



Lehigh Valley Chapter 415 -- Vietnam Veterans of America

October 2010 Newsletter



Barry Willever raising a flag that will fly over Phillipsburg High School

Flu-Shots Are Being Scheduled!

If you are interested in getting a Flu-Shot this season contact a VA Medical Facility:

Allentown (610) 776-4304
Bangor (610) 599-0127

Or Wilkes-Barre has a "Walk-In" Clinic with no appointment necessary. Please call

(570) 824-3521

News From Military.com . . .

Study Finds Dementia Link

A new study has linked post-traumatic stress disorder to dementia later in life. While the findings of the study do not prove that PTSD causes dementia, they did show that combat PTSD is linked to dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The study was conducted by the VA Medical Center in Houston and is published in the September edition of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. An abstract of the study is available.

The next time you are visiting Washington D.C., please keep the following information in



mind:

Pentagon Memorial Welcomes Visitors

Nine years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., visitors come night and day to reflect at the Pentagon Memorial, which was built on the site to honor the victims. Just west of the Department of Defense headquarters, the memorial park features 184 stainless steel benches, one for each victim of the attack, each set over a lighted pool of water. For more information, visit the [Pentagon Memorial website](#).

East Coast Assistance Dogs



The organization **East Coast Assistance Dogs** trains and places assistance dogs to help people with disabilities gain independence and mobility. Through its Project Heal, the not-for-profit organization provides service dogs free-of-charge to wounded warriors. Each veteran is provided with 13 days of Team Training instruction at the organization's Dobbs Ferry, NY facility. For more information, visit the [Project Heal website](#) and the [East Coast Assistance Dogs website](#).

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A Thank-You . . .

To members of Chapter 415 who helped out at the Palmer Park Mall this past September. Our presence in the Lehigh Valley is a solemn reminder of the service and help that is available for individuals.

A History Lesson In Review

Please find below a short summary of the **Zumwalt Report** (1990), a formerly classified document that exposes the systematic attempts of certain public officials to deny health care and compensation to veterans affected by exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

The Zumwalt Report

Summary

The late Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. was the former commander of Naval Forces in Vietnam who ordered the spraying of the deadly defoliant Agent Orange. Admiral Zumwalt had a son, Elmo Zumwalt III, who served in Vietnam and died in his early 40s of what he believed was Agent Orange-related cancer. Admiral Zumwalt's grandson also has a severe birth defect, which Admiral Zumwalt himself believed was related to his son's exposure to Agent Orange.

Long after the Vietnam War, Admiral Zumwalt was commissioned by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Edward Derwinski, to investigate and report on the question of whether it is at least as likely as not that there is a statistical association between exposure to Agent Orange and specific adverse health conditions. Admiral Zumwalt submitted his report to Secretary Derwinski on May 5, 1990.

These were some of Admiral Zumwalt's findings and subsequent recommendations:

- ❖ **Finding:** After consulting with numerous experts, Admiral Zumwalt determined that it was at least as likely as not that there is a relationship between exposure to Agent Orange and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, chloracne and other skin disorders, lip cancer, bone cancer, soft tissue sarcoma, birth defects (unnamed and unnumbered), skin cancer, porphyria cutanea tarda and other liver disorders, Hodgkin's disease, hematopoietic diseases, multiple myeloma, neurological defects, autoimmune diseases and disorders, leukemia, lung cancer, kidney cancer, malignant melanoma, pancreatic cancer, stomach cancer, colon cancer, nasal/pharyngeal/esophageal cancers, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, liver cancer, brain cancer, psychosocial effects and gastrointestinal diseases.
- **Recommendation:** Any Vietnam veteran or child of a Vietnam veteran who experiences one of these health problems should be presumed to have a service connected disability and thus be eligible for VA health care and disability compensation.
- ❖ **Finding:** The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, the

committee formerly assigned with determining whether there is an association with exposure to Agent Orange and any diseases, had not acted with impartiality in its review of scientific evidence on the topic. Zumwalt noted that numerous outside scientists disagree with the findings of the Advisory Committee.

- **Recommendation:** The Secretary should reevaluate former biased findings of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards in light of scientific evidence which refutes its prior decisions. The Admiral also suggested that Secretary Derwinski reconsider who sits on the committee.
- ❖ **Finding:** Hearings on and investigation into the Agent Orange issue have revealed that nearly every study on the health effects of exposure to Agent Orange has been riddled with deception, fraud, and political interference. Evidence demonstrates that a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study and the Air Force's Ranch Hand Study have both been tampered with such that results have been skewed. These studies have no scientific merit because of sample dilution, improper reporting, and even falsified results.
- **Recommendation:** Most studies on Agent Orange-related illnesses conducted up to the present time, both private and governmental, should thus be discredited and disregarded.

Upon submission, the Zumwalt Report was immediately classified and restricted from public record. However, on June 17, 1990, a Washington Post article by Bill McAllister revealed the existence of this report and its contents. This revelation sparked a public outcry, and immediate action was taken by

Veterans Service Organizations and, consequently, concerned legislators.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-4) was passed less than a year after the Zumwalt Report was leaked to the public. This act required that the VA compensate veterans for specific diseases presumed to be service-connected. The act also set in place a system by which relevant science is reviewed biennially and additional diseases can be added to the initial list of those presumed service-connected. Several of the diseases listed by Admiral Zumwalt at the beginning of his report are now among the service-connected presumptives recognized by the VA

Day almost done for taps

With few buglers left who know the call, lawmaker wants schools to train students to play at military funerals.



MORNING CALL FILE PHOTO, DONNA FISHER

- LeRohn Deysher is one busy bugler.

He is one of the few musicians in the area trained to play at military funerals. Hardly a week goes by that he's not asked to come out and perform taps. He's attended 147 graveside

ceremonies so far this year, sometimes six in a single week.

"I cover the Lehigh Valley pretty well," the 88-year-old from Hellertown said. "I'm very dedicated to it. I feel a sense of pride when I do it."

A Message from Jeff White, VVA State President

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Hi, my name is Kimberly Kimball Gonzales. My father was PFC Richard Kimball Jr, he was killed in action in Vietnam in Nov of 1967. I was only two years old when he died and I have no memory of my dad. Below is the information I have found so far that may be able to put me in touch with anyone who knew him during his time of service. I was hoping to get in touch with anyone who may remember him or even have pictures of him. I appreciate anything you can do to help me. Thank you for your time. D co. at time of death.

HHC, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN
BDE, USARV

Sincerely,

Kimberly Kimball Gonzales

kmylou@comcast.net

**Special
Notice: If you are a veteran
in emotional
crisis and need help RIGHT
NOW, call this toll-free
number
1-800-273-8255, available
24/7, and tell them you are a**

veteran.

All calls are confidential.

Vietnam Veterans of America Disputes California Court Finding That Stolen Valor Act is Unconstitutional

"The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit has struck down a federal law making it a crime to falsely claim a military honor or decoration, and this is a most regrettable decision," said John Rowan, national president of Vietnam Veterans of America.

"We trust that this case will be reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. We hope that the court will agree with those legal experts who hold that the Constitution of the United States does not protect egregious false statements of fact."

In a 2-1 ruling on August 17, the appeals court found the Stolen Valor Act-a 2006 federal law that prohibits falsely claiming to have won a military decoration, making it a crime to lie about receiving the Medal of Honor and other military decorations--unconstitutional, throwing out the conviction of Xavier Alvarez, an elected member of a California water district board, who, on several occasions, falsely claimed to be a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

**Secretary Shinseki Announces Study
Vietnam-Era Women Veterans**

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Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching a comprehensive study of women Veterans who served in the military during the Vietnam War to explore the effects of their military service upon their mental and physical health

**IF YOU KNOW ANYONE IN THIS
POSITION PLEASE PASS THE WORD!!**

Approximately 90,000 U.S. servicemembers who were kept on duty past their original discharge following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have yet to claim the retroactive bonus pay they're entitled to, and the deadline to claim the bonus is quickly approaching.

Last October, Congress approved retroactive bonus pay for military personnel who were forced to participate in the controversial policy known as "stop-loss." Lawmakers approved back pay of \$500 for each month of involuntary service; the average lump-sum due is between \$3,500 and \$3,800.

Applications for the payments are due by Oct. 21, and so far, approximately one third of those eligible have submitted applications. Eighty percent of those are Army veterans.

To get the cash, an application must be submitted by Oct. 21; only about a third of those eligible have handed in paperwork. The Department of Defense currently is trying to track down the remaining service members to inform them of the

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benefit, mailing out letters and launching a publicity campaign.

Applications can be submitted online [here](#). By law, only those who apply can receive the payments.

The following service-specific sites provide more information on the claims process.

- Army: (877) 736-5554, [online](#), [e-mail](#)
 - Navy: (901) 874-4427, [online](#), [e-mail](#)
 - Marine Corps: (877) 242-2830, [online](#), [e-mail](#)
 - Air Force: (800) 525-0102, [Online](#), [e-mail \(active\)](#), [e-mail \(Guard/Reserve\)](#)
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Next VVA Chapter 415 Meeting will be Monday, November 1st. Please mark your calendars.

A Message from Ron Titus

A veteran friend found a case where a Vet appealed for pancreatitis and won it. It was based on the fact that he has PTSD, and from having PTSD he was a heavy drinker, his drinking led him to pancreatitis, he won his case. Please contact me for copies of the VA determination; and, pass this post on to others Veterans.



Don Bear and his brother at the American Legion Clambake



Do you like Country Music . . .



