



VETERAN JOURNAL



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Spring 2001

Menlo Park Veterans Home Dedicated Oct. 26

Story and photograph by G. Natasha Zoe

The Dedication Ceremony for the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home in Menlo Park was held Thursday, October 26. New Jersey's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Paul J. Glazar, the keynote speaker, was joined by the Woodbridge High School 90-piece band, Raymond Nadaskay, Nadaskay Kopelson Architects, and more than 200 veterans and community leaders.

The 3 ½ year construction project consolidated and modernized the sprawling campus of more than 15 buildings over 54 acres into one modern, efficient, two-story building.

In addition to consolidating both residents and resident services into one building, the new facility added 92 beds for a total capacity of 332 full-time residents. One historical building of the old campus still remains and houses the grounds and landscaping shop. A new annex was also built for the maintenance shops.

The old campus was home to more than 3,500 veterans during four decades of operation; but by modern nursing home standards it was inefficiently designed. All meals had to be prepared, trucked to the residential buildings and be reheated before they could be served. The old campus' layout with small-sized units also required a highly inefficient use of nursing staff.

United States Veterans Administration and the State of New Jersey jointly funded the \$46 million construction project, which began in 1997.

New Jersey's one-third share of this construction was less than the cost to update the old campus to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for handicapped access.

"Making the decision that a loved one requires nursing home care can be difficult and painful for family members," said Michael L. Warner, Deputy Commissioner for Veteran Affairs, DMAVA. "Selecting the right home can be just as difficult - proximity, quality of care and affordability are a few of the concerns a family must address. Fortunately, for the families of New Jersey veterans, affordable, quality care is available in our facilities."

The New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes located in Paramus, Menlo Park and Vineland serve about one thousand veterans who require long-term nursing home type care. The Vet-



Cutting the ribbon at the dedication of the new veterans nursing home at Menlo Park Oct. 26.

erans Memorial Homes offer around-the-clock medical and nursing care, rehabilitative and recreational services, Alzheimer's units, and other amenities.

For more information on New Jersey's Veterans Memorial Homes or for an application call 609-530-6766.

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General Doyle Veterans Cemetery Update

Earlier this year we announced that the U.S. Veterans' Administration had agreed to fund a \$22 million expansion and improvement program at the cemetery over the next 5 to 7 years. Bill Jayne, from the Veterans Administration, informed us recently that the VA will provide \$7 million this year for the first phase of the project. This year's funding will include two one-acre crypt fields (\$2 million), 3,500 columbarium niches (\$1.25 million), a new administration and maintenance complex (\$3.5 million), and \$250,000 in design costs. This is great news for New Jersey and its veterans.

Korean War Memorial Update

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs has hired a local company to perform maintenance at the memorial that is outside of the scope of work that is performed by Atlantic City. Our contractor visits the memorial daily and is responsible for maintaining the granite, statues, waterfalls, reflecting pools and irrigation system. They will also do snow and ice removal in the winter.

Additionally, if you have visited the Memorial recently, you will notice that the severe winter has caused some damage to the coating on the cement walls. We will be meeting with the manufacturer and the contractor to determine what the best fix is for this problem. The warranty will cover these repairs.

F

Become a Permanent Part of the NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial

The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial is preparing this spring to engrave and install another set of paving stones for the Memorial in Holmdel, N.J.

Your personal message can become a permanent part of our state's tribute to the men and women of New Jersey who served this nation during the Vietnam War.



NEW JERSEY VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL AND VIETNAM ERA EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Many veterans organizations, individual veterans, and families of veterans decide to participate in this program. More than 1,100 engraved paving stones have been installed at the Memorial since its dedication in 1995.

For a \$250 donation, a personal message of your choosing (maximum of 3 lines with 12 characters on each line) can be engraved on one of the paving stones lining the Memorial walkways. As part of this program, your name or your group's name will be entered as a paver sponsor in the Memorial Walkway Paver Registry at the Vietnam Era Educational Center. All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The deadline to have a paver installed each year is March 30. Forms received after that date will be installed the following spring.

If you would like a paving form or more information about this program, please call the Foundation's office at (732) 335-0033.

Respite Care

Respite care is now available at the three New Jersey veteran nursing homes in Paramus, Menlo Park and Vineland. Respite care allows caregivers a break from their care giving responsibilities. The program provides for a 13-day short-term stay with the possibility of an extension. These services can be utilized twice in a calendar year. Services available are the same as those available to long-term care residents. Admission eligibility for these services have been extended to veterans of the National Guard and reserve component retirees of the U.S. military service.

Additional programs offer short-term rehabilitation services to provide an opportunity to restore physical functioning in order to return home versus long-term care admission.

Call (609)530-6979 for information.

The New Jersey Veteran Journal is an official publication of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for New Jersey's veterans, their families, friends, and concerned individuals and groups.

*Donald T. DiFrancesco
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The Adjutant General*

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Meet the Acting Governor

March 12, 2001

Dear Veterans:

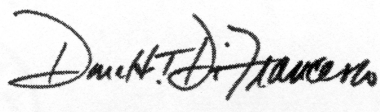
As New Jersey's Acting Governor, I want to thank each of you not only for answering the call when our nation needed you but also for the continuing contribution you have made to our state since your return.

With your support during my tenure as Senate President, we have been able to accomplish a number of important veteran goals. We stopped the privatization of the Paramus Veterans Home, built a state-of-the-art nursing home at Menlo Park, increased the property tax deduction for veterans, and built a magnificent memorial to our Korean War Veterans – just to name a few achievements.

Now we must look to the future for there are still significant challenges ahead. We must replace the aging veterans home at Vineland, expand and improve the General Doyle Cemetery at Arneytown, construct a memorial to honor our World War II Veterans, expand the Transitional Housing Program at Veterans Haven, and address the inequities of the VERA funding model.

I look forward to working closely with the Veterans Advisory Council and the commanders of our veterans organizations during the next year to ensure that we in New Jersey are adequately addressing the needs of the veteran community. Working together, we can move these projects into the “mission accomplished” column. I am committed to this goal and ask for your support as well.

Sincerely,



Donald T. DiFrancesco
Acting Governor



New Jersey Veteran Memorial Homes Update

The Vineland facility is currently in the process of architectural design for accommodations for assisted living and reconstruction of the existing facility.

The Menlo Park facility plans to offer Adult Day Care Services for thirty-two clients in May 2001.

Within our system of three homes and more than 1,000 beds, we can admit a veteran within two to three weeks. Normally if there is any further delay it is because a veteran is unwilling to accept temporary placement in one facility while awaiting a transfer to the facility of his or her choice. Those veterans who refuse a temporary placement, can currently expect a wait of six to eight months for admission to the Menlo Park home. Each of these veterans is offered a temporary placement at Paramus or Vineland while waiting for an opening at Menlo Park.

For information or an admission package call (609) 530-6979

NJ World War II Memorial

Legislation passed last year authorizing a World War II Memorial Commission to recommend a suitable location for a WWII Memorial here in the State. The commission is expected to hold a first meeting this spring and recommend a site to the Governor and Legislature by mid-summer.

New Jersey Women Veterans Advisory Committee

A monthly meeting is held at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home the second Friday of each month at 10:00 AM. For more information call Catherine Viscito at (609) 698-3985.

F

Legislative Process

Bills are introduced into a house (senate, assembly or house of representatives) by a member of that house. The bill is then sent to committee(s) to study the impact the bill would have if implemented into law. When (and if) the bill leaves the committee it is sent to the full house for a vote.

When it passes one house, it must then complete the same process in the other house.

When it passes both houses it is sent to the chief executive office (president or governor) to be signed or vetoed. A veto can be overruled by a re-vote in both houses.

Most bills never leave committee. More than 300 bills are introduced for each one that is signed into law.

If you want to influence the legislative process, you must call, write or e-mail your elected representatives. Only elected representatives can introduce a bill or vote on it.

HTTP://THOMAS.LOC.GOV

is the U.S. Library of Congress and has information about current bills and recent laws, as well as addresses and phone numbers for U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives.

WWW.NJLEG.STATE.NJ.US

is the New Jersey Legislative website and contains information about current bills and recent laws, as well as addresses and phone numbers for N.J. Senators and N.J. Assemblymen.

This same information can be found at your local library.

***Editor's note:** Due to space constraints this list includes only the new laws and most of the current bills (could be voted into law) but not resolutions (expressed opinions) that directly affect veterans and/or their benefits.*

New US Laws

Public Law No: 106-50 - To provide technical, financial, and procurement assistance to veteran-owned small businesses.

Public Law No: 106-117 - To enhance programs providing health care, education, memorial, and other benefits for veterans, to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Public Law No: 106-118 - To provide a cost-of-living adjustment in rates of compensation paid for service-connected disabilities, to enhance the compensation, memorial affairs, and housing programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve retirement authorities applicable to judges of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Public Law No: 106-413 - To increase the rates of compensation for service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

Public Law No: 106-475 - To reaffirm and clarify the duty of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

Public Law No: 106-419 - To increase amounts of educational assistance for veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill.

New NJ Laws

A1209/S163 - Designates a portion of Route 18 as "World War II Veterans memorial Highway," establishes memorial committee and appropriates \$25,000 for commemorative statuary.

A2250/S1430 - Supplemental appropriation of \$500,000 for completion of Korean War Memorial in Atlantic City.

A1200/S1215 - Provides that Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs shall determine status of veterans in certain cases.

S797/A1995 - Designates portion of State Highway Route 82 as the "Jewish War Veterans Memorial Highway" appropriates \$2,500.

S676/A2395 - Extends civil service veterans preference to certain persons who served in Operation "Uphold Democracy" in Haiti.

A1199 - Authorizes Adjutant General to issue service medal to commemorate 25th anniversary of ending of Vietnam Conflict; appropriates \$5,000.

New US Bills

HR51 - To provide that persons retiring from the Armed Forces shall be entitled to all benefits which were promised them when they entered the Armed Forces.

HR62 - To establish election day in Presidential election years as a legal public holiday by moving the legal public holiday known as Veterans Day to election.

HR65 - To permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive a portion of their military retired pay concurrently with veterans' disability compensation.

HR67 - To establish the Medicare Eligible Military Retiree Health Care Consensus Task Force.

HR81 - To allow a refundable credit to military retirees for premiums paid for coverage under Medicare part B.

HR134 - To revise the eligibility criteria for presumption of service-connection of certain diseases and disabilities for veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during military service.

HR157 - To provide that December 7 each year shall be treated for all purposes related to Federal employment in the same manner as November 11.

HR171 - To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to ensure that veterans of the United States Armed Forces are eligible for discretionary relief from detention, deportation, exclusion, and removal.

HR179 - To restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services.

HR208 - To direct the Secretary of the Treasury to determine and report to Congress an appropriate tax incentive to encourage individuals other than members of the Armed Forces to participate as members of honor guards at funerals for veterans.

HR288 - To extend eligibility to use the military health care system and commissary stores to an unremarried former spouse of a member of the uniformed services if the member performed at least 20 years of service which is creditable in determining the member's eligibility for retired pay and the former spouse was married to the member for a period of at least 17 years during those years of service.

HR290 - To revise the effective date for an award of disability compensation by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 1151 of such title for persons disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation.

New US Bills cont.

HR303 - To permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both military retired pay by reason of their years of military service and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability.

HR320 - To improve benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill by establishing an enhanced educational assistance program, by increasing the amount of basic educational assistance, by repealing the requirement for reduction in pay for participation in the program, by authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make accelerated payments of basic educational assistance.

HR336 - To enhance outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for more fully informing eligible surviving spouses and dependents of deceased veterans of benefits available to them under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to improve assistance provided at local levels by providing for staff with specific responsibilities to assist those individuals in obtaining benefits under those laws.

HR406 - To prohibit an insurer from treating a veteran differently in the terms or conditions of motor vehicle insurance because a motor vehicle operated by the veteran, during a period of military service by the veteran, was insured or owned by the United States.

HR435 - To improve access to medical services for veterans seeking treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinics with exceptionally long waiting periods.

HR439 - To extend commissary and exchange store privileges to veterans with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more and to the dependents of such veterans.

HR440 - To authorize transportation on military aircraft on a space-available basis for veterans with a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more.

HR442 - To increase the maximum amount of a home loan guarantee available to a veteran.

HR462 - To provide that military reservists who are retained in active status after qualifying for reserve retired pay shall be given credit toward computation of such retired pay for service performed after so qualifying.

HR491 - To deem certain service in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts to have been active service for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

HR510 - To authorize the design and construction of a temporary education center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the District of Columbia.

HR511 - To improve outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for more fully informing veterans of benefits available to them under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

HR514 - To provide a presumption of service connection for certain specified diseases and disabilities in the case of veterans who were exposed during military service to carbon tetrachloride.

HR545 - To revise the effective date for certain awards of dependency and indemnity compensation made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to survivors of veterans who died during the Vietnam era or later.

HR551 - To provide that the rate of reimbursement for motor vehicle travel under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be the same as the rate for private vehicle reimbursement for Federal employees.

HR594 - To amend the Social Security Act to further extend health care coverage under the Medicare Program.

HR606 - To direct the Secretaries of the military departments to conduct a review of military service records to determine whether certain Jewish American war veterans, including those previously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross, should be awarded the Medal of Honor.

HR609 - To provide limited authority for concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation in the case of certain disabled military retirees who are over the age of 65.

HR612 - To clarify the standards for compensation for Persian Gulf veterans suffering from certain undiagnosed illnesses.

HR639 - To establish a comprehensive program for testing and treatment of veterans for the Hepatitis C virus.

HR745 - To prevent veterans' contributions to GI bill benefits from reducing Federal student financial assistance.

HR764 - To provide a presumption of service

connection for injuries classified as cold weather injuries which occur in veterans who, while engaged in military operations, had sustained exposure to cold weather.

HR801 - To improve programs of educational assistance, to expand programs of transition assistance and outreach to departing servicemembers, veterans, and dependents, to increase burial benefits, and to provide for family coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

HR811 - To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out construction projects for the purpose of improving, renovating, and updating patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

HR818 - To grant a Federal charter to the Ukrainian American Veterans, Incorporated.

HR843 - To allow the sworn affidavit of a veteran who served in combat during the Korean War or an earlier conflict to be accepted as proof of service-connection of a disease or injury alleged to have been incurred or aggravated by such service.

HR844 - To provide that annuities of the Social Security Act paid by States to blind veterans shall be disregarded in determining supplemental security income benefits.

S38 - To permit former members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

S42 - To require the Secretary of the Army to determine the validity of the claims of certain Filipinos that they performed military service on behalf of the United States during World War II.

S43 - To authorize certain disabled former prisoners of war to use Department of Defense commissary and exchange stores.

S62 - To revise certain provisions relating to the appointment of professional psychologists in the Veterans Health Administration.

S97 - To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to the eligibility of veterans for mortgage revenue bond financing.

S129 - To provide for the payment of a monthly stipend to the surviving parents (known as "Gold Star Parents") of members of the Armed Forces who die during a period of war.

S131 - To modify the annual determination of the rate of the basic benefit of active duty

New US Bills cont.

educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill.

S145 - To increase to parity with other surviving spouses the basic annuity that is provided under the uniformed services Survivor Benefit Plan for surviving spouses who are at least 62 years of age.

S170 - To permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both military retired pay by reason of their years of military service and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability.

S186 - To provide access and choice for use of generic drugs instead of non-generic drugs under Federal health care programs.

S278 - To restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services.

S281 - To authorize the design and construction of a temporary education center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

S305 - To remove the reduction in the amount of Survivor Benefit Plan annuities at age 62.

S381 - To amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 to maximize the access of uniformed services voters and recently separated uniformed services voters to the polls, to ensure that each vote cast by such a voter is duly counted.

S392 - To grant a Federal Charter to Korean War Veterans Association, Incorporated.

S405 - To improve outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for more fully informing veterans of benefits available to them under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

S409 - To clarify the standards for compensation for Persian Gulf veterans suffering from certain undiagnosed illnesses.

New NJ Bills

A14 - Establishes Operation Recognition to provide State endorsed high school diplomas to veterans who left high school to serve in the armed forces during World War I or World War II.

A105 - Requires DMV to accept military retiree identification card as proof of legal name on driver's licenses.

A214 - Excludes Armed Services combat zone pay from gross income taxation.

A216 - Revises membership of USS NJ Battleship Commission; expands powers to operate the berthing site.

A326 - Authorizes special license plates for military retirees.

A368 - Extends property tax reimbursement benefits to certain low income veterans.

A455 - Extends civil service veterans preference to veterans who served in NATO campaign and peacekeeping in Yugoslavia.

A524 - Extends certain veterans' benefits to include veterans who served in NATO campaign and peacekeeping in Yugoslavia. (Passed in Assembly 5/25/00).

A663/S687 Authorizes special Distinguished Flying Cross license plates.

A664/S686 - Provides for special Bronze Star license plates.

A669/S780 - Allows gross income tax filers to designate contribution to Vet Group, Inc. for services to veterans.

A671/S689 - Authorizes special license plate for DSM recipients.

A678/S699 - Requires State reimbursement to municipalities of cost of disabled veterans' total property tax exemption. (A678 combined with bills A743 & A378).

A70/S103 - Extends veterans' property tax exemption to tenant shareholders in cooperatives and mutual housing corporations.

A765 - Directs N.J. Highway Authority to designate Garden State Parkway as memorial highway to ex-POW's (Passed Assembly Oct. 30, 2000).

A979 - Reallocates appropriate funds to pay disabled veterans' retroactive refund claims for property tax payments.

A1195 - Makes certain changes in retirement provisions for PERS members who are veterans.

A1197 - Entitles representatives of WAC's WAVES, Women Marines and Vietnam Veterans of America to leave of absence with pay to attend conventions - state employees only.

A1225 - Establishes and allocates funds

for program to provide capital grants to veteran's organization; appropriates \$250,000.

A1237 - Authorizes special license plates for members of the Disabled American Veterans Department of N.J.

A1249/S1907 - Permits certain TPAF veteran retirees to receive paid health benefits under State Health Benefits Program.

A1256/S847 - Excludes U.S. military pensions and survivors benefits of persons less than 62 years of age from gross income taxation. (Assembly Floor Amendments Passed 2/22/01)

A1258 - Grants local government budget cap exception for personnel costs of employees in military reserves and N.J. National Guard activated for NATO action in Yugoslavia.

A1329 - Modifies maximum age for police and fire department hires and for PFRS enrollment by permitting subtraction from actual age of up to five years for service in Armed Forces, Coast Guard, reserves or National Guard.

A1330/S1894 - Expands certain veterans' benefits to certain participants in the Lebanon Crisis of 1958. (Passed in Assembly 2/24/00).

A1336/S1149 - Extends TPAF, PERS and PFRS veteran's status to certain participants in peace-keeping operations in Somalia and Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Passed in Assembly 5/25/00; Senate Floor Amendment Passed 12/4/00).

A1401 - Permits certain war-time veterans and military surviving spouses to receive enhanced homestead rebate amount similar to the homestead rebate amounts allowed for senior and disabled residents.

A1446/S134/A2461 - Excludes veterans' entitlements from income for determination of PAAD eligibility.

A1461 - Permits parking of vehicles with "Disabled Veteran" license plates in spaces reserved for handicapped.

A1473 - Provides credit to retired or separated military personnel who apply for private passenger automobile insurance.

A1570 - Provides property tax relief to certain totally disabled veterans and provides for municipal reimbursement by State.

A1663 - Provides full or partial reimbursement to new veteran-owned small businesses of sales and use tax paid.

A1664 - Requires N.J. Public Broadcasting Authority and the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to videotape certain N.J. veterans; appropriates \$100,000.

**Don't let someone
else's opinion count
more than yours.**

Vote

**If you don't
do it, who will?**



A1711 - Broadens the criteria under certain circumstance, for eligibility for 100% exemption from property taxes for the surviving spouses of certain veterans.

A1745/S809 - Supplemental appropriation of \$100,000 to DEP for replacement of Civil War statue.

A1847/340 - Revises membership of USSNJ Battleship Commission, designates Foundation for the USSNJ Battleship as operator of battleship site and grants control over battleship to the Commission.

A1863 - "Veterans' Property Tax Relief Act of 2000."

A1971/S422 - Provides special license plates for Purple Heart recipients. (Passed in Senate 2/7/00).

A2004/S503 - Revises retirement provisions for PERS members who are veterans.

A2028/S609 - Implements proposed constitutional amendment extending eligibility for property tax deduction to N.J. resident who is surviving spouse of nonresident veteran.

A2042/S24 - Makes supplemental appropriation of \$7.2 million from the General Fund for Inter-Department Account capital construction project costs of the Battleship USS NJ refurbishment.

A2156 - Abolishes battleship commission and foundation; transfers funds to special account.

A2177/S1842 - Supplemental appropriation of \$100,000 from General Fund for NJ Naval Militia Joint Command. (Passed Both Houses 02/15/01)

A2276 - Directs that "N.J. Turnpike" be designated "N.J. Veterans Turnpike," appropriates \$500,00.

A2349/S1123 - Authorizes free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and State park admission for persons with certain types of military service.

A2402/S638 - Extends period of restricted sale of poppies to raise funds to benefit veterans. (Passed Both Houses 1/29/01).

A2482 - Establishes loan program to rehabilitate military monuments; appropriates \$600,000.

A2490 - Provides that certain surviving spouses of veterans may continue to receive veterans' property tax deduction after remarriage.

A2527/S1045 - Establishes special license plates for World War II Veterans (Passed by the Senate 6/8/2000).

A2546/S1086 - Establishes special license plates for veterans of the Korean conflict.

A2599 - Qualifies "Cold War" era veterans

for veteran's property tax deduction.

A2613/S1654 - Amends definition of veteran for certain military engagements.

A2713 - Provides for non-binding referendum as to the permanent berthing of the Battleship USS NJ; makes an appropriation.

A2783/S1388 - Supplemental appropriation of \$50,000 to DMAVA for study of veterans needs. (Passed Senate 10/23/00)

A2810 - Accelerates by one year phase-in of veteran property tax deduction increase.

A2823/S133 - Adds Haiti peacekeeping mission to definition of "active service in time of war" for eligibility to receive \$100 veterans' property tax deduction.

A2833 - Redesigns special prisoner of war license plates.

A2855/S1432 - Authorizes special emblem for license plates of disabled veterans.

A2881 - Permits municipality to retroactively refund veteran's property tax paid inadvertently.

A2949 - Authorizes Naval combat service license plate.

A2951 - Authorizes special license plate for ex-prisoners of war.

A3043 - Concerns calculation of retirement benefits of certain veteran members of PERS.

A3091/S1997 - Supplemental appropriation of \$25,000 to Division of Housing and Community Resources in DCA to fund grant to Willingboro Township for veterans' memorial.

A3180 - Authorizes special Bronze Star license plates.

A3234 - Supplemental appropriation of \$500,000 from General Fund to Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for Veterans Guide and Veterans Journal.

S24 - Makes supplemental appropriation of \$7.2 million from General Fund for capital construction project costs of Battleship USS NJ refurbishment.

S83 - Eliminates the requirement of overseas service in Operation "Desert Shield/Desert Storm" to qualify for civil service veterans' preference.

S133 - Adds Haiti peacekeeping mission to definition of "active service in time of war" for eligibility to receive \$50 veterans' property tax reduction.

S164 - Provides for the issuance of special motor vehicle license plates to Combat Medical Badge recipients.

S214 - "Totally Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Relief Act of 2000."

S465 - Authorizes special license plates for

members of the Disabled American Veterans Department of N.J.

S590 - Authorizes "Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation" license plate. (Passed in Senate 3/23/00).

S620 - Authorizes issuance of POW plates for vehicles leased by former prisoners of war. (Passed in Senate 3/27/00).

S742 - Provides that TPAF and PERS veterans' retirement with 35 years of services shall be based on highest benefit year rather than last year of service.

S766 - Authorizes "Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation" license plate.

S971 - Extends certain veterans' benefits to persons inducted into active service through the United States Selective Service System during the Cold War.

S1241 - Provides property tax exemption for fractional ownership by 100% disabled veteran in continuing care facility.

S1294 - Extends eligibility for NJ DSM to 25 year State residents.

S1975 - Exempts from the sales and use tax sales made at concession stands located in State-owned veterans' homes.

S2095/A3236 - Supplemental appropriation of \$6 million to DHS for Social Services to the Homeless grant program and \$2 million to DMAVA to assist homeless veterans.

S2101 - Eliminates criteria qualified voter must meet to receive military or civilian absentee ballot.

S2165 - Supplemental appropriation of \$40,000 to Division of Housing and Community Resources in DCA to fund grant to East Greenwich Township for veteran's memorial.

Editor's Note: The following are common acronyms used in the previous bill summaries.

DCA - Department of Community Affairs
DEP - Department of Environmental Protection

DHS - Department of Human Services
DMAVA - Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

DMV - Department of Motor Vehicles
DSM - N.J.'s Distinguished Service Medal
PAAD - Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled Program

PERS - Public Employees' Retirement System

PFRS - Police and Firemen's Retirement System

TPAF - Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund

Operation Recognition Expands

High school diplomas for those who left school to defend our freedoms

In October, the New Jersey Departments of Military and Veterans Affairs and Education jointly launched a program to honor World War II era veterans who left high school to join the military and never received their diploma.

Because of the overwhelming success of this program, The Adjutant General and the Commissioner of Education are expanding the program to include veterans from the Korean and Vietnam wars.

More than 500 of New Jersey's 100,000 living World War II veterans have already applied for their di-

plomas as part of the program Operation Recognition.

Governor Christie Whitman presented the first high school diplomas of Operation Recognition to 98 WWII veterans at the War Memorial in Trenton November 3.

"You missed high school's milestones because your nation needed you, and you responded selflessly," said Gov. Whitman. "We can't give you back memories of the senior prom or graduation. But we can put in your hand an important milestone – your high school diploma."

"I am asking local school leaders throughout the state to realize the opportunities this program will present to enhance their social studies and history curriculums," said Commissioner

of Education David Hespe. "I ask school districts to consider awarding these diplomas as part of Veterans Day or Memorial Day observances, or at commencement exercises."

Secaucus High School with the help

of states including Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Wisconsin and West Virginia.

To qualify a resident New Jersey veteran must have left a New Jersey high school to directly enter military service between the dates of:

~ Sept. 16, 1940
and Dec. 31, 1946

~ June 23, 1950
and Jan. 31, 1955

~ Dec. 31, 1960
and May 7, 1975.

Veterans of all the branches of service including Merchant Marine and Coast Guard as well as those who have earned a General Educational Development Diploma

(GED) qualify. Diplomas may also be issued posthumously; surviving family members of eligible veterans are encouraged to apply.

Qualified veterans may apply to receive the state-endorsed high school diploma. To apply for Operation Recognition diplomas, send a copy of your DD-214 or discharge papers, the name and address of the high school you attended, the year you would have graduated, your name, address and daytime phone number to:

Operation Recognition
N.J. DMAVA
Eggert Crossing Road Box 340
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340

For more information, call Patty Ann Richter at (609) 530-7052.



Then Governor Christine Whitman presented 98 World War II era veterans with their high school diploma in the first Operation Recognition ceremony Nov 3. Official state photograph.

of Radisson Hotels is holding a prom May 17 and graduation May 18 for veterans from Hudson, Bergen and Essex counties. To help with this ceremony or for more information, call Mike Germann at (201)974-2028.

The Department of Human Services in Middlesex has committed to a graduation ceremony for veterans of that county, but has not set the date.

No other counties have confirmed ceremonies. "We are looking for your help to organize graduation ceremonies in your community," explained Patty Ann Richter. "For guidance, assistance and more information, give me a call." Patty Ann Richter can be reached at (609)530-7052.

Programs similar to Operation Recognition have been established in other

Miss America Dedicates Haven for Homeless Veterans



Ms. Heather Renee French - Miss America 2000, and Maj. Gen. Paul Glazar, pledge allegiance during the dedication ceremony at Veterans Haven.

Story and photographs by Staff Sgt. Mark Olsen, N.J. Air National Guard

Miss America 2000 - Ms. Heather Renee French and New Jersey's Adjutant General - Maj. Gen. Paul J. Glazar dedicated the New Jersey Veterans Haven in a public ceremony August 18.

Veterans Haven is the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs transitional housing program for homeless veterans located at 202 Spring Garden Road (off Route 30) in Winslow, N.J. In operation since January 1995, Veterans' Haven has been a temporary home to more than 270 homeless men and women veterans.

Ms. Heather Renee French, Miss America 2000, has championed homeless veterans as her platform, assisting programs such as Veterans Haven during her reign. "As the daughter of a disabled Vietnam veteran, I pledge my heart, my hands and my voice to helping veterans fight the battles they face on our nation's streets. So they don't face these battles alone, I urge all Americans to lend their support to these often forgotten men and women."

In January 2000 Veterans Haven began a \$400,000 construction and expansion project jointly financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the New Jersey DMAVA. The construction project included expanding the dining room, adding an all-purpose classroom area, and installing a computer

training lab for the residents is furnished with two servers and more than 12 personal computers.

The surrounding outdoor area also received a face-lift. Members of the 177th Civil Engineering Squadron, New Jersey Air National Guard, cleared the parking lot behind the main building, graded it, and installed a newly surfaced parking lot and picnic area.

This expansion is the latest phase in a six year program designed to completely renovate and overhaul the building. "When the program first received the building, it had been abandoned - unused for more than five years," described Robert Durante, Veterans Haven superintendent. "A lot of the general cleanup in the first few years was done by residents."

Since the program began, 65 percent of the Haven's residents have successfully completed their recovery and returned to society as wage-earning, tax-paying citizens. The normal stay is six to 24 months allowing the veteran ample time to prepare himself to return to inde-

pendent living. The program is divided into three phases - treatment; self-reclamation, and community reintegration. There are currently 50 veterans in residence, many of whom are working full-time or attending school.

Durante also indicated that the program could not have become what it is today - the only one of its kind in the country - without the caring and generous donations of many people and organizations like the Elks, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and Vietnam Veterans of America. Many of the invited guests at the dedication ceremony were representing the organizations that have supported Veterans Haven.

For more information on the Veterans Haven transitional housing program, call (609) 561-0269.



Chief Master Sgt. Herbert Mimler evens out a rough patch in the parking lot addition behind Veterans Haven.

Tricare for Life

Recently an unidentified group has been contacting military retirees more than 65 years old and offering to enroll them in Tricare for Life for a \$50 fee. Tricare for Life does NOT charge an enrollment fee. For more information call Bob Washington at (800) 372-1924.

TROA Career Fair 2001

The Retired Officers Association is holding a career fair May 17 9 AM to 7 PM at the Washington Convention Center, 900 9th Street NW in Washington, DC. No fees. Business attire or uniform. More than 100 companies plan to recruit military personnel, veterans and spouses. For more information call toll free (877) 533-8677.

Vietnam Era Educational Center Upcoming Events

Saturday, April 21, 1:00 PM, **The Real Deal** - A film presentation by Marc Levy, Vietnam veteran and poet. Lecture attendees are asked to R.S.V.P. one week prior to the event to (732) 335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

Saturday, April 28, 1:00 PM, **Organizing Resistance to the Vietnam War** - Oral history presentation by Leonard Amada, WWII veteran and community activist. Lecture attendees are asked to R.S.V.P. one week prior to (732) 335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

Monday, May 7, 11:00 AM, **New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day Ceremony**
Keynote speaker: Hela Young.

F

THE NEW JERSEY Korean War MEMORIAL

Memorial Dedicated Nov 13

Governor Christine Todd Whitman and a host of dignitaries joined close to one thousand attendees in the dedication ceremony of the New Jersey Korean War Memorial, located in Brighton Park – where Park Place meets the Boardwalk. The keynote speaker was Medal of Honor Recipient from New Jersey Hector A. Cafferata Jr.

Senator Louis Kosco (R-38) wrote the enabling legislation for the Memorial in 1996, appropriating the initial seed money of \$25,000, which established the New Jersey Korean War Memorial Committee. Atlantic City's Casino Reinvestment and Development Authority (CRDA) contributed \$1 million toward the \$3 million project. The Korean War Memorial fund is still accepting corporate and private donations to cover the remaining costs associated with construction.

Sculptors J. Tom Carillo of Denver and Thomas Jay Warren of Sugar Grove, N.C., were selected by the Committee in 1998 to work on the Memorial, which features a 12-foot high statue of "The Mourning Soldier" clutching dogtags and remembering his lost comrades. A group of soldiers "under fire" emerges through a sheet of water just to his left. The back wall of the Memorial, beneath an eternal flame, is engraved with the names of the 822 New Jerseyans who were killed or are still listed as missing in action.

Then Governor Christine Todd Whitman attended the dedication and laid a wreath honoring the 191,000 New Jerseyans who served in the conflict. "May this memorial forever stand

both as a tribute to those who fought for freedom in Korea and as an enduring symbol of New Jerseyans' deep appreciation for the selfless, patriotic service of all our country's veterans," stated Gov. Christie Whitman.

Executive Director of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War, Maj. Gen. (Ret) Nels Running presented Gov. Whitman with a 50th Commemorative coin and certificate to symbolize New Jersey's recognition as an official "Commemorative Community."

Maj. Gen. Paul J. Glazar, The Adjutant General of the State of New Jersey said, "With this very beautiful and special permanent tribute, the veterans of the Forgotten War will be forgotten no more."

Members of the Korean Community dressed in traditional garb sounded a ceremonial gong as the New Jersey Army National Guard followed with a nine-gun rifle salute. The ceremony concluded with a flyover of four F-16C Fighting Falcons from the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard. Bally's Park Place hotel and casino hosted a reception immediately following the ceremony.

"The generosity and continued support from the CRDA, members of the New Jersey Legislature, Governor Whitman, Veterans' Organizations, corporate donors and so many individuals have truly made this important day a reality," stated Committee Chairman Larry St. Laurent. "Finally the courage and sacrifice of so many will forever stand tall in our community."

The Adjutant General Now Determines Veterans Preference

By CWO5 (RET) Bob Wimberly
Chief of Veterans Benefits Bureau

Beginning March 1, The Adjutant General of New Jersey, who also is the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, will assume the responsibility of determining veterans' status for N.J. state residents.

The job was previously the obligation of the New Jersey Department of Personnel and the New Jersey Department of Treasury, Division of Pensions.

The Adjutant General will determine whether a person seeking to be considered a "veteran" or "disabled veteran" meets the criteria established by the law. Any appeals will be adjudicated by the TAG.

When veteran status is determined, The Adjutant General will notify the Department of Personnel for civil service preference and the Division of Pensions and Benefits for retirement allowances and military service credit. The ruling will be binding.

Veteran status or disabled veteran status may be awarded to any person who meets the criteria as set forth in

the law. Veterans of war service may be eligible for veterans status for civil service testing, veterans status for retirement allowances or veterans status for military service credit.

War service is defined by service by a veteran in any war, conflict, mission or operation during the periods specified in the law. These include World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Conflict, Lebanon Peacekeeping Mission, Grenada Peacekeeping Mission, Panama Peacekeeping Mission, Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield in the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti.

For an application or assistance contact local veterans organizations, state or county Veterans Service Office or veteran counselor at a state employment office. The NJDMAVA Veterans' Hot Line phone number is 1-800-624-0508. Further information is also available on the internet at:

WWW.STATE.NJ.US/MILITARY/VETERANS

Memorial Walkway Dedication

On October 23, Maj. Gen. Paul J. Glazar, The Adjutant General, and Congressman Jim Saxton cut the ribbon, opening the Memorial Walkway at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

The memorial walkway in most veteran cemeteries is adorned with monuments and benches and provides a place for remembrance and reflection.

This Memorial Walkway is located near a pond in a serene corner of the cemetery.

The Memorial Walkway allows veteran organizations a place for permanent monuments in tribute to their fallen comrades. American Ex-Prisoners of War, Disabled American Veterans and The 4th Marine Division Association have monuments in place. The Marine Corps League and N.J. Advisory Committee for Women Veterans have also expressed intent to place monuments.

The walkway was constructed in 12 months with a \$100,000 grant from the Veterans Administration State Cemeteries Grants Service.

Thursday, May 17, 7:00 PM,
A Long Time Coming - Oral history presentation by Robert Maras, Vietnam veteran and past president of VVA, about his return trips to Vietnam. Lecture attendees are asked to R.S.V.P. one week prior to the event to (732) 335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

Monday, May 28, 11:00 AM,
Memorial Day Ceremony

Thursday, June 7, 7:00 PM,
Dreaming Through the Twilight - A play about loss and healing, presented on video by Tom Tunnington. Lecture attendees are asked to R.S.V.P. one week prior to the event to (732) 335-0033. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

Sunday, September, 16, 11 AM
Rolling Thunder - Ride for Freedom VI - 6th Annual motorcycle cavalcade organized by Rolling Thunder, Inc. to keep the issue of America's prisoners of war and missing in action in the public eye. Departs from Warinanco Park, Roselle, N.J. at 11:00 AM, travels the Garden State Parkway and arrives at the NJ Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.

All events and notices are included as space is available. Events must be opened to the general public, without discrimination or membership. Submissions must include hosting organization; event description, date, time and place; point of contact and cost if any. Submissions may be sent to: Veteran Journal Editor, NJDMAVA, PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Road, Trenton, NJ 08625-0340.

New Jersey Mints Vietnam Service Medal

By G. Natasha Zoe

The Adjutant General approved this design for the New Jersey Vietnam Service Medal and ribbon to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam Conflict in January 1973. It is expected to be minted by this fall.

An eligible veteran must meet all of the following:

~ was a resident of New Jersey when enlisted or inducted .

~ was on active duty in any branch of the armed forces of the United States in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos or Cambodia or the contiguous waters or airspace thereof on or after December 31, 1960 and on or before May 7, 1975.

~ have been given an honorable discharge from such service or currently serving.



~ meet one of the following four “in country” requirements: (1) were attached to or served for one or more days with an organization participating in or directly supporting military operations. (2) were attached to or served for one or more days aboard a United States Naval vessel directly supporting

military operations. (3) participated as a crew member in one or more aerial flights into airspace above Vietnam and contiguous waters directly supporting military operations. (4) served on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days in Vietnam or contiguous areas, except that this time limit may be waived for persons participating in actual combat operations.

The surviving spouse or immediate family member of any resident of the state meeting the above requirements for a medal and who was killed while on active duty or died after receiving an honorable discharge from the armed forces may apply for a posthumous awarding of the medal.

No applications are currently being accepted. Information and applications will be available this fall.

Republic of Korea War Service Medal Available and Now Authorized for Wear on US Uniforms

This medal was initially proposed by the South Korean government in 1951 to honor all United Nations troops who battled the communist aggressors during the Korean War. After 48 years, the medal was finally approved by the Department of Defense.

During the Korean War, the U.S. disallowed the wearing of Korean War Service Medal, because regulations at the time prevented American service members from wearing any foreign award. However, Congress changed this law in 1954. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary, the Republic of Korea once again offered the medal.

The Secretary of Defense appointed the Air Force as the lead agent to distribute the medal. The Air Force Personnel Center processes the requests and distributes the medals to all Korean War Veterans who qualify, regard-

less of their branch of service.

The Air Force Personnel Center processes medal requests on a first come first serve basis. The AFPC advises that the processing and shipment of medals may take up to six months due to the high volume of requests.

The medal is free to veterans who meet the criteria. Do not confuse it with other commemoration medallions for sale by for-profit organizations.

U.S. military personnel must have:
~ served between the outbreak of hostilities, June 25, 1950, and the date the armistice was signed, July 27, 1953;
~ been on permanent assignment or on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days, and
~ performed their duty within the territorial limits of Korea, in the waters immediately adjacent thereto or in aerial flight over Korea participating in actual

combat operations or in support of combat operations.

Only the ROK-provided medal is approved for wear on the military uniform. Because the order of precedence for non-U.S. service medals and ribbons is determined by date of approval, the ROKWSM should be worn after the Kuwait Liberation Medal, which was the last foreign medal approved for wear by U.S. military personnel.

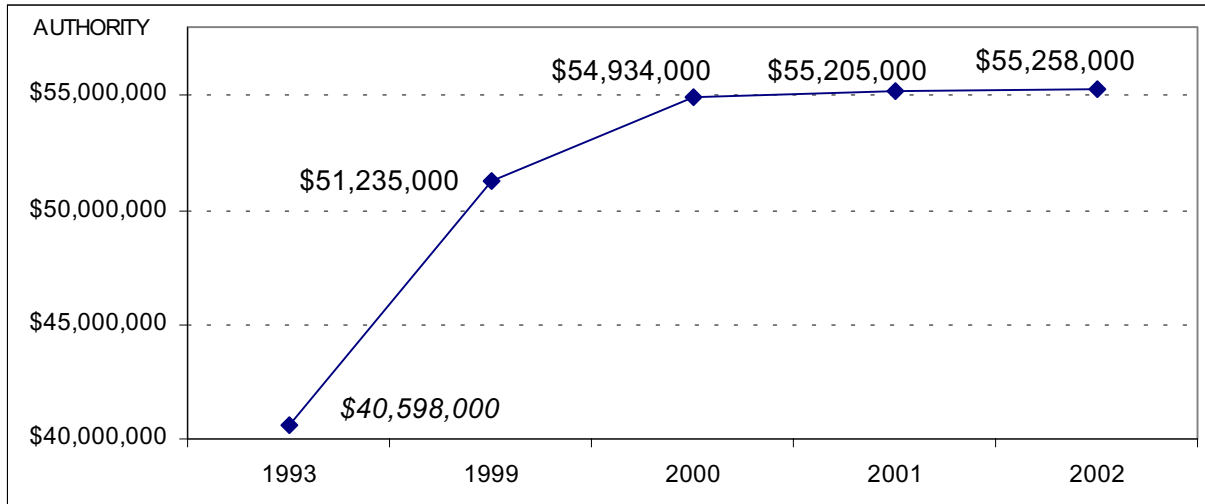
To apply, veterans should send a copy of their discharge paper “DD-214” and current mailing address to:
HQ AFPC/DPPRA
550 C Street West, Suite 12
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas
78150-4714

Additional information can be found by contacting the Air Force Personnel Center, at (800) 558-1404, or
WWW.AFPC.RANDOLPH.AF.MIL/AWARDS

Recommended FY2002 Budget for DMAVA

RECOMMENDED

YEAR	1993	1999	2000	2001	2002
AUTHORITY	\$40,598,000	\$51,235,000	\$54,934,000	\$55,205,000	\$55,258,000



By LTC (RET) Thomas J. Flynn
Fiscal Officer, DCVA

In the more than seven years of this administration, the Veterans portion of the departmental budget has increased \$14,660,000. That is a 36.11% gain in funding from 1993 to the governor's recommended budget for FY 2002.

Funding Highlights

Provides more than \$49 million for operation of our three veterans homes.

Ensures that New Jersey's veterans receive quality care at our veterans homes.

Provides more than \$2 million for operation of our veterans cemetery and burial services.

Provides \$4 million for administration of our veterans benefit programs and continued commitment for care of the state's veterans memorials.

Initiatives

During this current year and for 2002, Veterans Affairs has begun a new outreach with the establishment of our

own Veterans Benefits Bureau. The bureau has the authority for determination of veterans preference, veterans status, and veterans catastrophic entitlements.

The Veterans Benefits Bureau is the final approval authority of the aforementioned. By becoming the State Approving Authority, it eliminates having our veterans go to multiple agencies for certifications. State fiscal year 2002 will be the first full year that the bureau will be in service.

The Honor Guard Burial Detail began this current year. This prestigious detail provides the military honors and presence during interments. This entitlement is requested through the funeral director.

Legislation has passed establishing a World War II Memorial Commission. The Commission is currently not funded by an appropriation. Monies to support the establishment of the Commission will come from the administration portion of the FY 2002 budget. Funding for future

year's budgets will be sought to build and maintain the memorial.

The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Program has had a 10% increase in clients utilizing the counseling services provided. It is anticipated that more Korean War era veterans will use the PTSD program entitlement during Fiscal Year 2002.

Greater emphasis toward the Veterans Transportation Program was provided this year, by moving excess funds from lesser-utilized entitlement programs to transportation, more services were available. During Fiscal Year 2002, we look toward growth in this service program.

Editor's Note: The New Jersey State Fiscal Year 2002 runs from July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002. The governor's recommended budget must be passed by the N.J. Senate and Assembly before it becomes law.

US Dept of Veteran Affairs Updates

New VA Secretary

By Rudi Williams

American Forces Press Service

Calling himself a veteran's activist, Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi vowed to conduct a major top-to-bottom review of the VA's health care and claims processing systems.

Principi, who is from New Jersey, promises to make a difference, to work hard, to listen to veterans' concerns and to make decisions that will help. "If we don't improve benefits and services after four years, I'll consider my tour a failure," he said. The new secretary is a Vietnam combat veteran. His wife was a Navy nurse in Vietnam.

He said taking up to two years to reach a decision is not acceptable. "I want practical, hands-on solutions to better provide high-quality, timely evaluations on claims," he emphasized. "I want to ensure we have uniform access to high-quality healthcare."

"There has to be a close bond and trust between the people who defend the nation and who may come to us for their benefits after separating from the services," he said. "They need to know we're providing them with the care and benefits they've earned in service to our country."

Congressman Smith Calls for \$2.1 Billion Increase in VA Budget

By Dan Amon

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The U.S. House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved what Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ) called "a work in progress," a fiscal year 2002 budget calling for a \$2.1 billion increase in discretionary VA spending.

The committee's recommendations address healthcare needs, claims back-



Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco joined US Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi and Congressman Chris Smith at a roundtable discussion and tour of the James J. Howard VA Outpatient Clinic in Brick to listen to concerns from New Jersey veterans over a reduction in federal funding for their health care services.

Photograph by G. Natasha Zoe

log, and crumbling medical infrastructure. The recommended increases of more \$1.525 billion in VA health care and \$49.8 million to address the backlog of disability and pension claims.

Chairman Smith said the Administration's recommended billion-dollar, 4.5 percent increase in discretionary VA spending outlined by VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi would "just about keep veterans health care even."

"But we need to do more than keep health care even," Chairman Smith said. "We know that veterans programs have some specific needs for which funding has been too long deferred."

The \$1.525 billion increase in VA medical care would include \$141 million for mental health programs, \$100 million for higher pharmacy costs, \$88 million for long-term care, \$75 million for staff to reduce waiting times, \$68 million for emergency care, \$30 million for homeless programs, \$23 million for

spinal cord injury programs, and \$1 billion to adjust for inflation.

A \$130 million increase proposed for the Veterans Benefits Administration includes the \$49.8 million for an additional 830 full-time employees to help deal with a backlog in claims processing that is getting worse.

In addition to the \$2.1 billion increase in discretionary spending, the VA Committee recommends \$300 million in additional direct spending for further benefit increases in both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Veterans Opportunities Act of 2001.

The VA Committee also recommends a \$325 million increase for VA medical facility repair. This would fund The Veterans Hospitals Emergency Repair Act, which would authorize a two-year total of \$550 million.

The VA Committee also seeks modest increases for state nursing home and cemetery grants programs as well as for the National Cemetery Administration.

Free subscription for a friend - Please do NOT mail duplicate requests!

For a free subscription to this newsletter please fill out the information below including answering the three questions at the bottom and return this form to:

NJDMAVA--PAOV

ATTN: Veteran Journal Editor

PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Rd.

Trenton, N.J. 08625-0340

Name _____ Male _____ Female _____

Street Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Branch of Service _____ Dates Of Service _____

In order to protect your privacy, please answer the following three questions.

I wish to receive the NJ Veterans Journal. YES or NO

I wish to receive other veteran-related information from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs. My name may be added to the DMAVA mailing list. YES or NO

I wish to receive any veteran-related information. My name and address only may be used to send me any veteran-related information, such as from the VA. YES or NO

VA Applications Online

Veterans can apply for VA benefits and health care online. Veterans may apply for compensation, pension, rehabilitation benefits and health care.

To apply for health care online, veterans must fill out an Internet-based form application. The form is automatically e-mailed to the VA facility selected by the veteran. VA employees register the data, print the form and mail it back to the veteran for signature. Veterans can also print out the completed form and mail it themselves.

"Veterans On Line Applications" (VONAPP) is designed for veterans to apply for compensation, pension, and vocational rehabilitation benefits. Applications are sent electronically to the local VA office. Processing begins right away. Veterans receive a response with the status of their applications.

Later this year, VA plans to offer education applications on the Internet. Currently, veterans attending school under the Montgomery GI Bill can make their monthly certification of enrollment at WWW.GIBILL.VA.GOV.

To access Internet applications:
[HTTP://VABENEFITS.VBA.VA.GOV](http://VABENEFITS.VBA.VA.GOV)

Veteran Entrepreneurs

The new Center for Veterans Enterprise will extend VA's services to veterans who own or who want to start their own business. Veterans can call or e-mail the center to receive assistance from a national network of business specialists. Information will be available about loans, business management programs, online training and procurement opportunities with federal, state and local agencies.

There are 22 million businesses in the United States. The new center estimates that 5 million are owned by veterans. Plans are underway to register each veteran-owned business and advise owners of opportunities to do business with the federal government. Under this program, a veteran-owned business has 51 percent of the business controlled by a veteran.

For more information call toll free 1-866-584-2344, (202) 565-8336 or WWW.VETBIZ.GOV.

VA Links Agent Orange and Diabetes

Vietnam veterans with Type-II diabetes will now be eligible for disability

compensation from the VA based on their presumed exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides. Type-II diabetes is now a presumed disease associated with herbicide exposure.

Diabetes mellitus is characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to process the hormone insulin. More than 90 percent of the 16 million American diabetics are categorized as Type-II.

Approximately 16 percent of veterans receiving care in VA medical facilities have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death and the leading cause of blindness in the United States.

The following conditions are now considered service-connected for Vietnam veterans: chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, acute or subacute peripheral neuropathy, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, soft tissue sarcoma, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer and respiratory cancers (including cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus). In addition, Vietnam veterans' children with the birth defect spina bifida are eligible for certain benefits and services.

State of New Jersey
Department of Military and
Veteran Affairs - PAOV
PO Box 340, Eggert Crossing Road
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340



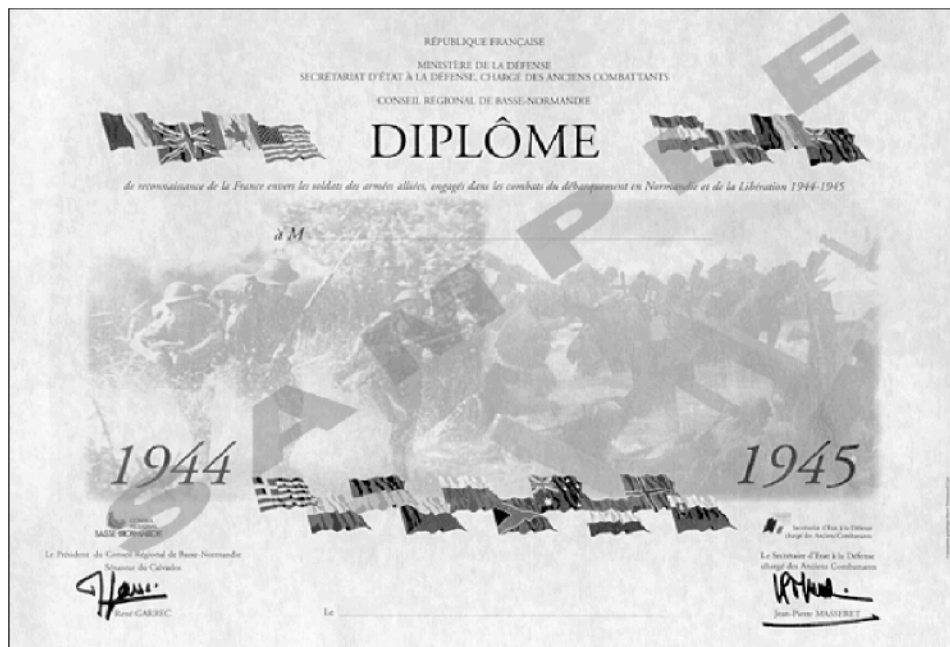
French Government Honors World War II Veterans

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi and H.E. Francois de l'Etang, ambassador of France, announced that the French Government will present certificates to World War II veterans to thank them for their participation in the liberation of France.

"This honor is further evidence that the contributions of our World War II veterans will be remembered by this nation and by our allies around the world whom they helped to free," said Principi.

To be eligible, a veteran must have served on French territory, in French territorial waters or in French airspace between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945. The certificate will not be issued posthumously. Presentation of the certificates is expected to begin later this year.

The application form may be available from veteran service organizations. The application form is also available



on a special internet site maintained by the French government WWW.INFO-FRANCE-USA.ORG

The form should be mailed to the French Consulate in New York with a copy of any document showing proof of service in France between June 6,

1944 and May 8, 1945. The documents will not be returned, please send copies.

French Consulate
"Thank-You-America"
934 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021