

VETERANS BULLETIN

LEXINGTON + SARATOGA + YORKTOWN
BARBARY WARS + LAKE ERIE + NEW ORLEANS
MONTEREY + VERA CRUZ + BULL RUN + SHILOH
ANTIETAM + CHANCELLORSVILLE + GETTYSBURG
INDIAN WARS + SANTIAGO + MANILA
BELLEAU WOOD + MEUSE - ARGONNE + MIDWAY
GUADALCANAL + ANZIO + BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC
NORMANDY + ARDENNES - ALSACE + IWO JIMA
BERLIN AIR LIFT + PUSAN + INCHON + SEOUL
GULF OF TONKIN + ROLLING THUNDER + DAK TO
KHE SANH + TET OFFENSIVE + COLD WAR
GRENADA + PANAMA + GULF WAR I + BOSNIA
SOMALIA + KOSOVO + TORA BORA + KANDAHAR
FALLUJAH + SADR CITY + BASRA

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

Veterans Day



November 11, 2010



Georgia Department of Veterans Service
VETERANS BULLETIN
November 2010

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Welcome to the digital edition of the *Georgia Veterans Bulletin*.

By bringing the *Bulletin* to you online, the Georgia Department of Veterans Service is saving valuable budget dollars, a necessary choice given our state's current fiscal status.

Remember, every hypertext link in this document is clickable.

Wherever you see a website address, such as www.va.gov, you can click on the link and be taken to that site.

We would like to encourage you to subscribe to our news feed via RSS. You may do so here:

http://sdvs.georgia.gov/rss/sdvs_press_releases.xml

Whenever a new *Bulletin* is published, whenever the Department issues any news release, you will be among the first to know.

Please take a moment to complete a brief survey that measures your views about our quality of service. Your feedback is important and will help us continue to improve and provide the highest customer service standards our veterans deserve:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/287DY2S>

As always, thank you for your service to our country and do not hesitate to call upon us.



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Georgia Veterans Bulletin

The *Georgia Veterans Bulletin* is published by the Georgia Department of Veterans Service, Public Information Division, Floyd Veterans Memorial Building, Room E-970, Atlanta, GA 30334-4800.

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Dan Holtz	Assistant Commissioner, Administration, Health & Memorials
Heldon (Bill) Jung	Director, Veterans Education & Training
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Commissioner's Message



I am honored to take this opportunity to wave the flag, express my patriotism and pride in America, and say “THANK YOU” to America’s men and women who served in our nation’s military.

In 1954, at the urging of many Americans, Congress passed a law renaming Armistice Day, November 11, as Veterans Day. It was felt that it was more appropriate to set aside one day in the year to honor not only the veterans of World War I, but the veterans of all wars of this nation.

Thus it is that on this annual occasion we recall the valor, the bravery, and the sacrifice of those who served to defend and, at times, fight for freedom and liberty.

There are now a little over 23 million veterans nationwide, more than 772 thousand residing in Georgia and hundreds of thousand young men and women serving in today’s U.S. Armed Forces.

Veterans Day – that special day of the year we gather together to honor, “salute,” and acknowledge every patriotic man and woman who has ever worn the uniform of our Armed Forces.

It could be someone in your own family, a friend, a neighbor, or even yourself. All have faced the greatest test that can be applied to American citizenship; the test of being willing to risk one’s life to defend this country’s freedom and liberties. Every man and woman who has donned the military uniform and served with honor has passed this test of citizenship.

Veterans Day gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect how blessed we are in the United States of America. We should take the opportunity to recall at what cost.

Many have suffered the shock and pain of combat. Some have become disabled for life; many have made the ultimate sacrifice. All who served have giving up some of the best years of their life. Why did they do it?

Simply because there was a “job” to be done and they were the ones “called” to do it. What was the result of their sacrifice? Simply this: America’s freedoms and liberties remain ours to control.

If we value anything more than freedom, we will lose our freedom. If we value comfort and money more, we will lose that too.

We may be uncertain about many things in America today but we should have no reason to be uncertain about the respect and honor we owe to those who have served in this nation’s Armed Forces.

We must always remember that America is #1,
THANKS TO OUR VETERANS!

PETE WHEELER
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Veterans Service

On a special note: To Those young Americans in uniform today here and around the globe, “Godspeed,” our prayers and our sincere wishes for your safe return home go out to you.



The Honorable Sonny Perdue cordially invites you to attend the

State of Georgia's

Veterans Day Proclamation Signing Ceremony

Thursday, October 28th, 2010

9:30 a.m.

Georgia State Capitol

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend

The State Of Georgia



**Department of Veterans Service
and the
State Board of Veterans Service**

award this

**Certificate Of Appreciation
to**

**Georgia's 773,000-plus veterans
and their families**

Thank You!



*Pete Wheeler, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Veterans Service*



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

TO

The Employees of
The Georgia Department of Veterans Service

For outstanding contributions to the betterment of our state through faithful and dedicated
service to Georgia's veterans.

Ed F. Holcombe

CHIEF OF STAFF

Sonny Perdue

GOVERNOR

Recent Events



LEFT: The staff of Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville was honored as for Team Excellence during the 2010 Governor's Customer Service Awards.



RIGHT: Commissioner Wheeler participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the dedication of the pedestrian bridge connecting VAMC-Atlanta with VARO-Atlanta.



ABOVE, RIGHT: The annual "Play it Again, Pete" Charity Golf Tournament, sponsored by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, raised money for homeless veterans.



Taiwan Veterans Affairs Commission Visit



Taiwan Veterans Affairs Commission Visit



中華民國國軍退除役官兵輔導委員會

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U.S.A.

September 10, 2010



Dear Commissioner Wheeler,

Greetings from Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) in Taiwan. This is to express our profound appreciation for your assistance and hospitality when we paid a visit to your esteemed Commission.

The 62 years of your services have not only spoken a great lot of veterans benefits provided in the great State of Georgia, but also revealed to the Georgians the sweat and toil you have personally contributed to Georgia. For that we as veterans of the Republic of China in Taiwan also salute you with all our hearts.

We wish you all the best,

Sincerely yours,

General Tseng, Jing-ling (Ret.)
Minister

Headlines Of Interest To GA Veterans

VA Video Outreach Message Aimed at New Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching a new television advertisement encouraging Veterans to take full advantage of the VA benefits and services they have earned. The ad is one step in a robust outreach effort aimed at welcoming returning Servicemembers and easing their transition from military to Veteran status.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1981>

Secretary Shinseki Announces \$41.9 Million to Help the Homeless

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has announced that 40 states will share more than \$41.9 million in grants to community groups to provide 2,568 beds for homeless Veterans this year.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1977>

VA Publishes Final Regulation on “Presumptive” Illnesses for Gulf War and Iraq, Afghanistan

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register that makes it easier for Veterans to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in Southwest Asia (including Iraq) or Afghanistan.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1974>

VA Improving Veterans’ Access to Health and Benefits Information

The Department of Veterans Affairs is launching a multi-year initiative called Veterans Relationship Management (VRM) that will greatly improve Veterans’ access to health care and benefits information.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1972>

VA Continues to Ensure and Protect Servicemembers’, Survivors’ Life Insurance Benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reviewed the account administered by Prudential that includes Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans’ Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs to ensure beneficiaries are protected, being treated fairly, and accorded the utmost care and respect. VA is also ensuring that benefits are delivered in a transparent way that clearly outlines all available options.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1956>

VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation that will be published on August 31, 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1945>

VA Approves \$2.8M for Gulf War Illness Research

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has approved \$2.8 million to fund three new research projects that focus on testing or developing new treatments for illnesses affecting Veterans who served in the Gulf War 1990-1991. The research incorporates recommendations of the department’s Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses Task Force.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1925>

VA Research: Possible Link Between Head Trauma, Chronic Traumatic Encephalomyopathy

Researchers with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy (CSTE) at Boston University School of Medicine have provided the first pathological evidence of a link between repeated head injuries—such as those experienced by athletes in contact sports such as boxing, football, and hockey—and a disease (chronic traumatic Encephalomyopathy) that resembles amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. The results will appear in the September issue of the Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1936>

Headlines Of Interest To GA Veterans

VA/NIH Award \$6 Million for Substance Abuse Research

The Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to award \$6 million in grants for research examining the link between substance abuse and military deployments and combat-related trauma.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1941>

VA Announces Test of Paperless Claims Processing System

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected its regional benefits office in Providence, R.I., to test a paperless system and new procedures to improve processing of Veterans' claims for disability compensation.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1933>

More than 1,100 Schools Partner with VA on GI Bill

Paving the way for recipients of the Post-9/11 GI Bill to attend higher-cost schools, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has entered into more than 3,200 agreements with over 1,100 schools for the upcoming academic year under the "Yellow Ribbon" program.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1931>

VA Makes Applying for Health Care Benefits Faster for Veterans

As part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to streamline access to benefits, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has removed the signature requirement for Veterans who electronically submit an online 10-10EZ "Application for Health Benefits."

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1928>

VA Unveils Contract Strategy that Helps Veterans' Small Businesses

To improve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) execution of information technology (IT) projects and to further advance top-priority programs for Veterans, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced a new contracting strategy to be known as Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology (T4) which is focused on giving Veteran-owned small businesses more opportunities to support VA.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1924>

VA Simplifies Access to Health Care and Benefits for Veterans with PTSD

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced a critical step forward in providing an easier process for Veterans seeking health care and disability compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1922>

VA Makes Filing Claims Easier and Faster for Veterans

As part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to break the back of the backlog, the Department of Veterans Affairs is reducing the paperwork and expediting the process for Veterans seeking compensation for disabilities related to their military service.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1912>

VA Announces Change to Medication Copays for Some Veterans

As previously announced on January 7, 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs froze prescription copayment increases for six months. Veterans who generally have higher income and no service-connected disabilities - referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 Veterans - will now pay an additional \$1 for each 30-day supply of outpatient medications. Taking effect July 1, the increase to \$9 from \$8 is the first change in VA's medication copay since Jan. 1, 2006.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1910>

VA Secretary Announces New Hotline for Homeless Veterans

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the establishment of a new telephone hotline to provide emergency support and resources to homeless Veterans.

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1904>

You Can Benefit



Camaraderie; mutual respect; a room full of people who understand where you've been because they've been there, too. Every veteran can benefit from membership in a Veterans Service Organization.

Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) are designed for the benefit of veterans, future veterans and their families, and the community. Most areas of the country have local American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, or Military Order of the Purple Heart posts/chapters. There are many more service organizations, such as the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Blinded Veterans Association, Jewish Wars Veterans, Marine Corps League, Viet Nam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Reserve Officers Association, Fleet Reserve Association and others geared to particular groups of veterans. Each organization has its own individual requirements for membership, of which some are more stringent than others. The requirements range from honorable service during any time period to serving in a combat zone, or from having served in a certain branch of the Armed Forces to having held a certain military rank, and some requiring a service-connected disability or injury.

VSOs welcome any eligible member, regardless of age, race, religion, or gender. Many of these organizations host auxiliaries so spouses and other family members can also participate. These organizations provide countless hours of local community service. You'll see veterans proudly marching with our nation's flag at the forefront of parades or donating time and money to local causes. And there are even times the honor/color guard and the uniformed person who presents the flag at a military funeral are members of veteran service organizations. Sometimes it's as simple as VSO members going to the local VA hospital and veterans nursing home to play cards or Bingo with the patients.

Although they are all separate organizations, there is commonality in their goals:

- They are a voice for returning and currently deployed service members and their families;
- They monitor and lobby for legislation that directly impacts our veteran and military communities; and
- They help to develop the next generation of patriots by sponsoring character-enhancing youth programs like scout troops, civic camps/workshops, athletics, academic scholarships, and oratorical/essay contests.

VSOs are at the forefront of public policy related to national defense, adequate funding for the VA, concurrent receipt of retirement pay and VA disability compensation for disabled military retirees, veteran's employment and training, services for homeless veterans, POW/MIA accountability and flag protection. Virtually all of our veteran's legislation has been driven by VSOs (just ask a veteran who uses the GI Bill and has a VA Home Loan).

Most all VSOs have service officers who assist and advocate for veterans in filing claims for service-connected disabilities. VSOs are responsible for getting post-traumatic stress disorder and the Agent Orange related diseases, among others, recognized as presumptive by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Concerned about a veteran-related issue? Wonder what you can do for a local Veterans Service Organization? Join one and participate. In order for these organizations to be around when you need them, they must be self-perpetuating. Contribute your time, energy, and assets. Take advantage of the camaraderie unique to military veterans. There is strength in numbers. When VSO National Commanders and Presidents go to Congress to lobby for military or veteran-friendly legislation, numbers count. Large organizations have clout.

Together, VSOs are a voice for all of us.

