

MASS. VS 1.3:5/1

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

The

COMMONWEALTH VETERAN

Thomas G. Kelley  
Commissioner

Argeo Paul Cellucci Governor  
Jane Swift Lieutenant Governor

Volume 5 Issue 1

"Because They Served"

Spring, 1999

USS Massachusetts--A Proud Lady

The pride of the Battleship Cove Museum in Fall River and a veteran of 13 World War II campaigns and 35 battles was in danger of sinking because she had been neglected for 46 years. The fate of the USS Massachusetts, a 57-year old battleship was placed in the hands of the Massachusetts Legislature. They appropriated the estimated \$10 million expense to save the ship.

The Battleship Massachusetts was built in Quincy at the Fore River Shipyard and was launched September 23, 1941. She went into action on November 8, 1942 in the Invasion of North Africa, where the Massachusetts engaged in gun duels with



an enemy battleship and destroyers, silencing them and inflicting heavy damage to the buildings and docks of Casablanca. During her distinguished career, the ship, which has logged 225,000 miles and served many years in the Pacific, was credited with the destruction of 18 enemy aircraft between November, 1943 and August, 1945.

The USS Massachusetts has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service, "for its significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America." Furthermore, the ship has continued to be a resource to help educate the many school children who visit the ship each year.

◆◆◆



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Commissioner's Column  
Coming Events
- 3 Women's Network
- 4 Law & Legislative Updates  
Annuity Offered
- 5 State Veterans' Cemeteries  
Veterans' License Plates
- 6 Operation Recognition  
From the Training Tent
- 7 Bronze Star Awarded  
Purple Heart Awarded
- 8 DVS Moves  
E-Mail for POW's Families

The USS Massachusetts was the first and last battleship to fire her 16" guns in World War II. After the war she operated with the Pacific Fleet until 1946 when she was deactivated, and returned to Norfolk, VA until 1962. The Navy ordered the ship to be sold for scrap, but her crew who had held reunions for many years decided to raise money to find a site for the 35,000-ton battleship. She was brought to Fall River in June, 1965 and opened to the public a few months later.

The restoration has been completed and "Big Mamie", as she was known by her crew, returned to Fall River last month.

DVS WELCOMES  
NEW COMMISSIONER

Thomas G. Kelley took over the helm of the Department of Veterans' Services on April 5, 1999 and his first column as the new Commissioner appears on Page 2 (Commissioner's Column). Tom is a Vietnam veteran and a recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Purple Heart. He is a retired Naval Officer, a native of Massachusetts, and resides in South Boston. Please welcome him aboard.

◆◆◆

## COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

Let me take this opportunity to tell all veterans and their families, across the Commonwealth, how proud and honored I am to have been appointed Commissioner. In my eight months with the Department, it's become clear to me that we in Massachusetts have the best programs in the country to serve those veterans who need help the most. It hasn't happened by accident: the united front presented by veterans' agents, Service Organizations, the Veterans' Administration, and service providers, aided by the professional staff here at DVS have kept veterans issues clearly on the minds of our elected officials. Sitting in Tom Hudner's chair is a humbling experience. I know I can count on the same support from the entire veterans' community that you gave Tom over the past several years.

As I write this, the air war in the Balkans is almost two weeks old with no resolution in sight. Three of our soldiers are in enemy hands, which is a stark reminder of those missing and unaccounted for from previous conflicts. Let's never forget, and continue to insist upon a full accounting.

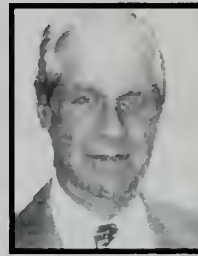
Elsewhere in the issue, Jack Corey has outlined our legislative agenda for this year. As we...all of us who have the opportunity...make our case to the legislature, I'd like to make the point that veterans who served as long as fifty or more years ago in the Armed Forces, are still serving in the communities to which they returned, and that these communities should take advantage of this unique source. At a time when people become role models simply because of the salaries they earn, can anyone think of a better example for our young people than those who have served their country in times of need? Veterans, especially those not working full time, have so much to offer to many segments of society: mentoring for our youth, companionship for senior citizens, library and school volunteer work. They served years ago when there was a need...why not now when the need is different but no less urgent.

About ten years ago, an effort was started to raise funds for the construction of a Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans' Me-

### Farewell: Commissioner Thomas J. Hudner, Jr

Commissioner Hudner retired from his position at the Department of Veterans' Services on April 2, 1999.

After eleven years of service, Captain



Hudner, although "retiring" from this agency, is now off on several new adventures, many of which still involve veterans and lending support to other veterans' causes. We wish him a fond farewell, good luck in his new endeavors and, if he slows down long enough, a lower handicap on the greens at Concord Country Club. ♦♦♦

morial. It looks like the effort is finally getting ready to become a reality. The City of Worcester, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans' Services and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Trust, has stepped forward to take the lead in the construction of the memorial. Legislation is pending which would make this relationship formal and would allow the project to move forward rapidly. Thanks to Mike O'Brien, Worcester's Park Commissioner, a real friend of veterans, for leading this initiative, and to Ray Destratis of the VVMT for keeping the vision alive for the past few years.

Finally, I'd like to challenge everyone who reads this newsletter to give us at DVS your suggestions on how we can better serve veterans. No idea is too outlandish. Please give us your thoughts, especially on policies, procedures and ideas that may or may not have been tried before. ♦♦♦

### VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY

The following remarks were delivered by Robert Glassman, Co-Chairman of Wainwright Bank at the Vietnam Veterans' Day Luncheon at UMASS Boston on March 29, 1999.

"In early 1996, I wrote the following letter to the *N.Y. Times* and *The Wall St. Journal*. The letter speaks to the degree to which I had found the tone of the Buchanan presidential campaign to be particularly offensive. I would like to read part of that letter:

"...In listening to the rhetoric of the Buchanan campaign I was struck by the oft repeated phrase "Listen Jose, you're not coming in!" Given the frustrations surrounding current immigration policy and the persistent desire of the campaign to scapegoat the Hispanic population, they may wish to expand their vocabulary of Hispanic names.

Even when you are using a not so thinly veiled code, a little variety is useful. Here are some additional suggestions: Juan, Ramon, Alejandro, Luis, Manuel, Jorge, Arturo, Francisco, Armando, Fernando, Rafael, Ricardo, Alfonso, Carlos, Jesus, Lorenzo, and Ruben. The Buchanan Campaign might be interested in where these names can be found. Including Jose, they are repeatedly inscribed on a wall in Washington, DC: THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL...

Alongside of these names are countless thousands of African-Americans who would take serious issue with anyone who equated "We shall overcome" with "Dixie" as Mr. Buchanan recently did. The diversity that is America (if not the Buchanan campaign) is represented on that wall in that it also included gay men, Jewish men, and women.

Although he did not participate in the military, I do not doubt that as a Nixon aide, Mr. Buchanan fervently supported the war. Therefore, since the campaign preaches old-fashioned patriotism, it seems especially egregious to scapegoat some of the very constituencies that disproportionately bore the burdens of that war.

Social Justice may not currently have much campaign resonance, but it is a very important component of how one governs. It would be my hope responsible political voices would speak out against these thinly veiled codes and talk of social justice." ♦♦♦

### Coming Events

- April 24 DVS training @ National Guard Armory in Taunton 8:00 am to 5:00pm
- April 28 Veterans' Night in Methuen
- May 18 Commissioner Hudner Testimonial
- May 22 DVS training @ Northampton VAMC 8:00am to 5:00pm
- May 23 MVSAA "Lobby Day" Luncheon at the State House
- June 1 Worcester Agents' Association Meeting
- June 20-23 MVSAA Summer Conference
- July 19-25 "Moving Wall" in Burlington
- July 27-Aug 2 "Moving Wall" in Holliston
- Aug 1 Puerto Rican Festival Parade-Honoring 65th Infantry Div in Boston at 12 Noon
- Aug 4-10 "Moving Wall" in Dorchester
- Aug 12-18 "Moving Wall" in North Attleboro

# WOMEN'S NETWORK

Many women who served in the military do not even know they are veterans. DVS is trying to find women veterans residing in Massachusetts. We currently have approximately 12,000 names and addresses and our database is still growing! Our goal is to let women know about their rights and benefits under federal, state, and local law and to keep them informed about changes.

To accomplish this goal, DVS contracted with, Mary Ellen Mesale and Marcy Winzer, members of the Women's Network, to build the database and design a brochure to mail to them as well as to the public. Mary Ellen is a retired U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major with 21 years active federal service. Marcy is a consultant who has established databases for the Boston VA Women Veterans' Health Center in Jamaica Plain.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, Mary Ellen and Marcy looked at existing databases. Their list of contacts is extensive and includes the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Women in Military Service to America (WIMSA), veterans' organizations and local veterans' agents. They are also looking for ideas from other states which are establishing women's databases. Anyone who wants to be included in the database or may have names and addresses of women who should be in the database, please clip and mail the attached form or call Mary Ellen at the Women's Network: (617) 727-3578, extension 316.

As part of its outreach, the Network also developed a brochure highlighting its mission, some of the benefits women veterans may be afforded, and information about the database. The brochure was mailed to over 10,000 women veterans in May 1998 and we were overwhelmed (and pleasantly surprised) by over 2,300 responses to date.



**Farewell Luncheon for Commissioner Hudner:** kneeling (l to r) Mary Jane Hillery, Joan O'Connor, Marcy Winzer, Pat Robinson, Mary Ellen Mesale; standing Venus Hammack, Eileen Merullo, Commissioner Hudner, Edythe Sheridan, Ethel LaSalle, and Frances Tobin.

The Women's Network Committee includes women veterans from all eras, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs representatives, local veterans' agents, and two State legislators. The Network, chaired by Joan O'Connor, the DVS' Women Veterans' Coordinator, meets monthly at the Coast Guard Station, Boston. On March 16, 1999, the meeting was actually a "farewell luncheon" in honor of Commissioner Hudner's retirement. The Women Veterans' Network evolved because Commissioner Hudner wanted to do more to reach women veterans in Massachusetts. The luncheon, with a special cake and champagne (non-alcoholic, of course), was also attended by Senator Jo Ann Sprague and Captain Margaret Riley, the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Base. Speeches were given,

roasts were made, gifts were presented. It was a wonderful afternoon and the Women Veterans' Network said, "Thank You, Commissioner, and we wish you Fair Winds and Following Seas..."

Another important group is the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans established in 1984 by M.G.L. Chapter 115, section 2. Committee members are appointed by and serve along with the Governor. Members of the Committee are Dorothy Dickson, Lillian Eaton, Marie Egan, Bernice Ethier, June Ferrell, Antonia Jimenez, Henriett Justice, Ethel LaSalle, Adrienne Millhouse, Rep. Mary Jeanette Murray, June Newman, Edythe Sheridan, Nancy Shilepsky, Lillian Shumski, Sheila Spicer, Frances Tobin, and Betty Victorine.

The annual luncheon is October 24, 1999 at the Sheraton Braintree Hotel (formerly the Sheraton Tara) in Braintree. The guest speaker is Joan Furey, Director, Center for Women Veterans, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC. All are invited to attend. For more information on the luncheon, please contact one of the co-chairwomen, Betty Victorine at (508) 822-4602 or Frances Tobin at (617) 333-0340. Seats are limited. ♦♦♦

## CORRECTION

Our apologies to Lieutenant Colonel Mary Jane Hillery, USAR, who in our last issue was incorrectly identified in a photo caption as "Lieutenant" Mary Jane Hillery. We know what an accomplishment it is for women to attain senior officer rank and we are very proud of this Sudbury Veterans' Agent. ♦♦♦

(Please type or print)

I want to be in the Women Veterans' Network Database:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Service:  USA  USMC  USN  USAF  USCG

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Guard/Reserve  Nurse Corps

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Retired from Military Service

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Served: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Highest Rank/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please send this form to: Department of Veterans' Services, Women Veterans' Network, 239 Causeway Street, Suite 100, Boston, MA 02114)

# Law & Legislative Update

By John Corey, Esq.



It's Boston, Spring is in the air, robins will be looking for the worms, and the tree buds will soon abound as you walk out your front door. All of which is of minor interest if you are one of a number of Legislative junkies tracking the State House hearings, a spring ritual, which for some, stirs a hope no less fervent or fragile than that found in a Red Sox season ticket holder on opening day.

Just so you won't be caught without a score card, veterans and dependents of veterans can keep score by tracking the Department's Legislative priorities listed in the program below.

## A. AN ACT AMENDING THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN UNDER CHAPTER 115

This legislation would expand the chapter 115 definition of veteran to include those who served on active duty (other than for training) during peacetime. The vast majority of these veterans served between 1975 and 1990. Estimated Funding Impact: \$1,000,000

## B. AN ACT AMENDING ANNUITY ELIGIBILITY UNDER CHAPTER 115, SECTION 6B TO INCLUDE SURVIVING SPOUSES.

This bill would add surviving spouses of veterans who died as a result of injury sustained during time of war, insurrection, or combat to the class of people who receive a \$1500 annuity. Presently, veterans who have a 100 percent service connected disability and parents of those who died as a result of injury sustained during time of war, insurrection, or combat, receive the annuity. Estimated Funding Impact: \$750,000.

## C. AN ACT AMENDING CHAPTER 115, SECTION 6B, RELATIVE TO THE PAYMENT DATES OF THE ANNUITY FROM JULY 1<sup>st</sup> AND JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup>, TO AUGUST 1<sup>st</sup> AND FEBRUARY 1<sup>st</sup>.

Enactment of this bill would facilitate the administration of annuity payments. Presently, annuitants expect their first payment on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Because the receipt of fiscal year budget appropriations occurs after July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Department is beset with a deluge of calls the first two weeks of July asking why the annuity has not yet been mailed. A simple change of dates would alleviate this problem.

## D. AN ACT AMENDING CHAPTER 115, SECTION 6, RELATIVE TO THE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR BENEFITS PAID BY CHELSEA AND HOLYOKE TO RESIDENTS OF THE SOLDIERS HOMES.

This bill would correct the language inadvertently incorporated in the General Appropriations Act of 1999 and reimburse the cities of Chelsea and Holyoke, not the "several cities", as the law now reads, 100 percent of the benefits paid to

residents of the Soldiers' Homes. Estimated Funding Impact: \$25,000.

## E. AN ACT TO PROVIDE 100 PERCENT REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERANS, SURVIVING SPOUSES OF SUCH VETERANS, AND SPOUSES OF VETERANS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES AS A RESULT OF INJURY SUSTAINED DURING TIME OF WAR.

The Department supports a modified version of this bill, i.e., extending only to spouses of veterans who have lost their lives as a result of injury sustained during time of war, a 100 percent tax abatement, the same as now granted to paraplegic veterans with service related injuries. Estimated Funding Impact: \$750,000.

Current exemptions include:

- \$775 abatement given to those who have lost both feet, hands, or eyes; and,
- \$950 abatement given to those who require adaptive housing.

## F. AN ACT RELATIVE TO EXTENDING CERTAIN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS TO THE SURVIVING SPOUSES OF VETERANS.

This bill would grant to the surviving spouse the same tax exemption to which the veteran had been eligible under M.G.L. Ch.59, s5, Clause 32. Estimated Funding Impact: The Department of Revenue has provided an estimated range of 1.1 to 2.2 million dollars.

## G. AN ACT FOR THE ERECTION OF THE POW/MIA ETERNAL FLAME.

This bill would have the Commonwealth match the City of Boston's \$50,000 grant for the establishment of a POW/MIA memorial. The state does not have such a memorial. The Department would seek an amendment, enlarging the grant to \$100,000.

## H. AN ACT AMENDING CHAPTER 289 OF THE ACTS OF 1998 BY INCREASING THE APPROPRIATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL FROM \$500,000 TO \$1,400,000.

Representative McManus has filed legislation drafted by this Department to amend to erect the Official Vietnam Memorial. Estimated Funding Impact: \$900,000.

## I. DVS IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY BILL FILED ON BEHALF OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE OR SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE THE RE-

QUIREMENT THAT CITIES AND TOWNS OF A CERTAIN POPULATION APPOINT A FULL TIME VETERANS AGENT.

## J. DVS SUPPORTS LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE REAL ESTATE ABATEMENTS UNDER C.59, s.5, cl. 22, 22(e), 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, AND 22E BY \$100.00

The Department of Veterans' Services has a new manager. Commissioner Tom Kelley has managed a number of teams with notable distinction. The book is that with Kelley as Skipper, DVS will give veterans a lot to cheer about this season. ♦♦♦

## Cold War Service Certificates

Source: *Paul Revere Dispatch*

If you were a member of the Armed Forces or were a Federal Government civilian employee between September 2, 1945, and December 26, 1991, you are eligible for a certificate honoring you for your role in winning the Cold War. Between 18 and 22 million service members and civilians, whose service was directly related to the Cold War, are eligible to apply for these certificates as of April 5th, 1999.

Applicants can apply via the Internet E-mail: [cwrs@Fairfax-emhl.army.mil](mailto:cwrs@Fairfax-emhl.army.mil); or fax to (703) 275-6749. Applicants may also mail requests to: Cold War Recognition, 4035 Ridge Top Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. Military applicants must provide proof of service by submitting one of the following: Certificate of Release/Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214); War Department Separation Document (WD AGO Form 53-55); or Oath of Office or Letter of Appointment. Do not send original documents as they will not be returned. Copies of these documents can be obtained by writing to: National Personnel Records Center, (Military Personnel Records), 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63132-5100. ♦♦♦

## State Annuity Offered

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its Department of Veterans' Services are pleased to provide recognition to our 100% disabled veterans and to the parents of veterans who gave their lives in service to their country. A special benefit, in the form of an annuity in the amount of \$1,500 annually is paid in two increments of \$750. It recognizes the sacrifice that these veterans and "Gold Star Parents" have made.

For information about the annuity, please contact the Veterans' Agent in the City or Town where you reside, or Alex Kravchuk at DVS at (617) 727-3578, extension 107. ♦♦♦

## Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries



By Robert McKean  
Director of State Veterans' Cemeteries

The Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is pleased to announce major progress in the construction of the two State Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries.

### Agawam:

After laborious design phases to include land layout, building proposals, and numerous formal presentations of documents to many boards and commissions which include the Conservation Commission, State EPA (due to the need of a stream-wetland crossing), along with final approvals of the VA Cemetery Grant office and the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM), significant progress has been accomplished. It is anticipated that formal bid documents will be published by late April, followed with formal construction to begin in June. The construction process should take approximately ten months, which will keep the project on target for opening around Memorial Day 2000.

Through the efforts of DVS and the VA in Washington, along with assistance from Congressman Neal, it has been announced that federal funding for the construction of the State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Agawam project will be at 100%. This will save Massachusetts taxpayers approximately \$3.2 million dollars once total reimbursements are received from the VA. The Commonwealth will then operate the cemetery as it will remain a State Veterans' Cemetery and, by grant design, not join the National System.

### Winchendon:

The site for the second State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery has noted steady progress. A consultant is in the process of completing a "Master Plan" which will include preliminary land layout, burial fields and building locations, along with any wetland and historical documentation required. The transfer of land from the town of Winchendon to the State for the express purpose of this construction is in progress.

It has also been announced by Congressman Olver that this cemetery will be funded at 100% from the VA which will save the Massachusetts taxpayer approximately \$3.2 million dollars. The funding may come in a separate federal fiscal year budget, but there are state funds appropriated through the Legislature that will keep the process on track.

The consultant will complete the "Master Plan" by mid-summer. Once the VA, DCAM, and DVS accept this portion of the project, a bid package for formal land and building designs will be published. We expect that the opening of the State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon will follow Agawam by about one year.

### Military Honors:

The subject of "military honors" has always been a major item on the DVS agenda. One of the highlights in the administration building that will be constructed at each cemetery will be a room built especially for the "Honor Guards." This room will allow the guards to store weapons, flags, and uniforms while waiting for ceremonies to begin.

Every veteran is due "military honors" and it is the intention of the DVS, Cemetery Division, to insure that this is accomplished. The department has met with numerous veterans' organizations who have expressed the desire to become members of an honor guard detail for the Veterans' Cemeteries. More are welcome.

DVS has had formal discussions with General Raymond Vezina, the State's Adjutant General, who has offered his strong support and will work with us to seek ways we can mutually accomplish "military honors" through the Guard as well.

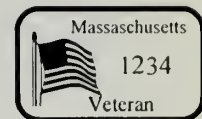
DVS is of the strong opinion that not only quantity, but also quality of the honor guards must be maintained. It is anticipated that initial training and refresher training will be conducted at each of the veterans' cemeteries and continue on an on-going basis.

Currently, there are over 2,000 approved pre-registration applications for burial in the new cemeteries. This response shows the need and timeliness of the construction of these resting-places for our nation's service men, women, and their eligible family members.

If there are any questions, comments or if you are in need of a pre-registration application please direct them to Robert McKean, Director of State Veterans' Cemeteries or Hazel Pryce, Administrative Assistant at (617) 727-3578 ext. 108 or ext. 100. The e-mail address for the cemetery division is: [Robert.McKean@state.ma.us](mailto:Robert.McKean@state.ma.us).

♦♦♦

## VETERANS' LICENSE PLATE UPDATE



The Veterans' License Plate (Flag, Purple Heart, Silver & Bronze Star) program continues to be very successful. Since January 1, 1998 the Silver Star and Bronze Star license plates have been issued. They are four-digit (no alpha) plates and begin with the number 1000. Not all numbers are available at this time since they are being issued in number sequences that correspond to the particular month of issuance.

The new plates are issued to the holders of the "Silver Star Medal" and the "Bronze Star Medal" ONLY. There has been much confusion on the part of some veterans who believe that any silver or bronze service stars issued in conjunction with campaign medals are one and the same with the above-mentioned medals. We have received numerous inquiries for these plates with documentation that does not allow for such issuance. Please ensure that you have documentation that you are a recipient of the Silver Star Medal or Bronze Star Medal before you apply.

Military Service Decals for veterans flag license plates also became effective as of January 1, 1998. The new procedure requires that the applicant first obtain a veteran's flag plate. Application is then made to the Registry, Special Plate Division for a specific military branch decal. Once applications are approved, the Registry will reproduce the current registration plate (same numbers and letter) with a blank area for decal placement. The RMV will then affix the appropriate decal to the blank portion of the plates and mail them directly to the applicant. Veterans who may have already applied decals to their plates may replace them to comply with the new process. The fee for this optional replacement is \$10.00. This procedure ensures that military decals are applied directly to the registration plate, not over the American Flag which was the procedure prior to June, 1998.

The Department of Veterans' Services has been working with numerous state legislators in order to have a bill introduced to correct an oversight to the veteran license plate bill. This is in reference to having a "Distinguished Flying Cross Medal" plate made. This medal is located between the Silver and Bronze Star medals in the order of rank. Another oversight is the fact that the surviving spouse of a veteran, who has the Purple Heart, Silver and/or Bronze Star plate is allowed to keep the plate by paying a fee. However, the surviving spouse of the veteran who has a Flag plate cannot. DVS hopes that this oversight is corrected, as a loss of the issuance of these plates would erode the much-needed funds for the two soldiers' homes.

If you have any questions on plate issues, please contact Karen A. Lynch, Director of External Affairs at DVS (617) 727-3578 extension 310. ♦♦♦

## OPERATION RECOGNITION

By Robert McKean

The Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) has embarked on a program called "Operation Recognition" in which high schools in Massachusetts award diplomas to those veterans who left high school during the 1940's to serve their country in WW II and, for whatever personal reasons, did not return to school and complete their formal education after the war.

This program has been accepted in over 45 communities in Massachusetts. We believe that many members of *The Greatest Generation* (title of Tom Brokaw's bestseller) would be able to receive the recognition and thanks from their former high school. It would allow them to join what would have been their original graduating class if it were not for the war.

Many members of that generation gave up a normal adolescence to ensure that we are here today, able to learn and prosper in a land that allows us to enjoy freedom. The "life experience credits" they earned during the war either at Omaha Beach, Iwo Jima, Battle of the Bulge, Pearl Harbor or any other place of service in WW II were far and above the credits the students in the class room were experiencing at the time.

These men and women were learning geography first hand by traveling to foreign lands that they would have only known about through textbooks. They experienced biology through the medical attention they offered their fellow soldiers when they were wounded. They extolled compassion when many of their comrades died in their arms. Mathematics was instructed by the need to work on maps, weapon projections, and the like. Finally, in the area of history, they made history, and we're all enjoying the freedom of that history to this day. A WW II veteran who is eligible for this program offered one of his favorite quotes, "Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first and the lesson afterwards."

(Contd. on Page 8)

## WE CARE-WE REMEMBER

Source: Dennis Rindone

From the Revolutionary War through Desert Storm, all 351 cities and towns across the Commonwealth pay tribute to Massachusetts veterans' in the form of memorials, statues, plaques, and the naming of parks to commemorate their service to our nation.

Every soldier and sailor memorial has an interesting piece of history. For instance, John Coffing a Great Barrington industrialist and chairman of the Civil War Soldiers' Monument Committee, reported at a town meeting in April 1874, "The true way to manifest a grateful spirit or an approving heart, is to offer by word or deed something to commensurate to the thing said or done. In proportion as we love our country, her Constitution, and her flag, in the same ratio must we respect the memory of those who bled and died to preserve it for us." So began the debate to appropriate funds for the Winged Victory statue, one of the earliest bronze statues in the Commonwealth located in front of the Great Barrington Town Hall.

Did you know that the World War I memorials for veterans of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott, the towns now under the Quabbin Reservoir can be viewed in the Town of New Salem? Visting Libertore Square in Mansfield is an emotional experience. Dedicated to the memory of the three Libertore brothers, Guido (USMC), Wilfred (USMC), and John (USA), all of whom were killed in World War II.

As a tribute to honor Massachusetts's veterans and in an effort to raise the consciousness of the historical significance and preservation of these memorials for Massachusetts's citizens, I have been documenting them in photographs community by community. So far, I have photographed memorials in approximately 162 cities and towns across the State. My goal is to publish a book containing pictures along with some interesting history of these memorials from all 351 communities.

It is important to keep the spirit and memory alive of our veterans who served with courage and made great sacrifices in order that we may live free. What better way than in pictures and history to teach and inspire our young people and future generations about Massachusetts' veterans. I hope that this book will one day make it to our schools and public libraries to commemorate our local communities' involvement in the pursuit of peace.

I'm available to speak to organization about this project and have displays of all photographs. Any questions or suggestions concerning the successful completion of this project should be directed to: Dennis E. Rindone, 3 Briggs Street, Erving, MA 01344, or telephone (978) 544-6547. ♦♦♦

## From the Training Tent of Dave Dube'

In November 1998 the Department of Veterans' Services hosted its first Veterans' Agents Training Session. Over 200 full and part time Veterans' Agents, Support Staff, and Service Providers attended this three-day session at the Holiday Inn in Worcester. Attendees were broken up into three groups by region and attended classes ranging from Annuities, Cemeteries, VA Benefits, License Plates, Social Security, Chapter 115 benefits to other Commonwealth benefits and programs for veterans. The atmosphere was upbeat and those that attended seemed to have an excellent experience and enjoyed the camaraderie of their peers.

DVS staff conducted classes that were in their area of expertise within the department. It gave a chance for not only the staff to meet others but for the attendees to place a name with a face. There is another November session being planned and future information will be in upcoming newsletters.

It is the Department's goal to have each Veterans' Agent trained with consistent information and then certified. There is a Training Advisory Committee from the MVSAA assisting us in providing a quality program. We are now in the process of holding regional sessions for those who were unable to attend in November. These sessions are being held on Saturdays so that many of the part time agents would find it easier to attend.

Shawsheen Vocational Technical School in Billerica was our first regional effort on March 27th. Over thirty people attended and were successfully certified. Thanks to Ken Buffum of Billerica and Robert Hogan of Burlington for assisting me with that session.

The new Massachusetts Army National Guard Armory in Taunton will be the location of the next session on April 24th. It looks as if there will be over thirty attendees at this session. Thanks to Richard Bagdasarian of Middleboro and Michael House of Taunton for their assistance.

The next training session will be May 22nd at the VAMC Living Center. Reservations are beginning to come in. Thanks to Robert Cahillane of Northampton, Leo Parent of Turners Falls, Peter Pappas of Palmer, and Charles Loven of Greenfield for their assistance.

The Department will be developing future sessions. Your input is greatly appreciated. If you have any subject, idea, or comment about our training effort, please feel free to contact me at (617) 727-3578, extension 213 or E-mail at: DDube@vet.state.ma.us. ♦♦♦

"Veterans - No other group in America is more deserving of assistance toward an improved quality of life; they are the ones who secured such a life for the rest of us." Anonymous

## Seeking Unaccounted for Korean War Veteran

Source: *The American Legion*

The Department of Defense and the four military services (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force) are mounting an intense public outreach effort to locate family members of servicemen who remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. According to Tom Perry, Chief of the Air Force Missing Persons Branch, "we have begun to open some doors in North Korea, and we need to re-establish contact with the families of our unaccounted for servicemen."

Because of two negotiated agreements, the U.S. has conducted four joint operations inside North Korea during 1996 and 1997 to seek answers and to locate and recover the remains of U.S. Servicemen lost during the Korean War. In the four operations, the remains of what are believed to be seven (7) American soldiers have been recovered. One missing serviceman has already been identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Perry also stated, "As we're able to obtain additional circumstances of loss, information, or recover remains from North Korea, we'll need to inform the families. Unfortunately, in some cases nearly 45 years have elapsed since the Air Force had contact with many of our families. We need to know who the primary next of kin is to aid in future identifications. We'd welcome any lead family members can give us." Family members of any unaccounted for Korean-Era servicemen are asked to provide their name, mailing address, and relationship of their loved one as soon as possible to the appropriate service casualty office listed below.

Air Force (800) 531-5501

or E-mail:  
([POW-MIA@HQ.AFPC.MIL](mailto:POW-MIA@HQ.AFPC.MIL))

Army (800) 892-2490

Navy (800) 443-9298

Marine Corps (800) 847-1597

Each branch of the service has compiled a partial list of Korean War family contacts, but with more than 8,100 unaccounted for servicemen from the war (more than 900 Air Force servicemen), the task is extremely difficult given the considerable amount of time that has elapsed since the cease fire in Korea. Perry's hope is that their ongoing efforts in North Korea will result in bringing closure to the families who have sacrificed so much for so long.

◆◆◆

## Purple Heart Medals Awarded



Recently, the Department of Veterans' Services hosted the presentation of the Purple Heart Medal to two recipients. Mr. Francis M. Connolly of Hyde Park, and Mr. William J. Freeman of Reading. Both men fought gallantly and were wounded for their country. Mr. Connolly at the Battle of Bougainville in the Pacific during World War II and Mr. Freeman in Vietnam. Thomas J. Hudner, Jr. former Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Services and a Medal of Honor recipient, presented the medals to Francis and William on the behalf of a grateful nation.

◆◆◆

"You have achieved excellence as a leader when people will follow you anywhere, if only out of curiosity."

-Colin L. Powell

## UNSUNG HERO AWARD

Source: *Transition Times*

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans held its annual conference in Washington, DC on March 10-12. Annually the organization presents special awards such as: Legislative Advocacy Award, Outstanding Member Award, and Unsung Hero Award. Chuck Forbes, President/CEO of the United Veterans of America, was one of the five recipients of the Unsung Hero Award. The award is given to a person or organization that has contributed to the recognition of the homeless veteran issue in a supporting or unrecognized leadership role on behalf of our nation's homeless veterans. The United Veterans of America was the first non-profit homeless shelter to be located on a VA campus nationwide. The program has become a model for other VA campuses.

On another note, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans appointed Mr. Forbes to the Board of Directors for a three-year term. The mission of the NCHV is to champion the quality of life for homeless veterans by shaping public policy, educating the public and building the capacity of service providers to meet the needs of homeless veterans. The National Coalition has membership in 42 states plus DC and Puerto Rico and is seeking new members.

◆◆◆

## Bronze Star Awarded 50 Years Later

Sgt. Louis Janulewicz returned home in December 1945 from Europe where he had fought in World War II, but it was not until December 1997, more than 50 years later that he received the well-deserved Bronze Star Medal. In 1992, Janulewicz approached Peter Pappas, Director of Veterans' Services for the Town of Palmer, asking how he could receive the medal. Pappas said he would contact State Senator Stephen Brewer, who then contacted Robert C. McKean, Director of External Affairs for the Department of Veterans' Services, who was able to obtain the medals awarded to Janulewicz.

Mr. Janulewicz served in the Army and Air Force from October of 1942 until December of 1945. He was wounded twice during his military career; once while he was stationed in Normandy during the Northern France and Rhineland campaigns; and the second time while he was with the Air Force stationed in Germany.

Senator Brewer, Robert McKean, and Peter Pappas were on hand to award Mr. Janulewicz the Bronze Star Medal. "We are free because of people like Mr. Janulewicz," Brewer said. "I have heard it said once, but I will say it again, that is, freedom is not free." Robert McKean noted that presenting well-deserved awards is the "fun part" of his job. "I'm proud and honored to present this award today. Unfortunately there are many other veterans who are deserving of medals that haven't received them and time is running out for the veterans of World War II and Korea", said McKean. He noted that all award applications go through an office in St. Louis before they are presented to the veteran. However, he explained that the Department of Veterans' Service is able to cut through the bureaucracy of that office to obtain the awards in a more timely manner. Without the assistance of the Department of Veterans' Services, the process usually takes years.

Mr. Janulewicz currently resides in Thorndike with his wife of 50 years, Mildred. They also have a son, a daughter, and a grandson.

◆◆◆

**Military War Records  
Moves Office**  
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Military Division  
The Adjutant General's Office  
Military Records Section  
239 Causeway Street, Suite 130  
Boston, MA 02114

◆◆◆

## Operation Recognition

(Contd. from Page 6)

DVS has received tremendous support from many of the Veterans' Agents in the Commonwealth, who have taken the lead in assisting us in moving this project forward.

We are advocating the awarding of high school diplomas as part of a special school assembly or some other appropriate recognition ceremony. The current student body could participate and meet the men and women who left their high school as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors to serve their country.

For more information about this program, or if you have any questions, please direct them to Robert McKean, Director of State Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries or Hazel Pryce, Administrative Assistant at (617)727-3578, extensions 108 or 100. An e-mail address you may use is Robert.McKean@state.ma.us. ♦♦♦

### The e-mail addresses to families of the POW's in Kosovo are the following:

Family of James Stone is: [ssoldier@swbell.net](mailto:ssoldier@swbell.net)

Family of Andrew Ramirez is: [casoldier@pacbell.net](mailto:casoldier@pacbell.net)

Family of Steven Gonzales is: [tsoldier@swbell.net](mailto:tsoldier@swbell.net)



## Government Humor

In his recent autobiography Walter Cronkite tells of a conversation he once had with Astronaut Wally Schirra:

"Over a beer one night, I promised never to tell if, off the record, he would level with me about what he had really been thinking in the last minutes before his rocket blasted off. Wally said, 'Well, I was lying there looking up at all the dials and buttons and toggle switches on the control panel, and I thought to myself, *Good God, this thing was built by the lowest bidder.*'"

Reader's Digest (June, 1997) ♦♦♦

## DVS Address Changes

The Department of Veterans' Services moved to a new location on March 1, 1999. The new address is:

239 Causeway Street, Suite 100  
Boston, MA 02114

However, our telephone numbers have remained the same:

(617) 727-3578  
(617) 727-5903 FAX

Most Department personnel can be reached on E-Mail at:

FirsInitialLast Name@vet.state.ma.us

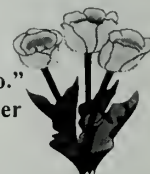
We in the Department of Veterans' Services welcome your correspondence by telephone and regular or E-Mail.

We hope to have the Department of Veterans' Services WEB SITE up and running in the near future. ♦♦♦

The Committee welcomes material for publication, but reserves editorial privileges.

"Flowers are the sweetest things God ever made and forgot to put a soul into."

-Henry Ward Beecher



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Veterans' Services  
239 Causeway Street, Suite 100  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114



The Commonwealth  
Veteran

### Newsletter Committee

Thomas G. Kelley  
Commissioner

Walter F. Pero  
Deputy Commissioner

Richard H. Spicer  
Director of Operation

Karen A. Lynch  
Director of External Affairs

Frank E. Crowley  
Budget Director

Geraldine M. Peterson  
Editor

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
COLLECTION

MAR 16 2000

University of Massachusetts  
Depository Copy