



Department of Pennsylvania January 2012 News Bulletin

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From all of us to all of you...The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Pennsylvania, wishes everyone...

"HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL"



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

2011 built the foundation for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for 2012. We are honored to continue to serve America's veterans and their families here on Capitol Hill, and we are committed to ensuring our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through their service to our great Nation. These are challenging times, but we are dedicated to the task at hand, and we will succeed in our mission to serve you.... Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

VA CEMETERY AUDIT

Chairman Miller has called on VA to complete an audit of veterans gravesites to ensure all veterans and their dependents are buried in the correct graves, stating, “Although I am glad these mistakes have been found, this never should have happened in the first place.” The Committee will continue to investigate this issue and work with VA to ensure these problems do not arise ever again at our veterans cemeteries. Read Chairman Miller’s full statement [here](#).

RIP SECRETARY DERWINSKI

The Committee mourns the passing of the first VA secretary, Edward Derwinski. Derwinski began his career as a private in the Army during World War II, rising to cabinet secretary under President George H.W. Bush. Secretary Derwinski was committed to America’s veterans and lead the way in VA recognizing Agent Orange exposure as a service-connected disability. To learn more about Secretary Derwinski’s life, click [here](#).

2012 AT THE COMMITTEE

Chairman Miller laid out the Committee’s priorities for the year ahead, including remaining focused on decreasing the veteran unemployment rate. Talking to the [Military Times](#), Chairman Miller said of the new law, the [VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#), “if this is not implemented in a timely fashion, it’s not going to achieve the positive results we all expect.” The Committee held an [oversight hearing](#) on the new veteran employment legislation in December and will continue to monitor VA and DoL to ensure as many veterans as possible can take advantage of the expanded benefits provided.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Committee would like to welcome it’s two newest Members, [Rep. Mark Amodei](#) and [Rep. Bob Turner](#). As veterans themselves, we are delighted to have their expertise and insight in representing America’s veterans in Congress. To learn more about Reps. Amodei and Turner, click [here](#).

MAKING HISTORY

LAST WEEKEND, [RED TAILS](#) opened to critical acclaim nationwide. Telling the story of the Tuskegee Airman on the big screen, this exciting film documents how one band of brothers overcame all the odds to fight for America and make history. Read what it was like to be a [Tuskegee Airman](#), from one veteran’s point of view.

TOO GOOD TO MISS

Rep. Sean Duffy of Wisconsin helped to track down what one veteran thought was lost forever – a howitzer shell casing engraved with the “Thirsty 3rd’s” members names. Cpl. Plenge spoke of the shell casing for more than 60 years, but no one in his family or his friends had ever seen it – until Rep. Duffy’s office stepped in. Recovered recently and delivered to Cpl. Plenge’s family, this is truly [a story not to miss](#).

UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

- February 1 - Examining VA’s Pharmaceutical Prime Vendor Contract: 10 a.m.
- February 2 - Lowering the Rate of Unemployment for the National Guard: 10 a.m.

Watch both live at Veterans.House.Gov, or comment on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) or [Twitter](https://twitter.com).

This is a fascinating, nine minute, short film called "The German".

Particularly the incredible four minute footage of a desperate Spitfire vs. ME-109 dual.

You feel like you are there! Amazing computer work blended in with real photography.

Also an interesting factual story that most of us did not know. History is rarely 'over'.

Now sit back and strap on your parachute harness ... it is the Summer of 1940 over the skies of England.

Listen to the perfect 'purr' of the Rolls Royce Merlin.

Watch this full screen. It's very well done.

Be sure to watch this Video to the end for an interesting but often forgotten twist to the events of WWII.

The German

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Museum and Hall

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Soldiers & Sailors to Induct New Members into its Hall of Valor

PITTSBURGH — Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum Trust, Inc. today announced it will induct new members into its Hall of Valor at a special ceremony on Sunday, March 25, 2012.

Since 1963, the Joseph A. Dugan Jr. Hall of Valor at Soldiers & Sailors has recognized Pennsylvanian veterans that have received medals for bravery and heroism during times of military conflict. Soldiers & Sailors has inducted nearly 700 veterans as recipients of The Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Airmen's Medal and Soldier's Medal.

“This program connects our mission to honor and remember service members by personally recognizing those within our community,” said President & CEO John F. McCabe. “Each year, we have the opportunity to honor our local heroes who have acted with great courage and bravery while serving our country.”

The induction ceremony will begin at 2:00 p.m. in Soldiers & Sailors Auditorium and is open to the general public. The community is invited to attend the ceremony at no cost and show their support for the honorees.

Reservations are also available for a celebratory dinner that will follow the ceremony in the Grand Ballroom. The cost is \$40 per person and reservations can be made by contacting Soldiers & Sailors.

To qualify, a member of the armed forces must have been born, enlisted or lived most of their life in Pennsylvania and received one of the aforementioned awards. Soldiers & Sailors accepts nominations all year and will accept nominations for this year's induction class through February 1, 2012. Supporting documentation must be received completed by March 1, 2012.

Soldiers & Sailors is still accepting sponsorships for this program. If you are a business or individual that wishes to offer sponsorship, or for more information about nominations and reservations, please contact Casey Patterson at 412-621-4253 ext. 206 or visit, <http://www.soldiersandsailorshall.org/veteran-hall-of-valor.html>.

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Soldiers & Sailors is the nation's only military museum dedicated to honoring the men and women of all branches of service, and in all capacities (Active, Reserve, Guard). The historic building was designed by renowned architect Henry Hornbostel and has exhibits covering all of America's conflicts, from the Civil War to our present operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The museum offers a unique look into American history by telling the stories of the individuals that served our country through military equipment and personal mementos, as well as detailing the effects our military conflicts have had on society. "Honor Them With Your Presence"

Very interesting WW II Trivia

You might enjoy this from Col D. G. Swinford, USMC, Ret and history buff. You would really have to dig deep to get this kind of ringside seat to history:

1. The first German serviceman killed in WW II was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937), the first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940); highest ranking American killed was Lt Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps. So much for allies.
2. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
3. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'), the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
4. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, your chance of being killed was 71%.
5. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace Hirooyoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.
6. It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

YOU'VE GOT TO LOVE THIS ONE.....

7. When allied armies reached the Rhine, the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act).

8. German Me-264 bombers were capable of bombing New York City, but they decided it wasn't worth the effort.

9. German submarine U-120 was sunk by a malfunctioning toilet.

10. Among the first 'Germans' captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.

AND THE BEST FOR LAST....

11. Following a massive naval bombardment, 35,000 United States and Canadian troops stormed ashore at Kiska, in the Aleutian Islands. 21 troops were killed in the assault on the island. It could have been worse if there had been any Japanese on the island.

Subject: US Law Game

Below is a link to a 30-question test to see how well you know US Law. Not exactly grade-school level. Give it a shot, and see how well you do!

Supposedly 96% of all High School Seniors FAILED this test .. AND if that's not bad enough, 50+% of all individuals over 50 did too!! Take the test and be surprised at what we don't know.

<http://games.toast.net/independence/>

SUBJECT: "STANDING GUARD" PICTURE OF THE YEAR

Pic taken at the National Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN on a June morning - as it appeared in the

[Minneapolis Star/Tribune](#).

Talk about a picture being worth a thousand words! It says everything.

This could become an official Memorial Day, 4th of July and/or Veterans Day remembrance photo;

“Our Symbol Standing Guard”



Subject: VA Providing Credit Monitoring to 2,200 Veterans

VA Providing Credit Monitoring to Misidentified Veterans

WASHINGTON (Jan. 20, 2012) – The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering free credit monitoring to more than 2,200 Veterans whose personal information, including social security numbers, was posted on Ancestry.com following the mistaken release of data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

“VA places the highest priority upon safeguarding the personal information of our Veterans,” said Jerry L. Davis, VA’s chief information security officer. “When lapses occur, we will immediately take prompt remedial action, such as notification.”

The family history website, which provides access to genealogical and historical information, had requested information from VA about deceased Veterans. Under FOIA, VA is obligated to release requested records upon written request unless they may be withheld. Therefore, VA provided the website with the data on March 18, 2011.

On Dec. 13, 2011, after the information had been posted on the history website, VA learned that it included data about some living Veterans because some of the death reports provided to the website were inaccurate.

“Fortunately, no personal health information was included in this data release,” Davis said. “Ancestry.com has worked with us and immediately removed all the information that we had supplied them.”

There is no indication personally identifiable information of any Veteran has been misused. However, VA is still notifying all potentially affected Veterans so they can be vigilant and take steps to protect against identity theft. VA is also offering credit monitoring for one year at no charge to every Veteran whose name was mistakenly released and posted on the history website.

FOIA requires federal agencies to disclose requested records unless they may be withheld under specific statutory exemptions. Under FOIA, VA was obligated to provide the website with the name, social security number, date of birth, date of death, military branch assignments, and the dates of entry on active duty and release from active duty for deceased Veterans.

VA has launched an effort to determine why information about living Veterans was included in a database about deceased Veterans. The error did not affect the VA benefits of any Veteran. VA is committed to protecting Veterans' personal information and to improving information processing to avoid erroneous data.

Veterans who believe they may have been affected by this incident who have not been notified by VA may verify whether their information was involved by writing to: Department of Veterans Affairs, OIT Privacy Officer (005R1A), 810 Vermont Ave., NW Washington DC 20420, (Attn: Garnett Best).

Affected Veterans can request a free credit report for one year from one or more of the three national credit bureaus by calling 1-877-322-8228 or by visiting <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>.

Information about this and other protections, including placing a "fraud alert" on credit accounts, is available by calling the Federal Trade Commission at its toll free number, 1-877-438-4338, or by visiting its website, <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/index.html>



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