

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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NEWSLETTER

JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2012

SERVICE HOURS – MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS, 9am – 1pm

OFFICERS 2012

Commander	Earl Mason	321-259-4827
Sr. Vice Commander	Henry Merckson	321-636-5544
Jr. Vice Commander	JoAnn Daszuta	321-727-3847
Adjutant	Brian Mitchell	321-259-4827
Treasurer	Brian Mitchell	321-254-9605
Chaplain	Leisa Todero	805-294-2117
Judge Advocate	JoAnn Daszuta	321-636-5544
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SGT at Arms	George Theriault	772-664-5479
Officer of the Day	Campbell Love	321-254-4327
Newsletter editor	Anita Theriault	

Executive board members

Paul Adams
Jessie Owens
Ken Haney 321-259-4924
Rafael Rodriguez

Service Officers

DSO, Earl Mason; CSOs, Brian Mitchell, Henry Merckson, JoAnn Daszuta, James Daniel, Kevin Reed, Rafael Rodriguez, and Jean Gautreaux

*******Commander's corner*******

Summer is coming and we will be doing the "going into darkness" thing again. This means no general membership meetings until September (that will be the 26th for those of you who actually plan your life.) There will still be Executive Board meetings on June 13th, July 11th and August 8th at 1300 if anyone is interested in attending. It also means our service hours will be Wednesday only, for the usual 0900 to 1300 hours.

The 65th anniversary open house was a qualified success (we didn't have as many folks show up as we had cookies to feed them) but, overall, a good time was had by all. Our Melbourne City Councilman, Mark Larusso attended and pledged to provide us with a new set of flags for our poles. We were honored with a resolution from the County Board of County Commissioners and a Proclamation from the Melbourne City Council, recognizing our efforts on behalf of disabled veterans. We also got a congratulatory letter from Congressman Bill Posey, which was displayed.

We displayed a wish list on a beggin' board and we will be getting some of our more urgent maintenance needs taken care of, some by a Home Depot grant and some as a part of a Boy Scout Eagle project. The board is still up and just the other day, one of our clients snagged a couple of items from it to help out!

We have served literally hundreds of veterans with their VA claims in the past nine months and are starting to see the log jam break up and decisions start to flow. We are proud of the work we do as a part of the premier veterans' service organization in the U.S.

Have a safe and sane summer
Earl

Social Security and Department of Defense Implement New Processes to Improve Efficiency for Wounded Warriors Applying for Disability Benefits.

Electronic Medical Records Reduce Time for Decision

The Social Security Administration and the Department of Defense (DoD) are working together to improve access to disability benefits for the nation's Wounded Warriors, service members, veterans, and their dependents. A new nationwide project enables Social Security disability case processing sites to receive military medical records from multiple DoD facilities with a single request to a centralized DoD site. As of today, this initiative is in its first phase of nationwide expansion.

“Receiving electronic medical records for our Wounded Warriors and other military personnel will significantly shorten the time it takes to make a disability decision,” said Michael J Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. “This new process will improve the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of the disability program.”

Originally a pilot, the program included five states (Colorado, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington) and more than 60 military treatment facilities. These states are now receiving electronic medical records within 72 hours, a remarkable improvement over the previous average response time of five weeks for paper records from individual military treatment facilities.

The new DoD-Social Security collaboration consolidates requests for medical records from Social Security to a single location that has access to DoD records in a central electronic repository. This central location receives and responds to requests for medical records based on Social Security's Electronic Records Express (www.socialsecurity.gov/ere), another successful initiative that offers electronic options for submitting health records related to disability claims.

The benefits of the new process include:

- a reduction in the time it takes to make a medical decision on a disability claim, and
- a reduction in the number of consultative examinations (medical exams requested by Social Security when additional tests or medical records are needed.)

This is the first step towards the long-term goal of a fully automated solution of improving medical information sharing using health information technology and the Nationwide Health Information Network Exchange.

More information on Social Security's use of health IT is available at www.socialsecurity.gov/hit.

VA Released more Disability benefits questionnaires (DBQ's)

VA has released 68 new forms that will help speed the processing of Veterans Disability compensation pension claims. The new forms bring to 71 the number of documents, called disability benefits questionnaires (DBQs) that guide physicians' reports of medical findings, ensuring VA has exactly the medical information needed to make a prompt decision.

When needed to decide a disability claim for compensation or pension benefits, VA provides veterans with medical examinations for gathering the necessary medical evidence. Veterans who choose to have their private physicians complete the medical examination can now give their physicians the same form a VA provider would use. It is very important that physicians provide complete responses to all questions on the DBQs. VA cannot pay for a private physician to complete DBQs or any costs associated with examination or testing.

Veterans may file a claim online through the eBenefits web portal at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>. The Department of Defense and VA jointly developed the eBenefits portal as a single secure point of access for online benefit information and tools to perform multiple self-service functions such as checking the status of their claim. However, anything you do on your own online takes the DAV out of the loop and inhibits our ability to help process your claim so we recommend that you only use the eBenefits portal for information and tracking purposes. Keep in mind that eBenefits is currently running 30-45 days behind in status reporting.

Disclaimer: The Disabled American Veterans, J.L. Golightly, Inc. Chapter #32 publishes this newsletter as a service to its members as well as a public information service on Veteran's Affairs. The contents do not reflect the views or opinions of the membership, the Chapter officers or National parent organizations of the DAV

BEWARE – SCAM EMAILS!! -- that appear to be sent by Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) employees (<http://www.dfas.mil/dfas.html>). There are emails being sent to individuals, including military members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by a DFAS employee and displays a dot mil address, it is acutally from a non-government email account.

The emails indicate that individuals who are receiving disabililty compensation from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) may be able to obtain additional funds from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These emails are NOT issued by DFAS and will likely result in a financial loss if you comply with the suggestion in the email. Bottom line – do not send your personal information or copies of your tax returns and 1099s to the individual listed in the email.

The email states that such funds can be obtained by sending copies of your VA Award letter, your Income Tax Returns, your 1099-Rs, your RAS statements, and a copy of your DD214, to a so-called retired Colonel at an address in Florida. DO NOT follow the suggestions in the email because you will be providing a significant amount of your personal information to a complete stranger, which could result in a financial loss to you.

Rating decision notification letter:

The VA has made big changes to the Rating Decision Notification letter. This letter transmits your VA Rating Decision. Now, some of the Rating Decisions will be in the Rating Decision and some on the Notification Letters. This is, in a word, confusing. If you have gotten a new Rating Decision in the new format and don't quite understand it completely, please come to our office for assistance.

CAMP CORRAL

Golden Corral is the national sponsor of Camp Corral. After years of honoring Disabled American Veterans through their Military Appreciation Monday event, Golden Corral and their guests are grateful for the opportunity to provide a free, fun-filled camp experience for the children of our American heroes, at no cost to them. Families pay only for transportation to and from camp.

Camp Corral is offered in partnership with 4-H Youth Development Group, which is recognized for its expertise in developing programs and activities as well as managing the day-to-day operations of a camp and its residents.

Camp Corral is a place where kids, ages 8-15, are free to be kids, apart from the day-to-day challenges they may face as children whose parents were wounded or disabled during military service.

Camp Corral is a one-of-a-kind experience that will create a lifetime of memories, new friends who can relate, and a week of non-stop fun with all the camping can-do's kids love: canoeing, kayaking, and fishing; target sports; camp fire stories; horseback riding; ropes courses; sleeping in cabins; crafts and swimming.

There are nine camps this year around the US. The Florida camp is at 4-H Camp Ocala, Altoona, FL, 18533 NFS 5335, Altoona, FL 32702 from August 5-10.

For information about other locations, to register, or to make a donation, visit:

www.campcorral.org.

For Your Funny Bone

One reason our military services have trouble operating jointly is they don't speak the same language---

If you told NAVY personnel to secure a building, they would turn off lights and lock the door---

If you told Marine personnel to secure a building, they would assault the building, capture it and defend it, with suppressive fire and close combat---

If you told AIR FORCE personnel to secure a building, they would take out a 3-year lease with an option to buy.

Submitted by: Mrs. Betty Mix

SCHOLARSHIP

Two years ago the Chapter decided to offer a scholarship to children and grandchildren of chapter members and began soliciting donations to support it. An award of \$500 was made the first year. Last year, we had three non-responsive applications and no award was made. This year, as of the application deadline, there have been no applications whatsoever.

Since there appears to be no interest in this scholarship, the Chapter has voted to do away with it and will no longer be soliciting donations. The monies collected were set aside in a "fenced" memo account within the general chapter fund. It is proposed to do away with this "fencing" and meld the remaining funds with the general funds. If you donated to the scholarship fund after May of 2010 and do not want your donations blended, they can be returned to you. The Treasurer can research the receipts to ascertain when and how much you donated and issue a check. Please let us know, in writing, not later than the end of July.

If you have no objection to our using the donations for general support of chapter utility bills, administrative expenses and training of service officers, no action on your part is necessary. We regret that this service did not work out.

Boosters March-May 2012

Jose & Marilyn Albaladejo	Lester Armstrong
Angelo Barbato	George Bell
Fred & Betty Berneski	Ed Britton
Robert Byheny Sr	William Cahill
Charles Cirlin	Margaret Clark
Jim Congdon	Dominic & Mary DelGrosso
William Edwards	Kenneth Fallin
James Hartwell	Johh Hucek
Ivan Kusinitz	John Lawler
Campbell & Gerry Love	Lawrence McDonald
Raul Mercado	Richard Murphy
Frank & Anita Palmieri	John Panik Sr
Harry Pawlak	Leonard Pirolozzi Jr
Lloyd Soughers	David & Josie Sulzbach
Jim Toomey	Bob & Mary Whitney

Transportation to the VA Clinic

It was recently published in the Florida Today that the Space Coast Chapter for Independent Living would no longer be able to furnish transportation to the VA Clinic due to budget cuts, effective May 1st. Jill Dunham-Schuller, Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living said the organization had no alternative but to reduce services. Reduced funding from United Way, the Florida Dept. of Transportation, and Brevard County forced the Center to take three of its five vans out of service. She said it takes about \$275,000 a year to run five vehicles. We are continuing to look for other funding sources, but I know other non-profits are going through the same problems. The Center provided the service to veterans for a \$10 fee, round trip from anywhere in the county.

Rob Raines, President of United Way, said tough times forced the organization to refocus funding to agency fighting hunger and other critical needs. He said it was a process that resulted in four agencies being cut. "In tight times, you try to focus on your priorities, but we still think they are an important service to the community."

Officials at the VA Clinic said that through volunteers it transports patients from their homes to the Clinic if there is a medical indication they are unable to drive and cannot take public transportation. They said the patients should discuss their situation with the Primary Care Provider or a Social Worker at the Clinic.

As an alternative, Volunteers in Motion provides transportation on a limited basis. A Spokeswoman said that if a veteran is frail and lacks the ability to drive or otherwise get to the Clinic, Volunteers in Motion would consider providing the service. The organization makes only about a half-dozen trips each month to the Clinic.

Aging Matters of Brevard also provides transportation through its TranService Program. It relies on volunteers to transport the veterans, as with other services it provides. Once the organization receives a request from a veteran, it finds a volunteer from its list. "We have volunteers who are veterans who we match with veterans", said Cindy Flechmeier, President and Chief Executive Officer of Aging Matters. "The key to being able to do the transport is having the volunteers.

Anyone interested in helping their fellow veterans travel to and from the VA Clinic should contact the VA Clinic and volunteer their services.

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 was recently passed by Congress to provide assistance for unemployed Veterans. If you are an unemployed Veteran between the ages of 35 and 60 you might qualify. If you know other Veterans that may qualify, please spread the word about this program.

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) was part of the recently passed legislation. The program is a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) joint effort to provide training to Veterans unable to find work.

VRAP will provide 12 months of training assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program (currently paying \$1,473 per month). Participants must be enrolled in a program approved for VA benefits that is offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree or a Certificate. To qualify, a Veteran must:

- Be at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Be unemployed on the day of application
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g.: the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance)
- Not be in receipt of VA compensation due to unemployability
- Pursue a program that leads to employment in a high demand occupation

The program is limited to 45,000 participants between July 1, 2012, and September 30, 2012, and an additional 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. DOL will provide employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of their program. Application will be accepted May 15, 2012 through October 1, 2013.

VA will publish more details on the programs as they become available at our VOW website. If you have further questions please visit our Customer Help page where you can read our FAQs about the VRAP program or submit a question to our customer service staff.

Thank-you for your interest and please feel free to pass this message to another Veteran.

Retirement living: PLANNING AHEAD

Are you a person who planned ahead for retirement and prepared legal documents such as a durable power of attorney for health care, a living will, and a power of attorney for your other personal and financial affairs? Well, if you have contact with any VA services, you probably would be well-served by filling out the VA's specific legal documents to make things official.

The VA is a federal entity, but legal documents are based in state law. That makes things confusing depending on the state in which you signed your document, your state of residence at the time of signature, your state of residence while receiving medical care, and the state in which your treatment is administered. Military retirees are a mobile group, and the VA can help ensure our plans are respected state-to-state.

The VA Advanced Directive for Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care and a Living Will is known as VA Form 10-0137. The VA power of attorney form to appoint a veteran service officer or an individual as your representative to handle a VA Claim or appeal are VA Form 21-22 and VA Form 21-22a, respectively. Both are available online, or you can pick them up at your VA office or veteran service office. Find a local office at www.va.gov/statedva.htm to ask specific questions.

FAMILY MATTERS

Discover helpful resources for military spouses and children. According to DoD numbers, autism spectrum disorders are more prevalent among military dependents. For military families facing regular permanent-change-of-station moves with a child with autism, finding new doctors – or even autism-friendly swimming instructors – can be real challenge.

MyAutismTeam is a social network specifically for parents of children with autism, making it easy to connect with others who have had similar experiences. The network allows parents to share recommendations on local providers, discuss issues, share tips, and gain access to local services they might not discover otherwise.

Aluminum Cans

We are still collecting aluminum cans for recycling and annually realize about six or seven hundred dollars from this effort which helps with Chapter expenses. While a majority of the cans are soft drink and beer cans, others such as Spam and some pet food cans are also aluminum and are acceptable. All we ask, for the benefit of the disabled vets opening the bags at the recycler, is that you rinse the pet food cans out before bagging them as they can become a bit “ripe” during the time the spent in our shed awaiting the trip to recycler. ...Thanks

NEWSLETTER

Please send the coupon below and your check for \$10 to subscribe to our newsletter. If you’re due for renewal, don’t forget to do so. If you have anything for the newsletter let us know.

BOOSTERS

Donations from our DAV Boosters help defray the chapter costs. The donation will be \$10.00 annually; you may use the form below for the newsletter or booster donation. Check boxes indicating what you are donating for -Thank you.

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Make check payable to:

J.L. GOLIGHTLY CHAPTER #32
2265 NORTH HARBOR CITY BLVD
MELBOURNE, FL 32935-6653

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NEWSLETTER BOOSTERS

TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____