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Memorial Day



"Soldier, rest
Thy warfare
o'er, Sleep the
sleep that
knows not
breaking. Dream of battled
fields no more. Days of danger,
nights of waking."
- Sir Walter Scott



On Monday, May 27, 2002, Canton's Memorial Day parade and ceremonies once again will be spearheaded by the America Legion Post #24. Their band and color guard are known and respected throughout Massachusetts and beyond. Other organizations in town also participate and support the overall effort to produce a ceremony which truly honors all veterans living and deceased. Veterans who are physically unable to march the parade route will have bus transportation available. Restrooms will be open at public buildings along the route.

*"We can't all be heroes, some of us
have to stand on the curb and clap as
they go by." - Will Rogers*

BULLETS FROM THE DIRECTOR

- ◆ There are approximately 1,500 to 2,000 veterans living in Canton. This department has a mailing list of 1,150, so any veteran living in Canton that doesn't get this newsletter should call 781-821-5005. Get the word out.
- ◆ The number of Canton veterans, spouses, widows, parents and dependents eligible for VA, state, and Canton benefits is approximately 5,100.
- ◆ Over 2.1 million dollars is received by Canton veterans, widows and dependents each year.
- ◆ Veterans Day Breakfast had more than 200 veterans and guests in attendance. Thank you to the Knights of Columbus.
- ◆ The Veterans' Department Funeral Honor Guard provided services for 15 veterans who passed away during 2001.
- ◆ 20 Canton Veterans submitted V.A. disability claims through this office in 2001.
- ◆ Two Vietnam veterans claims were approved for compensation for diabetes herbicide exposure.
- ◆ Two WWII veterans claims were approved for compensation for post traumatic stress disorder.
- ◆ Military programs were presented at St. John's, Kennedy and the High School.
- ◆ Any veteran of any war, who would like to share their military experiences with the Canton Cable audience should call me at (781) 821-5005.
- ◆ Veterans' coffee hours will begin on March 7th, 2002 at the Canton Town Club, hours will be 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Drop in the first Thursday of each month.
- ◆ Alert—Rumors that new enrollments to the V.A. medical system may be put on a waiting list. Important that every veteran join ASAP.
- ◆ Reimbursements from the state for benefits paid by the Town to Canton veterans was \$14,900.
- ◆ Net cost for the Canton Veterans' Dept. \$55,000.
- ◆ Eleven diplomas were issued to the Class of the Korean War on August 5, 2001 at the Town Club Graduation.
- ◆ WWI Fallen Heroes Memorial Sign Dedication was completed on December 12, 2001. Thanks due to the Veterans Council, Ed Lynch and Beth Erickson, publisher of the Canton Citizen.
- ◆ WWII, Korea and Vietnam Memorial Sign Dedications will begin on April 3, 2002.



Purchase a brick to be installed at the American Legion "Walk of Honor" brick plaza. Applications at the Legion Post and Veterans Office.

SIXTY YEARS AGO

BY DICK MARTIN

Pearl Harbor Survivor

Adolph Mortensen
A junior naval officer
U.S.S. Oklahoma

"I found myself with four other men in the dispensary with a small pocket of air trapped above the water, our only source of life. The ship's carpenter, Mr. Austin, weighed over 200 pounds, knew he'd never make it through...He reached down and held the porthole open for me...knowing full well that his minutes were few."

Many of us remember President Roosevelt when he said that the Japanese Empire had attacked Pearl Harbor. Who can forget his, "This dastardly attack will live in infamy." We were scared, threatened and unsure of the future. (After the World Trade Center attack, we now have lived through a similar experience) That attack brought us into

the war in the Pacific, as well as the war in Europe. Our brothers and sisters went directly to the recruiting stations the next day to sign up for military service of their



choice. Why? I don't think it was all patriotic fervor. I think that they knew most of them would be drafted and if they wanted a particular branch of service, they had better volunteer. If they waited to be drafted, they might serve in a branch that they did not want. Ration books for gasoline and other items in short supply, letters to our brothers and

sisters in the service and the daily news, both newspaper and radio were the order of the day.

Our fathers would patrol the streets as

air raid wardens when the air raid siren was sounded and all houses were subject to being blacked out.

When Hitler said that he would invade England, we knew that if he were successful, we (the United States) would be next on his (Hitler's) list for attack.

U Boats waited 100 miles off our coast to sink our ships. Who can forget Winston Churchill's response to the English People. "If Hitler invades England, we will fight him on the beaches; we will fight him in the fields; we will fight him in the cities: but we will never give up!" (Good advice for America).

VA EXPEDITING OLDEST BENEFITS

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi recently announced an unprecedented effort to move some long-pending applications for benefits, especially from older veterans, to a special unit designed to speed action on their claims.

The focus of the administration's initiative is veterans 70 years of age or older. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates these veterans are dying at a rate of 1,369 each day and have a typical life expectancy of less than 10 years.

"America didn't have to wait when this brave generation was called to duty. Our older veterans shouldn't have to wait in their hour of need while we make necessary improvements to speed up decisions on all veterans' applications," Principi said.

VA compensates veterans for disabilities that arose or worsened while they were in the military. When a service-connected condition deteriorates later in life, veterans may be entitled to higher

payments, and most of the pending VA workload of older veterans relates to these kinds of "re-opened claims."

VA's 57 regional claims offices first are being instructed to pull the benefit applications of veterans age 70 or older that have been pending for more than a year, an estimated 6,000 applications. A special team in Cleveland will tackle that workload as a top national priority, then will move to another 17,000 of the longest-pending claims of other veterans where the claims have been pending more than a year.



Secretary of
Veterans Affairs
Anthony J. Principi

"America didn't have to wait when this brave generation was called to duty."

New VA Outpatient Clinic Open in Quincy

This new VA Community based Outpatient clinic opened in July 2000, and is designed to serve those veterans living on the South Shore, in Norfolk County. Centrally located on the second floor of the Quincy Medical Center at 114 Whitwell Street in Quincy, MA, its services include Primary Care, Radiology, Mental Health/Substance Abuse Programs and Stat Labs. The convenient location affords free parking facilities and public transportation, making it desirable for elderly veterans who do not wish to travel into Boston.

MISSING DOG TAGS RETURNED

While shopping in a market not usually frequented by tourists, two Florida businessmen, Rob Stiff and Jim Gain, recently discovered some disturbing “souvenirs” for sale—soldiers’ dog tags.

The two men weren’t looking for war mementos on their January business trip to Ho Chi Minh City, and left the tags there. Back home in America, they were so troubled by the memory that they returned to Vietnam in May to buy the tags, and hundreds of others. They returned home with about 640 tags, pur-

chased for a total cost of \$180. Some tags were purchased for as little as 14 cents.

Upon returning to America, they began trying to reunite soldiers and their families with the lost tags. The businessmen transcribed what was printed on each, then created a website listing the names. A dozen tags matched names listed on the black granite Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. To date, 18 tags have been returned to soldiers or their loved ones.



A list of all the tags can be seen at www.founddogtags.com.

AGENT ORANGE

Honorably discharged veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975 and have “adult onset diabetes mellitus” are considered to have a “presumptive service-connected disability” and are eligible for a pension from the Veterans’ Administration.

This pension may be 100%. The claimant must have served “in-country.” If you served in Korea during 1968 or 1969 and have the aforementioned diabetes, the VA may extend the same benefits to you, since the DOD used Agent Orange in Korea during this period.

If you have further questions, or before you go to the VA Hospital, call the Veterans’ Office at 781-821-5005.

FREEDOM

It is the soldier,
not the reporter,
who has given us the
Freedom of the press.

It is the soldier,
not the poet,
who has given us
Freedom of speech.

It is the soldier,
not the campus organizer,
who has given us the
Freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who
serves beneath the Flag,
who salutes the Flag,
whose coffin is draped
by the Flag,
who allows the protester
to burn the Flag.

It is the soldier,
not the politician,
who has given his blood,
his body, his life,
who has given us these
FREEDOMS.

TYPE 2 DIABETES NEWS (HEADS UP)

“The hazards of the battlefield include more than bullets and shells,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. “As our understanding of the health risks faced by our military personnel increases, VA will adjust its programs and benefits to fit the needs of veterans.”

Principi’s announcement came as the Federal Register today published VA’s final rules for benefits for Vietnam

veterans with “Type 2” diabetes. Under federal law, those rules don’t take effect for 60 days. However, VA offices are already accepting claims from eligible Vietnam veterans.

Veterans affected by the new rules will receive a priority for VA health care, and, depending upon the severity of their illnesses, disability compensation that ranges from \$101 to \$2,107 monthly. Cost of the new benefit during the next

five years is projected to be \$3.3 billion, with about 220,000 veterans receiving benefits.

The following conditions are now considered service-connected for veterans who served in Vietnam: chloracne (a skin disorder); porphyria cutanea tarda (a liver disorder); acute or subacute peripheral neuropathy (a nerve disorder); and certain cancers, including 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).

THE FINAL INSPECTION

*The soldier stood and faced God
Which must always come to pass
He hoped his shoes were shining
Just as brightly as his brass
"Step forward now, you soldier,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other
cheek?
To My Church have you been true?"
The soldier squared his shoulders and
said, "No, Lord, I guess I ain't
Because those of us who carry guns
Can't always be a saint.
I've had to work most Sundays
And at times my talk was tough,
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.
But, I never took a penny
That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime
When the bills got just too steep,
And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear,
And sometimes, God forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.
I know I don't deserve a place
Among the people here,
They never wanted me around
Except to calm their fears.
If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand,
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand."
There was a silence all around the
throne
Where the saints had often trod
As the soldier waited quietly,
For the judgment of his God,
"Step forward now, you soldier,
You've borne your burdens well,
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell."*

TO ALL THAT SERVED!

LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE

Veterans who served in the Gulf War are nearly twice as likely to develop Lou Gehrig's Disease as other military personnel. V.A. said it would offer disability and survivor benefits to veterans with the disease who served in the Persian Gulf during the conflict a decade ago. ALS is a rapidly progressive and always fatal disease which at-

tacks the nerve cells that control voluntary muscles in the arms and legs.

Keep in mind that the onset of ALS does not generally occur until a person is in his or her forties or fifties, an age most Gulf War veterans have not reached yet.

Any questions, call Tony Andreotti at (781) 821-5005.

VETERANS COFFEE HOUR

A Gathering of Brothers and Sisters, Veterans Coffee Hours will be held on the first Thursday of every month in the Club Rooms of the Canton Town Club on Bailey Street starting on Thursday, March 7th, 2002 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

buddy or meet a new one, play cribbage, pool, watch t.v. or just relax with a friend and listen to a bad joke or a tall story.

Drop in during those hours and let's get to know each other, time is wasting away and being in good

company is always a great way to enjoy a few hours.



Call Tony Andreotti at (781) 821-5005 if you have any questions.

Come in and see an old



"Patriotism is more than waving and displaying a flag"

PATRIOTISM

The events of September 11, 2001 have brought about a renewed sense of patriotism. However, patriotism is more than waving and displaying a flag. It's about freedom, country, ideals and values.

Freedom of the press, of speech, or religion, to demonstrate, to organize and to achieve without regard to race, creed or national origin.

Patriotism is also about helping the homeless, volunteer-

ing, world-wide food pantries, energy independence, affordable and public housing.

Patriotism is helping the have-nots and those less fortunate than we are and speaking up for those who can't speak for themselves. It's about caring, being unselfish, it's about ***having a better world for all the people in it.***

Display the flag but understand the meaning, for patriotism is not a once in a while feeling. It's a way of living.

Let's have more of it in 2002.

FUNERAL ESCORT HONOR GUARD

Since its first informal meeting on June 22, 2000, the Canton Veterans Council has moved rapidly on an ambitious agenda. Of its list of priorities, none has been more endearing and rewarding than the creation of the Funeral Escort Honor Guard.

A dedicated group of volunteers under the direction of Agent Tony Andreotti enthusiastically has come together to render a military escort at all local veterans' funerals. Each member of the group is attired in a Class A uniform of his particular branch of service. White gloves are a standard part of the dress code, shirt, tie, appropriate shoes and cap are required. Weather conditions govern the wearing of outer wear.

From the onset, the Honor Guard group decided against helmets, rifles or a firing detail. Instead, the emphasis is placed on a ceremony centered on the presentation of the flag, TAPS, and escorting the deceased veterans with proper dignity and solemnity. The Honor Guard assembles for burials at local cemeteries or if the burial is out of town, at the local funeral home or local house of worship.

Where can a veteran obtain a uniform? New clothing can be purchased from:

Air Force:

AFES/Hanscomb AFB
1-781-377-4588

Army:

Fort Devens, MA
Clothing Exchange
1-978-772-6838

Navy/Marines/Coast Guard:

Uniform Support Center
1-800-368-4088

Presently, the Honor Guard consists of George Berteletti, Cal Calibani, Paul Cash, Tom Jenkins, Ed Lehan, Jack O'Neil, Bob Pesaturo, Ed Piana, Eddie Trunfio and George Sykes, Bob DeYeso, and Dom Duganiero. Other veterans from any era are encouraged to volunteer their services by joining the Honor Guard.

Contact Agent Andreotti at 781-821-5005. He is anxious to expand the pool of available volunteers.



The Canton Funeral Escort Honor Guard: Front Row: L-R: Cal Calibani, Paul Cash, Eddie Piana, Eddie Trunfio, Bob Pesaturo, Tony Andreotti

Back Row: L-R: Ed Lehan, George Sykes, Tom Jenkins, George Berteletti, Jack O'Neil
Not pictured: Bob DeYeso and Dom Duganiero

GENERAL BENEFITS

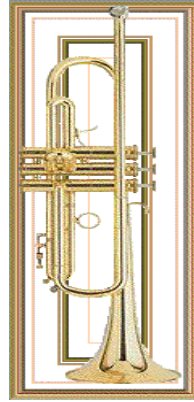
Burial, Headstones & Markers 1-800-697-6947
Disability, Compensation, Pension,
Education & Training, Vocational
Rehabilitation, Home Loans 1-800-827-1000
Education Programs 1-888-GI-BILL-1
Life Insurance 1-800-669-8477

HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

CHAMPVA 1-800-733-8387
Emergency Medical Preparedness 1-304-263-0811
National Mammography Helpline 1-888-492-7844
Spina Bifida 1-888-820-1756
Veterans Healthcare 1-800-827-1000

MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS

Agent Orange Helpline 1-800-749-8387
Center for Veteran Entrepreneurs 1-866-584-2344 or
1-202-565-8336
Debt Management Center 1-800-827-0648
Income Verification Center 1-800-949-1008 or
1-404-235-1300
Persian Gulf Hotline 1-800-PGW-VETS
Persian Gulf TDD 1-800-829-4833
Sexual Trauma Hotline 1-800-827-1000
Telecommunication Device for
the Deaf (TDD) 1-800-829-4833



TAPS

Day is
done,
gone the
sun,
From
the hills,
from
the lake,
From

the skies,
All is well, safely rest,
God is nigh.

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the soldier or sailor,
God keep.
On the land or the deep.
Safe in sleep.

Love, good night, must
thou go,

When the day, and the night
Need thee so?
All is well. Speedeth all
To their rest.

Fades the light; and afar
Goeth day, and the stars
Shineth bright,
Farethee well, day is gone.
Night is on.

Thanks and praise, for our
days.

'Neath the sun, 'neath the
stars,
'Neath the sky,
As we go, this we know,
God is nigh.



A. Andreotti
Director of
Veterans' Services

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Canton, MA 02021