

**NEWSLETTER**  
**July - August 2007**  
**Disabled American Veterans**  
**Blind Veterans National Chapter**

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## HAPPY 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

### Why "TAPS" is played

If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which taps were played; this brings out a new meaning of it.

Here is something Every North American should know. We in the North America have all heard the haunting song, "Taps". It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the

gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket

of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals was born. The words are:

Day is done ... Gone the sun  
From the lakes ... From the hills ...  
From the sky. All is well.  
Safely rest... God is nigh.

Fading light... Dims the sight...  
And a star. Gems the sky  
Gleaming bright From afar...  
Drawing nigh. Falls the night.

Thanks and praise ... For our days.  
Neath the sun ... Neath the stars...  
Neath the sky. As we go  
This we know... God is nigh

### **CHAPLAIN**

Please let the Blind Chapter Chaplain know if you are sick, hospitalized or you know of one of our members who is. Contact Reverend Anthony Martino at 25016 87th Street, Unit 2, Salem Wisconsin 53168. His phone number is 847 736 2111 and his email address is [Deaconmart@wi.rr.com](mailto:Deaconmart@wi.rr.com).

### **“DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION”**

The DAV National Convention will be held at the Hilton Riverside in New Orleans. The schedule for the Blind Veterans National Chapter meetings is as follows:

Friday, August 10, 2007

9:00 a.m. Oak Alley – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

2:30 pm Oak Alley – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Monday, August 13, 2007

9:15 am Oak Alley – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

### **HONORING SACRIFICES**

On April 18, 1942, mere months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle led a squadron of 16 B-25 bombers on a daring attack of the Japanese mainlands. The bombers were stripped of most of their defenses to allow them to reach their targets and deliver America's first response to World War II.

After enduring enemy anti-aircraft fire and fighters, and striking targets in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and other locations, 15 of the planes crash-landed at dusk on the Chinese coast. Several crew members died guiding their aircraft in or bailing out.

Many of the Raiders escaped the Japanese occupation of China through the help of civilians, but eight were captured and tortured. Three of the prisoners were executed and another died in captivity.

To honor these brave men on the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Doolittle Raid, the DAV Airshow Outreach Program is holding a special event at the National Convention in New Orleans. The DAV Flight Team's B-25 "Panchito" will soar into New Orleans Lakefront Airport. From there, the historic plane will travel by barge to a place of honor along the Riverwalk at Spanish Plaza near the Hilton where the convention will be held. (Source: DAV Membership Bulletin of May 2007)

## **War Funding Bill Adds VA Money**

President Bush has signed legislation adding \$1.8 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs as part of the \$120 billion military supplemental spending bill funding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The VA funds are in addition to the \$77.9 billion Congress already appropriated for veterans programs for the current fiscal year. The Iraq war supplemental closed a \$1.3 billion funding gap the DAV said was needed to fund veterans medical care for 2007 and added \$444 million for VA administration. "The DAV had urged lawmakers to provide additional resources for veterans health care and services in the war funding bill because caring for our nation's veterans is part of the continuing cost of war," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson.

The VA supplemental funding includes money to upgrade the VA's existing polytrauma centers and to build at least one additional polytrauma center. It designates funds for polytrauma residential transitional rehabilitation programs. Also included is an additional \$32.5 million for medical and prosthetics research related to the unique needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

## **Bill Would Boost VA Spending Next Year**

The House Appropriations Committee has approved a spending bill for fiscal 2008 that would provide the Department of Veterans Affairs a total of \$87.7 billion, \$3.8 billion more than the administration requested and \$9.9 billion more than was provided for fiscal 2007. The bill now goes to the full House of Representatives for consideration. The \$109 billion measure, approved by a 56-0 vote, would provide \$4 billion more than the \$105.2 billion requested by President Bush and \$18.2 billion more than

fiscal 2007 spending for military construction and veterans' affairs.

"This represents a significant, much-needed investment in health care and the benefits delivery system for our nation's sick and disabled veterans," DAV National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante. "The recommended funding increase will allow the VA to better meet the needs of the men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as all veterans who have served in the past."

## **House Passes Disabled Veterans Memorial Coin Act**

Legislation to require the U.S. Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled as a result of their military service has been approved by the House of Representatives. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act (H.R. 634), which won unanimous support in the House May 15, has been referred to the Senate for consideration. The legislation provides for the design, manufacture and sale of special \$1 silver coins to commemorate living disabled American veterans and authorizes a \$10 surcharges on these coins to be contributed to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the construction of American Veterans' Disabled for Life Memorial near the Nation's Capitol. (Source: DAV Washington Update of June 2007)

## **\*\*Social Security Administration Legal Blindness Updated**

Standards/Qualifications

The Social Security Administration published new rules for visual disorders in

the Federal Register (71 FR 67037) on November 20, 2006. These rules became effective on February 20, 2007.

As in the past, statutory/legal blindness continues to be defined as best corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye; or a visual field limitation such that the widest diameter of the visual field, in the better eye, subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees, as measured with a Goldmann III4e or equivalent size stimulus.

Under the new rules, how visual acuity and visual field can be tested to meet this definition has changed.

For visual field testing, the following measurements can be used:

1. Automated static threshold perimetry (Humphrey 30-2 and 24-2)
  - a. For Humphrey Field Analyzers, a 10dB stimulus is equivalent to a 4e stimulus. A dB level that is higher than 10 represents a dimmer stimulus, while a dB level that is lower than 10 represents a brighter stimulus. Therefore, for automated static threshold tests performed on Humphrey Field Analyzers, any point seen at 10dB or higher are a point that would be seen with a 4e stimulus.
2. Kinetic perimetry, such as the Humphrey "SSA Test Kinetic"
  - a. The kinetic test must use a white III4e stimulus projected on a white 31.5 apostilb (10 cd/m<sup>2</sup>) background.
3. Goldmann perimetry
  - a. With a III4e target.

SSA will not use the results of visual field screening tests, such as confrontation tests,

tangent screen tests, or automated static screening tests, to determine legal blindness.

For visual acuity testing, the criteria changed because most test charts that use Snellen methodology do not have lines that measure visual acuity between 20/100 and 20/200.

Newer test charts, such as the Bailey-Lovie or the Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study (ETDRS), do have lines that measure visual acuity between 20/100 and 20/200.

Under the new criteria, if a person's visual acuity is measured with one of the newer charts, and they cannot read any of the letters on the 20/100 line, they will qualify

as legally blind, based on a visual acuity of 20/200 or less. For example, if the person's best-corrected visual acuity for distance in the better eye was determined to be 20/160 using an ETDRS chart, they would now be classified as legally blind. Regardless of the type of test chart used, the person will not be classified as legally blind if they can read at least one letter on the 20/100 line. For example, if a person's best-corrected visual acuity for distance in the better eye was determined to be 20/125+1 using an ETDRS chart, they would not be classified as legally blind because they were able to read one letter on the 20/100 line.

To view the new rules please use the following link:

<http://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/2.00-SpecialSensesandSpeech-Adult.htm> # # #

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