

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the

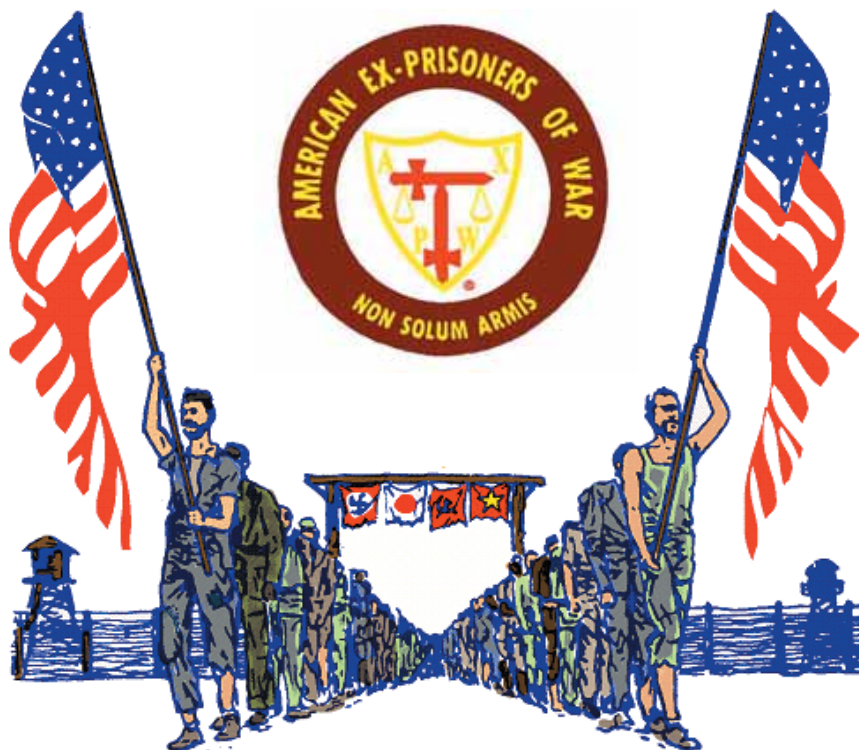
American Ex-Prisoners of War

Volume 64

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Number 2

February 2007



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



Operation Homecoming, 1973

Inside...News...stories...events, NSO success stories...and more



**the ceremonies of
17 December 2006
in the
North Sector
of the Ardennes**
By Hans J. Wijers



national commander



Robert W. Fletcher

Former Fellow POWs,
Family Members and Friends,

My greetings and best wishes to all of you. A new year has come and with it new challenges for all of us. For AXPOW, our challenges are to return the organization to solid financial footing while maintaining our departments and chapters as best possible due to the declining numbers in our membership.

As I mentioned in my last column, at the Board meeting in November we established committee membership for the year. I have also directed a number of the committees regarding tasks that need to be accomplished.

The date for the mid-year meeting has yet to be established according to the Congressional calendar. You will be notified through the Bulletin as soon as we know when it will be. I expect that at the meeting the committees will return with recommendations that will continue to move AXPOW forward.

I have also found a well qualified candidate to fill the Board position left by Leonard Rose's death, but cannot announce his name until he is approved by the Board.

My own goals for this year are to:

1. Consolidate the functions of the organization so that we are not running a deficit budget as we have done for at least 5 years;

2. Have open bidding for jobs based upon updated job descriptions;
3. Establish all services under contracts approved by the Board;
4. Have all AXPOW financial matters reported openly and according to accepted accounting practices so that any interested member of the organization can access and understand them;
5. Educate members of the Board regarding their legal responsibilities as Board members;
6. Include members of the Board in all aspects of the decision making process.

Although many of these goals may sound like common business practices that should have been followed all along, that has not always been the case.

My final goal is to have as much personal contact with members of AXPOW as possible. To that end I would like to attend as many of your state conventions or meetings as I can. I have asked your Department and Chapter Commanders to let me know when they are scheduled so that I can coordinate them as best possible.

And as always, I want to know what you think or the questions you have. Please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be glad to give you a call if you have to pay long distance charges.

Fletch

Three of VA's oldest facilities—Togus, Milwaukee and Dayton—will celebrate a proud heritage this year: 140 years of providing service to veterans. They began after the Civil War as the nation's first soldiers' homes, each opening between October 1866 and December 1867. Some of the nation's richest history lies within the walls of these iconic spaces and they are all currently under consideration for National Historic Landmark status.

From the ByLaws Committee:

All requested changes to the National Bylaws are to be submitted as follows:

Resolutions have two major parts: a preamble and a resolution. The preamble gives the reason for the resolution.

The resolution gives the intent. Each can contain one or more paragraphs and the whole is read in its entirety, beginning with the preamble.

Each preamble paragraph begins with "Whereas" and ends with "and" to connect it to the next paragraph.

The final paragraph is joined to the resolution with a semicolon and followed by the phrase "Therefore, be it"

Whereas, (ETC); and

Whereas (ETC); therefore, be it

Resolved, that _____

One signature is required on resolutions and amendments.

Members are reminded that resolutions must be submitted to the committee before **Feb. 28, 2007.**

Those requesting changes should include a telephone number where they can be reached if more information is needed.

Send requested changes to: George Coker, Judge Advocate, 1145 Wivenhoe Way, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-3047.



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On the cover...

Operation Homecoming Facts

591 POWs released to U.S. authorities...13 captured in Laos and released in North Vietnam...122 Captured in South Vietnam...28 released in the South ...94 released in the North ...3 released in China...Released from enemy control prior to Operation Homecoming...76 early releases...5 released by Laos ...32 released by Cambodia ...13 released by North Vietnam ...1 released by China ...25 released by South Vietnam ...Escaped from enemy control prior to Operation Homecoming...32 early releases...30 captured in South Vietnam ...2 captured in Laos ...Escaped from enemy control post Operation Homecoming...2 captured in South Vietnam and escaped to Saigon.

It was an overcast day, but beautiful to the POWs.

Larry Chesley had been a POW for more than seven years. In his book, "Seven Years in Hanoi", he wrote:

"February 12th was a beautiful day in North Vietnam, - at least to 112 American POWs. We had received our going away clothes the night before and cleaned up our rooms as well as we could. We assembled in the courtyard and made our way under guard to the gate of the Hanoi Hilton. This was the first time we had moved anywhere from there without being blindfolded and handcuffed."

Camouflaged buses carried the men to the airfield in Hanoi.

And 28 years earlier...

January 30 - Cabanatuan liberated

February 3 - U.S. Sixth Army attacks Japanese in Manila

February 3 - Santo Tomas Internment Camp Liberated

February 4 - Bilibid Liberated

February 16, 1945 - U.S. Troops recapture Bataan in the Philippines

February 19, 1945 - U.S. Marines invade Iwo Jima

February 23 - Los Banos Liberated

Freedom is within sight.

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Deadline for the May, 2007 issue is March 25, 2007.

Please send all materials to the editor at the above address.

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on capitol hill



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It was a long time ago. Right after the Civil War, the Veterans Administration was flooded with claims from veterans represented by attorneys. Use your own imagination as to what must have been going on for the VA to declare "No more lawyers!" (You could hire legal representation provided he was paid no more than \$10.00.) Lawyers have been virtually shut out of the claims process for over 120 years.

Congress changed that with the passage of the Veterans Benefit Improvement Act of 2006 (S3421) on Dec. 8, 2006. The changes will take effect next June (180 days after passage). The question is...should you hire a lawyer to represent you at VA? I can understand both sides of the argument. It does not seem reasonable in our democracy operating under the free enterprise system to be told, "No, you cannot be represented by counsel", and it seems reasonable advice that counsel should be secured from the beginning rather than the end of the proceedings to be sure the case was properly developed from the beginning. (That's the standard operating procedure for lawyers.)

With over 100 years experience caring for veterans, their widows and their orphans, the VA has certainly developed procedures and expertise to get the job done. The VSO network was developed to assist veterans through the claims process. This is just my personal opinion, no one should attempt to file his own claim; work with a Service Officer. POWs should use a Service Officer accredited with AXPOW because a former POW has presumptives available only to him that Service Officers of other VSOs may not be aware.

This might be a good time to review the process currently in use by the Board of Veterans Appeals. Before we get into that, it is my opinion that no POW claim should be sent to BVA. With the presumptives we have, any dispute should be settled in the Regional Office. When all else fails, BVA is the mechanism that is there for your benefit. The appeal process starts by filing a Notice of Disagreement with your local VA office. The Regional Office creates a Statement of the Case and sends a copy to the veteran. A VA Form 9 (Substantive Appeal) is included. To finish the appeal process, the veteran must complete the Form 9 and return it to his Regional Office. Then, you wait. They are busy. If you feel a personal hearing would help your case, you may

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request one; either in your local VA Office or with a member of the Board of Appeals.

Any one of three things can happen on an appeal. It will Allow, Deny or Remand the claim. A remand is a request for more information, usually from the Regional Office. If your claim is denied, you can go back to your Regional Office and ask that your claim be reopened. You may file a motion with the Board to reconsider your claim because there was a Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) in the decision. The whole procedure is all very structured, but does not carry the formality of a court trial. For that you have to appeal your case to the Court of Veterans Appeals in the Federal Courthouse. All in all, I believe that a veteran has several "shots" at getting a fair decision. Your Washington Office has a close working relationship with BVA. We see every case in which the veteran designated AXPOW Power of Attorney on his claim. We are advised by BVA the case is there and we are invited to review the claim and add our written testimony. Charlie Stenger writes a masterpiece every time. (well, almost every time). We do not hesitate to meet with top executives in BVA on the veteran's behalf, if we feel the case warrants it.

Les

110th Congress Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

Democrats

Daniel K. Akaka, HI - Chairman
John D. Rockefeller IV, WV
Patty Murray, WA
Barack Obama, IL
Sherrod Brown, OH
Jim Webb, VA
Jon Testor, MT

Republicans

Larry Craig, ID - Ranking Member
Arlen Specter, PA
Kay Bailey Hutchison, TX
Lindsey Graham, SC
Richard Burr, NC
John Insign, NV
Johnny Isakson, GA

Independent

Bernard Sanders, VT

VA Outreach S*O*O*N Before it's too late

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ND Bill Richardson (910) 864-7318

Outreach on Alert! Friendly Coincidence

It happened in a San Angelo, Texas, doctor's office in 2002. Sylvia had brought her father to his cardiologist for a checkup. Bill was an 84 year old former German prisoner of war - held for 18 months at Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria and weighing 100 pounds at liberation. Sylvia sat there in the waiting room while Bill was in seeing his doctor. Lots of magazines were around to read, but West Texans are inherently friendly. There are more cattle in our stretch of Texas than there are people. So Sylvia just naturally struck up a conversation with the elderly lady nearby. "My name's Sylvia. I brought my father to see Dr. M and hope he gets a good report. He's been having problems, and they may go back to his POW time in World War II."

The lady's response was, "My first husband was a prisoner of war in Germany, too, and he had heart trouble before he died in 1973. I remarried, but now my second husband has died." Mrs. Shack was from Rochelle; she had come over 100 miles to see the cardiologist. It would be a very good trip for her.

Sylvia asked, "Do you have your VA benefits?"

"No. I was denied a VA benefit after my first husband died. I doubt if I can get it."

Sylvia said, "An American Ex-POW National Service Officer here is helping my father apply for his VA former POW benefits. Would you give me your phone number so he can call you to see if he can help you?"

I called Mrs. Shack and had her send me a copy of her first husband's death certificate. It wasn't much help. "Death from natural causes," it said. BUT, with a little detective work this came to light. He had been hospitalized for heart trouble more than once in Durango, CO, and the Farmington, NM newspaper report said observers saw him suddenly turn his pickup into the ditch; when they got to him, he was dead.

Our Waco VA Regional Office's POW Coordinator, Dave Mercer, took over and Mrs. Shack - after 20 years - got her DIC widow's VA Benefit. I love coincidental Outreach. It's amazing what can happen.

Calls to new widows in Nov/Dec Bulletin TAPS about benefits: Melanie Bussel, NY; Les Jackson, MD; Don Lewis & Frank Kravetz, PA; Kay Arnold, MA; Doc Unger, OH; Merilee Hill, SC; Doris Jenks, FL; Guy Stephens, IN; Walt Peterson, WI; Marilyn Corre & James Aujian, CA; George Coker, VA; Betty Grinstead, IA; Edward Kazmierczk, MI, Fred Campbell, ID/SD/NM/TX.

Important Outreach!

Success!

It was Christmas Day, a former POW's widow calls from North Carolina: "I just want to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year".

My response, "Thank you for thinking of us".

Then she said, "Oh, I can never forget you, for all you have done

for me. With my VA widow's benefit, life is so much easier. And what a help ChampVA is!"

Messages like this are vital food for our AXPOW National Service Officers. Please, a word to all those who have had the help of your AXPOW NSO, write a note to us, so we can spread the word through this Bulletin. That is the way we can know about NSO Successes that have brought a better life for us former POWs, and our spouses/widows who have put up with us and our eccentric ways.

And speaking of the EX-POW Bulletin, it is our regular communication asset that can let us know that good things are happening. Our members, or someone they have told about possible VA benefits, are inquiring from all over the country. Let's keep the Bulletin a positive instrument of strength and outreach for American Ex-Prisoners of War.

This press release was received:

Secretary Nicholson: VA Reaches Out to Veterans and Spouses ~ "Aid and Attendance" an Under-Used Benefit

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance.

"Veterans have earned this benefit by their service to our nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "We want to ensure that every veteran or surviving spouse who qualifies has the chance to apply."

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outreach cont...

Although this is not a new program, not everyone is aware of his or her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing homes or assisted-living facilities.

Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self support and in need of regular personal assistance.

The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs.

People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment.

Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000. Information is also available on the Internet at www.va.gov or from any local veterans' service organization. **NOTE: Your AXPOW NSOs are ready to help!**

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nso



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I will be attending the Stalag 17B reunion in Tucson, Arizona from April 30, 2007 to May 4, 2007. The reunion will be at the Hotel Arizona on 181 West Broadway. The phone # there is: 1-800-845-4596 or (520) 624-8711. I will be in Arizona from April 17th, when I return from the ceremonies again this year in Hawaii. If anyone needs help during this time, perhaps either visit me at the Hotel Arizona or call me before then and perhaps I can visit your area. I will be in the Lake Havasu area from April 20th to April 27, 2007.

Nick Nishimoto will again be organizing activities in Hawaii for the Prisoner of War Recognition Day ceremonies. The itinerary is: April 4, 2007 - Picnic at 11:00 A.M. at the back of the Army Museum (near the Hale Koa Military Hotel), April 5, 2007 - pick-up 6:00 A.M. to the Arizona Memorial, USS Missouri, lunch at the Sea Breeze and then visit to Central Identification Lab, April 6, 2007 - 5:00 P.M. Banquet in the Hale Koa Ballroom, Cost \$35.00, April 9, 2007 - 9:00 pick-up to the Punchbowl National Cemetery of the Pacific for the Prisoner of War Recognition Day Ceremonies. Nick has 30 rooms blocked at the Hale Koa 1-800-367-6027.

Our National Ex-POW Service officer in West Palm Beach, FL has devoted many years of service as a volunteer at the Veterans Medical Center in West Palm Beach. The current Iraq

War has resulted in more than 20,000 service men and women returning with life-altering injuries, such as blindness, amputated limbs, paralysis and severe emotional trauma. Therefore, Stovroff and other volunteers that he works with are joining in a fund raising effort to procure guide dogs to assist in helping our injured veterans to recovery.

In 2003, the Guide Dog Foundation provided guide dogs to the Blind Rehabilitation Center at the West Palm Beach VAMC. It was agreed that the Foundation would begin training services to veterans who could not make it to the national headquarters in Smithtown, N.Y. The cost of raising and training a VetDog from birth to proper placement is approximately \$30,000. Since the Foundation delivers its dogs free of charge, sponsorship opportunities have been created to assist the Foundation in providing a new lease on life for our veterans.

In addition to receiving a guide dog, each blind veterans receives four hours of Guide dog training seven days a week and four hours of computer- assisted technology training. In return for team sponsorship the donors will be assured of the following: Guaranteed partnership of veteran and dog; fully trained service or guide dog; in-home follow up training, if needed; triplicate "dog tags" for the veteran, the dog and the sponsors with the sponsors name engraved on the back; donor's name printed in the Foundation's Annual Report as VetDogs Sponsor; an invitation to meet the veteran and his/her new partner. The cost of this sponsorship: \$6,000.00, tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Those individuals or groups interested in becoming involved in the team sponsorship program can contact Irwin Stovroff directly at the following numbers: VA Medical Center, 7305 N. Military Trail, West Palm, Fl. 33410; Office - (561) 422-7475; Home - (561) 488-6155 or by e-mail: irwintfl@aol.com

pow medsearch

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Packet #5 (What Every POW's Wife Should Know Before She is Your Widow) has been updated again, with much time and effort on the part of Marlene Agnes, to include the most recent laws and benefits published. The packet may be purchased from National Headquarters. Cost of the updated packet is \$15.00~includes S/H.

The article is taken from the Department of Veterans Affairs book **Healthwise for Life**, Healthwise Incorporated, PO Box 1989, Boise, Idaho 83701. Molly Metter MS, and Donald W. Kemper MPH, Carrie A Wiss, Editor, Steven L Schneider, MD Medical Editor.

Larry Strickland,
MedSearch Chairman

My doctor says I'm on the
verge of becoming an
old man. I place no
stock in that. I've been
on the verge of becoming
an angel all my life.

Mark Twain

Men's Health

This chapter focuses on health problems that are unique to men.

Genital Health

Daily cleansing of the penis, particularly under the foreskin covering an uncircumcised penis, can prevent bacterial infections. Daily washing also reduces the already low risk of penile cancer.

Call your health professional:

If you have unexplained groin pain.

If you notice any penile discharge.

Because the risk of testicular cancer is very low in older men, testicular selfexams are usually not recommended after age 50.

Erection Problems

As a man ages, the speed of his sexual response slows, his drive to reach orgasm is delayed, and the force of his orgasms gradually decreases. These physical changes need not be seen as problems. In many cases, they can prolong sensual enjoyment prior to orgasm.

Although occasional erection problems are common, healthy men of all ages are able to have erections. A man has erectile dysfunction when he has persistent difficulty achieving or maintaining an erection that is sufficient to have satisfactory sexual intercourse.

Most erection problems are caused by a combination of physical and psychological factors. Physical causes of erection problems include illnesses, injuries, or complications of surgery (such as prostate surgery) that interfere with nerve impulses or blood flow to the penis.

Psychological causes of erection problems include depression, anxiety, stress, grief, or problems with relationships. These problems interfere with the erection process by distracting a man from things that would normally arouse him. The use of certain medications, tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs may also lead to erection problems.

Prevention

Most erection problems can be prevented or resolved by taking a more relaxed approach to lovemaking and by following the tips outlined in Home Treatment.

Home Treatment

First rule out medications as a cause of erectile dysfunction. Many

drugs, especially blood pressure medicines, water pills (diuretics), and mood altering drugs, have side effects that can cause erection problems.

Ask your provider or pharmacist to check your prescription medications for possible side effects on sexual function. You may be able to take different drugs that do not have this side effect.

Do not stop taking any medication without talking to your provider first.

Avoid alcohol and tobacco products, which can make erection problems worse.

Cope with stress. Tension in your life can distract you and make getting erections difficult.

Regular exercise and other stress-relieving activities may help ease tension.

Talk to your partner about your problems and concerns. Sexual intimacy is a form of communication. If you and your partner aren't talking outside the bedroom, it's unlikely that you will have good sexual intimacy.

Take time for more foreplay. Let your partner know that you would enjoy more stroking. Slow down; then slow down some more.

Relax. Worrying about sexual performance may only worsen erection problems.

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medsearch continued...

Make sure you're ready. If you are grieving over a loss, you may not be ready for erections and sexual intercourse. Give yourself some time. Find out if you can have erections at other times. If you can have an erection on awakening or at other times, the problem may be related to stress or an emotional problem.

Avoid unproven remedies. Many products available in health food stores or through magazine advertisements promise relief of erection problems. They have never been medically proven to work and can also be expensive. If you have tried home treatment for a few months but your symptoms have not improved, you may wish to talk with your provider about erection-producing medications or injections, a vacuum device, or a penile implant.

Getting all the facts and thinking about your own and your partner's needs and values will help you make a wise decision about treatment for erection problems.

When to Call Your VA Health Provider

Seek care immediately:

If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours after you use an erection-producing medication.

If you have taken sildenafil citrate (Viagra) in the past 24 hours and are having chest pain.

Do not take nitroglycerin tablets if you have chest pain and have taken Viagra in the past 24 hours.

If the problem has not improved despite self-care.

Prostate Infection (Prostatitis)

The prostate is a small, lemon-shaped gland that lies under the bladder, about halfway between the rectum and the base of the penis. It encircles the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. The prostate produces some of the fluid that transports sperm during sexual climax (ejaculation).

The prostate can become inflamed—a condition called prostatitis. Prostatitis typically causes pain and urinary problems. For some men, the only

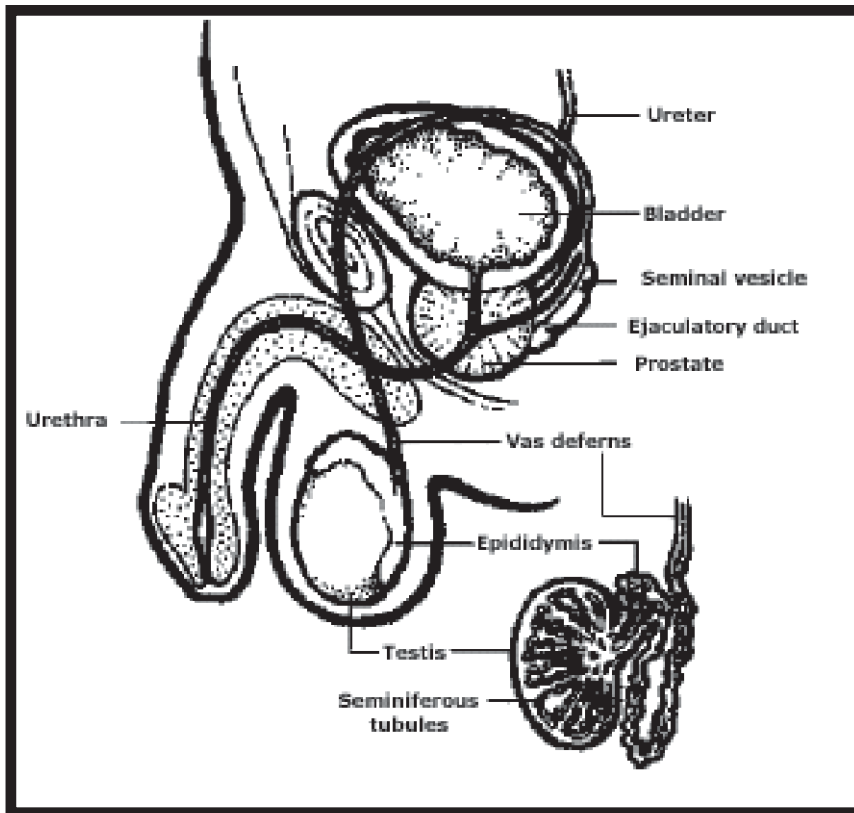
symptom is chronic pelvic pain. Prostatitis can have many causes, ranging from bacterial infection to stress or anxiety. In some cases, a cause for prostatitis symptoms cannot be identified.

Symptoms associated with prostatitis include:

Frequently having the urge to urinate, especially at night, but passing only small amounts of urine.

Feeling a burning sensation when you urinate.

Having difficulty starting a urine stream; having an interrupted or weaker-than-usual urine stream; being unable to empty your bladder completely; and dribbling after you urinate.



Call a health professional:

If an erection problem develops after you start taking a new medication or change the dose of a medication.

If your symptoms are related to a recent injury.

If erection problems occur with signs of a hormonal imbalance, such as loss of pubic or armpit hair and /or breast enlargement.

If you have other symptoms such as urinary problems, pain in the lower abdomen or lower back, or a fever.

If an erection problem is affecting your self-image or sense of wellbeing.

medsearch continued...

Feeling pain or discomfort in your lower back, scrotum, the area between your scrotum and anus, your lower abdomen, upper thighs, or above your pubic area (this pain may get worse when you pass stools).

Having prostate pain or vague discomfort when you ejaculate.

If prostatitis is caused by an acute bacterial infection, the symptoms are severe, come on suddenly, and may also include fever and chills. Acute bacterial prostatitis is uncommon. Bacterial prostate infections usually respond well to self-care and antibiotics. If the infection recurs, longterm antibiotic treatment may be needed. Pelvic pain and prostate inflammation that are not caused by bacterial infection usually respond to home treatment.

If symptoms of prostatitis are severe, come on suddenly, and occur with fever and chills.

If your urine is red or pink and there is no dietary reason why your urine might look this way (for example, if you had eaten beets). Always call your provider if you have blood in your urine.

If urinary symptoms (frequent urge to urinate, a burning sensation when urinating) occur with:

Persistent low back pain.

Lower abdominal pain.

Pain in the area between your scrotum and anus.

Pain in your upper thighs or above your pubic area (may get worse when you pass stools).

Pain when you ejaculate.

If you have recurrent urinary tract infections.

If there is an unusual discharge from your penis.

If you have symptoms such as difficulty getting a urine stream started, inability to empty your bladder completely, or a frequent urge to urinate (especially at night).

If pain and urinary symptoms persist even after you try home treatment.

Prevention

Wash your penis daily.

Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to help prevent urinary tract infections.

If you develop a urinary tract infection, seek treatment promptly.

Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and spicy foods, especially if they make your symptoms worse.

Take hot baths to help soothe pain and relieve stress.

Eat plenty of high-fiber foods, and drink enough water to avoid becoming constipated. Straining to pass stools can be very painful when your prostate is inflamed.

Take aspirin or ibuprofen to help relieve painful prostate symptoms

Prostate Enlargement

As a man ages, his prostate may grow larger. This condition is called benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH. As the prostate gets bigger, it may squeeze the urethra and cause urinary problems, such as:

Difficulty getting a urine stream started and completely stopped.

A frequent urge to urinate, or being awakened by the urge to urinate.

Decreased force of the urine stream.

Dribbling after urinating. (A small amount of dribbling after urinating is common and is not necessarily a sign of prostate problems.)

A sensation that the bladder is not completely empty after urinating.

An enlarged prostate is not a serious problem unless it makes urination extremely difficult or causes urine to get backed up in the urinary tract, which can lead to bladder infections or kidney damage.

BPH does not cause prostate cancer, and it has no effect on a man's ability to have erections or father children.

Surgery is usually not necessary to treat prostate enlargement. Although surgery used to be a common treatment, recent research shows that most cases of prostate enlargement do not get worse over time.

Many men find that their symptoms are stable, and symptoms sometimes clear up on their own. In these cases, the best treatment may be no treatment at all.

Drugs are available that may help minimize your symptoms. Your provider can advise you about the various treatment options.

Prevention

Since the prostate produces seminal fluid, there is a long-standing belief that ejaculating 2 to 3 times per week will help prevent an enlarged prostate. There is no scientific proof of this, but it is risk-free.

Home Treatment

Avoid antihistamines and decongestants, which can make urinary

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problems worse. Check with your provider or pharmacist to find out if urinary retention is a side effect of any prescription medications you are taking. You may be able to take different drugs that do not have this side effect. Do not stop taking any prescription medication without talking to your provider first.

The berries of the saw palmetto plant contain substances that can relieve urinary symptoms related to prostate enlargement. Saw palmetto extract is available in capsule, tablet, and liquid forms and as a tea. Saw palmetto has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of symptoms of prostate enlargement.

Herbal remedies are not subject to the same testing or purity standards as prescription and nonprescription medications are. The amount of drug in herbal preparations varies widely, and herbs may be contaminated with metals and other harmful substances. If you choose to use saw palmetto, let your health professional know.

Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to help prevent urinary tract infections. If you are bothered by a frequent need to urinate at night, cut down on beverages before bedtime, especially those containing alcohol or caffeine.

Don't postpone urinating, and take plenty of time. Try sitting on the toilet instead of standing to urinate. If dribbling after urinating is a problem, wash your penis once a day to prevent skin infections.

When to Call Your VA Health Provider

If you are unable to urinate, or if you feel as if you cannot empty your bladder completely. If you develop a fever, lower back or lower abdominal pain, or chills.

If there is blood or pus in your urine.

If you take water pills (diuretics), tranquilizers, antihistamines, decongestants, or antidepressants. These medications can aggravate urinary problems. Ask your provider if there are different medications you could take that will not cause urinary side effects.

If the symptoms of an enlarged prostate come on quickly, are bothersome enough that you want help, or last longer than 2 months.

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men. When detected early, before it has spread to other organs, prostate cancer may be curable. A man's risk for prostate cancer increases with age, and most cases develop in men over age 65. Prostate cancer sometimes runs in families, is more common in African-American men, and tends to be more common in men who eat a high-fat diet.

Since prostate cancer tends to develop late in life and usually grows slowly, most older men who have prostate cancer don't die from the disease.

Men younger than 65 who have prostate cancer (but no other serious health problems) are more likely to die of the cancer than older men are.

There are no specific symptoms of prostate cancer. Most men have no symptoms at all. In a few cases, prostate cancer may cause urinary symptoms similar to those associated with prostate enlargement. In advanced cases, symptoms such as pain may develop if the cancer

spreads to other organs or to the bones.

Prostate cancer treatment is tailored to each individual. Learn all you can about the available treatment options-which may include watchful waiting-so that you and your provider can select one that will give you the greatest long-term benefit.

Your age, overall health, other medical conditions, and the characteristics of your cancer are all important factors to consider when you make treatment decisions.

Prevention

Eating a low-fat diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables is the only known way to reduce your risk for prostate cancer. There is some evidence that eating 7-10 servings of foods that contain cooked tomatoes each week may decrease your risk for prostate cancer.

There is controversy about the value of using digital rectal exams and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test to screen all men for prostate cancer. Using these tests to detect early prostate cancer may not improve quality of life or prolong life, especially in men who are older or have other serious health problems. Therefore, many experts are uncertain whether routine digital rectal exams or PSA tests are appropriate for all men. Talk with your provider about your risks for prostate cancer and whether screening tests are appropriate for you.

When to Call Your VA Health Provider

If any urinary symptoms come on quickly, are bothersome enough that you want help, or last longer than 2 months.

If you want to discuss screening for prostate cancer, especially if you have a relative who developed prostate cancer.

Andersonville



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Progress Report on Museum Project

In the last issue of the Bulletin I reported that plans had been made to temporarily close the National Prisoner of War Museum for 2 ½ months for a major maintenance project. I am pleased to report at the time of this writing the project is moving along well thanks to careful planning and a dedicated staff.

The need for the project is eight years of wear and tear on a building that is open 9 hours a day every day of the year but three and hosting over 150,000 visitors a year. Visitors touching the walls and constant foot traffic tracking soil into the building made the building look much older than it actually is.

Like any government project, this job wasn't cheap. The price of the contract was just under \$87,000. Funding was secured through the National Park Service cyclic program. Once the funding was secured, contract specifications were prepared and a contractor chosen. The contractor chosen was approved by the Small Business Administration as a Small Business Disadvantaged Contractor. The company, RCA Contracting Inc., of Montezuma, Georgia, is one which the park has worked with on several occasions and has always been pleased with the quality of the work.

Once the contractor was chosen the park staff had to do their work to prepare the building for the job. First, all the artifacts had to be removed and placed in storage. Our Curator, Kandace Muller was able to get the assistance of three other curators to help with the move. All the exhibits, library books, furniture and the sales area had to be moved out by the Maintenance staff and put into storage. Fred Sanchez led the effort to carefully remove all the exhibits so they could be wrapped for storage. The park rented a large storage trailer to place all the exhibit panels and furniture in while the work progressed. The park rented a mobile home office to serve as a temporary visitor contact station during the time the museum would be closed. The move and set up of the temporary visitor center was all done in eight days.



It aint pretty but its home for now. This is the temporary visitor contact station that will serve visitors while the National Prisoner of War Museum is closed for maintenance.

At this point the museum was ready to turn over to the contractor. As with any painting job, there was a great deal of preparation work to be done before the first can of paint was opened. Many of the surfaces had to be covered to protect them. Some paint was rolled and brushed on but most of the surfaces were done with a multi-color textured spray paint. This was the same color and texture originally called for by the architect in 1998. By the week before Christmas, all the spray paint had been applied with excellent results.

Next came the carpet. The carpet chosen was made by the same company that supplied the carpet in 1998. Several different styles were selected to maintain the effect that the architect planned for when the building was designed. As the visi-

tor moves from one exhibit room to another the carpet changes to help mark that the theme of that particular room is different. Care was also taken to choose a carpet that will off gas as little as possible to minimize that negative effect on the artifacts on display.

After the museum was stripped of exhibits and furniture all sorts of problems appeared that had not been noticed before. With the museum closed and cleaned out this was the time to fix these problems. It was amazing how dirty the windows at the top of the three towers had gotten. All the high light bulbs that require a special lift to access were replaced. There were a number of dry wall repairs that had to be made. The beautiful walnut paneling in the lobby was treated and preserved. All the curtains were cleaned. The wooden benches in the commemorative courtyard were removed, sanded and sealed. Those are but a few of the repairs that were made during this process.

Closing the museum for one day is regrettable. The staff looked for every way possible to do the job without closing but there was no practical way to do so. Although a public relations campaign was launched in November to inform potential visitors of the closure, some visitors arrived surprised that the museum was not open. The period chosen to close the museum was done so because that is the time of the lowest visitation. Nearly all the services provided to the public are continuing during the down time.

Plans are to move back in early February and reopen to the public by mid February. At this time, I believe we will meet that time schedule. This will be just in time to greet the throngs of school children and spring visitors who come to learn about the sacrifices made by those who sacrificed so much for our nation and the freedom we cherish.

NamPOW news



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Vietnam POW Repatriation ~ Bland Diet

February 12, 1973. 34 years ago. The first groups of American POWs were released under the Accords reached in Paris on January 26, officially ending U.S. involvement in the longest war in our history. Provisions of the Accords required that POWs be notified of their signing within a very short period of time. It was not a total surprise, however.

Many of the POWs had been evacuated to "Dog Patch," a camp near the Chinese border, when the air war had resumed in 1972 following a nearly four year hiatus broken only by the Son Tay Raid in November of 1970. From the stridency in the voice of Hanoi Hanna, propaganda mistress of Radio Hanoi, most of us POWs thought that it was for real this time. Reading between the lines and with input from newly captured Americans - first "news" we'd had in years - we learned that the harbors had been mined and rail transport nearly shut down.

Despite a dearth of supplies, conditions for the Americans actually got a little better. We speculated that the Vietnamese knew the war was going to be over soon and some of the senior officers and interrogators seemed almost solicitous of the POWs, something never seen before.

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We were suddenly moved from Dog Patch to Hanoi in an unusually non-secure manner. We were moved in the daytime. We weren't blindfolded. As I recall the restraints weren't as bad as in the terror-filled midnight moves we'd had so many times before.

Then, in January the lights all over Hanoi came on at night. There were celebrations in the streets and fireworks instead of AA guns. Across from Hoa Lo prison, a man scaled the tall radio tower and put a huge North Vietnamese flag on the tower. Something big was happening! Over the next few days we were shuffled into various rooms. We quickly figured out that we were being arranged by shutdown date. Communications, always pretty good in this camp, became even better and the guards didn't seem to care. We were let out en masse for the first time ever.

The camp commander called the POWs into the court yard. Col. Flynn, our senior officer organized the group in a military formation by cells - that had never been allowed. The word went quickly that there were cameras filming whatever was about to happen and we were not to show emotion. We straight-facedly received the news from the camp commander that we would all be released within 60 days and the first group would leave in a few weeks.

Straight faces. No emotion. The camp commander asked, "Do you understand?" Nothing. The camp commander read the Accords again. No reaction. He and the officers yelled, "Go back to your cells."

Other than communicating illegally, it was our only victory over the North Vietnamese since we'd been flying missions and it felt good.

On February 11, the first group received real clothes - Czechoslovakian - with shoes and a jacket. Next day, Group 1 - the sick and wounded and the longest held left. I remember seeing the C-141 that brought us home - workhorse of the Vietnam War, I'd never seen one before. It appeared after I'd been shot down.

We were turned over to American custody showing no emotion and escorted into the plane. We rode through our first take off in, for Everett Alvarez, 8 ½ years. Someone muttered, "These bastards are going to shoot us down."

That didn't happen and when the pilot called, "Feet wet" (over the ocean) the loud cheer that went up almost over-pressured the aircraft's fuselage!

Arrival in the Philippines was a mental overload. We were greeted by a band, generals and admirals, throngs of military personnel and dependents and "Welcome Home, POWs" signs. We had to process through Clark AFB's hospital before proceeding. All of us were anticipating food that had seemed like a dream only hours before.

"Not so fast," said the Air Force flight surgeon, "Your system won't tolerate rich food."

"Huh? Gimme a break, Doc."

We'd been working out heavily over the last year as the Vietnamese tried to fatten us up for the release. I'd learned to walk on my hands and could do an unbelievable number of vertical pushups while balancing on my hands. I jumped onto my hands, did 25 vertical pushups, walked around a bit, jumped up and looked at the slightly overweight flight surgeon.

"If you can do that, Doc, I'll eat your bland diet. Other wise I'm eating steak, eggs and ice cream."

On his prescription pad, the doctor wrote, "Normal diet OK." Life was good. And over the next couple of days my 128 lbs. release weight went to 135. And the C-141 that flew us back to the U.S. had absolutely no garbage to discard by the time it got to the United States!



pow-mia



**PNC John Edwards,
Chairman**

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POW/MIA car-window decals are available at a cost of \$20 per 100 by sending a check to the League office at 1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 170, Arlington, VA 22201. POW/MIA lapel pins are also available at \$3 each or 2/\$5. For added information please contact the League's web site at www.pow-miafamilies.org or call the national office at 703-465-7432. If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message.

Army Soldiers Missing in Action from Vietnam War are Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced on December 19, 2006 that the remains of three U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Capt. Herbert C. Crosby, of Donalsonville, Ga., Sgt. 1st Class Wayne C. Allen, of Tewksbury, Mass., and Sgt. 1st Class Francis G. Graziosi, of Rochester, N.Y., all U.S. Army. Burial dates and locations are being set by their families.

Representatives from the Army met with the next-of-kin of these men to explain the recovery and identification process, and to co-

ordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

On Jan. 10, 1970, these men were returning to their base at Chu Lai, South Vietnam aboard a UH-1C Huey helicopter. Due to bad weather, their helicopter went down over Quang Nam Province. A search was initiated for the crew, but no sign of the helicopter or crew was spotted.

In 1989, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) gave to U.S. specialists 25 boxes containing the remains of the U.S. servicemen related to this incident. Later that year, additional remains and Crosby's identification tag were obtained from a Vietnamese refugee.

Between 1993 and 1999, joint U.S./S.R.V. teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), conducted three investigations in Ho Chi Minh City and two investigations in Quang Nam-Da Nang Province (formerly Quang Nam Province). A Vietnamese informant in Ho Chi Minh City told the team he knew where the remains of as many as nine American servicemen were buried. He agreed to lead the team to the burial site. In 1994, the team excavated the site and recovered a metal box and several bags containing human remains, including these three soldiers.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of the remains.

WWII Research

An analyst from DPMO's Joint Commission Support Directorate completed a month-long search in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb for records pertaining to American WWII MIAs. Some of the

documents discovered contain references to destroyed American aircraft and captured or killed American and Allied servicemen. Additionally, the researcher gathered information on several WWII crash sites, including the specific location of a U.S. aircraft, reportedly in 72 meters of water off the coast of Vis Island. The co-pilot of that aircraft is MIA. This information and documentation could lead to further investigations to refine more specific locations

DASD Appointment Announced

The POW/MIA issue has a new Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD), Ambassador Charles A. Ray. Ambassador Ray brings to it a full career in the Army, a second career as a State Department Foreign Service Officer, multiple languages and understanding of the countries with which he will be working. Ambassador Ray's stature is willing and able to assume this responsibility and very hopeful of a united, cohesive and positive effort going forward.

Ambassador Charles A. Ray is a Vietnam War two-combat tour (now retired) Infantryman. He set up and ran the Consulate in Saigon for about four or five years before being named Ambassador to Cambodia.

Ambassador Ray traveled to Moscow in an effort to advance the objectives of the US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs (USRJC), his first such visit since assuming responsibility for the POW/MIA accounting mission. Unfortunately, the environment for the visit was clouded by recent negative actions of the Russian Government including refusal to allow US officials access to museums previously given.

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civilians

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Another Shot at Freedom Now Hear This! Now Hear This!

By Sascha Jansen

The lumbering C-47 lifted off from Nichols Field in the Philippines to some unknown destination. It was the first week of March, 1945 as planeloads of American civilian prisoners, who had been liberated by the US Forces early in February, were heading for freedom. Our tailbones screamed in pain as we sat on hard steel shelves saddled tightly with a contraption called a Mae West – a floatation device in the event we landed in the drink.

I had just had my 12th birthday and clutched my sole possessions on this earth – four shrapnel fragments, a fistful of medals from the GIs and a bloody Jap insignia. The fragments had barely missed me by four inches by ack ack during one of the huge bombing raids.

After a treacherous ride in the tail end of a typhoon, the pilot landed blindly in a turbulent jungle field of raging water. Whipping rains and winds soaked us to the bone as our trucks slogged through the jungles of Leyte. Sinkholes and leaches were our worst enemy. After leaving the men off at their camps, the women and children headed to the beach camp hospital for the military wounded. Our jungle sojourn lasted 6 hours.

The next day the beautiful white beaches were drenched by the sun as we looked upon Leyte Bay – still showing remnants of steel hulls and

debris from the intensity of the battle fought in October of 1944. In between physicals given by military doctors and the wonderful chow we were eating, we were constant companions with all the GIs recuperating. We ate with them in the mess halls, swam in the bay, and at night sitting on fallen coconut trees, we watched first rate movies, eating candy bars and swilling coke. For us kids and the GIs who became our good friends, life could not have been sweeter. We reminded ourselves every day that these brave young boys had taken flack and bullets for us so we could be free.

One afternoon after five playful days, we were given fifteen minutes to line up as trucks moved us out two miles down the beach. In no time we were plowing the waters on LCT's then found ourselves bobbing up and down beside a troop ship. GIs, patients and our dads, who were transferred from their camp earlier, were leaning over the rails waving and calling out to us. Our moms and the single gals responded to all their whistles by showing off what the boys went off to war for. These guys hadn't seen an American woman in almost three years, so you can imagine the surprise in knowing we would be traveling on the same ship.

At no time were we told what our destination would be. "Loose Lips Sink Ships," was our mantra and the crew never let us forget it. The war was still on and security was tight.

We expected to weigh anchor any minute, but the three days sitting pretty in the bay soon took its toll. The heat of the tropics was suffocating and the sun beat down unmercifully on this tin can. But we were on the USS Admiral Capps, and she was OUR tin can. She was taking us to freedom and home, wherever that may be.

The first thing we heard on the squawk box was, "Now Hear This – All prisoners lay down to the mess deck!" The tables had white table clothes and on each place was a red apple and a real glass of cold milk. The mess hands lined up sporting very big grins as we came through

the door. The dinner was pork chops ending with a dish of ice cream. When we told them that half of the children had never had cold milk, apples or ice cream, they had tears in their eyes.

Our voyage in convoy was uneventful as we anchored in The Admiralties for a few hours. We had two sea burials and traveled 12 knots per hour. A Coast Guard trio with a jazz combo taught us the latest songs and how to jitterbug. My favorite song today is Honeysuckle Rose. We helped the crew spot mines and became good at it. We fell in love with the America we never knew and learned Pinocle and Pedro from the wounded guys on deck. They taught us slang, with a few naughty words thrown in, and exchanged autographs and addresses.

We landed in Hawaii to pick up FBI agents who for the next five days held debriefing sessions with the prisoners. As we weighed anchor we turned our attention to a high pitched bosun's whistle being piped. The whole ship erupted with cheers as we were treated to a long rendition of "California Here We Come."

Our excitement was hard to contain on the early morning of arrival to San Francisco. Not wanting to miss a thing, we stood on deck in the pitch dark in ill fitting Wac and Army uniforms. The freezing weather was new and unique. We could feel the ship's engines slow its pace to a low grind. Gradually night gave way to a crimson blush, then changed hesitantly to an orange hue spun in a web of fog. Another grinding shift of the engines. Then, if by magic, the tip of the Golden Gate Bridge loomed out of the fog. My dad held my hand tightly and drew me close as the USS Admiral Capps slipped silently under the bridge. Tears stung our eyes as the PA system announced,

"NOW HEAR THIS – NOW HEAR THIS! PASSING THROUGH THE GOLDEN GATE at 7:48."

The date was April 8, 1945 – we had made it home!

events and information



April 18-22, 2007. Anzio Beach-head Veterans of WWII 28th Annual Reunion will be held in Washington, DC. Contact John Boller, 1 Harbor North, Amityville, NY 11701; 631-691-5002.

April 26-29, 2007. Stalag Luft III Ex-POW Reunion will be held in Kansas City, MO. For more information, call Tom Thomas 630-668-0215 or Bob Weinberg 830-257-4643/ All are welcome.

June 21-25, 2007. WWII PT Boats, Bases, Tenders 43rd Annual Reunion will be held at the Drawbridge Inn, Ft. Mitchell, KY. For more information, contact PT Tenders, Boats and Bases, PO Box 38070, Germantown, TN 38183; 901-755-8440; www.ptboats.org.

August 15-18, 21007. 80th Infantry Division Association 88th Annual Reunion will be held in Fairborn, OH at the Holiday Inn. For reservations, call 937-426-7800. Reunion Chairman, Elmer G. Dorsten, 208 N. Elm St., Coldwater, OH 45828; 419-678-2618.

Sept. 27-Oct. 1, 2007. The 45th Infantry Division (Thunderbirds) will be holding their annual reunion. For further information, please contact: Raul Trevino, 2145 NE Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73111; 210-681-9134.

October 2007. The Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, Inc. (SSMA) will be celebrating the 64th Anniversary Reunion of "Black Thursday" (8th Air Force - Mission 115 over Schweinfurt, Germany on October 14, 1943) in Schweinfurt, Germany. (Tentative location for 2008 — Savannah, Georgia). For more information,

please contact Julee and Bob MacDonald at 720-254-7418 or juleemac@comcast.net.

looking for



I would like to extend **my appreciation** to the overwhelming response of those that contacted me regarding the Obermassfeld Hospital. (Published in your magazine). Although I was not able to locate the specific former POWs medical records, I was advised the location of the archives that supposedly have other POWs' records treated at the facility. The former POW however was approved for award the Purple Heart which was presented to his widow by Brigadier General Jones. Regards, Robert E. Johnson.

I am looking for information on Stalag 4D and 12A. My uncle, **Henry T. Vermeulen**, was in the 82nd Airborne, 80th AA Bn. He participated in D-Day in a glider. He was captured on June 8, 1944. Thank you. James J. Vermeulen, 720 Tulip Lane, Connersville, IN 47331.

The Ex-POW Bulletin ran an article about my collection of **POW license plates**. I received an excellent response, but still need six to complete my collection. They are: Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, New Hampshire, Vermont and West Virginia. I also need three for my Purple Heart collection Maryland, North Dakota and Vermont. The plates are displayed respectfully and used to educate students and others. Thanks, Cecil Freeman, P O Box 928, Bynum, Alabama 36253.

I was a POW for a year in Germany. I was shot down May 24, 1944. I

have tried for some time to get a fairly accurate count of **American airmen captured by the Germans in WWII**, and an estimate of how many of us are still living. How many British airmen were captured by the Germans? The statistics published each year by the VA do not give the number of American airmen who flew out of England and Italy (the 8th, 9th and 15th air forces, I believe). I could get close to what I need if you have a listing of POWs in each camp... at least the larger camps. I know where our airmen were kept... just don't have the number in each camp. It would be nice to have the number of British airmen held by the Germans but that might be asking too much. Can you help me? Robert L. Black, 84 Little Branch La., Hendersonville, NC; email: powl200@Planetusa.net.

News Briefs

Stolen Valor Act Signed

The Stolen Valor Act of 2005 (the Act), signed into law by President George W. Bush on December 20, 2006, is a U.S. law that broadens the provisions of current U.S. law addressing the unauthorized wearing, manufacture or selling of military decorations and medals. Under current law, it is a federal offense which carries a punishment of prison time and/or a fine; the scope currently covers only the Medal of Honor.

The Act was first introduced into the United States Congress's House of Representatives on July 19, 2005

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news briefs cont...

by Representative John Salazar, a Democrat from Colorado, as H.R. 3352. It was introduced into the Senate by Senator Kent Conrad, a Democrat from North Dakota, on November 10, 2005 as S. 1998. The Senate version was passed unanimously on September 7, 2006. The Senate version then went to the same House Judiciary Committee that held the House version. The Act briefly stalled, but the House subsequently passed the Senate version, S. 1998, on December 6, 2006.

The purpose of the Act is to strengthen the provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 704 by broadening its scope and strengthening penalties. The legislation calls for up to six months in prison for anyone who falsely claims to have earned a military honor, and up to a year in prison for fraudulently wearing a Purple Heart, Silver Star or other high military honor.

Both crimes would also be classified as felonies, which can carry additional penalties such as limits on gun ownership and disqualification from certain public offices, depending on the state.

Under current law, anyone caught wearing a military medal they did not earn faces a misdemeanor charge and up to six months in prison, but law enforcement can't do anything to someone simply displaying or claiming to have earned the honor.

The need for the Act came about because of large numbers of fake military heroes in the United States. For example, as of June 2, 2006 there were only 120 living Medal of Honor recipients, but there were far more known imposters. There are also large numbers of fake Navy

SEALS and Army Special Forces, among others.

"These frauds have diminished the honor of our military heroes," said Rep. John Salazar (D-CO), who introduced the original version of the measure. "They use it to gain credibility for themselves, and often go on to commit even worse crimes."

President Bush Signs Veterans Bill into Law

On Dec. 22, 2006, President George Bush signed into law a \$3.2 billion comprehensive benefits and health care bill for veterans sponsored by U.S. Senator Larry Craig, the outgoing chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Among its many provisions, the new law partially overturns a policy dating back to the Civil War era that has prohibited veterans from hiring attorneys to help them seek veterans' benefits until they have spent months - sometimes years - exhausting the administrative process. As signed into law, this bill will now allow veterans or other VA claimants to hire attorneys during VA's appeal process.

The legislation will also require VA to establish an Office of Rural Health. The new law should also help rural states by allowing VA to create a pilot program which makes non-VA facilities - such as private nursing homes or community hospitals - eligible for state veterans' home per diem payments.

Among its provisions, the bill adds \$65 million to increase the number of clinicians treating post traumatic stress disorder and \$2 million for additional blind rehabilitation specialists and increases the number of facilities where the specialists will be located. It authorizes VA to designate six Parkinson's Disease Research, Education, & Clinical Centers of Excellence, and at least 2 Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence.

The bill contains provisions that will provide VA with additional tools to help it contract with veteran and disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

The new veterans' law authorizes the replacement of the VA facilities in New Orleans, and move forward with new hospital projects in Denver, Las Vegas, and Orlando.

The bill also includes a provision which requires the removal of the remains of a double murderer - Russell Wayne Wagner - from Arlington National Cemetery.

The new law will also enable the spouse or child of a servicemember who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care to begin receiving financial help through VA for their education. The new law will also enable tribal organizations to obtain grants from VA to help them establish, expand, or improve veterans' cemeteries on trust lands.

National Salute Campaign

VA's 2007 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans campaign is an annual recognition of the men and women who once served in military uniform. This year it will be marked by community activities around the country Feb. 11-17 at VA health care facilities.

Approximately 100,000 volunteers contribute millions of hours a year helping hospitalized veterans with their compassion and attention to individual veterans' needs.

The national event is timed to coincide with Valentine's Day because the sentiments of caring and sharing match the salute's purpose of expressing honor and appreciation to veterans.

Newspaper readers, classroom students, scout troops and others annually generate more than a

news briefs cont...

million "Valentines for Veterans" cards and letters to local VA medical centers and nursing homes to express gratitude for veterans' service to their country.

Community and state officials, military and veterans' organizations and youth groups often join with the public during the National Salute week to visit patients in VA hospitals, nursing homes, state veterans homes and other facilities.

Members of the public are encouraged to call their local VA health care facilities to participate in activities during the 2007 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. At VA medical centers, they should ask for the voluntary service office, which coordinates the activities.

VA SSOC Deadline

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing to amend its regulations to change the response period from 60 days to 30 days as the time limit for filing a response to a Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC). Their rationale is to improve efficiency in the appeals process and reduce the time it takes to resolve an appeal, while still providing an appellant with a reasonable period of time to respond to a SSOC.

The difficulty for a veteran receiving an SSOC is that he/she may not know whether the various issues of the SSOC are being adjudicated for the first time or not. Many may believe their previously filed Form VA9 (Appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals - BVA) is sufficient to appeal all issues to the BVA. That belief may not be true and their appeal for the issue in question will be denied by the BVA if it is not.

Issue number (2) is a new issue for which the veteran never gave an

Notice of Disagreement (NOD). Unless the veteran files an NOD within one year of the SSOC date, he has failed to appeal issue number 2. The BVA need not issue a decision on issue number 2.

The better practice when receiving an SSOC is for the veteran to file a new VA9 for all SSOC issues and to file a new NOD for all SSOC issues. In filing the veteran should use a secure means of delivery of his paperwork to the RO. All veteran paperwork sent to any Regional Office should be sent Certified - Return Receipt Requested in case a subsequent denial of receipt is claimed. The VA could lessen the problem of vets meeting deadline dates if they followed the example set by the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA has a standard time period for appeal at all levels: Sixty days plus five days if the SSA decision was mailed. Ordinary citizens can understand that timeframe. It is always 65 days. By contrast, the VA has an assortment of complex time periods to appeal a VA decision.

Social Security Reform

Late last year, the GAO released a report that examined the implications of using different methods of indexing Social Security. Indexing is used in the calculation of initial retirement benefits, to annually adjust the maximum amount of wages subject to taxation, and in calculating the annual COLA. Many recent Social Security reform proposals have proposed modifications to the indexing currently used. The proposed modifications would generally cut initial retirement benefits for persons retiring in the future. But some proposals would result in COLAs that grow even more slowly than they do now, thus cutting the benefits of current retirees. Some economists, including retired Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, argue that COLAs should be cut. He said the Consumer Price Index that the gov-

ernment uses to calculate COLAs overstates inflation and thus overpays seniors. Overwhelmingly, however, retirees believe the COLA is too low, and does not accurately reflect their health care costs.

During the past five years for example, Medicare Part B premiums alone grew 60% while COLAs grew just 13.6%. Seniors would receive a more adequate COLA if the government were to calculate it using an index that more accurately reflects the portion of income that seniors spend on health care. The federal government has tracked such an index, the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E), for more than 23 years. In one case, a senior who retired with an average benefit of \$460 in 1984 would have received \$10,290 more over her retirement had COLAs been calculated using the CPI-E. The higher COLAs are like interest and grow bigger over time. Today, when that retiree is 85 and more likely to have costly health problems, she would be receiving a monthly benefit that's \$70 more had the CPI-E been used over the course of her retirement. TSCC continues to lobby and build support for legislation that would provide a more fair and adequate COLA by using the CPI-E to calculate the annual increase.

VFW Supports Tinnitus Supreme Court Case

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. filed an Amicus, or Friend of the Court brief in December in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of veteran Ellis C. Smith, who is seeking to overturn a lower court decision that allowed the Department of Veterans Affairs to rate tinnitus as a single disability, regardless of whether it affects one or both ears.

Freedom Stories



4 Days to Liberation...

by Peter Wygle



General Vernon Mudge, The CO of the 1st Cavalry Division, received MacArthur's "Flying Column" liberation decree for the Santo Tomas prisoners on 31 January, 1945, one day after the division arrived at a "rest stop" at Guimba in the Luzon Central Valley.

The General spent the rest of that day gathering the troops he thought it would take to accomplish his new mission. These troops included, in addition to parts of the 5th Cav and the 8th Cav Regiments and some miscellaneous support people, the 44th Tank Battalion, a bunch of air cover from Marine Air Groups 24 and 32, and—luckily—a Navy demolitions expert, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) James Patrick Sutton.

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Dividing the Column into three serials, Mudge assigned missions to each, and, at one minute past midnight on the morning of 1 February, led them out of Guimba. The race for Manila was on.

The Column, carrying only four days' rations and the absolute minimum in arms, ammunition, and fuel, had to tread carefully for the first few miles because the military prisoners from Cabanatuan were still being evacuated across its path following their liberation the day before. Once in the clear, however, the column fought its way at top speed down the Central Valley along Highway 5, slowing only for a day of heavy firefights at Cabanatuan and Gapan.

An ambush at a road intersection during the fight at Gapan cost the life of Lt. Col. Tom Ross, commander of the third serial. This was the serial with most of the 44th Tank Battalion assigned to it.

After this fierce early fighting the Column sped south, depending totally upon Marine flyers for flank security as it moved toward Manila, pausing only to bypass blown bridges and to engage the Japanese in hit-and-run fighting.

It hit a snag, however, at the Novaliches Bridge just south of a road junction that became known as "The Hot Corner". They were still about ten miles short of Manila. Mines had been set on the bridge, the fuse was lit, and the Japanese were laying down heavy sniper fire to discourage all efforts to prevent its destruction. Bypassing this particular bridge was not an option, because the gorge was deep and the river was swift. It was here that having Pat Sutton along turned out to be a stroke of good fortune. He, ap-

parently protected by some sort of a providential Star Trek force field that seemed to repel sniper bullets, ran out on the bridge and cut the demolition fuse, enabling the Column to cross the river with dry feet.

Lt. Sutton later helped in clearing a path through a minefield farther south on the approach to Manila. His next running—with his brand new Distinguished Service Cross—was for Congress, where he won a Tennessee seat in the House of Representatives.

Shortly after the Column crossed the river at Novaliches, the bridge fell victim to Japanese foul play because the Column had not had time to leave protective security behind. Loss of the bridge delayed follow-up support and reinforcements for the Flying Column and slowed down the securing of the Novaliches reservoir and the Balara water filters just north of Marikina, both of which were essential to the water supply of the city of Manila.

One of the many interesting stories about the Column now took place behind it. It was essential to the Column's resupply problem that the Novaliches bridge be replaced, and during the evening following its demolition by the Japanese, what should show up but a heavy engineer unit that had been told that a new bridge was needed. They asked General Mudge if he was the one who needed the bridge and the general allowed that he certainly was. He needed it in a hurry, and he



freedom stories continued...

needed it right there. In hardly any time at all he had his bridge and the supplies were moving again. It didn't come out until the next day that the engineer unit thought they were building the bridge for the 37th Division, located some distance to the west. General Mudge's comment to the engineer colonel was to the effect that "Your people didn't ask me who I was. They just asked me if I needed a bridge; which I certainly did."

The Flying Column itself, however, was still moving down Quezon Boulevard straight toward Santo Tomas Internment Camp and Malacanang Palace.

Inside the prison camp, 3700 apprehensive civilian men, women, and children were watching the approach of the tracer-bullet fireworks in the evening sky with a strange mixture of excitement and dread. After three years in the "protective custody" of the Japanese, they were excited that SOMETHING was happening—even if they didn't know what it was—but mixed in with this excitement was dread of the possibility that the pyrotechnic display was, in truth, being caused by the bad guys headed their way with malice in their souls. Rumors had been rampant for some time that the Japanese intended to kill all of their prisoners.

Late on 3 February, after a couple of wrong turns and some heavy fighting in the mixed-up outskirts of Manila, the Santo Tomas column picked up Captain Manuel Colayco, a Filipino newspaperman and clandestine intelligence officer, who guided them to the main gate of the prison camp. At about nine in the

evening, after a brief flurry of resistance by the Japanese guards during which Captain Colayco was fatally wounded by a grenade explosion, the 44th Tank Battalion's M-4 Sherman "Battlin' Basic", followed closely by the "Georgia Peach", knocked a hole in the camp fence and the war was nearly over for the internees.



The Flying Column was 66 hours into its mission. With time out for the fights at Cabanatuan and Gapan, and delays in bypassing some of the blown bridges, it had covered 100 miles. The Cav had footholds—tenuous as they might actually have been—at Santo Tomas and at Malacanang Palace. For the Santo Tomas internees, their liberation was followed by a night of delirious happiness, but a standoff and hostage crisis in one of the campus buildings, and two or three days of murderous artillery dueling were to follow.

The artillery battle resulted when the few hundred men of the Cav, not having all that much Manila real estate under their control, had to set up their artillery inside the Santo Tomas complex and begin making enough noise to discourage thoughts of counter-attack in the minds of the 20,000 Japanese defenders of the city. While the good news was that no counterattack materialized; the bad news was that the presence of American artillery in the front yard invited counter-fire from the Japanese south of the Pasig River,

and the internees were caught in the middle. This several-day artillery duel caused the only prisoner casualties of the Santo Tomas liberation — with the possible exception of a couple of internees who reportedly ate themselves to death in the first day or so. Seventeen internees and several Army troopers were killed in the exchange of fire and many more were injured.

But they were free after 37 months!!

Pete went on to make a career in the military, retiring as a Colonel. We lost a good friend when he passed away Sept. 23, 2003.

February 3, 1945...

by Ted Cadwallader

It was a Saturday night, tropical, warm, dark in some areas of the sky and light in other areas. The young boy in the thin-walled shanty watched through the window with his parents as carrier aircraft from Bull Halsey's Third Carrier Fleet rushed down through the night air to unleash ordinance on Japanese naval vessels in Manila Bay not far away. The three people in the shanty were watching the Second World War in the Pacific through their window. The boy and his parents had been in the prison camp for 37 months and for the last few months, had watched and listened as angry American aircraft with powerful, deep-sounding engines flew high and low over the city of Manila, always careful not to bomb or strafe the camp. An amazing and wonderful sight to the boy during this period were the puffs of brightly colored flak in the sky sent up by the Japanese anti-aircraft weapons for range finding. Some puffs were blue, some yellow and some red. They were consistently

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attractive and pretty in their cotton-like appearance.

This Saturday night was particularly busy in the sky and the city was alive with an electric feeling as if something was going to happen — somewhere. Distant sounds of group weapons firing could be heard occasionally, which added to the din of the battle over the bay. What the people in the little shanty did not know was they were now involved in the first minutes of the horrific, fatal, Battle of Manila, which would free them of their captors, destroy the city and 100,000 of its Filipino residents.

The night grew later and some of the automatic weapons sounds were now louder and closer. Someone ran through the dark street near the shanty, repeatedly shouting, "The American are here!" The young boy's mother, ever skeptical, advised this had happened before and it was a delusion. Thirty-seven months in the camp could hardly come to an end in one night. It wasn't possible. Within minutes an unfamiliar rumbling sound could be heard and a slight vibration could be felt. The boy looked at his parents, they looked back, no one said anything as they moved toward the door. With others, they converged on the road which circled around the main building of the camp.

With the rumbling growing louder and the vibrations increasing, the boy looked around the side of the building and could barely discern massive moving shapes, moving slowly toward him with bright lights. He was a bit shaken as he had never seen anything like these

shapes, with bright, almost blinding, light. Apprehension seized him as these rumbling, squeaking monsters continued to move toward him with grim determination. Nothing could stop them. Then they were very close, and turning in dust and noise in front of him, stopping abruptly. There in front of him were three American Sherman tanks covered in dust and dirt, smelling heavily of dust, dirt, oil, exhibiting a great armored arrogance and power with their main guns and machine guns on display. He was afraid, he was excited, he was overcome.



The cheers started around him, the tankers emerged from their machines, and he ran to the first tank, determined to climb aboard. Others his age had the same idea and the scramble up the sides of American tanks by young American children in a concentration camp in Manila began. Their 37 months of isolation and imprisonment was instantly ended at that moment.

Ted was 6 1/2 years old at the time of his release. He had been held captive by the Imperial Japanese Army for nearly half his life.

Going Home

By Richard Stratton

The war in Vietnam was a long one for the Americans. Of course it was even longer for the citizens of the Republic of Vietnam; but that is their story. The first American prisoner to be captured alive in North



Nearly 30 years ago, cartoonist Jeff McNelly immortalized the release of the Vietnam POWs.

Vietnam was Ev Alvarez who was shot down in August of 1964. Whenever the later shoot downs were inclined to feel sorry for themselves, all they had to do was think of Ev, how long he had been down, what a great sense of humor he had maintained and what a positive attitude he had. It placed everything into perspective.

After the courageous Son Tay Raid in North Vietnam by American troops in 1970, the communists gathered the American prisoners, with few exceptions, into two large groups. One group of younger men on the Chinese border; the second group were stuffed into the main downtown Hanoi prison, Hoa Lo (facetiously called by the Americans - the Hanoi Hilton).

Torture for propaganda as a daily routine had ceased except for those who challenged the communists for leadership of the prisoners. Torture for military information seemed to be reserved for aircraft, squadron and air wing commanders as well as electronic warfare officers.

Our seniors covertly organized us into the Fourth Allied Prisoner of War Wing and they formed the Wing Staff. Each cell was considered to be a squadron and the senior in that cell the Commanding Officer. The communists would only recognize the most junior man in each cell in dealing with its inmates, which had the effect of consolidating the senior officer's position, by implicitly recognizing

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rank in reverse. They never figured out their mistake.

Each squadron (cell) had its department heads and was divided into divisions and sections. The divisions would form a mess, take one meal in common each day and share the contents of any package received. We operated on a self-imposed régime living by a plan of the day, a duty roster, designated functions, training periods and common recreation periods. Education consisted of languages, history, social science, international relations, math and hard science. Adult education (no tests; no homework) covered all subjects from auto mechanics to the complete Toastmaster syllabus.

Each man was required to teach one subject in his field of expertise. This was all without paper, books or writing instruments. The movie officer was required to present or arrange for a presentation of a movie every evening after chow, just like on board ship. No film, no projector, no screen - just his memory and skill. It was perhaps the most challenging of assignments before a crowd of 39 movie critics.

The Paris Peace Talks had been an international propaganda show until we resumed bombing in North Vietnam. They started really cooking as we mined their rivers and harbors, starting to target areas, which for years were regarded as



safe zones. In November of 1972 we had indications of increased seriousness directly proportional to the increased nutritional value of our heretofore subsistence level rations.

We got wind of Kissinger's "Peace is at hand." pronouncement when it fell through as reported on "Hanoi Hannah" - the voice of Vietnam - a program which was piped into our cells each night prior to taps. We never got any good news but always got the bad. However, continuation of serious air warfare and improved rations were the real indicators of meaningful progress in Paris. Our spirits arose accordingly.

Just before Christmas 1972, I knew for sure that we were GOING HOME. What was my first clue? It was when President Nixon, Lord rest his soul, committed B-52's to missions over downtown Hanoi. Navy A-6 Intruders and Air Force F-111's of course joined them; but this is the first time B-52's had been employed.

The raids came at night. As the BUFs (B-52's) laid their eggs, the steel I beam rafters in the cell twanged like plucked banjo strings. The accumulated detritus of 100 years came loose from the ceiling. The cement pad upon which we slept jumped and quaked. The sound was a rolling "whoomp, whoomp, whoomp whoomp . . ." as each pattern was laid down with amazing accuracy. They must have been using us as an offset point in their bombing runs; for we were never hit.

To a man we stood up and cheered, stretching to see anything we could find out the narrow windows surface to air missiles (SAMs) and flack could be seen lighting up the sky. Sadly we saw the explosion of one BUF being hit. As the bombing progressed

night after night, the SAMs and the flack became less and less. They must have been running out of ammunition.

The communist Cadre of any country cheerfully will send thousands off to die as long as those sent are not their family or clan members. They will commit thousands of square miles to death and destruction as long as it is not their square mile. When it comes to losing their own lives and property, they become eminently practical.



On the nights of the bombing, the communist officers and guards brought themselves and their families inside the prison right under the walls of our cells. They knew the safest place in town would be in a location where there were Americans. The communists knew that Hanoi and Hoa Lo had been identified by the United States as a major POW location. And they were not wrong in that assessment.

Naturally there had to be a Christmas bombing halt; there always had been one and there always would be one, world without end, Amen. Encouraged by the irrational but seemingly universal international cry of outrage over the bombing of Hanoi, the communists decided to renege once more on that which had already been negotiated. Not to be cowed, President Nixon resumed the bombing after Christmas with a vengeance and peace indeed was at hand.

freedom stories continued...

Up to that point, we of course were told nothing. One day we were all mustered outside our cells, all at the same time for the first time ever. Things were obviously in disarray. Our seniors took charge without any interference and lined us up in military formation standing at the head of their troops. A high ranking communist military officer read an official announcement declaring that a peace treaty had been signed and that there would be a release.

Cameras at the ready to record a mob of simpering fools overcome with joy, the communists were amazed when this announcement was greeted by the sepulchral silence of a formal, disciplined military formation.

"Do you understand what I'm telling you?"

"Yes. I understand."

"What do you have to say for yourself?"

"We would like to go back to our cells."

Our SRO turned, dismissed the formation and ordered us back to our cells. We all silently and orderly filed back into our cells. From then on, the cell doors were never locked behind us until after dark. Thereafter, each morning, the guards would open the cell doors and deliver to each cell a steaming caul-

dron of coffee and sugar coated bread.

Suddenly cells were broken up and rearranged. It became obvious that people with similar shoot down dates were being grouped together. Sick and injured were placed in a single cell. Early one morning a glum Cadre, instead of prancing about as usual, shuffled from cell to cell passing out mimeographed sheets of paper, one for each prisoner. It appeared that a peace treaty had been signed. One provision was that those parts of the treaty affecting prisoners were to be given in writing to each prisoner written in his own language. This was to occur within three days of the signing of the treaty. Releases were to be incremental: sick and wounded first; then, by date of shoot down - those down first departed first; those down last, left last.

The first group went out on February 12. We assumed that there would be that one release and then the communists would once more screw it up for another ten years. Suddenly bunches of books and letters were literally thrown into each cell. I got a packet of letters some dating as early as 1967. I picked up a book: "Adele Davis on Dieting"! What maniac would send a prisoner a book on dieting? One evening we were told that we were going to have the privilege of being entertained by a communist combat "USO" entertainment group. The cell doors were opened. No one person ventured out. The guards set up basketball backboards and volleyball nets; no one played for the cameras.

Somehow the word spread that Henry Kissinger was going to visit Hanoi and that the communists were going to, unasked and against the treaty, grant him a group of 20 POWs to take back home with him. The 20 were culled out and put in an isolated cell. The day they were supposed to go, 18 February, they refused outright. In the middle of

the morning, a fatigue clothed US Army Major came storming into the courtyard cursing and swearing up a blue streak at a volume sure to be heard at Yankee Station.

He made a beeline to the offending cell, demanded: "What the hell are you guys trying to do, screw up the whole goddamned release? Get your asses outa here! Get into your clothes, and get the hell out of this country!" As he paused for breath, there was no doubt he was American, the group's SRO told him that the only way they would go is if they had the personal face to face permission of our overall SRO and Wing Commander, Colonel John Peter Flynn, USAF. What was being asked was contrary to the treaty and our own standing orders.

The Major was dumfounded. Sputtering to himself he explained the nature of the holdup to the communists. The 20 men marched across the prison courtyard to the cell of the Senior Ranking Officer, saluted and formally requested permission to go ashore. Under the major's glaring eye, permission was granted. It was kind of funny in a way, but made us wary, as the communists were screwing with the treaty even at the outset.

Sure enough, the release sequence was delayed as the communists played more games. I smuggled a letter to my family out with the first group. I was that sure that this release business was a farce. President Nixon understood his adversary. The entire minesweeping task group steamed west over the horizon, leaving the Red River, Haiphong harbor and other ports still replete with mines that only we had the capability of clearing.

They got the message; the releases resumed. And I was GOING HOME!

Capt. Richard Stratton retired from the Navy and resides in Florida with his wife Alice.



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Fear and trembling.

Throughout Holy Scripture those are the words which describe at all times and in all places the meeting of humans and our God. "The Lord is King," the psalmist sings, "let the people tremble...let the earth shake." The God of fear and trembling is all-powerful. The God of

fear and trembling is distant. The God of fear and trembling is high and exalted. He is a stern judge and a king whose deeds surpass human understanding. But that's not how our Great and Glorious God wants us to see him.

God is love. That's one of the first verses of Scripture that my mother taught me, that we each learned and that we teach to the children in our lives. That's how God wants to be seen by us, as love making radiant all of God's creation. Just pause for a moment and look out upon God's creation and give thanks that we are truly blessed by the God that gives life and love to people like us. Praise His Holy Name.

"And the greatest of these is Love."

Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, may praise and glory be given for all the many and special bless-

ings You hand out to us each and every day. It seems to be far from us to really understand why, but we do know beyond any doubt that it is You who cause the sun to rise, supply the food for our table, share your love with us in many and glorious ways. Please forgive us when we fail to humbly bow before You and give You proper thanks. Please, Lord, lead and guide us through the trials and tasks of each day and may we give You praise and glory as we ask forgiveness, help for our military who stand in harm's way and special aid for those still listed as POW/MIA. In Your Holy and Blessed Name we pray. AMEN.

Thought for the month: If you pause to think, you will have cause to thank.



taps



Please submit taps notices to: Cheryl Cerbone, 23 Cove View Drive, South Yarmouth, MA 02664

BAKER, M.L. "Butch", of Morton, TX passed away Dec. 3, 2006. He was 87. He served in the Army during WWII in Burma and was a POW of the Japanese for 3 ½ years. Butch was a charter member of the Texas Panhandle Chapter, AXPOW. He is survived by two daughters, two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and two brothers.

BAUMGARNER, John Reed, of Greensboro, NC passed away Dec. 13, 2006 at the age of 94. In April 1942, Bumgarner was an Army doctor stationed in the Philippines when the Japanese overran the country. He was among 33,000 American troops rounded up and herded into captivity during the Bataan Death March. Later, in the crowded, ill-equipped Cabanatuan POW camp, he survived malaria, dysentery and a starvation diet. Late in the war, Bumgarner was among the group of prisoners and medics taken to Japan. He was in a POW camp on a northern Japanese island when the war ended. He is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Evelyn, 1 son, 1 daughter and 4 grandchildren.

BECKLEY, John W., 85, of Cadiz, OH passed away Nov. 30, 2006. He was a member of the Yellow Creek Chapter, AXPOW. John was captured while serving in the Army during WWII. He spent 10 ½ months as a POW in Luft 4. Survivors include his wife of 40 years, Ann, 2 daughters, 1 son, 1 sister, 5 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

BRADAC, Joe, of West Virginia, member of the Yellow Creek Chapter, AXPOW died Sept. 18, 2006.

CAWTHORNE, Genevieve D., of West Virginia, member of the Yellow Creek Chapter, AXPOW died Dec. 10, 2005. Her husband, **Alfred E. CAWTHORNE**, passed away Sept. 7, 2006.

CLEMONS, Marvin, of Orlando, Florida, died June 22, 2005. He was a POW in Germany and spent months in a German Hospital. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Flossie, and three daughters.

CLEVON, Gale (Bucky), member of the Dakota West Chapter, AXPOW, died Nov. 17, 2006 at the age of 88. He was captured while serving with the 350th BS, 100th BG, flying over Bremen, Germany. He spent the next 1 ½ years in German POW camps. Bucky will be missed by his many friends.

DUVAL, GERALD A. died on February 18, 2006 in Pittsburg, KS. Gerald was a life member of AXPOW and a charter member of the Hutchison-Poplowski Chapter, Panama City, FL where he was active until April, 2005. During WW II Gerald served with the 459th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force. He was shot down and captured by the Germans on April 2, 1944. He was liberated by the Russians near the end of the war in Europe. Gerald was preceded in death by Thelma, his wife of 57 years, and is survived by a son, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

FISH, Joseph H. of Rego Park, Queens, NY passed away Nov. 10, 2006. During WWII, he served with the 117th Infantry and was a POW in Germany. He leaves his son, Joseph.

FORNEY, Robert, 83, of Boone, IA died Dec. 5, 2006. Bob served as a pilot on a B-24 Heavy Bomber during WWII. He was captured and held

in Germany. He was a member of the Mid-Iowa Chapter, AXPOW. Survivors include two daughters, one sister, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

GALING, Bernard W. "Bernie" died Aug. 23, 2006 in Melbourne, FL. During the Korean War, he served with HQ Co., 9th Inf. Reg., 2nd Inf. Div. He was captured at the Kunuri Roadblock in North Korea and held in Camps 5 and 2 for 33 months. Bernie is survived by his wife of 56 years, Florence, 1 daughter, 3 sons and 11 grandchildren.

GENTRY, Elsie, of Temple, Texas, died December 13, 2006. A member of the Cen-Tex Chapter, she was the wife of 57 years of Walter Gentry, a POW in Germany.

HAMBY, Thornton Estill, 85, of Lubbock, TX died Nov. 23, 2006. Thornton was serving in the Marines when he was captured in the Philippines. He spent 3 ½ years in Japanese POW camps. An active and enthusiastic member of AXPOW, Thornton set up chapters across Texas, volunteering both time and expertise to the organization he loved so much. His beloved wife, Arlee, survives him; he also leaves 2 sons, 1 daughter, 1 stepdaughter, 4 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, 1 brother and 1 sister. Thornton was a great friend to everyone he met; he will be missed by us all.

HICKS, James H. "Harry", of New Haven, KY passed away Sept. 2, 2006 at the age of 86. During WWII, he served with the 106th Division, 590th FA, Battery A. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge and held POW until liberation. He leaves his wife, Margaret, 6 daughters, 2 sons, one sister, 2 brothers, 19 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

taps continued

JOHNSON, Gerald, of Viroqua, Wisconsin, died November 9, 2006. He was a B-24 pilot in the 485 BG. Shot down on June 26, 1944, on his 26th mission, he was a POW until April 29, 1945, in Luft 3 and 7A. As a result, he earned his membership in the Caterpillar Club, and was a member of the Coulee Region Chapter.

KAPLAN, Irving, of Carlsbad, California, died Nov 17, 2006. A combat medic captured at the Battle of the Bulge, he is survived by his wife of 66 years, Esther.

KENYON, James R. "Dick", 84, of Hillsboro, OR died Nov. 24, 2006. He was a member of the Pioneer Mustang Group, which was the first to escort our bombers between Berlin and England. He was shot down and captured; spending 14 months in Luft 1, Barth. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Norma, 1 son, 1 daughter and 3 grandchildren.

KISSLING, James L. of Wyomissing, PA passed away recently. He served in the USAF during WWII, participating in the Normandy Campaign with the 8th AF, 389th BG. After capture, he was held in Luft 3, 7A. Survivors include his wife, Joanne.

LAURICELLA, Vincent Raymond, of Hopewell Township, NJ died Oct. 31, 2006. He was captured while serving with the 8th AF, 95th BG, 334th BS. He was a POW in Germany for 11 months. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor, two children, five grandchildren, one brother and one sister.

LISICA, Samuel J., member of the Pittsburgh PA Chapter, AXPOW, passed away recently. During WWII, he served with the 8th AF, 457th BG, 750th BS. He was shot down on the Merseberg Raid and held until liberation. He leaves his wife, Mary, three sons and two brothers.

McVAY, Hilda Luthi, 86, of Gainesville, GA, passed away November 6, 2006. She was a long-time member of the Middle Georgia Chapter, AXPOW, where she served as Chaplain. In 2005, she joined the Mountaineer Chapter (Georgia), AXPOW. During World War II, she served as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. Her husband, Birch, was a B-17 pilot, assigned to the 334th Bomb Squadron, 95th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. In addition to her husband of 62 years, Hilda leaves behind a son and daughter and numerous nieces and nephews.

MOORE, Matthew G., of Yorktown Heights, NY passed away Nov. 23, 2006 at the age of 86. He served with the 306th BG, 369th BS, flying out of Thurleigh, England. He was shot down and held in Stalag 17B. Survivors include his wife, Lori, 3 sons, 1 daughter and 9 grandchildren.

O'BRIEN, Robert L. Sr., of Carlisle, PA died Dec. 5, 2006 at the age of 90. He was serving on the USS Houston in the Navy when he was captured. He was a POW for 3 ½ years in Japanese POW camps. Bob was a member of the PA Capitol City Chapter, AXPOW. He is survived by two sons, five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

RECKNER, Roger, Hoopston, IL died Nov. 30, 2006. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge while serving with the 634th Coast Artillery. Roger was a life member of AXPOW and the Kickapoo Chapter. He is survived by his wife, Pauline, two daughters, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

RIGATTI, Richard L., member of the Pittsburgh, PA Chapter, AXPOW passed away Nov. 11, 2006. He was 82. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge while serving with the 106th Inf. Survivors include his wife, Patricia, three sons and two daughters.

ROBERTS, Charles David, 95, of Fresno, CA died Dec. 6, 2006. During WWII, he served with the First Ranger Battalion in Italy. He was a POW in Poland and Germany until liberation. He was a member of the Fresno Chapter 1, AXPOW.

SCHAAP, Leonard A. "Pete", of Delmar, NY died Aug. 11, 2006. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge while serving in Co. G, 104th Inf. Reg. He was a member of the Northeast NY Chapter, AXPOW. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Robin, 1 son, 1 daughter and 4 grandchildren.

SHEALY, Stokes K., age 82, of Columbia, SC died Oct. 19, 2006. He was captured while serving on Corregidor while assigned to the 27th BG (L). He was held by the Japanese for 3 ½ years. Stokes was a member of the Palmetto Chapter, AXPOW and charter member of ADBC. He leaves his wife, Sandra, 1 son, 4 daughters and 5 grandchildren.

VARANO, Anthony A., 84, of Palmyra, PA died Nov. 9, 2006. During WWII, he served in the Army; was captured in the Battle of the Bulge and held until liberation. Surviving are his wife, Joan, two daughters, seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, two sisters and one brother.

WARREN, William L., of San Angelo, Texas, died December 19, 2006. "Bill" served in the 8th AF, 92 BG, and was a POW in Stalag 17B. A member of the Concho Valley Chapter, he is survived by his wife of more than 61 years, Ina.

WORLEY, John "Zeke", of Kansas City, Missouri, died December 18, 2006, after a lengthy illness. He was a POW in Camp 5 in Korea, and an active member of the Heart of America Chapter. He is survived by his wife, Eloise.



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Marsha.Coke@axpow.org



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Norman D Gibbs
Betty J
Banning, CA
AAF
Frankfort, Wetzler,
Nurnburg, 7A
1/15/45-5/45

Carl C Law, Jr.
Francis I
Utica, OH
29 Div Co K 116 Inf
6G, 11B
12/5/44-4/30/45

James Brooks Speer
Beulah
Idalou, TX
99 Inf Div
Germany
1/30/45-4/12/45

New Life Members "Welcome Home"

***new member to AXPOW**

R.C. Stewart 39253
San Antonio, TX
351 BG H
Luft 3, 7A
5/14/43-4/29/45

Sara W. McKenna 39254
Richmond, VA
Widow of J.B. McKenna
2A, 4B

Mary Louise Erickson
39255

Northfield, MN
Widow of Leif Erik
Erickson
Bucharest, Lagarul, de
Prisoner #13

**Ex-POW Bulletin
February 2007**

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David William Miltner
39256

Sulphur Springs, TX
Son of Allen F. Miltner,
ETO

Seth P. "Pete" Staples
39257

Cincinnati, OH
450 BG 729 BS
Luft 4
7/19/44-5/2/45

Helen N. Knowles
39258

Lake Charles, LA
Widow of Jesse M
Knowles
Mukden, Cabanatuan,
Bataan Death March

Chester H Aszklar
39260

Chicago, IL
3 BN 504 H Co 82 ABN
7A, 2B
9/16/43-5/1/45

Deborah Ann Ledbetter
*39261

Midwest City, OK
Daughter of Warren
Ledbetter, PAC

Barbara A Uhl *39262

Lancaster, OH
Daughter of Wilbur
Primmer, ETO

Margie Frances Boyd
*39263

Narion, NC

Eugene Frink *39265

Hobe Sound, FL
AAC
7A, Work Camps,
Munich

H Ralph Bush, Jr.
Nancy M *39266 39267

Sarasota, FL
CO C 17 Reg 24Div
Anju, North Korea
11/4/50-11/8/50

Kenneth Malcolm Burns
Norma V *39268 39269

Vail, AZ
AAC
Luft 6, 4, 11B
2/10/44-4/16/45

Chester S Pestrak
Dorothy 39270 39271

Mount Prospect, IL
Co F 2 BN 397 Inf Reg
100 Div
9B, 9A
1/9/45-3/30/45

Leonard J Bingold
Ruth 39272 39273

Milwaukie, OR
11 AF 404 BS
Siberia, Petropovlask,
Tashkent Russia
12/7/44

Ralph J Kalberoh
Barbara 39274 39275

Jefferson City, MO
8 AF 100 BG 350 BS
Frankfort, Nurnburg, 7A
2/3/45-4/29/45

John S Templin
Helen 39276 39277

Brookeville, MD
357 FG
Luft 3
10/44-3/45

Dorothy Keener 39259

Lincolnton, NC
Widow of William Doyt
Keener
12A, 4B, 4A
11/28/44-4/23/45

Widow of James Boyd
Germany

Anthony J Peidl *39264

Gibbstown, NJ
AAF
Phara Sabina Italy
8/43-9/43



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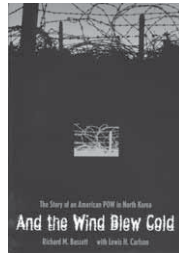
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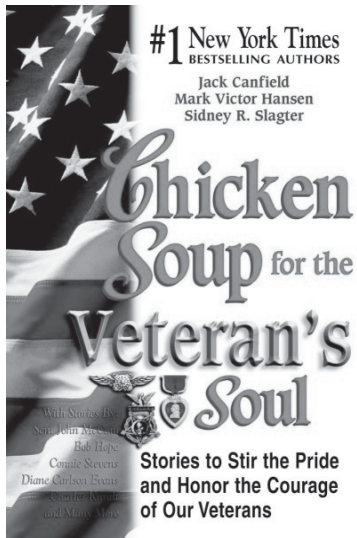
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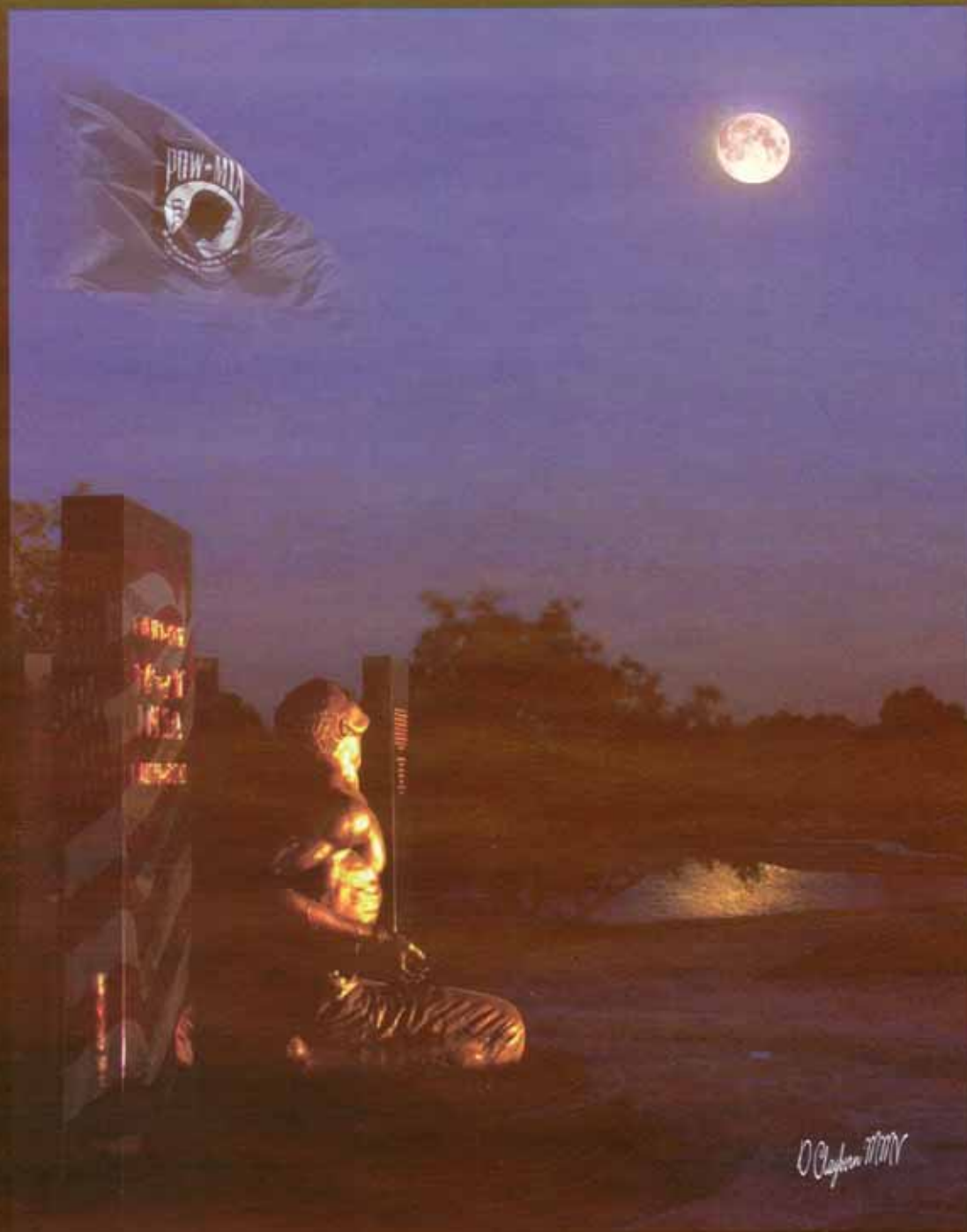
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