



Application Window Extended for Gulf War Illness Claims

Veterans from the Gulf War suffering undiagnosed illnesses now have an additional five years to qualify for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The change in VA regulations extends the application deadline to Dec. 31, 2016.

Congress set the original deadline of Dec. 31, 2011 in 1994 in response to cases of Gulf War illness which still lack a clearly defined diagnosis. This extension allows veterans of the Gulf War and the Iraq War to remain eligible for disability payments and VA programs while more research is done to investigate the cause of the symptoms.

Veterans or survivors who believe they qualify for these benefits are urged to contact the nearest National Service Officer for assistance with a claim.

Source:

<http://www.dav.org/news/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=531>

Critical Issues for Veterans



The DAV and other leading veteran's service organizations continue efforts urging the administration and Congress to protect and strengthen VA health care and benefits as they meet the challenge of tackling our nation's debt and deficit challenges.

The Independent Budget Critical Issues Report released by AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars is designed to alert the administration, Congress, VA and the public to those issues that deserve special scrutiny and attention. The report is a guide for policymakers to help them prepare an adequate budget for the current fiscal year and fill policy gaps, while preparing to develop the advance appropriation for the medical care accounts for fiscal year 2013.

"Protecting VA health care and benefits programs is especially crucial in the current economic and budgetary climate," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski.

"Our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and grandchildren who serve on the frontier of freedom need to know that they will come home to a nation that respects and honors them for their service, provides the best medical care to restore them, orchestrates the best vocational rehabilitation to help them overcome employment barriers created by injury and furnishes a supportive claims-processing system that delivers education, compensation, and survivors' benefits with efficiency to those who sustained harm in their service to our nation," the report states.

The Independent Budget for Fiscal Year 2013—an annual comprehensive budget and policy document, will be released in February 2012 concurrent with the release of the administration's proposed budget for the VA.

Download the report at www.independentbudget.org

Join the Disabled American Veterans

Who is Eligible?

Any man or woman, who:

- served in the armed forces during a period of war or under conditions simulating war, **and**
- were wounded, disabled to any degree, or left with long-term illness as a result of military service, **and**
- were discharged or retired from military service under honorable conditions

Go to: <http://www.dav.org/membership/JoinDAV.aspx>



Folgore Parachute Brigade



Shoulder Insignia of the
Folgore Parachute Brigade
“*paracadutisti*”

The Folgore Parachute Brigade is the largest unit of paratroopers (*paracadutisti*) of the Italian Army; a second smaller unit is the 4th Alpini Parachutist Regiment. The name *Folgore* is Italian for lightning. The Folgore (*Thunderbolt*) operates as Light Infantry, capable of both air-landing and parachute operations, and has a marginal mechanized role. It is part of the Projection Forces under the 1° Commando FOD.



Folgore paratrooper in Rome

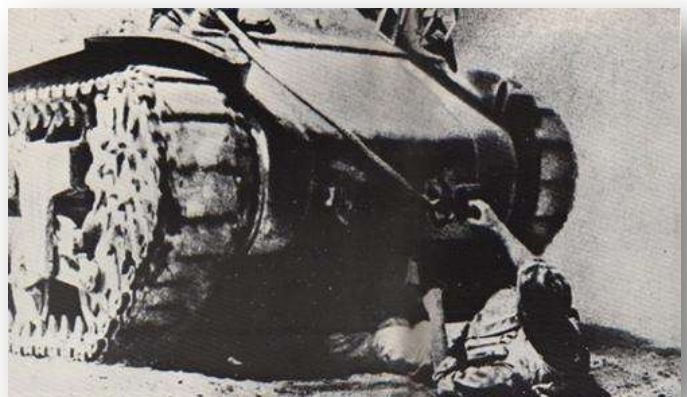
The first units of Italian parachutists were trained and formed shortly before the Second World War in Castelbenito, near Tripoli, where the first Military school of Parachuting was located.

The first troops trained were two Libyan battalions (one composed by "nationals", i.e. Italian elements, the other by Libyan elements of the Royal Colonial Corps). To these were added the first battalion of Italian troops and the Carabinieri Parachute Battalion.

Later moved to Italy, the staff at Castelbenito was expanded into the School at Tarquinia and became the first elements of the future Folgore Division.

The Folgore Division

In 1941, a Parachutist division was completed and was designated the 185th Airborne Division Folgore. The division trained together with their German allies for the planned assault on Malta in Operation Hercules which did not eventuate. During the course of the North African Campaign, it was engaged in ground combat operations.



“An Italian paratrooper from the Folgore Division throws himself under the tracks of a British Sherman tank with his mine to blow it up (North Africa, 1942)”

During the Second battle of El Alamein the *Folgore* Division resisted the attack of the British 131st (Queen's) Infantry Brigade, the 44th Infantry Division, the 7th Armoured Division (*Desert Rats*) and the Free French Brigade. The remnants of the Folgore Division were withdrawn from El Alamein on 3 November 1942, without water and carrying their anti-tank guns by hand in pieces. The survivors were reorganized into the 185th Folgore Parachute Battalion. At 2:35 pm on November 6, after having exhausted all its ammunition, the remainder of the Division finally surrendered to the British forces. In honour of their bravery, the British commander allowed them to surrender without having to show a white flag or raise their hands.

(continued....)





Paratroopers of the 183rd Regiment parading in Rome on 2 June 2006

The second Italian paratroop division, 184 Airborne Division *Nembo* ("Nimbus") was formed in 1943 from new units along with the 185th Regiment of the *Folgore*.

On 8 September, Marshal Badoglio announced the surrender of Italy, and the German forces in Italy acted quickly to take over the government. The *Nembo* division was sent to Sardinia that evening, where a malaria outbreak took a terrible toll on its manpower. Both the *Nembo* and *Folgore* divisions went on to fight for the Italian Social Republic (RSI) against the Allies at Anzio. Two thirds of the *Nembo* division's effective strength were killed in the battle and subsequent retreat. Various units formed by elements of both Divisions fought in the Italian campaign, in the battles of Filottrano, Grizzano Houses and in Operation Herring (these last ones in the Combat Group *Folgore*).

Towards the end of the Second World War the *Nembo* division became a Mechanized Infantry Regiment, based in Belluno, Villa Vicentina, Cervignano di Friuli and Gradisca d' Isonzo, where it was based until 1991, when it was reconstituted as the 183rd Parachute Battalion *Nembo*, within the *Folgore* Parachute Brigade.

The Folgore Brigade

Currently the *Folgore* is a Brigade, with six single battalion Regiments, with the Headquarters in Livorno and the various Regiments stationed in Livorno, Pistoia, Siena, Pisa and Legnago (VR).

The Brigade is composed of three Parachute Infantry Regiments (183rd, 186th and 187th), an Assault (Special Forces) Regiment (the 9th Col Moschin), an "Artillery" Regiment (185th, actually an OP/LRRP/LRS unit) a Regiment Supply Unit (185th), the "Guastatori"

Engineer Regiment (8th), and a Headquarters and Signals Company. It also includes the CAPAR Of Pisa (Parachute Training Centre, former SMIPAR - Military Parachute School, in its turn former CAP).

23 October celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein (1942). Patron saint: Archangel Michael (29 September).

"Folgore"

The name "Folgore" refers to two different units (coexisting until the "Division" level was removed from the Italian Army Order of Battle in 1986) of the Italian army: the *Folgore* Airborne Brigade and the *Folgore* Mechanized Division, the latter based in eastern Italy and tasked to defend the "Soglia di Gorizia".

Common heraldic elements to both units: the winged gladius on the moirine/Cap Badge (integrated with a parachute for the Airborne Brigade) and the yellow lightning bolt, symbol of the unit (on red field for the Mechanized Division, on sky blue field, with superimposed stylized white wings for the Airborne Brigade). Currently the Military Parachute Center (CAPAR) is based in Pisa.

185th Regiment

The 185th Regiment is a part of the Brigade Parachutists *Folgore*, where it is in charge of training and preparation of the unit, but depends on the technical-functional plan and therefore the employment on land, from the Commando Operations of Special Forces (COFS), as the other units of river basin FS/FOS of the Army, the Operating Group Incursori (GOI) of Military Navy, the Incursori Unit of the Aeronautics and for some functions also the Special Intervention Group (GIS), of the Police officers.

Previously a Parachute Artillery unit, its main tasks are now Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance (both to be carried out in hostile territory) and laser designation for "smart" ammunition. Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Enlisted personnel of the unit are recruited by selection or by cooptation (with a previous verification of psychological and physical requirements) from other units of the Army.

The Regiment has been engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq (where Sergeant Salvatore Marracino and Captain Nicholas Ciardelli lost their lives).

(continued....)





Italian Army Paratroopers from the Folgore Parachute Brigade during a Free Fall Parachute Jump from CH-47 Chinook Helicopter in heart of Afghanistan, 21st June 2011

In August 2007 they took part in operation "Leonte 2" in Lebanon, under the aegis of the UN (Resolution 1701), as a result of the war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006.

Peacekeeping

The Brigade has been employed in numerous peacekeeping missions in the recent years. Lebanon in 1982 (one of the first international missions of peace). In 1991 a Parachutist Tactical group was in Kurdistan with the objective of the mission being humanitarian aid "Italfor Airone".

From July 1992, the Brigade supplied personnel for operation "Vespri Siciliani" (anti-crime operation in Sicily). The Folgore participated in Operation Restore Hope, in Somalia, from 3 December 1992 to September 1993.

Parts of the Brigade have been employed many times in the Balkans (Missions IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia, and KFOR in Kosovo), with Multinational Forces in Albania and elements of the brigade participated in UN Mission INTERFET in East Timor. The Folgore participated from August 2005 to September 2005 in operation "Antica Babilonia" in Iraq.



Folgore, All the Way!



Welcome Home Trooper...

I was at a wedding in Savannah a few years ago. The groom was the son of a friend, and his grandmother and my mother were very close. Having been invited, I flew down from New England and attended the wedding. The father of the groom is an old friend, and he is the golf pro at Ft. Jackson, SC. The groom was just finishing 7 years in the Army as a paratrooper.

The church was beautiful, and when walking out of the church, to the immediate left, right across the street, was the park where Forrest Gump told his story at the bus stop.



The reception was in a beautiful hotel and I was sitting inside with my mother's friend, when two monsters came up behind my chair, standing on each side of me, and said I had to go with them. Thinking I did something wrong, and not wanting to fight (and lose), I went with them.

We walked out into a patio area that had two chairs in the middle, and all these young folks milling about. When we walked in, they all started yelling and cheering, and started to have photos taken. As it turns out, everyone, including the female in the photo, was a paratrooper in the 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf Regt, 173d Abn Bde, and they all served in Iraq together (except the female), having jumped in at the start of that war. The reason they were yelling is that I was in the same exact battalion some 40 years earlier, and never was I so well treated by any group of people.

When they started taking photos, the groom sat down in one chair and I asked the lady to sit in the other. They all yelled, saying that chair was reserved for me (It may be that they thought I would fall down, given the advanced age....). So I sat next to the groom. Then someone yelled to raise your drinks for the picture. I told them I didn't have a drink, so they said to get me a beer. I told them, *"No thanks. I was in the 173d when I had my last beer."* (I never liked the taste).

So they asked me what I drank, and I told them, *"Diet soda"*. They got me a diet soda, which is what I am holding in my hands in the photo. Unbeknownst to me, they also put a good dose of Jack Daniels in there, and according to one of the many traditions of the Airborne, you drink what's put in front of you. So I drank it and my stomach did flip flops for about 3 days.

These young folks were so good (and some of them were going back to the Middle East), I got all their email addresses, and wrote them a letter, to which some of them responded.

After reading the letters from these young troops, I find that there are things that just don't change. Many Vietnam veterans came home to hostility and disinterest. Most of us just moved on with our lives, putting our memories and our medals away in the closet. For the most part, the civilian population seemed to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to our experiences.

Then, all of a sudden and very unexpectedly, I came across a group of young, professional soldiers who treated me with more respect for my military service in one afternoon than I had received since leaving the Nam so many years before. I have since become a firm believer that if we ever want it done right, we, the Airborne, have to do it ourselves!

Don Ball
HHC/2/503d



A surprised honored guest, Don, sitting in chair next to the pretty 2/503d paratrooper.



Tribute to SGT MacKenzie

The West Point Glee Club, with others, and the images (on the web site below) tell what words could never express. This was used in the movie, *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KGHhEJdfFM>

Sgt. MacKenzie

Lay me doon in the caul caul groon
Whaur afore monie mair huv gaun
Lay me doon in the caul caul groon
Whaur afore monie mair huv gaun

When they come a wull staun ma groon
Staun ma groon al nae be afraid
Thoughts awe hame tak awa ma fear
Sweat an bluid hide ma veil awe tears

Ains a year say a prayer faur me
Close yir een an remember me
Nair mair shall a see the sun
For a fell tae a Germans gun

Lay me doon in the caul caul groon
Whaur afore monie mair huv gaun
Lay me doon in the caul caul groon
Whaur afore monie mair huv gaun
Whaur afore monie mair huv gaun

English Translation

Lay me down in the cold cold ground
Where before many more have gone
Lay me down in the cold cold ground
Where before many more have gone

When they come I will stand my ground
Stand my ground I'll not be afraid
Thoughts of home take away my fear
Sweat and blood hide my veil of tears

Once a year say a prayer for me
Close your eyes and remember me
Never more shall I see the sun
For I fell to a Germans gun

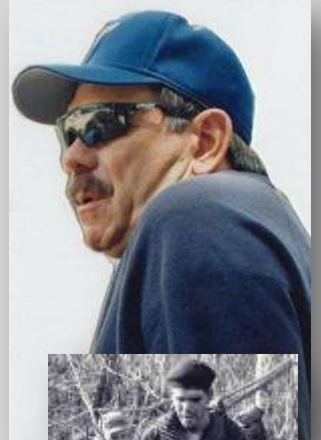
Lay me down in the cold cold ground
Where before many more have gone
Lay me down in the cold cold ground
Where before many more have gone
Where before many more have gone

In memory of Sgt. Charles Stuart MacKenzie, Seaforth Highlanders, who along with many others gave up his life in WWI, so that we can live free.

[Sent in by MG John "Uncle Jack" Deane]

Farewell to Bob Stammersky Recon Panther

Robert "Bob" Stammersky, 67, of Kearney, MO passed away January 26, 2012. Memorial Mass was held at St. James Catholic Church, in Liberty, Missouri. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to helping Kansas City area Homeless Veteran's.



Bob was an Army veteran of the Vietnam conflict. He was owner of Retro Bowl in Liberty, MO, and former General Manager of Samuel Bingham Co., retiring after 50 years' service. Bob began coaching his son's baseball teams and continued coaching high school and collegiate teams until 2010. Those teams included The Wildcats, Diamond Kings, The Train, The Crashers, The Bombers, The Orioles, Worth Harley Davidson, and The River Bandits. If anyone wanted to find Bob, they would find him at the bar at Retro Bowl with his Crown Reserve.



Survivors include his wife, Margie Stammersky, children, Damian (Val) and Anne Stammersky, brothers, Art (Susan) and Tom Stammersky, sisters, Betty Williams, Carol Soltesz, grandchildren, Taylor Robert Stammersky, Tyler Rose Stammersky, and brother in law, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Ralph R. (Clare) Williams.

Condolences may be sent to mountmoriahterracepark.com

~ From a Buddy ~

"4/66-4/67 Machine Gunner, 3rd Squad, Recon Platoon, HHC, 2/503 Abn Inf, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) RVN. Born 3 November 1944; died 26 January 2012, age 67. Successful husband, father, grandfather and businessman. Leaves his wife, Margie, son Damian, daughter, Anne, and two grandchildren, boy and girl, Taylor & Tyler. RIP big guy."

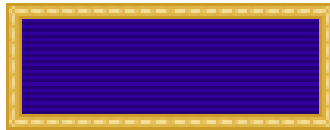
Jerry Hassler
Recon/2/503d, '66/'67



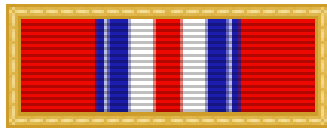
Vicenza unit earns 2 awards for Afghan missions

By Michelle Tan - Staff Writer

One of the most highly decorated battalions to fight in Afghanistan can now add two prestigious unit awards. For its Afghanistan deployment from June 2007 to August 2008, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Brigade Combat Team, out of Vicenza, Italy, earned the Presidential Unit Citation and the Valorous Unit Award.



Presidential Unit Citation



Valorous Unit Citation

This unit-level recognition is in addition to a slate of individual valor awards presented to soldiers from that battalion, including the first Medal of Honor awarded to a living service member since the Vietnam War. Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, who has since left the Army, received the nation's highest award for valor after running through heavy enemy fire to rescue a badly wounded comrade during a deadly ambush Oct. 25, 2007, in the Korengal Valley.

Soldiers from the battalion also earned two Distinguished Service Crosses, the second-highest valor award, and 27 Silver Stars, the third-highest award for valor.



Sky Soldiers on patrol

The battalion's Presidential Unit Citation was awarded for the soldiers' "extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy" from June 5 to Nov. 10, 2007, according to an order issued Oct. 26. The Valorous Unit Award was awarded for the soldiers' actions from Jan. 25 to July 30, 2008.

According to the Army regulation on military awards, the degree of heroism required to earn a President Unit Citation is equivalent to that which would warrant award of a Distinguished Service Cross to an individual. The Valorous Unit Award is equivalent to awarding the Silver Star to an individual.

The battalion, while highly lauded for its actions during a difficult deployment to one of Afghanistan's most treacherous and contested regions, also came under fire for a deadly attack in Wanat. Nine soldiers were killed and 27 others wounded in the July 13, 2008, attack, and family members of the fallen soldiers demanded the Army hold accountable members of the unit's chain of command for failing to properly plan and resource the soldiers' mission, leaving them vulnerable to the attack. The families' efforts prompted a Central Command-directed review that led to recommendations to discipline three officers in the battalion and brigade. The officers were later exonerated after further review by the Army, and the officers were given a chance to appeal.

[Sent in by Rich Whipple, HHC/2/503d]



Military Review is printed bi-monthly in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and quarterly in Arabic. Approximately 12,000 copies of the various editions are distributed in more than 100 countries.

Military Review is widely quoted and reprinted in other publications throughout the world and is readily available for reference at research agencies, civilian university libraries, most military libraries in the US and abroad, and via the Worldwide Web.

Military Review provides a forum for the open exchange of ideas about military matters of importance to the U.S. Army with a focus on the concepts, doctrine, and warfighting at the tactical and operational levels of war.

Military Review supports the education, training, and development of doctrine and the integration missions of the Combined Arms Center (CAC) and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) of the U.S. Army.

<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/aboutus.pdf>



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“The 173rd Airborne Brigade started out the new year on January 1, 1966, with a major strike into the Mekong Delta. Operation Marauder, as the mission was dubbed, soon found its quarry, the VC 267th Main Force Battalion, and a three-day battle ensued.” Tom Faley, C/2/503d

2 January 1966 Marauder as I Remember It

By Stephen P. Steets
B/2/503d

We were flying into a hot LZ. I remember seeing the spotter aircraft flying low over the area. On the ground we got word that the Bird Dog had been shot down, presumably by enemy fire.

We were advancing across a rice paddy, well ahead of our smoke. When we reached the other side of the paddy I saw an enemy gun position, probably a 50, not more than 10 meters in front of us. I opened fire at it and, goddamit, my M-60 jammed. I set it on the berm to clear it, and the next thing I knew; it was raining tons of mud. I never saw anything, I never heard anything, and I never felt anything. I was confused, I couldn't find my gun. I just saw mud and blood.

I looked down at my legs and saw blood pouring on them from my head. I realized that I must have been hit; I tried to get up and passed out.

As I lay there, I remember hearing a few soft moans next to me; it was MacIntyre, my assistant gunner. I called to him, but, no answer. Sgt Baker was just to the right of him. They both died. There were several others KIA and WIA in that incident but I do not know their names.

Today, I do not blame that aircraft. I take solace in the knowledge that the Air Force had lost its eyes, we were well in front of our smoke, the Air Force had a legitimate target, the bomb landed forward of our position, the target was within 10 meters forward of our position, and no doubt they wiped out that target and got a few of the enemy. Otherwise, those gooks might have taken our ears.



Steve

I don't know how long I lay there. It was dark, quiet, peaceful and warm. I just wanted to sleep. Then I heard voices. As they got closer, I heard one say,

“Here's one, aw fuck him, he's dead.”

I thought they were talking about me. Then I feel a tug at my chest, “Hey buddy, you ok?” I said, “I can't see, my eyes, I can't see”. He pushed me down, poured water on my head and face and cleaned the blood from my eyelids and lashes, and I opened my eyes. I wasn't dead, and I wasn't blind. I could see, I could see the orange flashes from the guns on that dammed Skyraider diving directly at us. Rounds kicking up all around us. “Shoot the motherfucker.” “He's on our side.” “Yeah right, tell him that.”

We survived. I don't know who this guy was, he wasn't a medic. He just picked up the medic's bag and helped with first aid. May God bless him. He tells me I lost a lot of blood and he was going to give me an IV. He sticks the needle in my arm and misses the vein -- that hurt. He takes it out and sticks it in again and misses the vein again. He takes it out, drops it in the mud, picks it up and wipes the needle on his shirt. I summoned the strength of a bull and pulled my arm away, pinned it to my chest, and told him, “Don't stick me with that thing again”. He asked if I want some morphine to make me feel better. I told him no, that I wasn't hurt. He gave me a funny look.

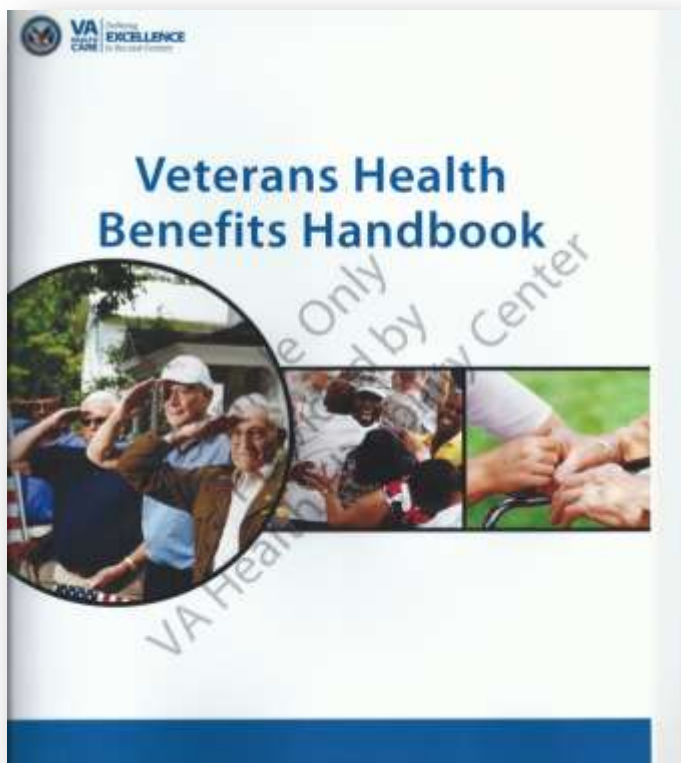
They needed to get me back to Med Evac. I tried but couldn't walk, so they get a stretcher, only they didn't have stretcher poles. They get six guys to carry me. The lead guys splashed paddy water on my face; that burned like hell from the tear gas that was in the water. As we get halfway across we come under enemy fire. They dropped me in the water and ran for cover, all but one, Furman.

Stanley Furman was a big dude, one really big man. He gets me up out of the water, grabs the back of my belt and says “Run!” As we hauled ass out of there, I don't know if my feet ever touched anything solid. I was probably just treading water while he carried me. He got me safely back to the Med Evac area and Dust Off.

Now hear this. Furman totally disregarded his own safety, and under heavy automatic weapons fire, hauled my sorry ass out of harm's way. Don't they give medals for that?



Veterans Health Benefits Handbook



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to informing the Veteran community about VA health benefits and services. Currently, VA is producing personalized Veteran Health Benefits Handbooks for Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care. The new handbooks are ***tailored specific*** for each Veteran and provides detailed information about the VA health services the Veteran may be eligible to receive.

The Veteran Health Benefit Handbook provides answers to common questions such as contact information for the Veteran's local facility, instructions on how to schedule appointments, guidelines for communicating treatment needs and an explanation of the Veteran's responsibilities, such as co-pays, if applicable.

Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare will receive their personalized handbooks via mail as part of a national rollout campaign starting in **February 2012** based on Priority Group, beginning with Priority Group 1 and ending with Priority Group 8. In the near future, VA will develop an online version of the handbook for Veterans to access via [MyHealththeVet](#). This will allow Veterans to access their up-to-date health benefit information anywhere, anytime.

For additional information about the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook call VA at **1 877-222-VETS (8387)**.

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration Set for March 31, 2012



The Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration for military members and their friends and families will be held on Saturday, March 31.

The USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, with support from the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters, announced that they will hold an incredible *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration* for military members and their friends and families that will be held on March 31.

Vietnam veterans never received the type of homecoming celebration that today's troops receive as they return from service. To honor those who served and the military members who returned from combat, the USO of North Carolina is holding a long, overdue homecoming celebration.

Hosted by the USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, the *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration 2012* is set to be an unforgettable experience featuring live entertainment, displays and demonstrations, military salutes, and much more.

Visit this web site for details and to reserve free seating: http://www.charlottespeedway.com/tickets/vietnam_veterans_homecoming_celebration_2012/600589.html

[Sent in by Larry Hampton, A/1/503d]
bigdog173.lh@gmail.com



Note: You can email Larry for a list of local area hotels near the Speedway. He also said, "Maybe we all wear our 173d hats."



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Paratrooper Retirement

Is the timing right for you?

This note came in from a Sky Soldier buddy.

Hey, Lew, got a second?

Every day I ponder retirement; all is lined up for an imminent departure. I don't care much for my job any longer, but is easy enough for me to perform. Suffice to say that I have enough minor physical ailments that would limit the range of work that I could do in retirement, and my pensions alone would require a change in my lifestyle (such as I have). I wonder WHAT I would do in retirement? I understand there are hobbies, home improvement, part-time work, as well as volunteer work, and R&R. You'd mentioned that you are retired down in Florida. The 2B Newsletter seems a passion and VERY time consuming. Tell me... how do you like retirement? Do you have items that fill your days (aside from the Newsletter, that is)? Most people tell me *"If you have nothing planned for in retirement, don't do it."*

Maybe we all wear our 173d hats. (MAYBE?)

Hi bro:

You pretty much hit it on the nose. For anyone with half a mind, and as paratroopers that's probably what we have, one must have a purpose to busy one's self with in retirement, or at least a fulfilling hobby. As you rightly point out, our



newsletter is mine for the time being. Reggie's and my other hobby is "going to the doctor", which isn't much of a hobby at all – she counted our combined visits from last year, 64 in all. When we worked we seldom saw doctors. In retirement, even with a purpose or hobby, the days zip by. We wake up, have coffee, read the paper, go to the supermarket, watch the political news, then off to bed. Given a bad back I do very little work around the house, fortunately we're able to hire expertise when needed. Reggie, on the other hand, goes to the gym, grows orchids, yells at me and plants flowers; either that or she has a lover, one of the two for sure. In spite of a bad back (probably heading for surgery this year), I slip in a couple rounds of golf with the buds, and a nite or two a month at the V telling lies with old soldiers; the following day is filled with nursing the headache which is often the result of those visits.

Semi often we'll drive to Miami to visit grandkids or they'll come up here for a few days....very time consuming, and chasing rug rats around may have something to do with the bad back. We bought a Roadtrek (a small RV/van) a couple years ago with plans to tour the country...Reggie had a benign brain tumor removed a while back, then my back gave out, so we fill some days looking at the RV and *wondering*; but we're getting closer to actually using the thing. There's probably some truth in the statement

"If you have nothing planned for in retirement, don't do it."

For the last 25 years or so of my career I owned my own business, pretty much focused on producing trade shows and conferences for the airline industry. It was challenging and professionally satisfying, but even if the days now zip by, I'll take going to the supermarket over a real job anytime. What we both noticed is, once retired, even in the early days, there is virtually no interest in returning to work. I heard sky diving is fun...if I could only get out of this chair. Good luck with your decision, bro.

Smitty Out

~ Bravo Bull Captures VC ~



An amazing action photo of Jerry Wiles B/2/503d on R&R in Florida capturing Victor Charlie. That's Jerry on the left.

503rd PRCT in the Pacific

Enjoy reading about the troopers of the 503rd PRCT during WWII in the Pacific? Check out these books:

<http://corregidor.org/publications.htm>



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WEB SITES OF IMPORTANCE TO VETS

Someone has gone to a lot of trouble to compile this list. Below are web-sites which provide information on Veterans' benefits and how to file/ask for them. Accordingly, there are many sites explaining how to obtain books, military/medical records, information and how to appeal a denied claim with the VA. Nearly 100% of this information is free and available to all veterans.

Appeals

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin2/1/m21_1/mr/part1/ch05.doc

Board of Veteran's Appeals

<http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/>

CARES Commission

<http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/> CARES

Draft National Plan

<http://www1.va.gov/cares/page.cfm?pg=105>

Center for Minority Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>

Center for Veterans Enterprise

<http://www.vetbiz.gov/default2.htm>

Center for Women Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>

Clarification on the changes in VA healthcare for Gulf War Veterans

<http://www.gulfwarvets.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/000016.html>

Classified Records - American Gulf War Veterans Assoc

<http://www.gulfwarvets.com/ubb/Forum18/HTML/000011.html>

Compensation for Disabilities

Associated with the Gulf War Service

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin2/1/m21_1/part6%20/ch07.doc

Compensation Rate Tables, 12-1-03

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/comp01.htm>

Department of Veterans Affairs

Home Page <http://www.va.gov/>

Directory of Veterans Service

Organizations

<http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=view>

Disability Examination Worksheets Index, Comp

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/exams/index.htm>

Due Process

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin2/1/m21_1/mr/part1/ch02.doc

Duty to Assist

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin2/1/m21_1/mr/part1/ch01.doc

Electronic Code of Federal Regulations

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/>

Emergency, Non-Emergency, and Fee Basis Care

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf>

Environmental Agents

<http://www1.va.gov/environagents/>

Environmental Agents M10

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1002

Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=315

Evaluation Protocol for Gulf War and Iraqi Freedom Veterans with Potential Exposure to Depleted Uranium (DU)

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DUHandbook1303122304.DOC> and

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1158

See also, Depleted Uranium Fact Sheet

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DepletedUraniumFAQSheet.doc>

Evaluation Protocol for Non-Gulf War Veterans with Potential Exposure to Depleted Uranium

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DUHANDBOOKNONGW130340304.DOC>

Fee Basis, Priority for Outpatient Medical Services and Inpatient Hospital Care

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=206

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents 2005

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf> or,

http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm

Forms and Records Request

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

General Compensation Provisions

http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter11_subchaptervi.html

Geriatrics and Extended Care

<http://www1.va.gov/geriatricsshg/>

Guideline for Chronic Pain and Fatigue MUS-CPG

http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/cpgn/mus/mus_base.htm

Guide to Gulf War Veteran's Health

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/VHIGulfwar.pdf>

Gulf War Subject Index

<http://www1.va.gov/GulfWar/page.cfm?pg=7&template=main&letter=A>

Gulf War Veteran's Illnesses Q&As

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/GWIllnessesQandAsIB1041.pdf>

Hearings

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin2/1/m21_1/mr/part1/ch04.doc

Homeless Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>

HSR&D Home

<http://www.hsr.dresearch.va.gov/>

Index to Disability Examination Worksheets C&P exams

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/exams/index.htm>

Ionizing Radiation

<http://www1.va.gov/irad/>

Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans VBA

<http://www.vba.va.gov/EFIF/>

M 10 for spouses and children

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1007

M10 Part III Change 1

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1008

M21-1 Table of Contents

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/M21_1.html

Mental Disorders, Schedule of Ratings

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/regs/38CFR/BOOKC/PART4/S4_130.DOC

Mental Health Program Guidelines

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1094

Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers

<http://www.mirecc.med.va.gov/>

MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Centers of Excellence

<http://www.va.gov/ms/about.asp>

(continued....)



My Health e Vet

<http://www.myhealth.va.gov/>

NASDVA.COM

<http://nasdva.com/>

National Association of State

Directors

<http://www.nasdva.com/>

National Center for Health

Promotion and Disease Prevention

<http://www.nchpdp.med.va.gov/postdeploymentlinks.asp>

Neurological Conditions and Convulsive Disorders, Schedule of Ratings

<http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/regs/38cfr/bookc/part4/s4%5F124a.doc>

OMI (Office of Medical Inspector)

<http://www.omi.cio.med.va.gov/>

Online VA Form 10-10EZ

<https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>

Parkinson's Disease and Related Neurodegenerative Disorders

<http://www1.va.gov/resdev/funding/solicitations/docs/parkinsons.pdf>

and, <http://www1.va.gov/padrecc/>

Peacetime Disability Compensation

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+38USC1131

Pension for Non-Service-Connected Disability or Death

http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapteri.html and, http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapterii.html and, http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapteriii.html

Persian Gulf Registry

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1003

This program is now referred to as Gulf War Registry Program (to include Operation Iraqi Freedom) as of March 7, 2005:

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1232

Persian Gulf Registry Referral Centers

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1006

Persian Gulf Veterans' Illnesses

Research 1999, Annual Report To Congress

[http://www1.va.gov/resdev/1999_Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Appendices.doc](http://www1.va.gov/resdev/1999_Gulf_War_Veterans'_Illnesses_Appendices.doc)

Persian Gulf Veterans' Illnesses

Research 2002, Annual Report To Congress

http://www1.va.gov/resdev/prt/gulf_war_2002/GulfWarRpt02.pdf

Phase I PGR

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1004

Phase II PGR

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1005

Policy Manual Index

<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/eds/edsmps.htm>

Power of Attorney

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch03.doc

Project 112 (Including Project SHAD)

<http://www1.va.gov/shad/>

Prosthetics Eligibility

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=337

Public Health and Environmental Hazards Home Page

<http://www.vethealth.cio.med.va.gov/>

Public Health/SARS

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/SARS/>

Publications Manuals

<http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/publications.cfm?Pub=4>

Publications and Reports

http://www1.va.gov/resdev/prt/pubs_individual.cfm?webpage=gulf_war.htm

Records Center and Vault

Homepage

<http://www.aac.va.gov/vault/default.html>

Records Center and Vault Site Map

<http://www.aac.va.gov/vault/sitemap.html>

Request for and Consent to Release of Information from Claimants Records

Records

<http://www.forms.va.gov/va/Internet/VARF/getformharness.asp?formName=3288-form.xft>

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses April 11, 2002

http://www1.va.gov/racgwvi/docs/Minutes_April112002.doc

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses

http://www1.va.gov/racgwvi/docs/ReportandRecommendations_2004.pdf

Research and Development

http://www.appc1.va.gov/resdev/programs/all_programs.cfm

Survivor's and Dependents' Educational Assistance

http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partiii_chapter35.html

Title 38 Index Parts 0-17

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/tile38/38cfrv1_02.tpl

Part 18

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/tile38/38cfrv2_02.tpl

Title 38 Part 3 Adjudication

Subpart A "Pension, Compensation, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/tile38/38cfr3_main_02.tpl

Title 38 Pensions, Bonuses & Veterans Relief (also A, A§ 3.317

Compensation for certain disabilities due to undiagnosed illnesses found here)

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/tile38/38cfr3_main_02.tpl

Title 38, Part 4 – Schedule for Rating Disabilities Subpart B – Disability Ratings

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=ab7641afd195c84a49a2067dbbcf95c0&rgn=div6&view=text&node=38:1.0.1.1.5.2&idno=38Title38A§4.16>

Total disability ratings for compensation based on unemployability of the individual.

Part A "Schedule for Rating Disabilities Subpart A" General Policy in Rating

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&rgn=div8&view=text&node=38:1.0.1.1.5.1..96.11&idno=38>

U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

<http://www.vetapp.gov/>

(continued....)



VA Best Practice Manual for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

<http://www.avapl.org/pub/PTSD%20Manual%20final%206.pdf>

VA Fact Sheet

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/gwfs.html>

VA Health Care Eligibility

<http://www.va.gov/healtheeligibility/home/hecmain.asp>

VA Instituting Global Assessment of Function (GAF)

<http://www.avapl.org/gaf/gaf.html>

VA Life Insurance Handbook A, Chapter 3

<http://www.insurance.va.gov/inForce/GliSite/GLIhandbook/glibookletch3.htm#310>

VA Loan Lending Limits and Jumbo Loans

http://valoans.com/va_facts_limits.cfm

VA MS Research

<http://www.va.gov/ms/about.asp>

VA National Hepatitis C Program

<http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/>

VA Office of Research and Development

<http://www1.va.gov/resdev/>

VA Trainee Pocket Card on Gulf War

<http://www.va.gov/OAA/pocketcard/gulfwar.asp>

VA WMD EMSHG

<http://www1.va.gov/emshg/>

VA WRIISC-DC

<http://www.va.gov/WRIISC-DC/>

VAOIG Hotline Telephone Number and Address

<http://www.va.gov/oig/hotline/hotline3.htm>

Vet Center Eligibility -

Readjustment Counseling Service

<http://www.va.gov/rcs/Eligibility.htm>

Veterans Benefits Administration

Main Web Page

<http://www.vba.va.gov/>

Veterans Legal and Benefits Information

<http://valaw.org/>

VHA Forms, Publications, Manuals

<http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/>

VHA Programs - Clinical Programs & Initiatives

http://www1.va.gov/health_benefits/page.cfm?pg=13<http://webmaila.juno.com/webmail/new/UrlBlockedError.aspx>

VHA Public Health Strategic Health Care Group Home Page

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/>

VHI Guide to Gulf War Veterans Health

http://www1.va.gov/vhi_ind_study/gulfwar/istudy/index.asp

Vocational Rehabilitation

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/>

Vocational Rehabilitation

Subsistence

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/InterSubsistencefy04.doc>

VONAPP online

<http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>

WARMS - 38 CFR Book C

<http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/bookc.html>

Wartime Disability Compensation

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+38USC1110

War-Related Illness and Injury

Study Center - New Jersey

<http://www.wri.med.va.gov/>

Welcome to the GI Bill Web Site

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

What VA Social Workers Do

<http://www1.va.gov/socialwork/page.cfm?pg=3>

WRIISC Patient Eligibility

<http://www.illegion.org/va1.html>

[Sent in by Mike McMillan, A/4/503d]

Last Month's *WHODAT?*



SFC Wheat, A/2/503d, September '66.

(Photo by Robert Guy, A/2/503d)

From the Youngin's



“Staff Sgt. Travis Surber, a native of Franklin County, Va., and a paratrooper with the 173d Brigade Combat Team's Battle Company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, parachutes out of a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft and into the Ukraine sky. “

(Photo by, who else, Travis Surber)



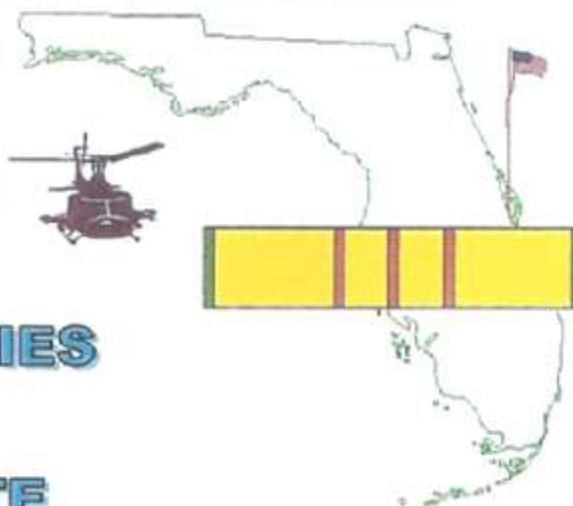
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Also visit the Reunion Web Page at:
floridaveteransreunion.com

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All Veterans, Families and Public Invited

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in the Reunion Area

Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted
for the Handicapped Only And Must
Abide By FL Highway Laws

Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
<http://travelingwall.us>

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