

NEWSLETTER
September – October 2008
Disabled American Veterans
Blind Veterans National Chapter
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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

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 25016 87th Street, Unit 2 Salem Wisconsin 53168. 847 736 2111 Deaconmart@wi.rr.com

**Welcome Aboard
Richard Bugbee**

Deceased
Percy (Barney) Barfield
May He Rest in Peace

SICK & DISTRESS

Received a phone call from Paul J Meray's daughter informing us Paul had been diagnosed with leukemia a couple of years ago and it is flaring up again. He will be remaining at home and having hispid care assist him at home.

Ted Romig sent along a note to keep us updated on his condition. Ted has been in the hospital a lot the past years. He and Barbara are remembering the great times at Blind Chapter meetings.

DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION

**Congratulations to our Newly Elected
and Installed Officers.**

Commander Eddie Humphrey
Sr Vice Commander Floyd Britting
1st Jr Vice Commander Dan Holden
2nd Jr Vice Commander Dennis O'Connell
3rd Jr Vice Commander Paul Kaminsky
4th Jr Vice Commander Dave May
Judge Advocate Gerard Boucher
Chaplain Tony Martino
Adjutant/Treasurer Steve Moffitt

At the convention chapter delegates were assigned as follows:

- Constitution & Bylaws:
Dennis O Connell and Paul Kaminsky
- Resolutions
Dan Holden and Terry Livingston
- Legislative & Veterans Rights
Floyd Britting and Steve Moffitt
- Nominations
Tony Martino and Gerard Boucher

Commander Humphrey appointed the following committees for the year.

Finance Committee
Dave May – Chair
Paul Kaminsky
Terry Livingston
Floyd Britting

Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Gerard Boucher – Chair

Tony Martino

Steve Moffitt

Dennis O'Connell

The new webmaster of the BVNC website located at www.davbvnc.com is Paul Kaminsky.

The new editor of the BVNC newsletter is Dennis O'Connell.

As you may have noticed my name has disappeared from the chapter officer listing. I had to step down from the position as adjutant-treasurer for health and family reasons. For the past 14 years the Blind Chapter has been an important part of my life. Many of us have developed a great friendship over the years and I hope that will continue even though I will not be active with the chapter for I need to spend more time looking after my health and being available for family.

I want to thank those who corresponded with me over the years. Your support and appreciation for the job I was doing helped tremendously. Barney Barfield was one who sent his messages via tape.

On the way to the convention I found out my mother, who has been bed ridden for several years had to be put in a nursing home. So it looks like I will be doing a lot more travel to Western Pennsylvania.

Although I do not hold a position I will be working in the background to help as needed.

MEMBERSHIP

As Barney Barfield faded away from our ranks Richard Bugbee stepped up to add to our ranks. The membership in the Blind Chapter will decline rapidly over the coming years if we don't step up our recruitment. Each member needs to be a recruiter and it would be terrific if you could just sign up one member. There are many blind veterans out there that need blind rehabilitation and we who have experienced the benefit of the training and prosthetic items and how it has improved our life should relate this to those who are unaware of the program.

A membership application is part of this newsletter for you to pass it along to a blind veteran in need.

RECRUITERS REMINDED TO OBTAIN ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION

Bringing a new member into the DAV is a reward in and of itself. But if you're serious about recruiting and want to push your fellow recruiters, make sure you get credit for your efforts. It is critical that you obtain and provide complete information on all applicants. Full dates of birth, dates of service, and complete information for applications is necessary and critical. Recruiters need to ensure that every piece of information required on the application is provided in full.

VA Announces On-Line Claims Applications

July 16, 2008 Press Release

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that on-line applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, VA will now process applications received through its on-line application website (VONAPP) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP (www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm) is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery.

VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA and approximately

approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

For more information about VA benefits, go to VA's website at www.va.gov or call our toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000.



DAV Washington Update

House Crafts VA Appropriations Bill

Disabled American Veterans' Legislative Department is working closely with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee as the 2009 House Appropriations Bill is assembled. While funding levels appear to be close to the figures outlined in the 2009 Independent Budget, DAV is very much concerned with when the Department of Veterans Affairs might see the dollars.

"It is encouraging that they are getting the funding levels close to the IB," said DAV's National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante, "but it also is important for the VA to know when it is going to get funded. It is impossible to effectively plan ahead with so many uncertainties. That needs to be fixed now."

DAV believes it knows what that fix should entail. Working around Congress' long opposition to mandatory funding for the VA, DAV is now leading the charge to get VA health care funded through an obscure legislative mechanism called

legislative mechanism called "advance appropriations."

Advance appropriations are already in place for some programs, ranging from housing subsidies to education grants to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Regardless of how delayed funds may be for the rest of the federal government, these programs are guaranteed to get their money on time, at the start of each fiscal year.

"The DAV sees approving appropriations a year in advance as a way to give Congress the oversight it demands and the VA the stability it needs," Violante said. "It is doable, and it is time to do it."

Lawmakers Introduce Veterans Travel Equity Act

Veterans seeking treatment at VA medical facilities would be reimbursed for gas mileage at the same rate as federal employees under a bill sponsored by U.S. Reps. Mark Souder (R-Indiana) and Brad Ellsworth (D-Indiana.).

The Veterans Travel Equity Act, introduced in mid-June, would also eliminate all income and pension eligibility requirements and service-connected disability rating requirements to qualify for the mileage reimbursement.

The bill would raise the reimbursement rate for veterans from 28.5 cents per mile to 50.5 cents per mile, the same as for federal employees.

Congress Passes Disabled Veterans Memorial Coin Bill

Congress has sent to the President legislation authorizing the U.S. Mint to produce a silver coin to commemorate

veterans who have become disabled as a result of their military service. A surcharge of \$10 on the sale of each limited-edition coin goes to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial to disabled veterans in Washington, D.C.

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act easily passed in the House in May of 2007 by a vote of 416 to 0. The House version was approved by unanimous consent in the Senate June 11.

"This is a major victory for our efforts to honor the service and sacrifice of the nation's disabled veterans," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "The proceeds from the sale of these special coins and the generous contributions from DAV Departments, Chapters and individual members, among others, will make the dream of this memorial to disabled veterans a reality."

The design of the coins is to be "emblematic of the service of our disabled veterans who, having survived the ordeal of war, made enormous personal sacrifices defending the principles of our democracy," according to the legislation. The measure also stipulates the coins will be 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper and are to be minted in 2010.

Reps. Dennis Moore (D-Kansas.) and Mark Kirk (R-Illinois.) introduced the measure (H.R. 634) in the House, while the Senate version (S. 2119) was brought in by Tim Johnson (D-South Dakota). Both bills had broad bipartisan support.

It is better to bite your tongue than to let it bite someone else.