



the WARRIOR the WARRIOR

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VVA TSC Service Officer Program Donation Challenge.....

VVA Chapter # 915 in Austin, TX has pledged \$500.00 to the VVA Texas State Council (TSC) Service Officer Program and challenged the other TSC chapters to make some form of donation, and if possible, to match or exceed the donation from VVA Chapter # 915.

VVA TSC has successfully applied for the past two years to the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund (VVAF), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, for grants to support and expand their Service Officer program. Last year VVAF provided \$4,500.00 in matching funds, and this year awarded VVA TSC \$7,000.00 again in matching funds. The VVA TSC Service Officer program is open to all generations of veterans and has had a consistently high success rate in representing veterans and obtaining claims through the VA adjudication and compensation process.

Our chapter has answered the challenge with a matching donation of \$500.00 to the VVA TSC Service Officer Program.



The Three Men Statue in Washington, DC on "Memorial Day 2008" (photo taken by B. Meeks)



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President's Corner.....The Prez



As Veterans, especially Vietnam Veterans, we are facing a new assault on the Veterans' Benefits. We are now the New "largest number of veterans" in the US and, therefore, responsible for Cost Increases in Veterans Benefits. An article, last week, in USA Today noted 2 things:

1. That the amount of Federal Funds expended for Veterans' Health Care has risen every year over the past 10 years and,
2. That Vietnam Veterans now represent the largest number of living Veterans and, as such, the largest beneficiary group for these increased expenditures.

Put these 2 items together and you will realize that we Vietnam Veterans, are to blame for the increases.

Please contact your local Congressional Representative, during their current break for campaigning for re-election, and ask them to commit to voting for "Assured Funding" for the VA Health Care System.

Please point out:

1. We served when called and most of our health problems relate to that service,
2. Our service put us at an employment disadvantage with those who did not serve, former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld (5 Deferments)for example, and
3. The erosion of private health insurance benefits has forced many Veterans into the VA Health Care System for treatment of Service Related Illnesses.

We are asking for the Assured Funding not only for ourselves but also for the other living Veterans - WW II, Korea, Gulf War and the Current Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans.

We, as our Motto states, ***"Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another."***

News From The Committee on Veterans Affairs

IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 1, 2008 CONTACT: Brian Lawrence (202) 225-3527

House Approves Four Veterans' Bills

Washington, D.C. — In a late evening session on Thursday, the House of Representatives approved four veterans' bills by voice vote. The following bills now await action by the Senate:

H.R. 674 would permanently establish the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV), which is set to expire December 31, 2009. The ACMV was established by Public Law 103-446, and is comprised of veterans who represent their respective minority groups, and are recognized authorities in fields pertinent to their needs. The ACMV's goal is to: promote the use of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs, benefits, and services by minority veterans; make benefits and services more accessible to minority veterans; and, make recommendations on how VA can better serve minority veterans.

H.R. 4255, as amended, the United States Olympic Committee Paralympic Act of 2008, would authorize VA to make a grant to the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) to plan, develop, and implement the Paralympic Program for veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

“I am pleased with this bill and the bi-partisan manner in which it moved forward through the Committee,” Ranking Member Steve Buyer (R-Ind.) said. “I am especially pleased that it contains several provisions from my bill, H.R. 1370, the Disabled Veterans Sports and Special Events Promotion Act of 2007. In 2005, VA and the U.S. Olympic Committee agreed to a joint effort to increase disabled veterans’ participation in sports activities. These heroes draw inspiration from the therapeutic outlet offered by sports, and we owe it to them to provide alternative avenues of rehabilitation from their injuries. I am delighted that eleven disabled veterans will participate in the U.S. Paralympics in Beijing, and hope this is the beginning of larger participation in future games.”

H.R. 6221, as amended, the Veteran Owned Small Business Protection and Clarification Act of 2008, was introduced by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Ranking Member, John Boozman (R-Ark.). The bill would require VA to comply with the contracting goals and preferences for small business concerns owned or controlled by veterans. It would also require the VA to conduct a five-year pilot program on work-study programs for veterans, and authorize \$60 million in fiscal years 2009 through 2018 to create the Military Occupational Specialty Transition program, a modernized version of the Service Members’ Occupational Conversion and Training Act.

H.R. 6225, as amended, the Injunctive Relief for Veterans Act of 2008, would improve upon existing *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)* and Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections for military servicemembers and their spouses. More specifically, it would require judges to give a preliminary hearing to veterans seeking to regain jobs lost due to deployment. Current law makes such hearings optional when a veteran seeks injunctive relief. The bill would also require colleges and universities to provide refunds on tuition and fees for students who are called up for active duty, and it would allow such students to reenter the institution at the same academic status that was held at the time of activation.

New York Times:.....

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Wounded Warriors, Empty Promises

The bad news about the Army's treatment of wounded soldiers keeps coming. The generals keep apologizing and insisting that things are getting better, but they are not.

The latest low moment for Army brass came on Tuesday in Washington, where a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing to examine the sorry state of the Army Medical Action Plan. That's the plan to prevent the kind of systematic neglect and mistreatment exposed by The Washington Post last year at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

After a flurry of apologies, firings, investigations and reports, the Army resolved to streamline and improve case management for wounded soldiers. Under the plan, "warrior transition units" would swiftly deliver excellent care to troops so they could return to duty or be discharged into the veterans' medical system. Each soldier would be assigned a team to look over his or her care: a physician, a nurse and a squad leader. It all sounded sensible and comprehensive.

It has not worked out so well. Staff members of the House subcommittee who visited numerous warrior transition units June 2007 to February found a significant gap between the Army leadership's

optimistic promises and reality. Among other things, the Army failed to anticipate a flood of wounded soldiers.

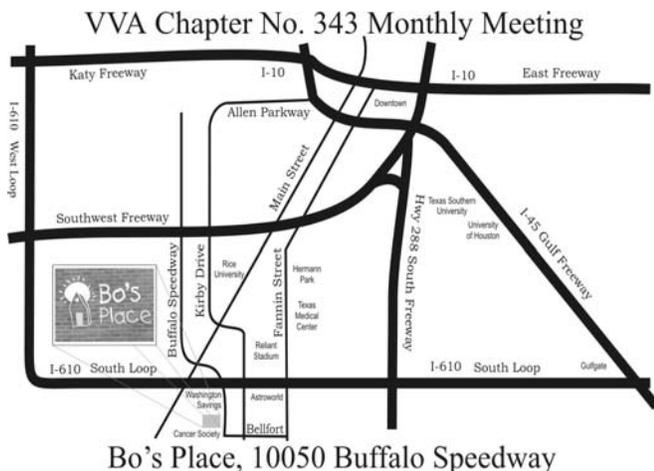
Some transition units have been overwhelmed and are thus severely understaffed. At Fort Hood, Tex., last month, staff members found 1,362 patients in a unit authorized for 649 - and more than 350 on a waiting list. Of the total, 311 were identified as being at high risk of drug overdose, suicide or other dangerous behavior.

There were 38 nurse case managers when there should have been 74. Some soldiers have had to languish two months to a year before the Army decided what to do with them, far longer than the goal the Army set last year. Under skeptical questioning during a hearing in February, Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker, the Army surgeon general, told the subcommittee that "for all intents and purposes, we are entirely staffed at the point we need to be staffed." He also said: "The Army's unwavering commitment and a key element of our warrior ethos is that we never leave a soldier behind on the battlefield - or lost in a bureaucracy."

That was thousands of wounded, neglected soldiers ago. There are now about 12,500 soldiers assigned to the warrior transition units – more than twice as many as a year ago. The number is expected to reach 20,000 by this time next year.

The nation's responsibility to care for the wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan will extend for decades. After Tuesday's hearing, we are left pondering the simple questions asked at the outset by Representative Susan Davis, the California Democrat who is chairwoman of the military personnel subcommittee: Why did the Army fail to adequately staff its warrior transition units? Why did it fail to predict the surge in demand? And why did it take visits from a Congressional subcommittee to prod the Army into recognizing and promising - yet again - to fix the problem?

Get involved today... by attending the VVA Chapter No. 343's August 8th meeting on Friday night, 7:30 PM at Bo's Place.....



Special Notice: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number **1-800-273-8255**, available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.



Displays in Washington, DC on "Memorial Day 2008" (photo taken by B. Meeks)

E. A. "Buddy" Grantham
Director, City of Houston Office of Veterans' Affairs

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center invites all Houston-area community agencies (non-profits) to attend a panel discussion and seminar focusing on VA programs and services for returning combat veterans. The goals of this event are to bridge gaps through education about the VA and build strong relationships between community organizations and resources.

Please RSVP to Rose Bush at 713.794.7034 or Rose.Bush@va.gov by Thursday, August 21, 2008 .

APPLICATION FOR VVA MEMBERSHIP

(Return to: Vietnam Veterans of America San Jacinto Chapter No. 343, P.O. Box 280358, Houston, Texas 77228-0358)

Name _____ Sex _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Chapter No. 343

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____ E-mail _____

Type: ___ Individual member – 1 year @ \$20 ___ Individual member – 3 years @ \$50
Life member: ___ \$250 (ages 49 and under) ___ \$225 (ages 50-55) ___ \$200 (ages 56-60) ___ \$175 (ages 61-65)
___ \$150 (ages 66+) ___ Optional Life member time payment plan - \$50 down, \$25/month

___ Incarcerated Veterans (IVI) \$0: TDCJ # _____ or ___ Incarcerated Veteran Associate (IVA) \$20: TDCJ # _____

Payment Method: ___ Check ___ Money Order ___ Credit Card (Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover)

Credit Card Number _____ **Exp. Date** _____

Signature _____

Eligibility: Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

New members and new life members must submit a copy of their DD-214 along with this application and dues payment.