



THE KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION, INC.
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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MONTHLY REPORTS FOR JANUARY 2017

The following monthly update for January 2017 is submitted by the Executive Director of the Korean War Veterans Association of the United States of America.

1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT REPORT: Submitted by Mr. John “Sonny” Edwards - as of 01-28-17

New members 33	New members TYTD 33
New members 42	New members LYTD 42
Active members LYTD 13, 437	
Active members TYTD 12, 677	
Decrease 760	

Deceased comrades TYTD 760
 Departments with 5 or more this Month: California 6; Florida 12

16 Chapters recruited one new member this month
 8 Departments had Chapters recruit new members this month

2. FREE FLU SHOTS: From now through March 31, 2017, all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can receive free flu shots at any Walgreens or Duane Reade pharmacy. The joint outreach health initiative is designed to help serve veterans closer to where they reside. Veterans must bring their VA identification cards with them, as well as another photo ID, and complete a short four-question application, which will be used to automatically update their VA Electronic Health Records. No appointments are necessary.



3. CVS NO LONGER PART OF TRICARE PHARMACY NETWORK: The Defense Department notified Tricare health care participants this fall that CVS pharmacies, including those in Target stores, would leave the network Dec. 1, 2016. Tricare clients would have to pay the full cost of medication up front at CVS after that date and file a claim for partial reimbursement, according to the Defense Health Agency. Express Scripts Inc., which manages the Tricare pharmacy network for the Department of Defense, announced Walgreens would join the network Dec. 1. Walgreens had been dropped from the Tricare network a few years ago, he said. “It was no hassle for us,” Groves said. “We just moved back to Walgreens. I’ve not heard anybody complaining about dropping CVS and adding Walgreens.” Tricare health plan serves about 9.4 million military beneficiaries around the world, including 202,867 in Alabama, according to the Defense Department. “The network will still have more than 57,000 locations across the country,” Dr. George Jones, chief of pharmacy operation for the Defense Health Agency, said in a news release. “About 98 percent of beneficiaries still have a network pharmacy within 5 miles of their home.”

Groves said Walgreens is as convenient as CVS for his family, with both located on Beltline Road.

“Most of the pharmacy network stays the same, including major chains like Rite Aid and Wal-Mart, grocery store pharmacies, and thousands of community pharmacies around the country,” Jones said. “While we know this change might cause an inconvenience for some people, it’s easy to search for another network pharmacy near where you live or work.” Gary Serby, director of corporate communications for CVS Health, said in a Friday email that the company worked hard to provide positive services to Tricare clients.

“It was not our desire or decision to be excluded,” he said. Serby did not address why CVS was dropped from the network. Edward Guice, owner of Guice Pharmacy on Sixth Avenue Southeast, said he doesn’t have many Tricare clients and didn’t see an uptick in Tricare clients after Dec. 1. “The ones I do take care of, I’ve taken care of them for 25 years or is a fishing buddy or a hunting buddy,” Guice said. “If I’m dropped from the network, they’ll understand, but I’ll feel bad.” Guice is afraid that Express Scripts will drop independent drug stores from the preferred network to focus on the large drug store chains. “We’re waiting to see if we get cut out,” he said. “They don’t want to deal with the little guy.”

Read more here: <https://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/news/walgreens.shtml>.

4. **DIRECT SCHEDULING FOR VA AUDIOLOGY AND OPTOMETRY APPOINTMENTS:** The VA announced it would eliminate a primary care referral requirement for veterans seeking appointments with audiologists or optometrists. The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is being piloted throughout the country and is expected to be fully operational within all VA Medical Centers by the end of 2016.



5. **OLDER VETERANS OFTEN MISS OUT ON LONG-TERM-CARE BENEFITS:** Many older war-era veterans and surviving spouses over the age of 65 across America are missing out on a major element in securing their retirements: the Aid and Attendance benefit for long-term care. The Aid and Attendance benefit is available to veterans and their spouses to help offset recurring medical costs and some of the costs for home care and assisted living care. This is a benefit for senior veterans who served during wartime—World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and the Gulf War—for at least 90 days of active duty and who are 65 or older, as well as their surviving spouses. It doesn't matter if the veteran served stateside or internationally, saw combat or didn't, was wounded or wasn't. If the veteran's doctor—not a VA doctor—affirms the veteran or spouse needs assistance, then he or she may be eligible for Aid and Attendance, regardless of Social Security, Medicare, pensions or other benefits. These benefits can be quite substantial, even if they are a variable number. Under Aid and Attendance, a veteran living alone can receive as much as \$21,456 annually, or \$1,788 a month. A married veteran can receive as much as \$26,550 annually, or \$2,210 a month. A surviving spouse is eligible for as much as \$13,788 annually, or \$1,149 a month. These benefits are paid directly to the veteran or surviving spouse and are tax-free. Payments are retroactive to the date of application. Many veterans and surviving spouses are not aware of the Aid and Attendance benefits they have earned, or they are confused about them. Too many veterans are told they can't have a certain level of income or assets to apply for Aid and Attendance. That's simply incorrect. As long as the veterans and surviving spouses meet the criteria, they are eligible for those benefits for the rest of their lives. Some of this confusion and lack of knowledge is perfectly understandable, since the application process can be complex. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) cannot give veterans legal or financial advice on how to get qualified for the Aid and Attendance benefits. Even worse, if a veteran asks about the benefits, the VA will simply tell them to apply. The VA will not tell veterans the requirements or how a veteran can qualify based on the rules. Only around 20% of veterans who apply on their own for Aid and Attendance benefits ever receive them. However, if a veteran follows the rules, they are able to receive the benefits. My firm has been working with veterans and surviving spouses on Aid & Attendance benefits for more than five years. During that time, we have helped more than 300 veterans and surviving spouses obtain the benefits they have earned through their service defending this nation. Unfortunately, around 80% of the veterans who we have met with over the years are not aware of or misunderstand these benefits. That's why it's important to get the facts about Aid and Attendance benefits from credible, unbiased sources with the ability to provide the correct information. The VA cannot and will not do that. There are billions of dollars already set aside in Aid and Attendance benefits that veterans and surviving spouses have earned. Veterans and their families should not feel guilty about having earned these benefits through their noble efforts and service.

6. Helpful Services: Phone Numbers and Web Sites

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Regional Office (Benefits)	800.827.1000	VA.gov
Office of the Secretary	202.273.4800	VA.gov
Office of the Inspector General	202.461.4702	https://www.va.gov/oig
Office of the National Cemetery System	202.461.6240	www.cem.va.gov
Arlington National Cemetery	703.607.8585	www.arlingtoncemetery.mil
Board of Veterans Appeals	202.565.5436	www.bva.va.gov
Central Office (Main Switchboard)	202.273.5400	
Funeral Arrangements & Eligibility	703.607.8585	www.cem.va.gov
Government Life Insurance	800.669.8477	www.insurance.va.gov
Personal Locator	202.273.4950	

Other Veteran Government Agencies

Department of Defense	703.545.6700	https://www.defense.gov
Veterans Employment & Training Office	202.693.4700	https://www.dol.gov/vets
Small Business Administration (VA)	202.205.6600	https://www.sba.gov

Congressional Committees

Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs	202.224.9126	www.veterans.senate.gov
House Committee on Veterans Affairs	202.225.3527	https://veterans.house.gov
Congressional Rural Health Care Coalition	202.225.6600	www.ruralhealthinfo.org

Other Veteran Related Offices and Agencies

U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims	202.418.3453	uscourts.cavc.gov
Questions on specific Cases	202.501.5970	
National Organization for Vets Advocates (Attorneys)	877.483.8238	https://vetadvocates.org
USO	888.484.3876	https://www.uso.org

POW/MIA

Department of Defense, POW/MIA Affairs	703.699.1169	http://www.dpaa.mil/
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Incarcerated Veteran

Federal Bureau of Prisons	202.307.3198	https://www.bop.gov
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PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

VA Readjustment Counseling Service	202.273.8967	www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/317
VA PTSD Information	802.296.6300	www.ptsd.va.gov
VA PTSD Help – In Crisis – Suicide Prevention	800.273.8255	www.veteranscrisisline.net
National Center for PTSD – Behavioral Science Division	857.364.4172	www.ptsd.va.gov/PTSD/about/divisions

Locator and Reunion Services

Army Worldwide Locator	866.771.6357	hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa/per_locator.htm
Navy Times Locator Services	901.874.3388	https://www.navytimes.com
Personnel Locator	800.333.4636	

Archives

Air Force Support Office	202.404.2264	www.afhistory.af.mil
Marine Corps Historical Office	703.432.4877	guides.grc.usmcu.edu/archives
National Archives – Military Records	866.272.6272	www.archives.gov/research/military
Naval Historical Center (Operations Archives)	202.433.3170	www.history.navy.mil
United States Army Center of Military History	866.272.6272	www.history.army.mil

Women Veterans

Women in Military Service-America Memorial Foundation	703.533.1155	www.womensmemorial.org
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7. NEW APPLICATION FORMS FOR THE SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE MEDAL

Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal

If you are a Korean War veteran, you may be eligible for the **Korean Ambassador Peace Medal**. The medal is an expression of appreciation from the Korean government to US service men and women who served in the Korean conflict.

To be eligible, the veterans must have served in country during the Korean War from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. It is also available for the veterans who have participated in UN peacekeeping operations until the end of 1955.

If a veteran was a Navy service member and had served aboard a naval vessel, then he or she is eligible if the naval vessel was assigned into Korean waters during the 1950 to 1953 time frame.

Please note that both men and women are eligible for this medal. The military had support positions such as nurse, clerical and administrative, and other positions that were predominantly held by women service members.

Criteria:

1. **To establish eligibility, you need a copy of your DD 214.** The DD 214 need not be certified or notarized, but it should be legible.
2. **There are no costs or fees to the family or to the veteran.** There are no legal agreements that need to be made, nor any documents to be signed. This is an appreciation in the form of the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal from the Republic of South Korea for the sacrifices, service and friendship of our American service men and women who served in the Korean War.
3. Fill out the attached application and send it along with a copy of your DD214 to:

koreadefense@mofa.go.kr

OR

Embassy of the Republic of Korea

Office of Defense Attaché

2450 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.

Washington, DC 20008



Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal Application

Name of Recipient: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Please include this along with a copy of your DD 214.

8.



JULY 11-14, 2017 KWDH PROJECT 3RD ANNUAL TEACHER CONFERENCE

Now accepting applications for attendees and presenters. All expenses paid for teachers who become legacy certified.

Who is eligible?

We welcome any educator who can incorporate veteran stories and artifacts from the Korean War Veterans Digital Memorial into the classroom.

A cohort of teachers from this conference will be selected to attend a week long research trip to South Korea.

Want to learn more?

Visit our website at www.kwdhproject.org/teacher-conference

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

WORKSHOPS FOR EVERY
SUBJECT AND GRADE LEVEL

FORMAL BANQUET
HONORING OUR VETERANS

EXCURSIONS TO HISTORIC
SITES

SPONSORED BY NATIONAL
COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL
STUDIES

HOSTED BY
**THE KOREAN WAR
LEGACY FOUNDATION**

www.kwvdm.org



Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc.

9. **10th Korea-America Student Conference (KASC)**: Conference Date: July 23rd - August 13th, 2017
Registration Deadline: March 1, 2017 --- Join 56 students from Korea and the United States in this three-week student conference to make new friends, discuss modern issues, and learn more about yourself. Apply before the priority deadline for a \$150 discount on your participation fee.

The 10th Korea-America Student Conference

The 10th KASC will be held in the United States from **July 23 - August 13, 2017**.

A delegation of 56 students will be competitively selected to represent the U.S. and Korea in the conference (28 American students, and 28 Korean students). Delegates will travel to three locations in the United States: **Washington, DC; Dallas, TX; and San Francisco Bay Area**, and engage in academic, cultural, and professional exchange, including participating in lectures, seminars, networking events, cultural activities, and community service.

Delegates will discuss, analyze, and co-create solutions to four pressing bilateral and global topics throughout the month, and will present their joint solutions to a panel of experts and the general public at the conclusion of the conference. KASC seeks a diverse delegation, and all majors are welcome to apply. No prior experience with Korea or Korean necessary.

[Applications to join the 10th KASC are open today. We accept applications on a rolling basis, apply soon!](#)

International Student Conferences, Inc.
1211 Connecticut Ave. NW · Ste. 420 · Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 289-9088 ·
info@iscdc.org

10. **VERIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP DATA**: We are asking all Korean War Veterans Association Members to contact Publishing Concepts (PCI) to update their member information. PCI is a trusted partner of the Korean War Veterans Association of the United States of America. They will be printing your membership information as part of the Member Publication. Please call 1-800-829-4999 (toll free) to verify the accuracy of the data currently listed on file.

11. **THINK YOUR VA RATING IS WRONG? HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:** If you believe that the VA rated your disability incorrectly, there is a way to refute it. Filing for disability with the Department of Veterans Affairs can be one of the most frustrating parts of becoming a civilian. The process of filing is confusing as hell; there's so much information out there to "help" you that you might not know where to start; and tracking down your entire medical history is just a real pain in the ass. So what happens if after you manage to create a case, provide all the supporting documentation, and submit it to the VA, you don't get the rating you think you're supposed to have?

[5 things you didn't know about 100% disability ratings »](#)

If you think that VA got your disability rating incorrect, there is something you can do about it. It's called a "Notice of Disagreement," **[and you can file it online](#)**. Once you submit this form, a decision review officer will process your appeal as though it was a new claim. Essentially, he or she will conduct a new review of your disabilities and determine your status without looking at the original ratings.

But before you decide to take on the VA and (likely) another mountain of paperwork in addition to some more waiting, be sure you understand your ratings fully. When you apply for disability, your medical information is inputted by the rater, the rating for each medical issue is calculated, and an explanation for each rating is provided. Once your rating is issued, the VA provides you a packet of documents, which include issue-by-issue justifications and what qualifies for the next level rating. If you review your case and meet those requirements, you should file the Notice of Disagreement. If not, perhaps reconsider. There are typically three issues you can dispute: service connection, effective date, and evaluation of your disability. The third, based on symptoms, is the most common point of disagreement for most veterans who file, because they feel the percentages don't accurately reflect their conditions. According to VA, to file the Notice of Disagreement, you will have to submit VA-Form 21-0958 that was included with your claim decision. In case you want a clearer picture of how the ratings work, the VA [provides a number resources](#) on the topic, and if you need help, contact a veteran service organization like Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, or the American Legion. They can help you sort through the process and get you the benefits you deserve. If necessary, speak to an appeals lawyer about your disability rights, but don't pay for legal services until you've explored all other options.

12. TRUMP'S DEFENSE CHIEF EYES DEBUT TRIP TO JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA



New U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis (R) is greeted by Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as he arrives for his first day of work at the Pentagon outside Washington, U.S., January 21, 2017.

WASHINGTON U.S. President Donald Trump's defense secretary plans to visit Japan and South Korea next week, choosing the two close U.S. allies for his debut trip abroad as Pentagon chief, a U.S. official said on Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

James Mattis, a retired Marine general, was sworn into the Pentagon's top job shortly after Trump's inauguration on Friday and a quick departure to Asia could be seen as a nod to the importance the new U.S. administration places on security ties. The trip would closely follow Trump's withdrawal from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact, fulfilling a campaign pledge but disappointing many key U.S. allies in Asia. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for example, had touted TPP in part as a counter-weight to a rising China.

No further details were immediately available about Mattis' proposed itinerary. Still, Mattis, in his confirmation hearing this month, described "the Pacific theater" as a priority and analysts expect new U.S. military spending under Trump's administration would strengthen America's military presence in Asia over time. Topping U.S. concerns in the region are North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs and China's military moves in the South China Sea. Tension with Beijing escalated this week when Trump's White House vowed to defend "international territories" in the strategic waterway. China responded by saying it had "irrefutable" sovereignty over disputed islands there. Mattis, in his Senate testimony, also voiced concern about North Korea, describing Pyongyang's activities as a "serious threat" that required U.S. attention. There are about 28,500 U.S. troops based in South Korea helping to defend the country against North Korea, which has technically remained in a state of war with the South since the 1950-53 Korean conflict. South Korea and the United States say the upcoming deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system will better help to protect Seoul against North Korea's nuclear and ballistic capabilities. But China says THAAD's powerful radar could penetrate its own territory, prompting calls from some South Korean opposition leaders to delay or cancel its deployment.

13. VETERANS SPLIT ON TRUMP'S PLANS TO REFORM VETERANS' HEALTHCARE By Shelby

Livingston Some veterans groups vehemently oppose President-elect Donald Trump's plan to allow military veterans to seek care from private doctors instead of Veterans Affairs' healthcare facilities. Others welcome the idea of more choice. Trump this week met with private-sector healthcare executives, including a contender for the next VA secretary, Cleveland Clinic CEO Toby Cosgrove, to talk about reforming veterans' healthcare. One option is allowing veterans to choose care from private-sector providers, an unnamed transition team official told media outlets on Wednesday. The official offered no details on how such a system would work. But some view the announcement as a step toward privatizing veteran's healthcare. "The VFW is against privatizing the VA, but we also acknowledge that contracted, private-sector care has its place," said Joe Davis, director of communications for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. Still, while private care can complement the VA system, it can't fully replace it, he said. "We will ask the same of any plan for the VA: Who will oversee the quality of health care and ensure accountability; and what will replace ... protection for our most vulnerable veterans?" Sherman Gillums Jr., executive director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, said in a statement. Another question for the group is, "What will become of VA specialized services as demand for tertiary care diminishes?" Gillums believes privatizing healthcare would lead to less fragmented and coordinated care and that allowing veterans to opt out of care provided by the VA puts the entire system at risk. The American Legion and Vietnam Veterans of America have also said they would oppose privatizing veterans' healthcare. Meanwhile, Mark Lucas, executive director of the Concerned Veterans of America, a conservative group funded by the Koch brothers, said that "the veteran community is encouraged to see the President-Elect Trump embracing solutions that would allow veterans to seek care outside of the VA." He added that offering more choice is not the same as "privatization." Trump initially proposed allowing veterans to choose a private healthcare provider during his presidential campaign, when he laid out his 10-point plan to reform the VA. He said the move would cut down on wait times for care. The proposal is similar to the Veterans Choice program, which was part of the 2014 VA overhaul. The \$10 billion, three-year program funded by Congress is meant to improve access to healthcare and reduce wait times for veterans who typically seek care from VA facilities. Under the Veterans Choice program, veterans who have waited at least 30 days for an appointment at a VA facility or have to travel more than 40 miles for VA care are able to get federally funded treatment at local, non-VA doctors. Some Republicans have advocated for making that choice open to all veterans. The VA has long been criticized for making veterans sometimes wait months to see a doctor. Advocates say patients have died while waiting for appointments. While those delays have improved, a July report by the Commission on Care said the VA still has "profound deficiencies" in delivering healthcare to millions of veterans. The report also said the "the design and execution of the Choice Program are flawed." "Implementing the Choice Program has posed challenges, including difficulties arising from overlapping, but fundamentally different, care-purchasing authorities. Veterans, VHA staff, and community providers have been confused because of conflicting requirements and processes in eligibility rules, referrals and authorizations, provider credentialing and network development, care coordination, and claims management." Instead, the Commission said the VA must establish high-performing and integrated healthcare networks. Previous studies have found that delivering VA healthcare services would cost more through private-sector providers. A 2014 report by the Congressional Budget Office

points out that it is difficult to compare costs of healthcare provided by the VA with services delivered by private healthcare providers because it is unknown how the VHA would build contracts with the private sector in a public-private system. Moreover, veterans typically receive most of their healthcare outside of the VA. Many veterans are enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid, or have insurance through a private plan, the CBO noted. In 2015, the VA spent about \$65.6 million on medical care for the 22 million living U.S. veterans, according to the Veterans Affairs Department's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

14. PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP NOMINATES , FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

President-elect Donald Trump has nominated David Shulkin, the Department of Veterans Affairs' undersecretary of health, to lead the federal agency. Trump announced Shulkin's selection at a press conference. "I'll tell you about David, he's fantastic," Trump said. "He will do a truly great job." Picking Shulkin, who as the VA's undersecretary of health, runs the department's network of 1,700 hospitals and other medical facilities, amounts to a vote of confidence in the current VA leadership's efforts to improve the health care it provides.

But Trump added that the incoming administration is going to solicit help for Shulkin, who is also a physician, from "some of the great hospitals of the world," including the Cleveland Clinic and the Mayo Clinic.

Trump was extremely critical of the VA's medical services as a presidential candidate, promising to improve the services available to veterans. The president-elect reiterated this commitment on Wednesday.

"One of the commitments I've made is that we're going to straighten out the whole situation for our veterans. Our veterans have been treated horribly," he said. The wait times currently facing veterans seeking care at VA facilities are "not going to happen," Trump promised. It is unclear whether the selection of a senior VA official in the agency's current leadership signals a change in the Trump administration's plans to dramatically overhaul the VA, however. Trump transition officials have suggested that as part of the administration's plans to reform the VA, the president-elect intends to increase the role of private health care providers in one form or another. Some possibilities include privatizing the VA, or partially privatizing it, by allowing veterans to opt in to private care. David Shulkin, undersecretary of health for the Department of Veterans Affairs, leaves Trump Tower in New York City on Jan. 9, 2017. Top veterans groups such as the American Legion vehemently oppose these changes, arguing that only a federally run system is properly equipped to meet the unique health care needs of returning military service members. Demand for VA services has grown significantly in recent years due to the influx of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the aging of Vietnam War veterans. The VA has proved ill-equipped to deal with this increase. The agency has endured withering criticism for the wait times facing veterans and the efforts of some VA personnel to conceal those backlogs.

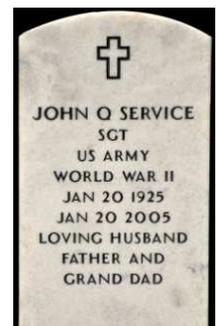
Retired Gen. Eric Shinseki resigned as VA secretary under pressure in May 2014 amid rising anger over lack of access to care and evidence of several schemes to cover up wait times. Robert McDonald was confirmed as the next secretary in July 2014. Further, a bipartisan reform effort in August 2014, led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and then-Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), allocated \$5 billion in additional funding for the VA medical system and created a path for veterans to seek private care under select circumstances, among other changes. Advocates point to some signs of progress — and many veterans groups had urged Trump to retain McDonald instead of nominating a new VA secretary — but major problems still plague the agency. As of October, there were 3,000 more veterans than there were in 2014 waiting for an appointment at a VA facility for over 125 days, according to a report by the VA's inspector general. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, one of the veterans organizations that urged Trump to reappoint McDonald, applauded Shulkin's selection. "The VFW is proud to support the nomination of Dr. David Shulkin as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and we are most appreciative of his willingness to continue serving veterans and making the VA better," said Brian Duffy, national commander of the VFW. AMVETS, which also pushed Trump to keep McDonald on, said it was "pleasantly surprised" by Shulkin's nomination, given reports that Trump might select a more ideological individual with the goal of privatizing the agency. "In the absence of clarity about who was to lead the VA, we grew more than a little concerned that political considerations might undermine veterans' best interests,"



AMVETS Executive Director Joe Chenelly said in a statement. “But this wise decision by President-elect Trump validates what we’ve long known and said — that the Veterans Health Administration is on the right track despite a prolonged, concerted smear campaign aimed at dismantling and privatizing veterans care. We applaud the transition team’s diligence.” Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America praised Shulkin’s record, but struck a more ambivalent tone, noting his lack of personal experience as a veteran. “We are optimistic about the nomination of Dr. Shulkin by the President-elect. He is well known to us, a man of character and has been a trusted partner of IAVA at VA. However, his selection is unprecedented. Our membership overwhelmingly supported the selection of a veteran for this critical leadership position,” Paul Rieckhoff founder and CEO of IAVA said in a statement. AMVETS’ Chenelly also noted his members’ preference for a veteran, but said he was “heartened by the fact that Dr. Shulkin seems to legitimately ‘get it.’” Concerned Veterans for America, a conservative veterans group founded by the billionaire Koch brothers, avoided judgment in its reaction to Shulkin’s nomination. “It is no secret that the VA has been failing veterans for years,” Concerned Veterans for America Executive Director Mark Lucas said in a statement. “While Shulkin already holds a leadership position at the VA, as Secretary, he will now have ultimate responsibility over the agency and we are hopeful he will take it in a new direction.” Lucas’ remarks are notable for their absence of negativity, given Concerned Veterans for America’s relentless criticism of the federal agency and work advocating the privatization of the VA’s health care system. In an apparent blow to CVA, Trump also decided against naming Pete Hegseth, a former CEO of CVA and current Fox News contributor, to head the VA. Lucas suggested, however, that CVA will continue to push for expanding veterans’ access to private care providers. “CVA will seek to partner with Shulkin on urgently needed reforms, such as empowering veterans to access care outside the VA when the VA is failing them,” Lucas said. Even Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, expressed cautious optimism about Shulkin. “I welcome the opportunity to hear from David Shulkin on how he will continue to work with me on significantly improving the services and benefits we owe our veterans — which all too often our nation has failed to provide. Among Cabinet nominees who lack experience or expertise necessary to run the Departments they have been nominated to lead, David is a welcome exception,” Blumenthal said in a statement

15. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS?

- Military members who died while on active duty or in the Selected Reserve
- Former military members who served on active duty or in the Selected Reserve and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions
- Former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service in the Selected Reserve and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions
- Further clarification on eligibility is available on our [DoD Policy page](#).



Who is NOT eligible for Military Funeral Honors?

- Any person separated from the Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions or whose character of service results in a bar to veteran's benefits
- Any person who was ordered to report to an induction station, but was not actually inducted into military service
- Any person discharged from the Selected Reserve prior to completing one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service for reasons other than a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Any person convicted of a Federal capital crime and whose conviction is final (other than a person whose sentence was commuted by the President)
- Any person who has been convicted of a State capital crime and whose conviction is final (other than a person whose sentence was commuted by the Governor of a State)
- Any person who
 - a. is found to have committed a Federal capital crime or a State capital crime, as set forth in [section 2411\(c\) of title 38](#), but,

- b. has not been convicted of such crime by reason of such person not being available for trial due to death or flight to avoid prosecution

For additional information, refer to [Title 38, United States Code, Section 2411](#) on the Department of Defense policy of this website.

See also paragraph 4.7.4 of Department of Defense Instruction 1300.15 on the [Department of Defense](#) policy of this website.

How do I establish veteran eligibility? The preferred method is to provide the member's DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. If the DD Form 214 is not available, any discharge document showing honorable service can be used. The DD Form 214 may be obtained by completing a Standard Form 180; once the DD Form 214 is received send it to:

National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)
9700 Page Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63132

If requested, the NPRC can provide a Standard Form 180 by mail, or it can be downloaded from the Internet at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

Is anyone else eligible to receive Funeral Honors? Yes, members of the Commissioned Officer Corps of the [Public Health Service \(PHS\)](#) and [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#). Certain Civilian or Contractual Groups who have been given [Active Duty Service Determinations](#) are **eligible as well as National Guard members.**

How is PHS eligibility for Funeral Honors established? For PHS Personnel, Funeral Honors eligibility is established by submitting PHS Form 1867, Statement of Service (equivalent to the DD Form 214). If the family does not have a copy of the Statement of Service, it may be obtained by contacting the Privacy Coordinator for the Commissioned Corps at (240) 453-6041 or by writing:

Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support
Attention: Records Officer
1101 Wootton Parkway
Plaza Level, Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20857

How is NOAA eligibility for Funeral Honors established? For NOAA personnel, eligibility is established by submitting NOAA Form 56-16, Report of Transfer or Discharge. If the family does not have a copy of the NOAA Form 56-16, it may be obtained by contacting the Chief, Officer Services Division, NOAA Commissioned Personnel Center at (301) 713-7715 or by writing:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Commissioned Personnel Center
Chief, Officer Services Division (CPC1)
8403 Colesville Rd.
Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910

How does a family request Funeral Honors for NOAA or PHS decedents? The families of PHS and NOAA decedents request Funeral Honors through their funeral director. The funeral director will contact the applicable points of contact at PHS or NOAA to arrange the Funeral Honors detail. Military Funeral Honors for PHS or NOAA decedents is provided by the Coast Guard.

How is Funeral Honors eligibility for Civilian or Contractual Groups established? By virtue of Public Law (P.L.) 95-202, individuals other than current/former uniformed service members can be considered 'veterans' under Title 38 (which contains the laws administered by the VA). Section 401 of P.L. 95-202 established a process whereby the Secretary of Defense could designate certain groups' service as active duty for the purpose of 'all laws administered by the Veterans' Administration.' These 'Active Duty Designees' would be eligible for Military Funeral Honors.

The Secretary of the Air Force has been delegated the responsibility, under Department of Defense Directive 1000.20., to make determinations under P.L. 95-202. This directive can be found at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/100020p.pdf>. The groups who could be considered for an 'active duty' designation by the Secretary must have rendered service to the Armed Forces of the United States in a capacity considered civilian employment or contractual service at the time the service was rendered.

Section 1491 of Title 10, U.S.C., requires the Secretary of Defense to provide a Funeral Honors detail upon request to any 'veteran.' Section 1491 defines 'veteran' as, among other things, 'a decedent who served in the active military, naval, or air service (as defined in section 101(24) of title 38)... 'Section 101(24), in turn defines the term 'active military, naval, or air service' to include 'active duty.' Since Active Duty Designees have served on 'active duty' for purposes of Title 38, Active Duty Designees would therefore be 'veterans' under title 10, U.S.C. Section 1491 for purposes of receiving Funeral Honors required by that statute.

- 6. BURIAL BENEFITS REQUIRE VETS TO PLAN:** No one likes to think about death, but if a veteran wants to be buried with military rights, or in a national cemetery, pre-planning is a must. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a website which includes information about national cemeteries, preparing in advance, donating burial flags and burial benefits for veterans buried in a private cemetery. To insure eligibility of burial in a VA cemetery, discharge papers are required. Family members should be made aware of where these papers are kept. The discharge papers are also required for burial benefits in a private cemetery. The VA has 131 national cemeteries and those eligible for the benefits are entitled to a gravesite at one of the national cemeteries, providing space is available. Opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate are provided at no cost to the family. Burial benefits are also available for spouses and dependents of the veteran in a national cemetery even if they predecease the veteran, according to the website <http://www.cem.va.gov> (click on Veteran Services, then on burial benefits in the drop-down menu). Family members need to contact a funeral home to assist with making burial arrangements at a national cemetery. To schedule a burial, fax documentation to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-866-900-6417 and follow up with a phone call to 1-800-535-1117. Many VA national cemeteries display an Avenue of Flags on patriotic holidays and during special events. The Avenue of Flags consists of burial flags donated by the families of deceased Veterans and provide a unique visible tribute. Veterans are entitled to burial benefits when buried in a private cemetery including a government headstone or marker, a burial flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for burial allowances.

For more information on eligibility call 1-800-827-1000. Arrangements for military burials in private cemeteries can also be arranged by calling the local VFW or American Legion Post.

7. VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES NOW OFFERING PRE-NEED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced it now provides eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program, upon request, individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery. “MyVA is about looking at VA from the Veterans’ perspective, and then doing everything we can to make the Veteran Experience effective and seamless,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “This new program reaffirms our commitment to providing a lifetime of benefits and services for Veterans and their families.”

Interested individuals may submit VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, and supporting documentation, such as a DD Form 214, if readily available, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by: toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to

Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov; or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151. The VA will review applications and provide written notice of its determination of eligibility. VA will save determinations and supporting documentation in an electronic information system to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need. Because laws and personal circumstances change, upon receipt of a burial request, VA will validate all pre-need determinations in accordance with the laws in effect at that time.

The VA operates 135 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA also provides funding to establish, expand and maintain 105 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. For Veterans buried in private or other cemeteries, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2016, VA honored more than 345,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

Eligible individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery, opening/closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care of the gravesite, and a government-furnished headstone or marker or niche cover, all at no cost to the family. Veterans are also eligible for a burial flag and may be eligible for a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov, or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117. [Pre-Need+Eligibility++Fact+Sheet-Final.docx](#)

8. **TAXES FROM A TO Z: V IS FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS:** Under the Tax Code, income is reportable and taxable unless otherwise excluded. Fortunately, when it comes to veterans' benefits, those paid under any law, regulation, or administrative practice administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are completely excludable. Excludable benefits for veterans includes educational benefits, including education, training, and subsistence allowances. Likewise, benefits under a dependent-care assistance program are not taxable. Excludable benefits for veterans also include compensation and accommodation for disabilities. Specifically, disability compensation and pension payments for disabilities paid either to veterans or their families as well as grants for homes designed for wheelchair living and for motor vehicles for veterans who lost their sight or the use of their limbs are not taxable. Payments made under the compensated work therapy program are similarly excludable. Death benefits for veterans and their families are also excludable. Veterans' insurance proceeds and dividends paid either to veterans or their beneficiaries, including the proceeds of a veteran's endowment policy paid before death are not taxable, as are death gratuities paid to a survivor of a member of the Armed Forces who died after September 10, 2001. Any interest on those insurance dividends you leave on deposit with the VA are also excludable. Finally, any bonus payment by a state or political subdivision because of a veteran's service in a combat zone is tax free. And remember, it's not just benefits paid to veterans that are excludable. As noted above, those veterans' benefits paid to family members are treated the same as those paid to veterans and are tax free. For more information about taxes and the military, check out [IRS Pub 3, Armed Forces' Tax Guide](#) (downloads as a pdf).
9. **TRICARE PUBLICATIONS UPDATE:** DOD has redesigned TRICARE handbooks, brochures, fact sheets and guides to make them more user friendly and visually appealing. To view the updated publications, visit: www.tricare.mil/publications.
10. **REVISIT TO KOREA PROGRAM:** The Revisit Korea program is over for 2016. Over 350 veterans and family members returned to Korea on the ROK government subsidized program that was commenced in 1975. The big change this year was that the Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (MPVA) approved Korea Defense Veterans, and their families, going for the first time. We have been told that the program will continue in 2017. We don't receive the actual quotas and specific dates until after the first of the year. However, the months are usually June, July, September, October and December. These quotas go very fast so it's highly recommended that you submit your registrations ASAP. For more information see: www.KWVA.org or www.miltours.com

11. **THE SAE EDEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA**—The Sae Eden Presbyterian Church is planning an event in Houston, Texas in June 7, 2017. President Thomas Stevens and Past President Larry Kinard will represent the KWVA.

12. **TELL AMERICA PROGRAM:** The Map Poster of the Korean War continues to be requested. The map is available to those participating in the Tell America Program. If you would like maps for your presentations, please contact:
Director Roy Aldridge, Chairman, Tell America Program
6544 Grand Ridge, Dr
El Paso, TX 79912
Phone: 915-581-4725 ~ Email: Royaldridge@sbcglobal.net

13. **VETERANS DAY 2017:** Director Paul Cunningham has been appointed Chair of the Veterans Day 2017 Committee. Other members include Director Whitmore and Executive Director Jim Fisher. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please inform Director Cunningham.
Our urgent interest in this planning lies in the necessity for the Korean War Veterans to prepare for Veterans Day, 2017 when we will be Host VSO.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and agenda items included:

- Review of quotes from caterers for Reception. Polish food items were included in the menu and reflected in the quotes of just under **\$32,000 (this includes all taxes and usage fees)**. This represents the largest single expense.
- Logistics of setting up the reception area to provide informative information regarding the PLAV, membership applications, National Service Director on Benefits available to veterans. Volunteers to “man” the tables, greeters and personnel to check the names of guests against the issued invitations. **(Must meet restrictions and/or rules set by VA) Signage and its display.**
- Invitation Cards for the reception.
- Ordering Lapel Pins for reception attendees and possibly members who will be unable to attend.
- Reception location. Women in Military Service Memorial Building. **RENTAL FEE: \$5,000.00 (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**.
- Determination of Need for a Specific Checking Account for the 2017 Veterans Day Event with the requirement that 2 signatures be required for all checks.
- Hotels and Transportation needs for Departments. Consideration of “Specials” such as tours and monument visitations. Several area lodging sites had been visited and were discussed.
- Seating for the Ceremonies at Arlington Amphitheater and Bus information. Early arrival for PLAV is encouraged because of expected crowds. Amphitheater seating is limited and opens to the public on a “first come-first seated” basis after 8:00A

14. **READING OF THE FALLEN:** The Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation has been conducting a reading the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice during the Korean War. In 2015, all of the American Servicemen who died during the war had their names announced in a very dignified and solemn ceremony. This year all of the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army soldier’s names who were killed had their names read at the Memorial. **On June 25, 2017, The Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation will read all of the fallen from the Allied Countries who came to the aid of South Korea will have their names read at the Memorial.**



15. POW/MIA REPORT: Submitted by Mr. Rocky Harder, KWVA POW/MIA Coordinator. Monthly Teleconference, DPAA-Family Organizations/VSO/MSO

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
Monthly Operations Summary 'Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise'
As of January 12, 2017

Summary: Keeping the families of our missing and engaged Veterans informed is essential to achieving the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) mission. This Operations Summary is intended to provide an overview of past and future efforts to account for our missing and identify the remains of previously buried, but not individually identified US personnel in Fiscal Year 2017 (October 2016 to September 2017).

Overview: There are currently 15 personnel deployed in support of operations around the world.

Like the rest of the US Government, the Department of Defense (DoD) is operating with limited funding under a congressionally mandated "Continuing Resolution (CR)." This has had a significant negative impact on our field operations. Due to the duration of the CR, the incremental funding associated with it, and the anticipated delay to the start of funding reprogramming actions within DoD, DPAA has had to cancel 19 recovery and 17 investigation missions, reducing our planned field operations by 35%. Our current FY17 operations plan consists of 30 investigation teams and 40 recovery teams operating in 20 countries, broken out below by conflict and country. The effort to achieve our goal of identifying the remains of 200 unaccounted-for personnel this year will come primarily from disinterment's of service members buried as Unknowns.

Our planning during December focused on making preparations for Joint Field Activities beginning this month. DPAA has completed its analysis on the operational impacts of the CR and adjusted accordingly. Operations to account for Vietnam War losses are our main operational focus, though missions there have been reduced. DPAA's operations in Europe and the Mediterranean region were impacted as well, and we are adjusting by deploying more investigation teams than recovery teams in that region. The majority of our long-term disinterment projects for this year will be from United States cemeteries in the Philippines, Hawaii and Europe.

Asia-Pacific Region: DPAA recently began missions in the Asia-Pacific region for the 2nd Quarter of FY17 (Jan-Mar 2017). To maintain momentum in Southeast Asia, DPAA deployed two (2) Investigation Teams (IT) and six (6) Recovery Teams (RT) to Laos; however, DPAA leadership directed a number of reductions, and in many cases, the cancelation of missions in other areas of Asia and the South Pacific in order to maximize our ability to work loss sites in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Missions had to be reduced in scope in Vietnam and Cambodia also. DPAA activities in Vietnam will be augmented by Vietnamese counterparts. DPAA will continue to reevaluate planned missions, adjusting the size and scope of field activities as dictated by budgetary constraints, degradation of sites by acidic soil, unexploded ordnance (UXO), increased development activity, and host nation requests.

During the 2nd quarter, DPAA will deploy one IT and one RT to Vietnam, as well as our Field Forensic Review and Joint Forensic Review team. Our Vietnamese counterparts will provide one Research and Investigation Team (RIT) and one Unilateral Investigation Team (UIT).

Overall, the planned number of Investigation Teams (ITs) operating in 1st/2nd quarter in the Asia Pacific area was reduced from 22 to 13, resulting in a loss of nine (9) ITs. Recovery Teams (RTs) were reduced from 29 to 22, resulting in a loss of 7 RTs.

- Within the last 30 days DPAA conducted missions in the following Asia Pacific region countries:
 - o Laos, 1xIT/3xRT
 - o Vietnam, 3xIT/6xRT
 - o Solomon Islands, 2xRT
 - o India, 1xIT
 - o Tarawa, (via History Flight Group, DPAA Partner
 - DPAA planned missions in the 2nd Quarter (January-March):
 - o Tarawa, Field Forensic Review (FFR)
 - o Philippines, Disinterment
 - o Laos, 2xIT/6xRT
 - o Cambodia, Pre Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) in prep for 1xRT 3rd QTR
 - o Palau, 1xIT/1xRT (Tentative, pending USN ship availability)
 - o Vietnam, reduced from 3xIT/5xRT to 2xIT/2xRT 1xRT, 1xURT
 - o Burma, reduced from 1xRT/1xIT to 1xRIT
 - o South Korea, 1xIT
 - DPAA missions cancelled due to Continuing Resolution impacts:
 - o Micronesia, 1xIT
 - o Solomons, 1xIT
 - o India, Outsourced RT
 - o Kirabati, 1xIT
 - o China, 1xIT
 - o Papua New Guinea, 2xRT
 - o Philippines, 1xIT/1xRT
 - o Indonesia, 1xIT
- Europe-Mediterranean Region: Under the current funding arrangement DPAA has sufficient funding to operate at full capacity in the Europe-Mediterranean region through April 17.

- Within the last 30 days DPAA conducted missions in the following Europe Mediterranean Region:
 - o Germany, 1xRT, History Flight Group, DPAA Partner

- DPAA planned operations/meetings for 2nd Quarter (January-March)
 - o United States-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) Tech Talks in Moscow
 - o Germany, History Flight Group, DPAA Partner, World War II Site Closure

- DPAA Missions in the European-Mediterranean Region, 2nd QTR:
 - o Italy/Sicily, 1xIT
 - o France, 1xIT
 - o Germany/Poland, 1xIT
 - o Italy, 1xIT
 - o Netherlands/Germany, 2xRT, History Flight Pilot Program, DPAA Partner

Disinterments:

- o Coordination continues with multiple agencies for the repatriation of unknown remains disinterred from the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) cemetery, in Margraten, Netherlands.
- o 8 scheduled for ABMC Cemeteries (5 in Ardennes, 2 in Sicily, 1 in Tunis)

Scientific Analysis: DPAA laboratories are adequately funded through the 2nd Quarter of FY17. A possible slow-down in identifications is anticipated in second quarter as the senior Medical Examiner assigned to DPAA departs without a replacement on site. The second Medical Examiner provided to DPAA by the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System will continue to validate/authorize identifications in the interim.

- Statistics:
 - o Identifications:
 - o Thirty Five (35) Fiscal Year To Date
 - o 14 in December 2016
 - o Nine (9) from USS Oklahoma
 - o Three (3) from Tarawa
 - o One (1) from Cabanatuan
 - o One (1) from WWII other
 - o Disinterments: 56 FYTD/8 in December 2016



- **Army Sgt. Edward Saunders**, missing from the Korean War, has now been accounted for. On the night of Feb. 11 and 12, 1951, Saunders was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and was attached to the Republic of Korea Army's 16th Regiment to provide support during a planned offensive, when they were attacked by the Chinese People's Volunteer Force (CPVF). Both units retreated east, joining U.S. units at Saemal, South Korea. The regiment continued to fight the CPVF along the withdrawal route to Hoensong. By the end of the battle, only six soldiers remained. It was during this battle that Saunders was reported missing in action. Following the war, one returning American prisoner of war reported that he and Saunders had been captured on Feb. 12, 1951, and that Saunders died sometime in August 1951 in

Koksan, North Korea. Based on this information, the U.S. Army declared him deceased as of Aug. 31, 1951. Between 1990 and 1994, North Korea returned to the United States 208 boxes of commingled human remains, which when combined with remains recovered during joint recovery operations in North Korea, account for the remains of at least 600 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. North Korean documents included in the repatriation indicated that some of the remains were recovered from the area where Saunders was believed to have died. DNA analysis and circumstantial evidence were used in the identification of his remains. Interment services are pending.

- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Eugene J. Colley**, missing from the Korean War, has now been accounted for. In late November, 1950, Colley was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. Approximately 2,500 U.S. and 700 South Korean soldiers assembled into the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT), which was deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when it was engaged by overwhelming numbers of Chinese forces. By Dec. 2, the U.S. Army evacuated approximately 1,500 wounded service members; the remaining soldiers had been either captured or killed in enemy territory. Following the withdrawal, fighting continued. Because Colley could not be accounted for by his unit at the end of the battle, he was reported missing in action as of Dec. 2, 1950. Colley's name did not appear on any prisoner of war lists and no repatriated Americans were able to provide any information concerning Colley as a prisoner of war. Due to the prolonged lack of evidence, the U.S. Army declared him deceased as of Dec. 31, 1953. Although the U.S. Army Graves Registration Service hoped to recover American remains that remained north of the Korean Demilitarized Zone after the war, administrative details between the United Nations Command and North Korea complicated recovery efforts. An agreement was made and in September and October 1954, in what was known as Operation Glory, remains were returned. However, Colley's remains were not included and he was declared non-recoverable. During the 36th Joint Recovery Operation in 2004, recovery teams conducted operations on the eastern bank of the Chosin Reservoir, Changjin County, North Korea, based on information provided a Korean witness. The site was in the vicinity of Twikkae Village. During the excavation, the recovery team recovered possible human remains of at least five individuals. DNA analysis and circumstantial evidence were used in the identification of his remains. Interment services are pending.
- **Army Sgt. James W. Sharp**, missing from the Korean War, has now been accounted for. In late November, 1950, Sharp was a member of Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division. Approximately 2,500 U.S. and 700 South Korean soldiers assembled into the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT), which was deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when it was engaged by overwhelming numbers of Chinese forces. By December 6, the U.S. Army evacuated approximately 1,500 wounded service members; the remaining soldiers had been either captured or killed in enemy territory. Because Sharp could not be accounted for by his unit at the end of the battle, he was reported missing in action as of Dec. 6, 1950. Sharp's name did not appear on any prisoner of war lists and no repatriated Americans were able to provide any information concerning Sharp as a prisoner of war. Due to the prolonged lack of evidence, the U.S. Army declared him deceased as of Feb. 17, 1954. Although the U.S. Army Graves Registration Service hoped to recover American remains that remained north of the Korean Demilitarized Zone after the war, administrative details between the United Nations Command and North Korea complicated recovery efforts. An agreement was made and in September and October 1954, in what was known as Operation Glory, remains were returned. However, Sharp's remains were not included and he was declared non-recoverable. During the 25th Joint Recovery Operation in 2001, recovery teams conducted operations on the eastern bank of the Chosin Reservoir, Changjin County, North Korea, based on information provided by two Korean witnesses. The site was approximately one kilometer from the 31st RCT's defensive perimeter. During the excavation, the recovery team recovered possible human remains of at least seven individuals. DNA analysis and circumstantial evidence were used in the identification of his remains. Interment services are pending.

- **MIA Families Sought:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is seeking families of missing American service members to attend informational update meetings and to collect DNA samples if one is not already on file. Learn more at: <http://www.dpaa.mil/Families/Family-Events/>.



16. POW/MIA FOREVER STAMP: A MESSAGE FROM TOM THIEL ~ KWVA CID169 Sec, Ed, Web, DoF Web, AL#41. 19147 Park Place Blvd, Eustis, FL 32736 [352-408-6612](tel:352-408-6612), kwvathiel@gmail.com

There are more than 83,000 MIAs in all wars starting with WWII to the present. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, More than 7,800 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Korean War. They were our brothers and sisters in arms, and U.S. Citizens. The Korean War and Korea Defense Service Veterans of Lake County, Chapter 169 Inc., has pledged to do all that it can to return all MIAs so that their families may gain some peace. We must do still more to keep the public aware of these 83,000 Missing in Action Americans. A First Class POW/MIA Forever Stamp would surely help us do this, and we want to convince the U.S. Postal Service to issue such a stamp. But the Post Office objects. Fortunately, one of our Korean War brothers, a POW for some 33 months, the late William “Bill” Allen, author of “*My Old Box of Memories*,” had already done a lot of spadework on this effort. But, sadly, Bill was not able to convince the Postal Service. So he went to his Congressman, Gus Bilirakis of Florida's 12th District who in 2013 introduced HR2794, the Perpetual POW/MIA Stamp Act. In December 2015, Mr. Bilirakis reintroduced it as H.R. 3558 with the same name.

I obtained this new information from Congressman Ron DeSantis, of FL 11th District. According to Mr. DeSantis, “This legislation would provide for the issuance of a forever stamp depicting the National League of Families POW/MIA flag to honor members of the Armed Forces who are still prisoners, missing, or unaccounted for.” Mr. DeSantis went on to say”H.R. 3558 has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.” Mr. DeSantis continued “As a member of this committee, I will diligently review this legislation with my colleagues and keep your thoughts in mind should this, or any similar measure, come to the House floor for a vote.” Sadly, our legislation is still buried in the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. We sincerely appreciate all that have contacted their U.S. Representatives on behalf of the original bill. But now you need to do it again—contact your Congress person, our FL representatives on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and leaders of this committee. Please also send this to your Veteran’s Group’s National Level so that this action might be implemented throughout the U.S., not just in Central Florida. Selected addresses follow:

Congressman Gus Bilirakis 2187 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5755; Fax:(202) 225-4085 7132 Little Road New Port Richey, FL 34654 (727) 232-2921; FAX:(727) 232-2923

Congressman John Mica 2187 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-4035; Fax:(202) 226-0821 100 East Sybelia Avenue, Suite 340 Maitland, FL 32751-4495 407-657-8080; Fax: 407-657-5353

Congressman Ron DeSantis 308 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 202-225-2706; Fax: 202-226-6299 1000 City Center Circle Port Orange, FL 32129 386-756-9798; Fax: 386-756-9903
United States House Committee on Oversight & Government Reform

Congressman Jason Chaffetz, Chairman, UT-3 2236 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-7751 51 S University Ave., Suite 318 Provo, UT 84601 Phone: (801) 851-2500

Congressman Elijah Cummings, Ranking Mbr, MD-7 2230 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-4741; Fax: (202) 225-3178, 1010 Park Avenue Suite 105 Baltimore, MD 21201, (410) 685-9199; Fax: (410) 685-9399

17. MESSAGE FROM BRIAN MCKEON FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

As we approach the Presidential transition, Dave Shear and I are writing to provide you a status update on the Department's search for a DPAA Director.

As you know, after Mike Linnington departed DPAA last summer, we sought to identify a suitable replacement by advertising the Director, DPAA position on USAJobs.gov. The several-months hiring process included candidate screening by Washington Headquarters Services and resume reviews and interviews by Dave and I, which resulted in the selection of highly-qualified candidate for the job last fall. That candidate, unfortunately, withdrew from accepting the position, citing personal reasons only weeks before we were prepared to announce the new Director.

Subsequently, after canvassing the Department of Defense for internal candidates, we have now decided to re-advertise the job on USAJobs.gov in the coming weeks. On this new timeline, we now expect that the Department will be able to identify a DPAA successor this spring.

Dave and I are disappointed that a permanent successor to Mike Linnington has yet to be appointed, particularly as we both end our government service this week. But we believe that holding an open competition to hire a DPAA Director provides the best opportunity to fill the position with a candidate who has a reputation of exceptional service and who has successfully led large and diverse organizations. While the Department completes this process, we continue to have the utmost confidence in Fern Sumpter Winbush, who has agreed to continue to ably perform the duties of DPAA Director until a permanent Director is identified.

It has been Dave's and my honor to oversee the DPAA mission -- one that is critically important to the Department, and to our Country. While we recognize this news may not be welcome, we believe that this course of action best provides DPAA the opportunity to succeed for years to come, and we felt a responsibility to communicate our reasoning to you.

Thank you for your continued support to DPAA.

18. NEWS FROM THE KOREAN PENINSULAR: TOKYO -- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hinted Sunday that Pyongyang may ring in the new year with another bang - the test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. In his annual New Year's address, Kim said that after testing what the North claims was its first hydrogen bomb last year, preparations for launching an intercontinental ballistic missile have "reached the final stage" Kim did not explicitly say an ICBM test, which if successful would be a big step forward for the North, was imminent. But he has a birthday coming up on Jan. 8, and last year Pyongyang conducted a nuclear test on Jan. 6. Kim threatened in the address to boost his country's military capabilities further unless the U.S. ends war games with rival South Korea. But he also said efforts must be made to defuse the possibility of another Korean war and stressed the importance of building the economy under a five-year plan announced in May.

"The political and military position of socialism should be further cemented as an invincible fortress," Kim said, according to an outline of the speech carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency. "We should resolutely smash the enemies' despicable and vicious moves to dampen the pure and ardent desire of the people for the party and estrange the people from it."

The address was shown on television mixing video with Kim speaking and stretches of audio only, as still photos were broadcast. It was less than 30 minutes long. South Korea's Unification Ministry said in a statement that it "strongly condemns" Kim's threat to proceed with a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile and strengthen North Korea's nuclear-strike capabilities. It said that the international community will not tolerate North Korean efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that the North will only face tougher sanctions and pressure if it continues to go down that path. Under Kim, who rose to power following his father's death in



2011, North Korea has seen steady progress in its nuclear and missile programs, including two nuclear tests in 2016. It recently claimed a series of technical breakthroughs in its goal of developing a long-range nuclear missile capable of reaching the continental United States. U.N. resolutions call for an end to North Korea's nuclear and missile tests. Kim appears uninterested in complying. The year ahead could be a tumultuous one in north Asia, with Donald Trump set to become the new U.S. president on Jan. 20, and South Korea's politics in disarray over a scandal that brought the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. Kim indicated there will be no change in the North's nuclear policy unless Washington makes a big, conciliatory first move, which, even with the advent of Trump, would seem unlikely.

Trump has somewhat offhandedly suggested he would be willing to meet with Kim - but not in North Korea - and has at the same time indicated that he wants China to exert significantly more control over Pyongyang to get it to abandon its nuclear program. Demands from Pyongyang for the U.S. to stop its joint military exercises with the South and enter into negotiations to sign a peace treaty formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War have fallen on deaf ears in Washington for years amid an atmosphere of distrust and deepening hostility. Kim is in his early 30s and is now in his fifth year as the North's leader. His New Year addresses, and a marathon speech at the May ruling party congress, are a contrast with his enigmatic father, Kim Jong Il, who rarely spoke in public. But he has yet to meet a foreign head of state or travel outside of North Korea since assuming power, and remains one the world's most mysterious national leaders.

- **PENTAGON CONDEMNS NORTH KOREA AFTER CLAIM IT WILL TEST MISSILE THAT CAN REACH US:** Washington warns Pyongyang against 'provocative actions' after regime announces it will test an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea is close to test-launching an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads, Kim Jong-un announced during a televised New Year's address from Pyongyang. Photograph: KCNA/EPA. The United States on Sunday sharply condemned North Korea's claims it will test-fire an intercontinental ballistic missile and warned Pyongyang against "provocative actions." The toughly worded US statement called on "all states" to show the North that any unlawful actions would have "consequences." It was issued by the Pentagon at a sensitive time – just weeks before President Barack Obama is due to hand power over to his successor, Donald Trump. The statement came hours after Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, said his country was close to testing such a missile, which would be capable of reaching American shores. "We are in the final stages of test-launching the intercontinental ballistic missile," Kim said in a televised New Year's speech, pointing to a string of nuclear and missile tests last year. He said Pyongyang was now a "military power of the East that cannot be touched by even the strongest enemy." The Pentagon statement noted that "multiple UN Security Council resolutions explicitly prohibit North Korea's launches using ballistic missile technology." It urged Pyongyang to "refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric that threaten international peace and stability." The statement reaffirmed Washington's "ironclad commitment" to defend its allies, using "the full spectrum of US extended deterrence capabilities." Pyongyang

has never successfully test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and analysts are divided over how close it is to doing so. But all agree it has made enormous strides in that direction since Kim took over as leader from his father Kim Jong-Il, who died in December 2011.

- **N. KOREA WARNS IT CAN LAUNCH ICBM ‘ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE’**

By KIM GAMEL | STARS AND STRIPES Published: January 9, 2017

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned it can launch an intercontinental ballistic missile “anytime and anywhere,” the latest salvo in a war of words over the communist state’s nuclear-weapons program.

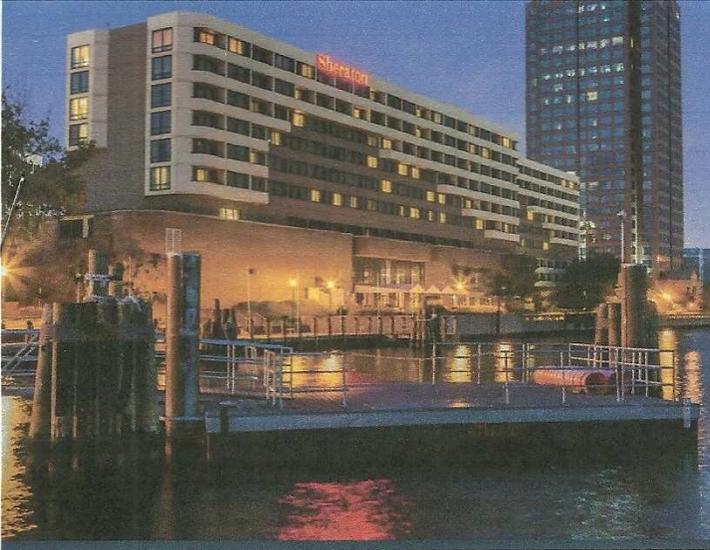
The statement, carried Sunday on the state-run Korean Central News Agency, came a week after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said preparations to test an ICBM have “reached the final stage.”

That prompted U.S. President-elect Donald Trump to respond by tweeting: “It won’t happen!”

KCNA, quoting a spokesman for North Korea’s Foreign Ministry, stepped up the threat.

“The ICBM will be launched anytime and anywhere determined by the supreme headquarters of [North Korea],” the news agency reported. It didn’t mention Trump by name but appeared to allude to his incoming administration, which has yet to issue a clear policy on dealing with the communist foe. “Anyone who wants to deal with [North Korea] would be well advised to secure a new way of thinking after having clear understanding of it,” KCNA said. The message blamed the U.S. for antagonizing Pyongyang and forcing it to develop the long-range weapon in what it insists is self-defense. It also denounced remarks by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who said North Korea has shown a “qualitative improvement in their capabilities” and vowed that Washington would maintain sustained pressure and sanctions against the country. It’s unclear how close the North is to achieving its goal of developing a nuclear-tipped ICBM that could reach the U.S. mainland. Experts have said Pyongyang could have one ready as early as 2020, but so far has displayed such a missile only during military parades and has not yet flight-tested one. The country also has demonstrated clear technical progress with an unprecedented number of ballistic missile tests and two underground nuclear explosions last year. U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter promised to shoot down any missiles that threaten the U.S. or its allies, although he stressed that would not include missiles test-fired into the sea. “We only ... would shoot them down, and that is use an interceptive for that purpose, if it was threatening. That is, if it were coming towards our territory or the territory of our friends and allies,” he said in an interview this weekend on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” South Korea’s Ministry of National Defense said Monday it is closely monitoring the possible launch of road-mobile KN-08 or KN-14 missiles. It also warned the North would face retaliation and harsher sanctions for any provocation. So far a series of toughened U.N. and other international sanctions have failed to curb the isolated country’s nuclear ambitions. South Korea’s Unification Ministry, which oversees inter-Korean affairs, called the warning an effort to persuade the U.S. to change its longstanding policies in dealing with the North, which rely heavily on sanctions and diplomatic pressure. It seems to have been put out as a means of pressure on the U.S. We see they have the intention of changing U.S. attitudes (toward Pyongyang) ... and an intention to shift the blame on others when they stage future launches,” ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee told a media briefing. Meanwhile, a high-profile North Korean defector said the regime hopes to complete development of an ICBM by the end of this year or early 2018. “North Korea has set the goal of developing miniaturized nuclear weapons that can fit atop a missile capable of reaching the U.S. by the end of 2017 or early 2018 as it takes into account political transitions in South Korea and the U.S.,” Thae Yong-ho told the Yonhap news agency. Thae, the former North Korean deputy ambassador to London who defected to the South last summer, also said the threat of a launch appeared to be a negotiating tactic. “Whether North Korea test-fires an ICBM this year ... will depend on Seoul and Washington’s response to this issue,” he was quoted as saying in the interview Sunday.

19. 2017 KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Sheraton[®]
NORFOLK WATERSIDE HOTEL

The Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel looks forward to welcoming the Korean War Veterans Association!

DATES

October 4th – 8th, 2017 Rates available (3) days pre and post subject to hotel availability

BOOKING LINK

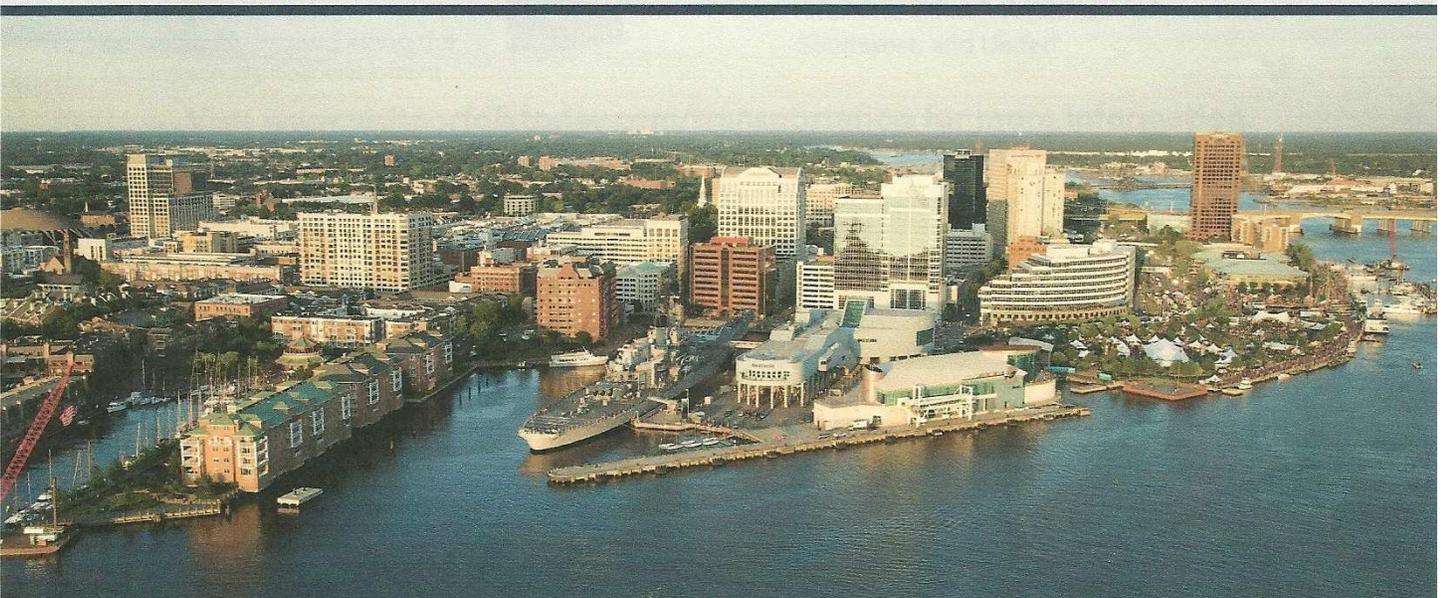
<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/KWWA2017> or call 1-800-325-3535 and ask for the Korean War Veterans Association

RATES

Standard room at \$104.00 plus tax, Balcony room at \$114.00 plus tax, Club Level king at \$134.00 plus tax. Choice of two queen size beds or one king size bed, harbor view or city view. Club level rooms include access to complimentary continental breakfast and evening hors d'oeuvres.

LOCATION

Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, VA 23510 www.sheraton.com/norfolk (757) 622-6664.



20. **HONOR FLIGHTS:** Honor Flights for the remainder of the year have not been scheduled to the unpredictable weather in Washington, D.C. Honor Flights will resume starting in April 2017.

21. **RESCHEDULED: KWVMF FUND RAISING GALAS:** A Gala Benefit is scheduled for, July 27, 2017, at the Sheila Hotel, Seoul, Korea to raise money for the maintenance program at the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Wall of Remembrance in Washington, D.C.

22. **Changjin (CHOSIN FEW) MEMORIAL DEDICATION** at Quantico Marine Corps Base (Museum) will likely be dedicated in April of 2017. More information to follow as it is given to us.

23. **NEW MEMORIAL PROPOSED FOR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY:**

Upper Monument Dimensions:

36" x 10" x 72" (revised 7-7-15)

Monument Base Dimensions:

52" x 18" x 8"

Morse Code (height): 1/2"

Letter Size (height):

Line 1 : 2"

Lines 2, 3, 4, 5: 1"

Line 6: 1-1/2"

Emblem Dimensions:

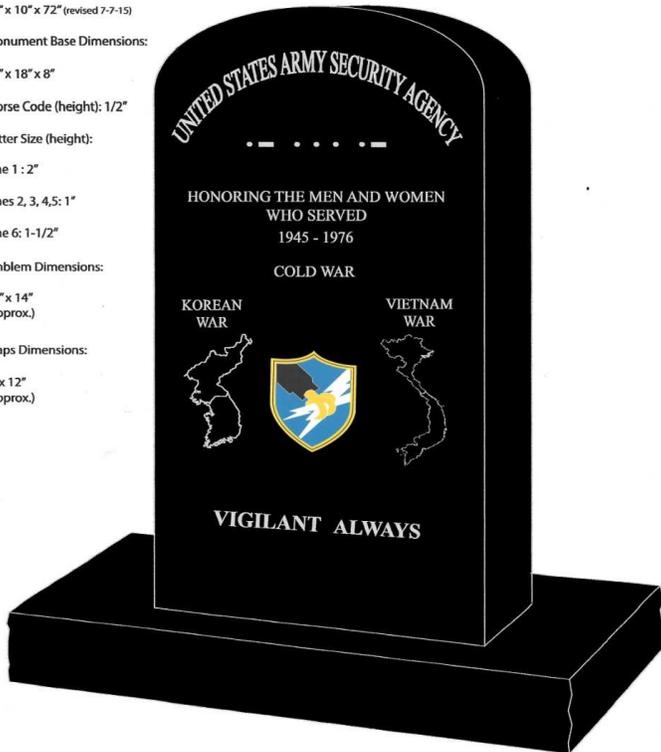
10" x 14"
(approx.)

Maps Dimensions:

6" x 12"
(approx.)

Note for Colors:

White areas are recessed



Upper Monument Dimensions:

36" x 10" x 72"

Monument Base Dimensions:

52" x 18" x 8"

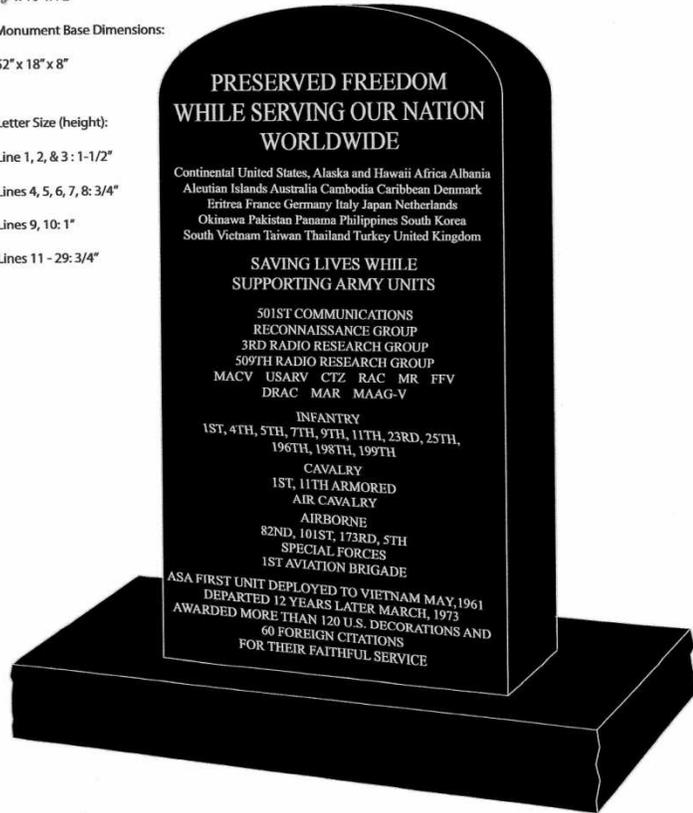
Letter Size (height):

Line 1, 2, & 3 : 1-1/2"

Lines 4, 5, 6, 7, 8: 3/4"

Lines 9, 10: 1"

Lines 11 - 29: 3/4"

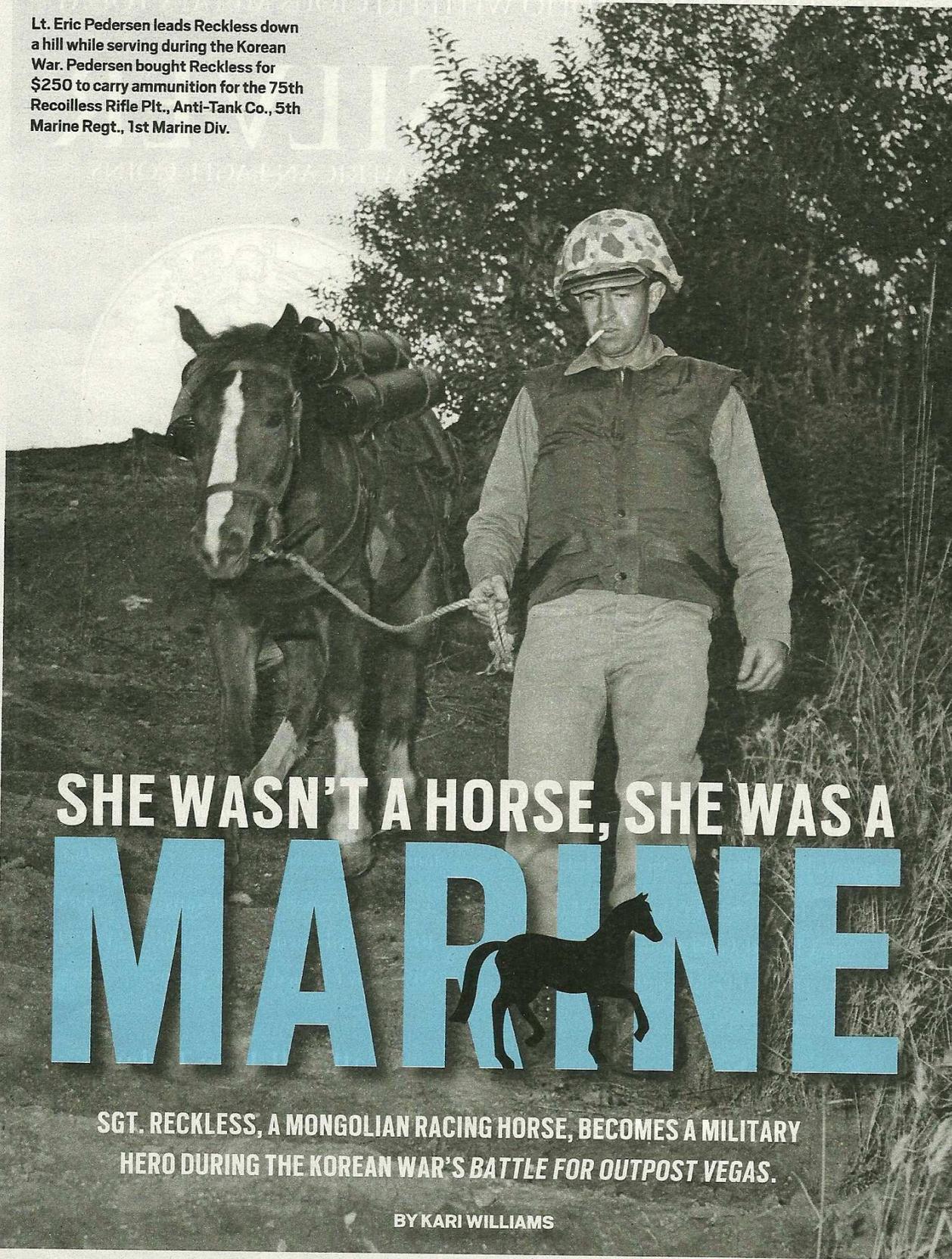


24.

THE STORY OF "RECKLESS" THE HORSE

Lt. Eric Pedersen leads Reckless down a hill while serving during the Korean War. Pedersen bought Reckless for \$250 to carry ammunition for the 75th Recoilless Rifle Plt., Anti-Tank Co., 5th Marine Regt., 1st Marine Div.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPT ARCHIVES



SHE WASN'T A HORSE, SHE WAS A MARINE

SGT. RECKLESS, A MONGOLIAN RACING HORSE, BECOMES A MILITARY HERO DURING THE KOREAN WAR'S BATTLE FOR OUTPOST VEGAS.

BY KARI WILLIAMS

She was a beer-drinking, scrambled-egg loving Marine who saved countless lives.

She earned two Purple Hearts, a National Defense Service Medal and Navy Unit Commendation, among other honors. But before that, she had to complete 'hoof camp.'

Reckless, a Mongolian racing horse, left her potential life on the racetrack to carry ammunition and wounded Marines to and from battlefields during the Korean War with the 75th Recoilless Rifle Plt., Anti-Tank Co., 5th Marine Regt., 1st Marine Div.

Robin Hutton, who authored *Sgt. Reckless: America's War Horse*, said Lt. Eric Pedersen, of the 75th Recoilless Rifle Pltn., "saw the need to get a pack animal of some kind" to carry ammunition across the rough terrain. After receiving permission, Pedersen visited a race track in Seoul, Korea, where he bought Reckless, then named Ah-Chim-Hai, for \$250 from a man who sold her to "buy an artificial leg for his sister who lost hers in a land-mine accident."

"They brought her back to camp on Oct. 26, 1952, and she became a Marine that day," Hutton said.

They changed her name to Reckless, representing the recoilless rifle the unit used.

"That was also the attitude you had to have to be associated with that weapon because it was a very dangerous weapon," Hutton said. "The back blast could really injure or kill someone."

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

Reckless' time in "hoof camp," according to Hutton, consisted of learning how to run for her bunker and get in and out of a trailer. Tech. Sgt. Joe Latham, who worked with horses extensively in the past, trained her.

"She got so good at her commands that Joe Latham could use hand signals and tell her what to do," Hutton said. "It was really quite amazing how she just trusted them and built this great bond with them."

Latham, according to Hutton's book, taught the Mongolian race horse to "lie down, even kneel, in case there was no cover and she needed to crawl into a shallow bunker for protection from incoming fire."

Reckless' first mission was in November 1952 at the firing line known as "Hedy's Crotch," a valley "between outposts Ingrid to the south and Hedy to the north, in the center sector of the Jamestown Line."

"They weren't sure how she was going to react to it," Hutton said. "She got through it because she trusted her men."

She also participated in *Raid Tex* in January 1953 and *Operation Charlie* in February. But it was the *Battle for Outpost Vegas*, a five-day battle in March 1953, that earned Reckless two Purple Hearts.

The battle for the area known as the "Iron Triangle" — with outposts Vegas, Reno and Carson — ran from



Tech Sgt. Joe Latham (pictured) put Reckless through 'hoof camp' in preparation for her active-duty service. Latham, who worked with horses in the past, taught the Mongolian racing horse how to run for her bunker and get in and out of a trailer.

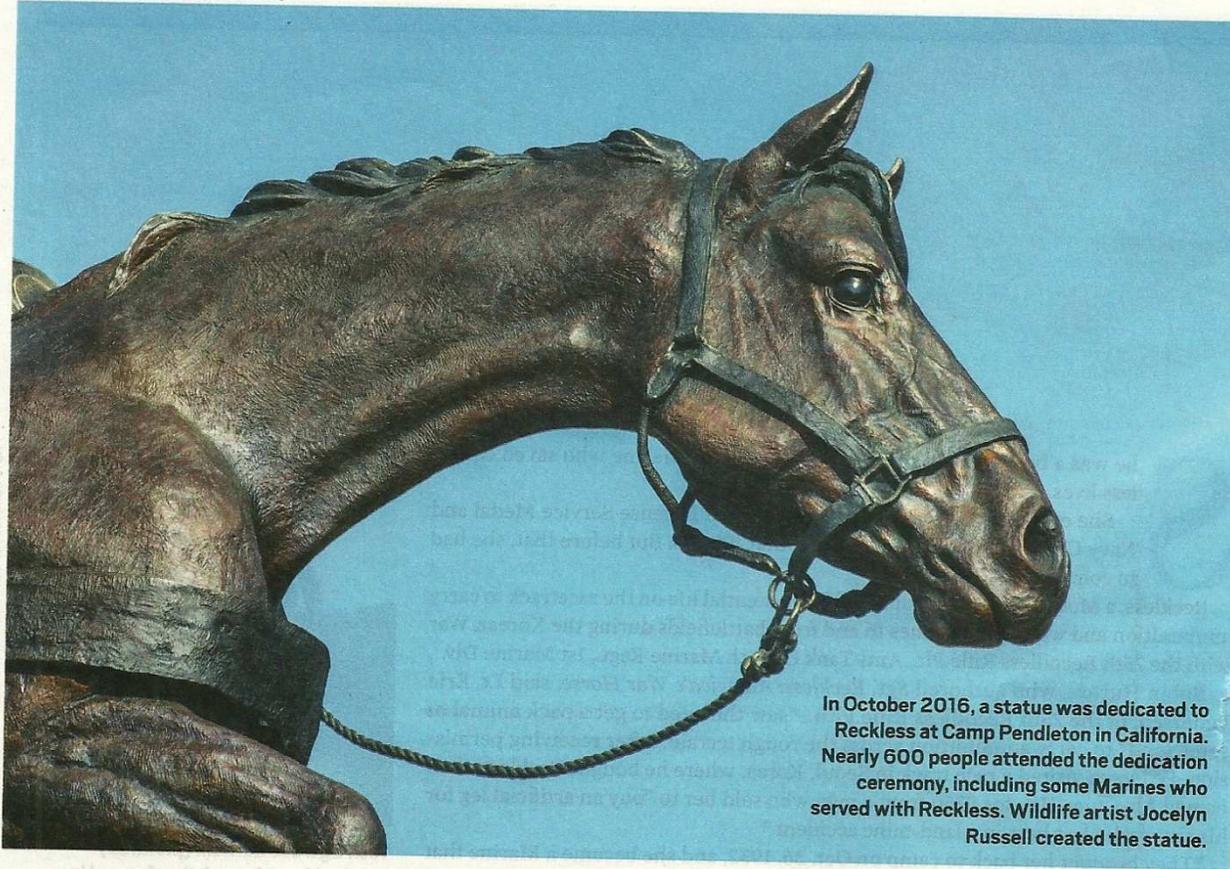


Off the battlefield, Reckless was known for her antics, such as drinking beer, eating in the mezz tent with her fellow Marines and more. She also enjoyed Hershey's bars, scrambled eggs and candy.


Reckless received two promotions, one in 1957 and the next in 1959.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMP PENDELTON ARCHIVES

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMP PENDELTON ARCHIVES



In October 2016, a statue was dedicated to Reckless at Camp Pendleton in California. Nearly 600 people attended the dedication ceremony, including some Marines who served with Reckless. Wildlife artist Jocelyn Russell created the statue.

March 26-30, with casualties upwards of 1,000.

Reckless' job was to carry ammunition, and, according to Hutton, she transported the equivalent of what three to four Marines could carry. Reckless carried six to eight rounds — “sometimes even 10 if it required that.” Each round weighed 24 pounds.

Harold Wadley, who served with Able Co., 1st Marines, from 1952 to 1953 as a demolition specialist, reinforced the point. He was involved in the *Battle for Outpost Vegas* with Reckless as part of the assault force to retake Reno and Vegas.

“She was worth a dozen ammo carriers,” Wadley said.

Hutton wrote that Reckless “knew what she had to do” as Latham and Pvt. Monroe Coleman initially guided her.

“As she tackled the hill, the canisters bounced perilously; with all that extra weight strapped to her back, Latham feared the bindings would give way,” Hutton wrote. “Reckless clambered up the abrupt 45-degree incline, struggling to maintain her balance and fight gravity, but she made it to the top of the ridge and then navigated her way along 250 feet of twisting trail to get to the gun sites.”

Wadley heard rumors about Reckless before the *Battle for Outpost Vegas* that caused some to “wonder if that’s just pure scuttlebutt.” But he also saw her from a distance while on patrol.

In the preface to Hutton’s book, Wadley wrote that Reckless was “a critical lifeline to the guns firing in support of us.”

“When I looked back toward the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) from the lower finger of Outpost Reno the night of March 27, I could hardly believe my eyes,” Wadley wrote. “There she was, Reckless, barely visible in the flare light, like the ghost of a horse packing 75s up to the guns. She faded in and out of sight and was gone as we continued with the stretchers.”

Mortar shells were “falling like raindrops,” Hutton said.

“500 rounds [per] minute were coming in,” Hutton said. “There was so much incoming and outgoing fire, it couldn’t be traced on the radar.”

Reckless was “in the middle of all this chaos,” Hutton said. In one day, she made 51 trips, walking more than 35 miles — sometimes without a guide — “through open rice paddies and steep hills in view of the enemy” with six to eight loads per trip.

“[It was] over 9,000 pounds of ammunition that she carried, which is crazy,” Hutton said. “[But she] never balked. Never stopped. She was wounded twice by falling shrapnel.”

She also carried wounded off the battlefield, Hutton said.

In Hutton’s book, Wadley told of watching the Mongolian race horse take her fellow Marines to safety.

“They would tie a wounded Marine across her packsaddle and she would carry them out of there with all of this artillery and mortars coming in,” Wadley stated. “The guys down at the



Robin Hutton received two certificates of appreciation from VFW for her work in keeping Reckless' memory alive.

bottom would unload the wounded off of her and tie gun ammo on her and she would turn around right on her own and head right back up to the guns.”

What is “implanted” in Wadley’s memory is a night where flares were fired for light, and the way the flares swung, he said it looked “like a mirage at times.”

“There on the skyline was a horse loaded down pretty heavy... Boy, I thought, ‘She’s not going to live through this.’ Thank the Lord, she did,” Wadley said.

‘SHE LOVED HER BEER’

Reckless’s appetite was legendary, and ran the gamut from Hershey’s bars to apple pie.

“It was really funny,” Hutton said. “She loved her beer, of course. And she loved eating in the mess tent with the guys.”

Hutton confirmed as such in *Sgt. Reckless*, writing that the war horse’s diet was “surprisingly varied.”

“Naturally, her favorite stop was the galley tent,” Hutton wrote. “One morning, new recruit Pfc. Billy Jones offered to share his scrambled eggs with Reckless. She shocked the young Marine by not only scarfing down all the eggs, but then washing them down with coffee.”

Reckless earned her first taste of alcohol after a firing mission around Christmastime.

“[Reckless] walked into the tent there and the guys in jest said, ‘Hey Reckless, how about a beer?’ and she ponied up to the bar and she drank a beer.”

But the most unusual items she tried to eat were an ammo clip — Hutton said it “loosened up her teeth” — and an Australian bush hat. Members of Australia’s military were “so impressed with her,” that they gave Reckless the hat as a gift.

“She hated the hat,” Hutton said. “She looked ridiculous in it. It tickled her ears ... One night, she ate it because she didn’t want to wear it anymore.”

Mike Mason, who served with Reckless from 1953-54 and is a trustee at VFW Post 2916 in Baltimore, said he met Reckless about four to five months after arriving in Korea. His first impression was that she was a “very gentle horse.” Having not served in battle with Reckless, Mason saw her humorous side, such as coming into his eight-man tent to wake the corporal for food. If he didn’t wake up, Mason said, Reckless would pull off the blanket with her teeth.

In another instance, Mason said there was a “ruckus” outside around dinner time and they thought North Koreans had “decided to come get us.” In reality, mess hall cooks were shooting Reckless away from pies that were cooling.

“They had to know where she was at before they could put anything out to cool,” Mason said.

Reckless, according to Mason, was comfortable around the Marines.

“She adapted to the Marines like we were one of her and she was one of us,” Mason said.

John Newsom, who served with Reckless and is a member of VFW Post 1985 in Woodland, Calif., said the war horse would come into their camps and eat their food. He served with her for one year and said she was “a great asset.”

“I feel toward [my dog] like I felt toward Reckless,” Newsom said. “She was ours — our baby, our pet.”

‘LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT’

Once the Korean War ended, Reckless was brought stateside to Camp Pendleton, in southern California, where Pedersen lives. Hutton said Reckless lived at Pedersen’s ranch for about a year until she was moved to the Marine Corps base. She resided there until her death in 1968.

In October 2016, a statue honoring the war horse was unveiled on base. Debbie McCain, a clerk at Camp Pendleton, said the ceremony was “absolutely gorgeous.”

“There are a lot of dedication ceremonies, but this one was really special because of who it was dedicated to,” McCain said.

McCain has known of Reckless since 1954, thanks to her father, who served during the Korean War. She met Reckless shortly after moving to California in the late 1950s.

“It was love at first sight,” McCain said. “Little girls, we all love horses... She let us all brush her and love on her and feed her carrots. She would eat anything that you had. So if you didn’t share your lunch with her, she would pester you to death.”

But what she liked so much about Reckless was that she was “almost human.”

“She could recognize people,” McCain said. “She would see me coming from the parking lot, whinny at me and come up to the fence knowing that I had something for her, which I always did.”



Two statues honoring Reckless already exist, the first at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and the other at Camp Pendleton. A third will be located at Yeoncheon, South Korea.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEATHERNECK MAGAZINE

Tech. Sgt. Joe Latham, who put Reckless through ‘hoof camp,’ demonstrates how he has taught the Mongolian racing horse to step over wire.



Naval Hospital Corpsman Sam Saba, the Marine 1st Provisional Demilitarized Zone Police Company corpsman, poses with then-Corporal Reckless at Camp Semper Fidelis. Camp Semper Fidelis was built in September 1953, according to Hutton, to house the 1st Provisional DMZ Police Co. after the armistice was signed in July 1953.

LARGER THAN LIFE PROJECT

Wildlife artist Jocelyn Russell, who is based on the San Juan Islands off the Washington state coast, created the original statue at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., and the more recent addition at Camp Pendleton.

Hutton initially contacted Russell in 2011.

Bob Rogers, a patron of one of Russell's art shows in Tulsa, Okla., served with Reckless. Russell said Hutton reached out to Rogers about working with Reckless and told him she was interested in having a monument created.

Before Hutton contacted her, Russell said, he had not heard of Reckless. Russell said she was hesitant at first to take on the project, but horses have always been her first love.

"[Robin] wanted to sell a monument project, but couldn't approach donors without having a concept," Russell said.

Therefore, Russell created a pose and Team Reckless was formed among Russell, Hutton, Wadley and Rogers. Russell was willing to take a chance on a "larger than life project."

The artist said she appreciated Reckless' "impish side" and the fact that she could be naughty, "yet get down to business."

"I found her very endearing," Russell said.

The first statue was installed at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, in Triangle, Va., in 2013. The Camp Pendleton

project was a four-month process, but the initial project took two years, according to Russell.

Russell said the most challenging aspect of the project was replicating the tack and ammunition that Reckless carried.

Hutton said Russell's work is "so incredible that you feel this horse moving."

The ceremony, at which Hutton spoke, exceeded her expectations, and nearly 600 people attended.

"It was breathtaking for me," Hutton said. "It was just that moment of honor."

A third monument also is in the works in Yeoncheon, South Korea, for Chairman Park of Marine House USA, according to Russell. The organization provides outreach, networking and philanthropic aid to Marines and their families,

according to the organization's website.

Representatives took Russell and Hutton to South Korea in May to visit the site of a new museum, which will house the monument.

McCain said Marines stand by the saying, "No Marine Left Behind," and Reckless never left anyone behind.

"If it hadn't been for that little horse there would not be some of the generations of Marines and families here today," McCain said.



EMAIL kwilliams@vfw.org

25.

PRAYER LIST:

- Mrs. Virginia Edwards (Sonny's wife) – remission from cancer and Hip Replacement
- COL Bill Weber – Fitting of new prosthesis
- Director George Bruzgis – Operation on his legs – Circulation problems

It is an honor to work with each of you and I hope we continue to look forward to continuing our progress in the New Year.

Respectfully submitted,

James R. Fisher

James R. Fisher
National Executive Director
Korean War Veterans Association, USA