claims process is a top legislative priority for VFW.

For more subcommittee information, visit the House VA Committee website at <http://veterans.house.gov/>.

(Legislative news courtesy of VFW Washington Weekly)