

## **OFFICERS 2014**

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Earl Mason, Hank Merckson, Jessie Owens, Henry Stallings, Louis Velez

### **Service Officers**

Earl Mason, Brian Mitchell, Henry Merckson, JoAnn Jackson, Rafael Rodriguez, Jim Daniel, Louis Velez, , Henry Stallings

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NEWSLETTER**  
**Spring/Summer 2014**  
**SERVICE HOURS – MONDAY & WEDNESDAY 9AM – 1PM**  
E-mail: [info@FLDav32.org](mailto:info@FLDav32.org) Website: [WWW.FLDav32.Org](http://WWW.FLDav32.Org).

SUMMER SCHEDULE starting Week of June 15, 2014 thru Labor Day: Wednesdays only - 9AM to 1PM

**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.

**BOOSTERS 2014**

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**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.

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NEWSLETTER  BOOSTERS

TOTAL AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TAPS**

Since our last newsletter, we were informed of the passing of the following members:

Dwinell Counsellor  
James P. Foster  
Earl Kirchartz

Joseph Daube  
Eugene Hadge  
Richard Onines  
Robert Whitney

Frank Dufay  
Kenneth Haney  
Edward Walker

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

As far back as I can remember in my military career (OK, so it only started in 1967 and a lot of you can say “Pshaw, I was retired before that!”) the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day was referred to as 101 Critical Days. (OK, again, so you AR types went and looked at your calendar and found that to be only 99 days this year.) The reason for this designation was that it effectively defined the summer vacation (leave) period for G.I.s and also the time when most permanent change of station moves were made (I suppose to give the least disruption to those of us with school-aged kids).

It also, coincidentally or not, was the time frame for most non-military accidents which resulted in injury or death to soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and their families. Trying to cram a lot of leisure activity into a usually, short period of time, sometimes involving long drives over unfamiliar roads could, and did, cause some of our comrades to take chances that they normally wouldn't. The same goes for PCS moves, where the travel time allotted was usually just barely adequate to get from point A to point B and did not allow for stays at points C,D,E, etc. along the way without charge to that precious leave balance. I remember one year, 1973, when April was a SC to NH jaunt to bury a relative, August was vacation, and September was yet another funeral. I admit to driving beyond my physical limits on two of those three trips, in both directions, with two small children aboard. I was young and healthy and, therefore, considered myself immune to anything bad happening on the road.

Fast forward to 2014 and I'm now 41 years older and, I hope, a tad wiser. I've got a bad heart, diabetes, stiff neck, GERD and a touch of old Arthur but I still don't want to spend a lot of time getting places. Anyone else out there feel the same way?

Well, I've got my mate of 48 years to smack me up the side of the head if I try to stretch my endurance too much. I hope that my audience here, that's all of you disabled folks out there who are reading this, have a similar guardian angel. Know your limits, really, and plan your trips accordingly, even the relatively short ones, like to Orlando for that KISS concert. (It's probably going to be at night, meaning driving in the dark, which we all love.) For the longer trips that we used to make in a l-o-o-o-n-g day of driving, take an extra day. Is saving a sixty or seventy buck motel stay worth your life? (Some places have a good free breakfast!)

We are losing enough of you to natural causes each month; we don't need to cut our numbers by over-extending ourselves trying to relax and enjoy the summer. Hurrying to get to the hammock under the elm tree for that series of afternoon naps, wherever that may be, could just result in taking the ultimate “dirt nap”. Plan safe, drive safely, and play safely this summer and we'll look forward to seeing ALL of you in the fall.

**“Life ends when you stop dreaming,  
Hope ends when you stop believing,  
Friendship ends when you stop sharing.”**

## *New ID Cards for Vets Enrolled in VA Health Care*

VA is introducing a new, secure identification card called the Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC). VHIC replaces the Veteran Identification Card (VIC), which was introduced in 2004. VA is committed to providing the high quality, safe and effective health care Veterans have earned and deserve, and part of this effort includes ensuring the personal security of Veterans. As part of a phased rollout, on February 21, 2014, VA began issuing the newly designed, more secure VHIC to newly enrolled and other Veterans who were not issued a VIC. Starting in April VA began a replacement effort to automatically mail the more secure VHIC to Veterans who have the old VIC. All Veterans who are enrolled and have the old card should have their new replacement card by July. VA expects to complete mailing of the replacement VHICs by July. To ensure receipt of the new VHIC, enrolled Veterans should make sure that VA has their correct mailing address. The new VHIC is distinguished by additional security features and will have a different look and feel. The Social Security number and date of birth were removed from the barcode and magnetic strip. Similar to a typical health insurance card, the VHIC displays the Veteran's Member ID and branch of service emblem, a new unique identifier, as well as a Plan ID which reflects the Veteran's enrollment in VA health care. The VHIC is for use in VA medical facilities and does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA medical facilities.

Detail view of the front of the – See more at:

<http://www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/2014/February/New-ID-Cards-for-Vets-enrolled-in-VA-Health-Care.asp#sthash.nR4qfhjx.dpuf>

### *VA Hospital Update:*

The new VA Hospital being constructed at the Lake Nona site in Orlando is 75% complete. The \$665 million hospital will be 1.2 million square feet and if you take in parking, the VA Nursing Home and Domiciliary, it will be over 2 million gross square feet.

Here is the latest:

- a. Completion of construction by summer 2014.
- b. Moving base of operations to Lake Nona 90 days after construction.
- c. Moving clinic operation to the site 120 to 270 days after completion.
- d. Getting the new hospital up and running six months to a year after construction (probably sometime in 2015)
- e. The hospital is projected to bring more than 800 new jobs to the Lake Nona area.
- f. When it is fully open in 2015, it is expected to serve 100,000 or more veterans annually.

**“How many times is it appropriate to say “What?” before you just nod and smile because you still can't hear or understand a word they said?”**

### Wheelchairs, etc.

The chapter has accumulated a number of manual wheelchairs, in good condition, should anyone need one, even for a short while.

We also have a number of power chairs including:

Mini Jazzy – good condition, needs batteries

Pride Jet 7 – new batteries about 1 ½ years ago, probably needs replacing

Quantum 600 – multifunction seat – needs batteries

Quantum 1650 – Multifunction – needs group 24 batteries – this is for a very large person, seat 26” wide, chair is 32' overall

Permobil Chairman Entra – multifunction seat, good batteries, control cable has problems

Invacare MK IV A – older chair, needs group 24 batteries and a good cleaning

FreeRider three-wheeled scooter – like new, needs batteries

Jazzy Select 6 - with new batteries

We have two “derrick” type scooter lifts, the kind that mounts in a pickup bed or just inside a van door. Both are electric powered. Also have a trailer-hitch mount scooter carrier.

All of these are free to members or their families and do not come with any warranty, implied or otherwise. All we ask is that you not get one with the idea of re-selling it.

### One-Ring Phone Scam

*From the desk of State Attorney Phil Archer*

If your phone rings once and disconnects, **don't call back**, especially if you don't recognize the number. It's probably a scam and could cost you. Criminals target victims simply by calling them on their phones, which ring once, and then disconnects. Unsuspecting recipients' natural curiosity is piqued and they call back.

Perpetrators of the “One-Ring Phone Scam” program their computers to blast out thousands of calls to random cell phone numbers, ring once, and then disconnect. This scam relies on consumers calling back missed calls, which then connect them to a paid international adult entertainment service, chat line, or other premium service located outside the country.

Victims who return the call are billed a \$19.95 international calling fee, along with per minute charges for the unwanted “premium service”, which can be \$9 per minute or more.

The Better Business Bureau recommends if you don't recognize an out-of-state telephone number on your caller ID, ignore it. Don't return phone calls to number you don't know. And if you mistakenly fall for this scam, contact your phone provider immediately. Be sure to check your cell phone bills carefully and inform you carrier if you spot any unauthorized charges. The earlier you document the fraud, the better your chances of having some or all of the charges removed.

**“The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight because, by then, your body and your fat have become really good friends.”**

### **ACCURED BENEFITS vs SUBSTITUTION of CLAIMANT:**

Accrued Benefits are VA benefits due and unpaid to the claimant at the time of the claimant's death. This could apply if the claim has been rated by the VA, but the claimant had not been notified of the decision at the time of death or if the VA had all the evidence needed to rate the claim in their possession at the time of death, but had not yet made a rating. If the VA still needed some additional supporting evidence concerning the claim, then it will not be considered an accrued benefits claim and the claim will be terminated. The following are eligible for accrued benefits if this type claim applied: surviving spouse, or if none, surviving children (defined as a minor child up to 18, an unmarried child over 18 found to be incapable of self support, unmarried child over 18, but not over 23, in college full time or if none, dependent parent(s) or if none, in all other cases, only so much as the accrued benefit may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse the person who bore the expense of last sickness or burial.

Now let's compare to substitution of claimant. Persons eligible to apply to substitute for claimant are the same as those for accrued benefits except the last category would be the estate if there are no other qualified claimants. The big difference is a substitution claim allows submission of new evidence after the claimant's death. This could include private medical records, VA personal hearings, VA exam request by VA and more. Please note new claim issues cannot be added after the claimant's death.

So, if a benefit claim is pending at the time of the claimant's death and has not been decided and you are an eligible claimant, it is usually best to file for a substitution of claimant. I strongly suggest you seek qualified Veteran Service assistance in filing this type of claim.

**“Even under ideal conditions people have trouble locating their car keys in a pocket, their cell phone and pinning the tail on the donkey – but it seems everyone can find and push the snooze button from 3 feet away in about 1.7 seconds, in the dark, eyes closed, first time, every time.”**

### **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 the majority of 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 recycling center, is that you rinse the pet food cans out before bagging them as they can become a bit “ripe” during the time they spend in our shed awaiting the trip to the center. Please remove any paper labels.

.....Thanks

## **SOME COMMON VA BENEFITS CLAIMS MISTAKES**

**1.** Filing the claim yourself. You should “always obtain the help of a trained and accredited Veteran Service Officer when filing a claim. It is free and will significantly improve your chances of success; **2.** Not submitting current medical evidence of a diagnosis and prognosis that your claimed disability exists today and how severe it is; **3.** Submitted on wrong form. In the past few months, the VA changed the major claims forms they will accept for Service-Connected Disability claims, Pension claims, and Survivor Claims.; **4.** Failure to sign all claim forms, including any buddy statements or personal statements submitted; **5.** Failure to appoint a National Service Veterans Services Organization, like VFW, DAV, American Legion, etc. as your Claims Representative. This goes hand-and-hand with #1 above about getting help from a trained and accredited Veteran Service Officer; **6.** Failure to act timely on correspondence from the VA about your claim. Get with your Veteran Service Officer to respond as soon as you get the mail; **7.** Not submitting the “right kind of evidence” to properly support your claim. Again, get help from a credentialed Veteran Service Officer. The VA claims business is a complicated, legalistic process that really requires you to get qualified help to file claims. Finally, do not ever pay anyone to help you file your VA claim. It is illegal to charge a claimant to help them file claims.

**“Nothing sucks more than that moment in an argument when you realize that you’re wrong”**

### **VA Removes Annual Income Reporting Requirement** *Eliminates Burden on Veterans, Improve Customer Service*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is eliminating the annual requirement for most Veterans in VA's health care system to report income information beginning on March 2014. Instead, VA will automatically match income information obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

“Eliminating the requirement for annual income reporting makes our health care benefits easier for Veterans to obtain.” Said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This change will reduce the burden on Veterans, improve customer service and make it much easier for Veterans to keep their health care eligibility up-to-date.

Some Veterans applying for enrollment for the first time are still required to submit income information. There is no change in VA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or for conditions that are officially rated as “service-connected”.

VA encourages Veterans to continue to use the health benefits renewal form to report changes in their personal information, such as address, phone number, dependents, next of kin and health insurance. For more information visit: [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost) or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-8387.

## THE BROTHERHOOD

“I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who suffered and stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades. Such good men.”

\*\*\*Author Unknown

## MORE SCAMS

More and more these days we, and other legitimate Veterans' Service Officers are contacted by veterans or their family members about veterans scams and fraud. According to the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, two of the most popular scams targeting veterans are charity scams and pension scams.

Many legitimate charities are soliciting donations to support the nation's military Veterans as well as the families of Active Duty personnel. And despite tough economic times, people reportedly are responding generously to these requests. However, not all “charities” are legitimate. Some are sham operators whose only purpose is to make money for themselves. The words “Veterans” and “Military Families” in an organization's name does not necessarily mean that Veterans or the families of Active duty personnel will benefit from the money. Before you donate to a “501C” organization claiming to help veterans, do your homework and ask questions.

If you're a Veteran over 65 you may be approached by people with convincing come-ons offering to help you apply for supplemental pension benefits. Whether it's through an ad or a website, the offer usually involves a “free seminar” and claims that: “We'll show you - for free - how to qualify for your benefits and stay in your home” or “We'll guarantee you'll get your Aid and Attendance pension.”

The people behind these pitches, who may claim to be Veterans Advocates, also show up at Assisted Living Facilities, Senior Centers, or other places in the community to help you submit your application for Aid and Attendance benefits to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The unscrupulous brokers claim to help veterans qualify for Aid and Attendance benefits. What they are really after is your personal finance information and to try to sell you financial products. One such organization wanted to charge a veteran \$700 for assistance in applying for a VA pension and Aid & Attendance. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER pay someone to apply for VA benefits. Come see us or a representative from one of the other Veterans Service organizations (American Legion, AMVETS, VFW) or the folks at the County Service Office. By the way, most of those “Free Lunch, Dinner, etc. offers will end up being a sales pitch for something that you may not need and probably can't afford. Nothing is ever Free.

**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.