



DAV

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans



October - December 2007
4th Quarter

The Marshall Patriot

Arab Chapter 18

Volume 1, Issue 3

Special points of interest:

- Columbus Day
October 8th
- US NAVY Birthday
October 13th
- Daylight Saving Time
Ends November 4th
- Election Day
November 6th
- USMC Birthday
November 10th
- Veterans Day
November 11th
- Thanksgiving
November 22nd
- Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day
December 7th
- Christmas
December 25th

From the Commander's Desk

The Disabled American Veterans mission is to assist disabled veterans in any way possible to make their and their family's life better. This assistance can take many different forms. DAV is heavily involved in the Legislative Process, on the behalf of disabled veterans. We can assist them through our Service Officers in processing their disability claims and appeals with the Veterans Administration. We can assist veterans through our visitations with them, in hospitals, nursing homes and in their own homes offering comradeship and support. We, as an organization can provide limited financial, or in kind assistance. As individuals we can also provide our private assistance.

Recently Chapter 18 has been able to provide several types of assistance to a disabled veteran and her children. They had suddenly became homeless and were living in a Huntsville shelter. The DAV regional office is helping her in



processing her claim with VA. As a chapter we were able to provide her with some emergency funds. One of our members was able to provide her with a temporary apartment, in a decent environment, for her and her children to live in while she locates a more permanent place to live. Others of us have been able to donate items that she needs to set up a new household for her family. Others have been able to give her guidance and make contacts to help her find the resources that she needs for her family. She is not out of the woods yet, but things are looking up.



I am proud of Chapter 18's efforts to help this family in their time of need. This type of situation is just the kind of thing that the DAV, Chapter 18 and our "Forget Me Not" campaigns are all about. If anyone knows of any other disabled veteran, whether a member of DAV or not, that needs any kind of assistance, please let your leadership team know.

On another note, Chapter 18 is well on it's way to obtaining a Charter for its' own Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Chapter. We would like to invite any family member of a disabled veteran, to join us as a member of our new DAVA Chapter. The cost of membership is minimal, but the opportunity for service, is unlimited.

CMDR Brennan



History Channel Sponsors 'Take a Vet to School Day'

The History Channel is launching a new initiative linking veterans of all ages with young people in schools and communities across America. The Take a Vet to School Day national campaign has enlisted former Marine drill instructor and acclaimed actor and host of "Mail Call" on The History Channel, R. Lee Ermey, to serve as the spokesperson for the campaign.

Ermey, a medically-retired honorary Gunnery Sergeant, is a longtime advocate for veterans' causes and

supporter of the DAV.

The Take a Vet to School Day program encourages interaction between students and veterans. In communities throughout the country, young people will learn about our nation's military history and the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have preserved and protected our precious freedoms.

Customized public service announcements featuring Ermey will encourage schools and communities

to invite local veterans to speak in classrooms and share their stories with the students. The History Channel will provide participating schools with curriculum-based educational materials as well a Veterans Day video produced with the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information about this new program, visit The History Channel Web site at http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=mini_home&mini_id=54799

Senate clarifies right to salute flag

The Senate has passed legislation clarifying U.S. law to ensure that veterans and service members not in uniform can salute the flag.

S 1877, sponsored by Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., would address the ambiguity of current law, which states that veterans and service members not in uniform should place their hand over their hearts, without specifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

“The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one’s military service,” Inhofe said. “Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag.”

Inhofe said he believes this is “an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens.

Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others.”

The House would have to agree to the legislation before it could become law.



Chaplain’s Corner

“God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change, the courage to change Things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

I have found this simple and well known prayer to be one that is sometimes very difficult for us, as Veteran’s, to live by. If we can, peace and tranquility are in our grasp.

"You don't lead by hitting people over the head-that's assault, not leadership."
-General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Adjutant’s Corner



Greetings Comrades!

Well it’s time for another installment of the newsletter. First of all I would like to thank everyone who has helped by contributing articles (Bill and Rhonda), it’s difficult to put this together and I welcome the support! The next newsletter will go out in January, so let’s start thinking of articles and I would like to add back comment from the Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, and the Service Officer. I feel it is important for the Chapter

members to hear information from all of the Chapter Officers.

If anyone has any question as to if they have an outstanding balance to complete their Life Member status. Please feel free to contact me and I can let you know if you are current or if you have a balance due.

Also, if anyone has any ideas about a fund raising activity that we could conduct, please bring it forward so we can perhaps pursue it.

As we approach the holiday season I would like to take a moment and wish everyone a joyous season, and I hope to see more of everyone at the monthly meetings (that was one of the reasons I joined the DAV, I enjoy being around other veterans). God bless, and hope to see you at a meeting.

Adjutant Bruce Niemeyer



Alabama G. I. Dependents' Scholarship Program

This nationally renowned program was created by Act 633 and approved October 1947 by the Alabama Legislature. It is administered by the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs and is governed by the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 31-6-1. The veteran must meet the following qualifications to establish eligibility of his/her dependents. A dependent is defined as a child, stepchild, spouse or the un-remarried widow (er) of the veteran.

Military Service: The veteran must have honorably served at least 90 or more days of continuous active federal military service or honorably discharged by reason of service-connected disability after serving less than 90 days.

Disability Requirements: The veteran must be rated 20% or more due to service-connected disabilities or have held the qualifying rating at the time of death, a former prisoner of war (POW), declared missing in action (MIA), died as the result of a service-connected disability, or died while on active military service in the line of duty.

Residency Requirements: The veteran must have been a permanent civilian resident of the State of Alabama for at least one year immediately prior to (a) the initial entry into active military service or (b) any subsequent period of military service in which a break (1 year or more) in service occurred and the Alabama civilian residency was established. Permanently service-connected veterans rated at 100% who did not enter service from Alabama, may qualify after establishing at least five years of permanent residency in Alabama prior to filing of an application or immediately prior to death, if deceased.

Entitlement: Four standard academic years or part-time equivalent at any Alabama state-supported institution of higher learning or a prescribed course of study at any Alabama state-supported technical school without payment of any tuition, required textbooks or instructional fees. Exception: A spouse or un-remarried widow (er) of a veteran who is rated 20 - 90% due to service-connected disabilities are only entitled to two standard academic years without payment of tuition, required textbooks and instructional fees or a prescribed technical course not to exceed 18 months of training. Note: Widow (er) forfeits benefits upon remarriage. Spouse forfeits benefits upon divorce from veteran in which the spouse derived their eligibility.

Age Deadline: The child or stepchild must initiate training prior to their 26th birthday. Age 30 deadlines may apply in certain situations. There is no age deadline for submission of the application by the spouse or un-remarried widow (er).

Application Assistance: The department maintains an office in each county which can furnish information and assist in filing your application. The Marshall County office can be reached at (256) 571-7761.

This information has been provided by:

Rhonda D. Tidmore
 Marshall County Veterans Service Officer
 Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
 Telephone: (256) 571-7761
 Fax: (256) 571-7856
 Email: rhonda.tidmore@va.alabama.gov



"A leader is a man who had the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do, and like it."
 - Harry Truman



WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

Whisenant could have cried on visit to WWII memorial

By ROSE MYERS - *The Arab Tribune*

Wednesday, September 19, 2007 10:19 AM CDT

Howard Whisenant made the trip of a lifetime last weekend. He arrived at the airport in Washington, D.C. to the cheers of hundreds of people, had an escort to meet his every need and was met by a crowd patting him on the back and shaking his hand.

"I guess there was 1,000 women there cheering," Whisenant said. "That felt real good. It was a better reception than when I got back from the war."

The 90-year-old World War II veteran was one of 117 - five from Marshall County - who flew on an Honor Flight Saturday to see the National World War II Memorial in Washington. It was his first time on an airplane in 50 years, but he didn't hesitate when offered the chance to go. It took 62 years to get a memorial in place to honor those who served in WWII and Whisenant wanted to see it.

"They didn't want to spend the money," he said of the delay. "There's a bunch of guys that won't ever get to see it because they died after they got back home."

Whisenant was an Infantryman who landed on Normandy on D-Day. Age has dulled his memory. He recalls little detail beyond getting off the troop ship onto the landing craft and heading for the beach.

"Things was a mess there. We hit the beach. We spread out so we wouldn't be such good targets. It took two days to settle in. After a while, it was cold in winter. Snow. That's about all I can tell you. I don't remember much."

Looking at the memorial, a reminder of the 400,000 lives that were lost in the fighting, was a sobering experience, Whisenant said.

"Standing in front of the WWII memorial kind of made me want to cry," he said. "I had a bunch of buddies that went in there and didn't make it. A lot I didn't hardly get to know. They were gone before they hardly got off the trucks."

Whisenant applied for the flight during the summer and went to an orientation meeting with his niece at a Huntsville church in August. They were told to meet at the Huntsville airport at 6 a.m. Saturday. They flew out at 7:25 a.m., had a breakfast of blueberry muffins on the plane and arrived at Reagan National Airport at 9:25 a.m.

In addition to the WWII memorial, veterans saw the Vietnam Memorial and Marine Corps War Memorial. One thing of particular interest to Whisenant was the regimented changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

"It was nice to see, but I would not want to be on that detail," he said.

Whisenant said he didn't get to talk a whole lot to the other vets for a couple of reasons. First, the plane was crowded and the men couldn't move around. Then, when they got off the plane, they were divided into four buses to travel to the memorials.

Finally, he said, veterans don't like to talk about the war. They enjoy sharing stories about basic training and what they were doing before the war, but the tragedies of combat are too painful to reminisce about.

The guardian who accompanied Whisenant was a man in his 50s, he said.

"He stayed with me the whole complete trip," he said. "Every 10 minutes, he asked me if I was all right. I think I made it as good as he did because on the flight back he took a few naps."

Whisenant said he didn't sleep because there was no room to stretch out on the American Airlines plane.

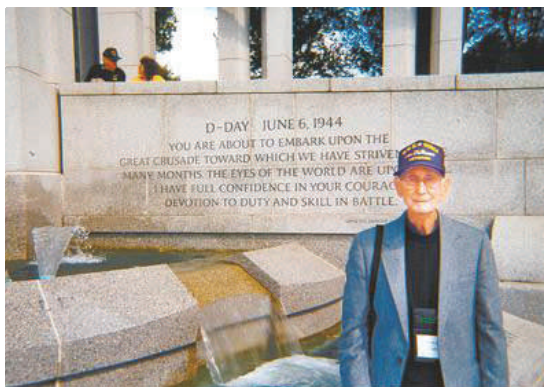
"They don't make them for comfort. They make them for money."

They got back to Huntsville about 8:20 p.m. to another big welcome reception.

"I wanted to stay there a week," he joked. "I really appreciated it."

Whisenant praised the entire experience and said it will be a wonderful memory for him to think about. Living south of Morgan City, he spends a lot of his time reading western magazines when it's hot weather. He grows a garden, cuts his own grass and drives around in his pick-up truck.

"I will remember that day the rest of my life," he said, "if I don't go completely crazy," he said.



Whisenant, who was at D-Day, was pleased to find it recognized



"...but for a soldier
his duty is plain.
He is to obey the
orders of all those
placed over him
and whip the
enemy wherever
he meets him."
- General Ulysses
S. Grant,
letter to Washburne,
June 19, 1862





Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans.

The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs

has an office in Marshall County located on the ground floor of the Marshall County Courthouse in Guntersville. The Veterans Service Officer is Rhonda Tidmore, U.S. Navy Retired. The Administrative Support Assistant is Kathy Floyd who has provided over 30 years of service to veterans of Marshall County.

Drop in anytime for counseling on your VA benefits, or call them at 571-7761. Office hours are 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday.

Arab Chapter 18
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We're on the Web!!

[http://
www.davmembersportal.org/
chapters/al/18](http://www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/al/18)

Free Legal Help for VA Claims Appeals

There is free legal representation available for veterans when appealing a VA claims decision at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This help is provided by the free legal services offered through the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program.

"The consortium provides significant assistance to lawyers and to the appellants seeking assistance from the pro bono program," according to information on the consortium's Web site. "For volunteer attorneys, the consortium teaches a one day class in veterans law."

For more information, contact:

Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program

701 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 131

Washington, DC 20004

Telephone: (202) 628-8164

Toll Free: 1-888-838-7727

Fax: 202-628-8169

E-mail: mail@Vetsprobono.org



VA Targets \$9.5 Million for Alabama Programs For New National Cemetery and Improvements at State Vets Home

WASHINGTON – To ensure Alabama veterans have access to the veterans benefits they have earned by their military service, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided \$9.5 million for a new national cemetery near Birmingham and improvements to the state veterans home in Alexander City.

"This is tangible proof our commitment to care for the men and women of Alabama who have served in uniform," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "Successful partnerships between federal and state governments are paramount to provide caring and comfortable environments for our veterans."

VA has provided the state with a \$1.5 million grant to cover 65 percent of the estimated \$2.3 million cost for renovations at the Alexander City facility.

VA also has spent \$8 million to purchase a 479-acre site in Montevallo, 15 miles south of Birmingham, for a new national cemetery. To expedite service for veterans, an early burial area will be developed, where interments are expected to begin in the fall of 2008.

In fiscal year 2006, VA spent over \$1.4 billion in Alabama to serve the state's 417,000 veterans. VA operates major medical centers in Birmingham, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and Tuskegee, as well as outpatient clinics and Vet Centers across the state.

When the first phase of the cemetery's development is complete, it will provide 9,100 full-casket gravesites, a 2,700-unit columbarium and 3,100 in-ground spaces for cremated remains. The new cemetery will also include an administration and public information facility, a maintenance complex, two committal service shelters for interment ceremonies, a flag assembly area and supporting infrastructure including utilities and irrigation. VA expects to begin construction in spring of 2008.

The nearest open national cemetery, Fort Mitchell National Cemetery in Seale, is approximately 150 miles southeast of Birmingham.

Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children are eligible for burial in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits for eligible veterans include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker – even if they are not buried in a national cemetery.

In the midst of the largest expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 125 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict -- from the Revolutionary War to the current Global War on Terror-- are buried in VA's national cemeteries.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from a VA Web site on the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Information on the Birmingham area national cemetery is available from the VA Memorial Service Network in Atlanta at (404) 929-5899.

The Alabama's veterans homes are available to veterans who have been honorably discharged from military service with a minimum of 90 days of service, of which one day was during a wartime period. Veterans must have been a resident of the State of Alabama for 12 months immediately preceding the application.

Further information about Alabama's veterans' homes is available on the Internet at <http://www.va.state.al.us/homes.htm> or call (256) 329-3311.

October

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Meeting 6:00 PM	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day	9	10	11	12	13 Navy B-Day
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 DST Ends	5 Meeting 6:00 PM	6 Election Day	7	8	9	10 USMC B-Day
11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiv ing Day	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December

2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Meeting 6:00 PM	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Christmas	26	27	28	29
30	31					

January

2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5
6	7 Meeting 6:00 PM	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		