

# EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the  
American Ex-Prisoners of War

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January/February/March 2018



*We exist to help those who cannot help themselves*



**REMEMBER THE PUEBLO!**

# Dedication of POW/MIA Commemorative Chair ~ November 8, 2017



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Jan/Feb/March 2018

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From the Officers and Directors

It has been 20 years since we dedicated “our” museum at Andersonville and we’re going back to celebrate! The National Park Service has grand plans for the 20th anniversary. There’s more information in the Andersonville column in this issue. If you haven’t been to the museum yet, this is the perfect opportunity to see the POW experience is portrayed...if you were there for the grand opening on April 9, 1998, come on back! The AXPOW Board of Directors will be having their mid-year meeting in conjunction with this event and all members are welcome to attend that as well.

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Deadline for the Apr-June 2018 issue is Mar 1, 2018.

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

Renewal Notice! Annual Members!

**This issue will be the last one you receive if you don’t renew. Take a minute and send your 2013 dues to National Headquarters.**

**Don’t miss out on all the benefits membership in AXPOW offers!**

Cover: On January 23, 1968 USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) was attacked in international waters by North Korean forces. Eighty-two surviving crewmembers were captured and held prisoner for eleven months. Original oil painting by artist Richard DeRosset for USS PUEBLO crewmember Tom Massie. North Korean hull and aircraft have their actual numbers of the attacking forces.

Inside front and back covers: Courtesy of National Director Charles Anthony Susino (and his soon-to-be bride, Debra). Thank you!

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Jan-Mar 2018



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National Commander  
Charles Susino, Jr.

I hope the Holiday Season has been a healthy and rewarding one for all of you.

Seeing 2017 come and go so quickly gives me reason to reflect. We all focus our time and energies differently. For so long, most of us focus on helping and doing for others, family, friends, and other veterans because it is most rewarding. There does come a time where we are required to shift our attention to the one thing in life that is taken for granted until it grabs our attention, our health. I have had my share of recent health challenges and I trust that

is unfortunately true for so many of you. The conditions are sometimes old and reoccurring even going back to our imprisonment and others are new but all require your undivided attention. It is time to be "selfish" to better ensure you are getting the medical attention you need. Anything less may compromise the results. I encourage you to reach out to the VA, your brother veterans, and family to help you through your time of need and never hesitate to get a second medical opinion either through the VA or outside. The best decisions are those based on diverse inputs and nothing is more important to you than your health. Further, it is always worthwhile to give feedback on your experiences, both positive and negative directly to VA management. A written letter is most effective. I have had to do this recently and I was very direct on specifics actions and personnel, both positive and negative. We deserve excellent care.

On a broader note, during the second week in November, Washington was buzzing with activity. On a blistery day in November, Veterans Day was formally celebrated at three of our nation's Capitol most prominent sites, the Vietnam

Memorial, the WWII memorial, and Arlington National Cemetery. Although my health did not allow me to make the trip, my son Charles Anthony attended on our behalf. In addition, on Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup>, there was a dedication of the Commemorative POW-MIA Chair in the Capitol Visitors' Center. It was well attended by prominent politicians including House Speaker Ryan. Please take the time to view the ceremony on line and I encourage you and your family to visit when you are in the DC area. It is very impressive and the Capitol Visitors Center hosts approximately 3 million people a year, offering countless opportunities of public awareness.

Looking forward, I hope many of you are able to attend the National Museum of American Ex-Prisoners of War in Andersonville, Georgia in April celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year.

God Bless America

-----Remember-----

## news from hq



Clydie Morgan  
Chief Operating Officer

The transition is complete. I am now working from home. It's going okay.

Marsha is also working from home as treasurer. It's been a process going from calling out from workspace to workspace to calling by phone when we have a question for each other.

I now do all the changes of addresses, update all TAPS, and keep the database up-to-date in all areas. I update the donations listing for Marsha for the reminder notices we send out on our direct mail programs. I also answer all phone calls now since the office telephone is in my home. I make referrals to veterans for help with their claims. I give out information to Members of Congress and refer all legislation to the proper committees.

Just recently we received a very generous donation from Garden

State Chapter #1. It is sad that the chapter is closing, but we are grateful that the members want the national organization to continue and they sent their support to us.

Our direct mail programs are running. We appreciate all your donations.

I help keep the AXPOW Facebook page updated. We are still waiting to hear from IRS on the C3 status. We'll keep you posted.

Happy new year and our best wishes for 2018 to you all.

Clydie and Marsha

# from the CEO



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## *Lest we Forget*

The New Year is a time to reflect on our blessings and, for Christians, a time to reflect on our joyous celebration of the anniversary of Jesus' human birth. But, as we face 2018, let us also live true to our mission of serving those who cannot serve themselves.

As you read this, I trust you took pause on Veterans' Day to remember, and to possibly reflect on the service of a family member or a neighbor, or even gave a nod to that person in the checkout line who proudly wears a ball cap reflecting service so long ago. Take time this new year to bring a smile to someone who may have been forgotten.

Lest we forget or lest we be forgotten...our lives move on.

In conjunction with The National POW Museum, AXPOW is dedicated to fostering educational programs such the travelling exhibit to sustain the legacy of the POW experience. And, it is through patriots like Russell Salvatore that all those who have served will not be forgotten.

As I write this, Barbara and I have recently visited family near Buffalo, New York. There, in Cheektowaga, Russell J. Salvatore has created Patriots and Heroes Park. Laid out under the largest American flag flying in the state of New York, are monuments to the Battle of the Bulge, the victims and responders to the World Trade Center on 9-11, the victims of Flight 3407, but also the Military Order of the Purple Heart and a Gold Star Memorial. Standing tall, near a battle tank and barbed wire is a soldier—in his arms a lifeless comrade. The plaque at his feet reads: "The greatest casualty is being forgotten"



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David

## Bladder Health for Older Adults

Everyone uses their bladder many times each day, but they may not know what to do to keep their bladder healthy.

Located in the lower abdomen, the bladder is a hollow organ, much like a balloon, that stores urine. It is part of the urinary system, which also includes the kidneys, ureters, and urethra. Urine contains wastes and extra fluid left over after the body takes what it needs from what we eat and drink.

As you get older, the bladder changes. The elastic bladder tissue may toughen and become less stretchy. A less stretchy bladder cannot hold as much urine as before and might make you go to the bathroom more often. The bladder wall and pelvic floor muscles may weaken, making it harder to empty the bladder fully and causing urine to leak.

### Common Bladder Problems

Bladder problems are common and can disrupt day-to-day life. When people have bladder problems, they may avoid social settings and have a harder time getting tasks done at home or at work.

Common bladder problems include:

Urinary tract infections (UTIs)—UTIs are the second most common type of infection in the body and can happen anywhere in the urinary system. More than half of

women will have at least one UTI in their lifetime. Older women are more likely to get UTIs because the bladder muscles weaken and make it hard to fully empty the bladder. This causes urine to stay in the bladder. When urine stays in the bladder too long, it makes an infection more likely.

Types of UTIs include:

Bladder infection—This is the most common type of UTI, in which bacteria enter the bladder and cause symptoms such as strong and sudden urges to urinate.

Kidney infection—Infections in the bladder can spread to the kidneys, which can lead to severe problems. When kidney infections occur frequently or last a long time, they may cause permanent damage to the kidneys.

Urethra infection —A UTI can also develop in the urethra, but this is less common.

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS)—a group of symptoms such as trouble urinating, loss of bladder control, leaking urine, and frequent need to urinate. LUTS are caused by problems with the bladder, urethra, or pelvic floor muscles.

Bladder cancer—Bladder cancer occurs in the lining of the bladder.

### What Can Affect Bladder Health?

Many things can affect bladder health. You can't control everything that affects bladder health, but there are many bladder health behaviors that you can control. Here are some things that may affect your bladder health.

Constipation. Constipation can cause too much stool to build up in the colon, which can put pressure on the bladder and keep it from expanding the way it should.

Diabetes. Diabetes can damage nerves around the bladder that help with control.

Being overweight. People who are overweight may be at higher risk for leaking urine.

Low physical activity. Physical activity can help prevent bladder problems, as well as constipation. It can also help you keep a healthy weight.

Smoking. Bladder problems are more common among people who smoke. Smoking can also increase the risk for bladder cancer.

Some medicines. Some medicines may make it more likely for your bladder to leak urine. For example, medicines that calm your nerves so you can sleep or relax may dull the nerves in the bladder, and you may not feel the urge to go to the bathroom.

Alcohol. For many people, drinking alcohol can make bladder problems worse.

Caffeine. Caffeine can bother the bladder and change how your

## medsearch, cont'd...

bladder tells you when you need to urinate.

Diet. Some people with bladder problems find that some foods and drinks, such as sodas, artificial sweeteners, spicy foods, citrus fruits and juices, and tomato-based foods, make the problem worse. People who have bladder problems may feel better when they don't eat these foods and drinks.

Pelvic Injury. Trauma—such as prostate surgery, childbirth, or sexual assault—can damage the muscles and nerves that help control the bladder.

Some activities can increase the risk of urinary tract infections, including:

Having sex. Sexual activity can move bacteria from the bowel or vaginal cavity to the urethral opening. Urinating after sex lowers the risk of infection.

Using a catheter to urinate. A catheter is a tube placed in the urethra and bladder to help empty the bladder. The catheter can make a direct path for bacteria to reach the bladder.

Using certain types of birth control. Diaphragms can bring bacteria with them when they are placed. Spermicides (a birth control that kills sperm) may also make UTIs more likely.

### Signs of a Bladder Problem

Everyone's bladder behaves a little bit differently. But certain signs may mean a bladder problem. If you have signs of a bladder problem, talk with your healthcare provider.

Signs of a bladder problem can include:

- Inability to hold urine or leaking urine (called urinary incontinence)

- Needing to urinate eight or more times in one day

Waking up many times at night to urinate

Sudden and urgent need to urinate

Pain or burning before, during, or after urinating

Cloudy or bloody urine

Passing only small amounts of urine after strong urges to urinate

Trouble starting or having a weak stream while urinating

Trouble emptying the bladder

### Signs of Urinary Tract Infection

In some elderly people, mental changes and confusion may be the only signs of a UTI. Older adults with a UTI are more likely to be tired, shaky, and weak and have muscle aches and abdominal pain.

Symptoms of a UTI in the bladder may include:

Cloudy, bloody, or foul-smelling urine

Pain or burning during urination

Strong and frequent need to urinate, even right after emptying the bladder

A mild fever below 101°F in some people

If a UTI spreads to the kidneys, symptoms may include:

- Chills and shaking
- Night sweats
- Feeling tired or generally ill
- Fever above 101°F
- Pain in the side, back, or groin

- Flushed, warm, or reddened skin

Mental changes or confusion

Nausea and vomiting

Very bad abdominal pain in some people

Some people may have bacteria in the bladder or urinary tract, but not feel any symptoms. If a urine test shows that you have bacteria in your urine, but you do not feel any symptoms, you may not need any treatment. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether antibiotics—the medications that treat UTIs—are needed.

### When to See a Health Care Provider—and What to Expect

If you have any of the signs of a bladder problem or urinary tract infection, talk to your healthcare provider. Read advice on talking to your doctor about sensitive subjects, like bladder problems.

When you see your healthcare provider, he or she may perform the following tests to try to figure out what might be causing your bladder problem:

· Give you a physical exam to look for any health issues that may cause a bladder problem. For women, the physical exam may include a pelvic exam. For men, the physical exam may include a prostate exam, which is usually done with a rectal exam.

· Take a urine sample to check for a bladder (or urinary tract) infection.

· Examine the inside of your bladder using a cystoscope, a long, thin tube that slides up into the bladder through the urethra. This is usually done by a urinary specialist.



## medsearch, cont'd...

- Fill the bladder with warm fluid to check how much fluid your bladder can hold before leaking.
- Check a bladder scan using ultrasound to see if you are fully emptying your bladder with each void.

### Treating Bladder Problems

Treatment for bladder problems may include behavioral and lifestyle changes, exercises, medicines, surgery, or a combination of these treatments and others. For more information on treatment and management of urinary incontinence, visit [Urinary Incontinence in Older Adults](#).

Because most urinary tract infections are caused by bacteria, bacteria-fighting medications called antibiotics are the usual treatment for UTIs. The type of antibiotic and length of treatment depend on the patient's history and the type of bacteria causing the infection. Drinking lots of fluids and urinating often may also speed healing. If needed, painkillers can relieve the pain of a UTI. A heating pad on the back or abdomen may also help.

### 13 Tips to Keep Your Bladder Healthy

While you can't control everything that affects bladder health, there are some steps you can take to improve bladder health. Follow these 13 tips to keep your bladder healthy.

1. Drink enough fluids, especially water. Most healthy people should try to drink six to eight, 8-ounce glasses of fluid each day. Water is the best fluid for bladder health. At least half of fluid intake should be water. Some people need to drink less water because of certain conditions, such as kidney failure or heart disease. Ask your healthcare provider how much fluid is healthy for you.

2. Limit alcohol and caffeine. Cutting down on alcohol and caffeinated foods and drinks—such as coffee, tea, chocolate, and most sodas—may help.

3. Quit smoking. If you smoke, take steps to quit. If you don't smoke, don't start.

4. Avoid constipation. Eating plenty of high-fiber foods (like whole grains, vegetables, and fruits), drinking enough water, and being physically active can help prevent constipation.

5. Keep a healthy weight. Making healthy food choices and being physically active can help you keep a healthy weight.

6. Exercise regularly. Physical activity can help prevent bladder problems, as well as constipation. It can also help you keep a healthy weight.

7. Do pelvic floor muscle exercises. Pelvic floor exercises, also known as Kegel exercises, help hold urine in the bladder. Daily exercises can strengthen these muscles, which can help keep urine from leaking when you sneeze, cough, lift, laugh, or have a sudden urge to urinate.

8. Use the bathroom often and when needed. Try to urinate at least every 3 to 4 hours. Holding urine in your bladder for too long can weaken your bladder muscles and make a bladder infection more likely.

9. Take enough time to fully empty the bladder when urinating. Rushing when you urinate may not allow you to fully empty the bladder. If urine stays in the bladder too long, it can make a bladder infection more likely.

10. Be in a relaxed position while urinating. Relaxing the muscles around the bladder will make it easier to empty the bladder. For women, hovering over the toilet seat may make it hard to relax, so it is best to sit on the toilet seat.

11. Wipe from front to back after using the toilet. Women should wipe from front to back to keep bacteria from getting into the urethra. This step is most important after a bowel movement.

12. Urinate after sex. Both women and men should urinate shortly after sex to flush away bacteria that may have entered the urethra during sex.

13. Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes. Wearing loose, cotton clothing will allow air to keep the area around the urethra dry. Tight-fitting jeans and nylon underwear can trap moisture and help bacteria grow.

### For More Information on Bladder Health

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)  
1-800-860-8747 (toll-free)  
1-866-569-1162 (TTY/toll-free)  
[healthinfo@nidk.nih.gov](mailto:healthinfo@nidk.nih.gov)  
[www.nidk.nih.gov](http://www.nidk.nih.gov)

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse  
1-800-860-8747 (toll-free)  
1-866-569-1162 (TTY/toll-free)  
[healthinfo@nidk.nih.gov](mailto:healthinfo@nidk.nih.gov)  
[www.nidk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease](http://www.nidk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease)  
[www.nidk.nih.gov/health-information/urologic-diseases](http://www.nidk.nih.gov/health-information/urologic-diseases)

# PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITIES

Public Law 97-37  
(Layman's Terms)

Originally published  
by William P. Skelton, III, MD,  
F.A.C.P.

updated by the Department of  
Veterans Affairs

*You should keep these and/or  
make copies. Whenever you open  
your claim, take them with you  
and make sure the adjudication  
officer sees them and have him  
read them! Tell your story as it  
relates to your problem.*

## 1. ARTHRITIS, TRAUMATIC

Also known as articular trauma. This disorder looks and is treated just like degenerative arthritis (arthritis associated with age) except it is caused by severe damage to a single or few joints producing early onset arthritis. Since it has a definite cause, it is called a secondary form of arthritis. This is an extremely difficult diagnosis to make, but in general one has to prove that a specific trauma occurred to a single or very few joints, and other changes consistent with degenerative arthritis are not present throughout the rest of the body at the same time. In short, these changes need to be localized.

## 2. AVITAMINOSIS

The total lack of vitamins in the diet. This disorder is a fatal condition unless it is supplemented with vitamins within a few weeks. Therefore, most individuals suffer from hypovitaminosis, which is a relative deficiency of vitamins in the diet. The specific type, intensity and duration of deprivation determines the long-term effects.

## 3. BERIBERI

Caused by a severe lack of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the diet. This produces changes in the nerves

(both in the brain and extremities) and the heart. Brain changes could produce dementia or psychosis. Nervous changes are usually associated with numbness and/or painful feet. Beriberi heart disease is an acute condition, similar to congestive heart failure, except that the heart pumps more blood than in normal congestive heart failure and it is associated with the presence of an excessive amount of lactic acid in the body. It is unknown at this time whether this can produce a chronic state.

## 4. DYSENTERY, CHRONIC

A disease characterized by frequent and watery stools, usually with blood and mucus, and accompanied by rectal and abdominal pain, fever, and dehydration. This is an infection in the colon and can be caused by a multitude of different organisms, the most common of which is amoeba which can produce a mild or severe dysentery and possibly be associated with a chronic irritable colon. Bacillary dysentery is associated with the bacteria shigella, but will not cause a chronic state. There are multiple other bacteria that can cause dysentery which usually do not produce chronic states. Viral dysentery can also present like amoebic or bacillary dysentery and will not produce a chronic state.

## 5. FROSTBITE

The actual freezing of tissue. This is graded on a continuum with one representing mild to four representing mummification of the tissue. The extremities furthest from the heart are usually affected, with primarily the nose, ears, fingertips, and toes being involved. This usually produces long-term side effects such as numbness, discoloration, excessive swelling, and pain in the affected area.

## 6. HELMINTHIASIS

Infection with any type of worms that parasitize the human. Most infections usually resolve spontaneously either with proper treatment or as the natural course of the disease. Strongyloides is known to persist in a permanent state in humans due to its ability to re-infect the host.

## 7. MALNUTRITION

Merely means bad nutrition. The nutritional depletion may be either caloric, vitamin, fatty acid, or mineral deficiency, or more likely a combination. Depending on the type, intensity, and duration, it may yield permanent side effects or no lasting side effects at all.

## 8. PELLAGRA

Literally meaning rough skin in Italian, also known as black tongue in dogs. It is caused by a virtual lack of vitamin B3 (niacin) in the diet, producing the classical trio of diarrhea, dermatitis, and dementia. All are easily treated early on with no side effects. The dementia, if left untreated, may produce permanent mental deficits.

## 9. ANY OTHER

### NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY

The lack of protein and calories in the diet generally produces no lasting side effects. However, vitamin deficiencies other than the aforementioned B1 (beriberi) and B3 (pellagra) can have very disastrous effects on one's body. Also deficiencies of certain fatty acids and essential minerals in the diet can have lasting and long term sequela.

## 10. PSYCHOSIS

A generic term for any of the insanities. Generally, it is thought of as a mental disorder causing gross disorganization of a person's mental capacity and his ability to recognize reality and communicate with others regarding demands of everyday life.

## Presumptive Service Connected Disabilities, cont'd...

### 11. PANIC DISORDER

Characterized by discrete periods of apprehension or fear with at least four of the following during an attack: shortness of breath, feelings of heart skipping, chest pain, dizziness, sweating, fainting, trembling, fear of dying, or doing something uncontrollable during an attack. These attacks need to occur at least three times within a three week period, not associated with physical exertion or life threatening situations. Also there needs to be an absence of severe physical or other mental illness which could cause these symptoms.

### 12. GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

Characterized by generalized persistent anxiety and with symptoms of at least three of the following four categories:

- (1) Motor tension as characterized by shaking, jumpiness, trembling and restlessness;
- (2) Autonomic hyperactivity, such as sweating, cold or clammy hands, high or irregular heart rate, dry mouth, etc.;
- (3) Apprehensive expectations, anxiety, worry, fear, anticipation of misfortune to himself or others;
- (4) Tendency to insomnia, hyperattentiveness, irritable.

All these symptoms had to have lasted at least one month. Also, there needs to be an absence of all other mental disorders and physical disorders which could explain the symptoms.

### 13. OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

This may be either obsessions or compulsions. Obsessions are recurrent, persistent ideas or impulses that are thoughts that invade consciousness and are experienced as senseless or repugnant. Attempts are made to ig-

nore or suppress them. Compulsions are repetitive and seemingly purposeful behaviors that are performed in certain similar manners. The behavior is felt by the individual to produce or prevent some future event. Generally, the individuals recognize the senselessness of the behavior and do not derive pleasure from carrying it out, although it often relieves tension. Also, the obsessive or compulsive individuals are associated with a significant sense of distress in that it interferes with social or role functioning.

### 14. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

The re-experiencing of a trauma of a past recognized stress or that can produce symptoms of distress. This re-experiencing needs at least one of the following:

- (1) Recurrent and intrusive recollection of the event;
- (2) Recurrent dreams;
- (3) Sudden feelings that the trauma was occurring because of an association, an environmental or ideational situation.

Also involved is reduced involvement with the external world beginning after the trauma, revealed by at least one of the following:

- (1) Hyperalertness or exaggerated startle response;
- (2) Sleep disturbance;
- (3) Guilt about surviving when others have not;
- (4) Memory impairment or trouble concentrating;
- (5) Avoidance of activities that arouse recollection of the traumatic event;
- (6) Intensification of symptoms by exposure to events that symbolize or resemble the traumatic event.

### 15. ATYPICAL ANXIETY DISORDER

This is a category that is used for diagnosis when the affected individual appears to have an anxiety disorder that does not meet the criteria for entry into any of the other known anxiety disorders.

### 16. DEPRESSIVE NEUROSIS/DYSTHYMIC DISORDER

Characterized by depressive periods in which the patient feels sad and/or down and has a loss of interest in the usual activities that cause pleasure or involvement in usual pastimes. These depressive periods are separated by periods of normal mood, lasting a few days to a few weeks, but no more than a few months at a time. During the depressive period, too little sleep or too much sleep, low energy or chronic tiredness, loss of self esteem, decreased effectiveness or productivity at work, social withdrawal, loss of interest in pleasurable activities, excessive anger, inability to respond with apparent pleasure to praise or reward, less active or talkative than usual, pessimistic attitude about the future, tearful or crying thoughts about death or suicide. There are also no psychotic features present..

### 17. PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Literally Greek for the suffering of nerves outside of the brain and spinal cord. There are several different causes for peripheral neuropathy, and vitamin deficiency and possibly mineral deficiency are just two. Other causes to be considered are various toxins such as lead, copper, and mercury, a hereditary predisposition to neuropathy, deposition of amyloid or protein produced by one's own body mounted in response to an infection, infections such as by leprosy, which is the most common form of neuropathy in the world, and multiple other less common causes.

### 18. IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder of the intestines that leads to crampy pain, gas, bloating, and changes in

## Presumptive Service Connected Disabilities, cont'd...

bowel habits. Some people with IBS have constipation (difficult or infrequent bowel movements); still others have diarrhea (frequent loose stools, often with an urgent need to move the bowels); and some people experience both. Sometimes the person with IBS has a crampy urge to move the bowels but cannot do so. Through the years, IBS has been called by many names - colitis, mucous colitis, spastic colon, spastic bowel, and functional bowel disease. Most of these terms are inaccurate.

### 19. PEPTIC ULCER DISEASE

A peptic ulcer is a sore or hole in the lining of the stomach or duodenum (the first part of the small intestine). In addition to the pain caused by the ulcer itself, peptic ulcers give rise to such complications as hemorrhage from the erosion of a major blood vessel; perforation of the wall of the stomach or intestine, with resultant peritonitis; or obstruction of the gastrointestinal tract because of spasm or swelling in the area of the ulcer. The direct cause of peptic ulcers is the destruction of the gastric or intestinal mucosal lining by hydrochloric acid, an acid normally present in the digestive juices of the stomach.

### 20. CIRRHOSIS

The liver, the largest organ in the body, is essential in keeping the body functioning properly. It removes or neutralizes poisons from the blood, produces immune agents to control infection, and removes germs and bacteria from the blood. It makes proteins that regulate blood clotting and produces bile to help absorb fats and fat-soluble vitamins.

In cirrhosis of the liver, scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue, blocking the flow of blood

through the organ and preventing it from working as it should.

Many people with cirrhosis have no symptoms in the early stages of the disease. However, as scar tissue replaces healthy cells, liver function starts to fail and a person may experience the following symptoms: Exhaustion, fatigue, appetite loss, nausea, weakness and/or weight loss. Cirrhosis may be diagnosed on the basis of symptoms, laboratory tests, the patient's medical history, and a physical examination. A liver biopsy will confirm the diagnosis.

### 21. STROKE & COMPLICATIONS

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, spilling blood into the spaces surrounding brain cells. Brain cells die when they no longer receive oxygen and nutrients from the blood or there is sudden bleeding into or around the brain.

The symptoms of a stroke include sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body; sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble with walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination; or sudden severe headache with no known cause. Includes the three major types of stroke: ischemic, hemorrhagic, and embolic, as well as complications from stroke.

### 22. HEART & COMPLICATIONS

Heart disease includes atherosclerotic heart disease, and hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease, and hypertension). Ischemic heart disease and coronary artery disease are included within this provision.

Complications of atherosclerotic heart disease are included. Complications may include myocardial infarction ("heart attack"), congestive heart failure ("heart failure"), and arrhythmia ("irregular heart beat").

Hypertensive vascular disease refers to disease associated with elevated blood pressure. Complications caused by hypertensive vascular disease are included. Diseases arising from viral or bacterial causes are not included.

### 23. OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. These broken bones occur typically in the hip, spine, and wrist.

Any bone can be affected, but of special concern are fractures of the hip and spine. A hip fracture almost always requires hospitalization and major surgery. Spinal or vertebral fractures also have serious consequences, including loss of height, severe back pain, and deformity.

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Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are determined by VA to be disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service connected. To be eligible for compensation, the Veteran must have been separated or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Monthly disability compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of eligible dependents. Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation (SMC). Disability compensation benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

# legislative



**PNC Charles Susino Jr  
Chairman**  
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Although of the press has primarily covered the activity to repeal National Health Care and Tax reform, there is a fair amount of activity of proposed Bills pertaining to veterans and military spending.

**Commemorative Coin Act:** The House has a proposed Bill HR 4044, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of WWII Commemorative Coin Act along with the Senate's companion Bill S.1718. They would authorize the creation and minting of commemorative coins (\$5 gold, silver dollars, and half dollars) depicting a representation of the WWII Victory medal. Some of the proceeds would be directed to the WWII National Museum educational program.

**Desert Storm War Memorial Site Selection:** Site selection continues with the list narrowed down from 18 to 3. The three potential sites include one along the Potomac River, another on E Street between the White House and State Department, and the third at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street, NW. The latter seems most appropriate with it close proximity to the other war memorials.

2017-2018 Legislative  
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**WWI memorials:** On November 9, 2017, there was a ground breaking ceremony for the WWI memorial which is to be located at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Ave. Although this memorial was developed almost 100 years after the war, the memories of those that served need to be honored for the families and all Americans need and to know and remember the sacrifices.

Tulsi Gabbard, from Hawaii has proposed a Bill, the "Honoring World War I Memorials Act of 2017" which provides money for matching funds to rebuild or maintain WWI memorials throughout the country that are decaying and need of repair. Given the importance of recognizing World War I and the previous support of Congress through the creation of the World War I Centennial Commission, rehabilitating these memorials is an important step in honoring those who fought and gave their lives during the war.

**Filipino Veterans Awarded Congressional Gold Medal:** The service and sacrifice of Filipino veterans from World War II were honored recently with the highest award Congress can provide: the Congressional Gold Medal. It was awarded to recognize the collective efforts of some 250,000 Filipino soldiers who served honorably in an active duty status between July 26, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, under the command of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Act of 2017:

Representatives Steve Pearce (NM) and Walter Jones (NC) introduced H.R. 4146, the Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Act of 2017. This legislation, if passed, would update the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) tables to reflect the 2017 inflation rate, increasing the current cap from \$10,000 to \$95,000 and would create a process for adjusting the cap based on inflation each year.

Please remain active in supporting Bills you believe are important to you by writing Washington.

Thank you

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## PNC Ed Dement on his Honor Flight

Ed got a hero's welcome on his return from Washington, DC



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# andersonville



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A new year brings exciting things to Andersonville National Historic Site!

The end of 2017 was filled with both highs and lows for our park. In September, the southeastern United States was hit hard by Hurricane Irma. Fortunately, the park grounds and museum received minimal damage. We lost power for three days, had several large downed trees blocking park



roads, and had a tree fall and inflict damage on the historic cemetery wall. Due to power loss and scattered debris, plus storm related travel issues for scheduled speakers, our annual National POW/MIA Day event had to be canceled. However, we are proud of our hard-working staff who spent countless hours clearing debris in order to reopen the park and museum as quickly as possible so that we could continue

telling the American prisoner of war story.



*Credit: NPS/ C. Barr*

In November, we held our annual Night Museum event which has grown in popularity over the years. Around 200 people were in attendance to view the National Prisoner of War Museum and historic prison site at night. Lantern-lined walkways led visitors to the reconstructed prison corner. Out on the historic prison site, living history volunteers portrayed Union prisoners and Confederate guards during Camp Sumter's winter months. Huddled around a crackling fire, living historians portraying prisoners answered visitors' curious questions and reenacted how prisoners would have passed time during the cold winter months. All while guards loomed over them in the "pigeon roost" towers around the reconstructed stockade corner.

Two ranger-led programs were delivered during the event as well. "Honoring our Fallen Veterans" focused on veterans buried in Andersonville National Cemetery,

including Harold S. Hirschi – a WWII POW who was recently interred at Andersonville National Cemetery in June. Army Air Forces Pvt. Harold S. Hirschi, 29, of Oklahoma City, was assigned to Headquarters Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands. Intense fighting continued until May 6, 1942, when American forces on Corregidor Island surrendered. Hirschi was admitted to the Cabanatuan Camp station hospital for illness, where he died on Nov. 19, 1942. According to prison records, Hirschi was buried along with 13 fellow prisoners in a local camp cemetery in Cabanatuan. Seventy-two years later in 2014, Hirschi's remains were positively identified through DNA testing and transferred to the U.S. for proper burial with full military honors.

Other notable veterans discussed during the program included: Jeremiah Dupree, a Revolutionary War Veteran; James Wiley, Civil War veteran and Medal of Honor Recipient; Burton Cole, Spanish-American War Veteran; Mary Theresa Hill, WWII Veteran and member of the Women's Air Corps; Jimmy Williams, Vietnam War Veteran who was killed in action; and Luther Story, Korean War Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient.

Guest speaker April Baldwin came from Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and delivered a program in the museum's theater on the lesser-known contributions of African Americans to the historic site. "Stories of African

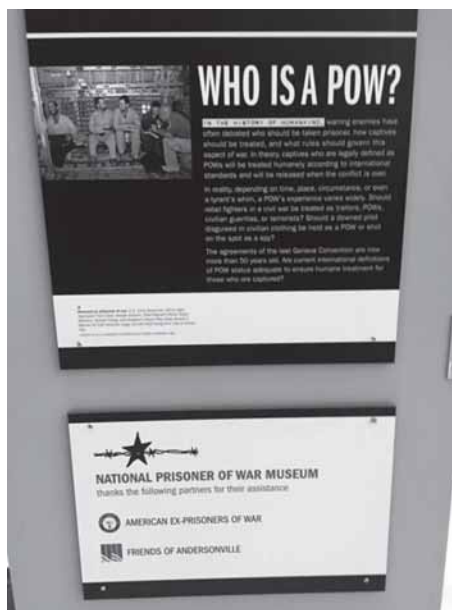
*"There is nothing so American as our national parks.... The fundamental idea behind the parks...is that the country belongs to the people, that it is in process of making for the enrichment of the lives of all of us." -Franklin D. Roosevelt (1936)*

## andersonville, cont'd..

American people here at Andersonville came at different points in the site's timeline," stated Baldwin during her program, "...this place held special significance for the blacks in this community about emancipation and freedom."

We then ended the year with a fresh start. All of the monuments and iron gates were cleaned and the gates received a brand new coat of paint. We also introduced a new "Cemetery Walking Tour". The tour is a card visitors can pick up at the museum front desk and is a companion to our existing "Prison Site Walking Tour" card. These cards allow visitors to stretch their legs, as well as gain valuable information about the site if they choose not to check out a driving tour. The "Cemetery Walking Tour" was created by one of our summer student interns.

As we move into the New Year, we have several new projects on the horizon. We will install a new Grave Finder Kiosk in Andersonville National Cemetery to help visitors easily locate a gravesite.



In May, the "Victory from Within" traveling exhibit will move from its current location at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida, to the Rice County Historical Society at the Coronado Quivira Museum in Lyons, Kansas. The traveling exhibit has had a very successful year at the National Naval Aviation Museum where they receive over 850,000 visitors annually.

We will also have a couple of projects focused on preserving and increasing the accessibility of some of the many items donated to our museum collections. One will involve digitizing several hundred of the photos preserved in our museum collection, including a collection of images from former WWII POW Angelo Spinelli. The other will convert about a hundred POW oral histories, including a collection from historian Lewis Carlson, that are currently in an audio cassette or VHS video format to a digital format.

We're welcoming several new volunteers with the coming year as well. From January to May our volunteer RV pads will be full! Volunteers are essential to our visitor services. They allow us to conduct more programs, branch out during special events, and bring in new ideas. It is always a pleasure when we are surrounded by volunteers who are just as passionate about the story we tell as we are.

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For the upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Prisoner of War Museum in 2018, a temporary exhibit will be on display commemorating the museum's grand opening in April 1998.



The exhibit will feature collection items that were donated by several POWs who were in attendance at the grand opening and will be on display throughout the year. We invite you to come to one of our many events that will take place during 2018.

The park will commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Prisoner of War Museum with special programs and activities on Sunday, April 8, 2018. We invite the American Ex-Prisoners of War and its members to join the Friends of Andersonville and the National Park Service in recognizing this milestone and the continued importance of preserving and interpreting the stories of all American POWs. We invite all former POWs to be our honored guests at this event and hope you will attend.

# namPOW news



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## 45 Years of Freedom

Forty-five years ago, on January 29, 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were signed, bringing an end to the Vietnam War and freedom for prisoners of war held on both sides of the conflict. The PPA was signed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG, aka Viet Cong), the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), and the United States of America.

On 1 February, the POWs in Hanoi were told to bathe and to shave. All facial hair had to be removed; and we were to put on clean clothes. In the afternoon all the POWs in the Zoo were brought into a large theater or auditorium. When we were all assembled, the camp commander made the official announcement that the Paris Peace Accords had been signed on 29 January. All prisoners were to be released on both sides within 60 days of the agreement.

We were elated! Linebacker II had been successful, and the lack of bombing for the last month had not signaled a failure after all. We

would be going home no later than 29 March. We were now officially SHORT, and could start a real countdown to release (i.e. 57 days and a wake-up).

When 10 February rolled around, we were all on edge. We had speculated we might be first, since we were in the best shape; but the prisoners code insisted that it would be first in, first out. I had argued in vain with the camp authorities that two of our guys needed bone and tendon repair and should go home with the first group. That morning, we knew they were going nowhere. During the afternoon lockdown, we heard in the distance the distinctive whining of C-141 engines. Immediately, we were at the windows watching it make its approach to the airport – a beautiful gray and white transport with a big red cross painted on its tail. At the last minute it made a missed approach, turning right toward the Zoo. As he approached, he waved his wings in salute to us and reentered the landing pattern. We were shouting and jumping for joy. The guards tried to quiet us down, but it was no use. Operation Homecoming was now underway.

The second release date was scheduled for Saturday, 24 February; but no C-141s arrived. What had gone wrong? Our fears of a new stalemate grew exceptionally large as we speculated and our hope for an on-time release fell into the cellar. An announcement over the camp radio claimed that the U.S. had violated the terms of the treaty by failing to sweep the mines out of Haiphong harbor. That meant to us that the NVN government had probably done

something to test the U.S. government. When the 141s appeared on Monday, the crisis was over. We would later learn that NVN had refused to release four men captured in Laos but held in Hanoi, claiming they were Laotian prisoners. With the threat of renewed BUFF strikes, they relented.

The 17 March release occurred on schedule, and we grew increasingly restless, anxious, hopeful, and defiant. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, two events occurred. One, we were issued the clothes, dark blue slacks and light blue shirt, belt, socks, shoes and a vinyl tote bag. The second event was the freedom flight for half the camp. The last release of American prisoners occurred on 29 March 1973 exactly 60 days after the Paris Peace Accords had been signed. We were placed on buses and taken to Gia Lam Airport. A host of spectators were gathered, so we were kept behind the hangars until things were ready and the C-141 was on the ground and prepared to pick us up. We were driven to the front of the terminal, climbed out of the bus and formed two lines in order of our shoot-down dates. When our names were called we marched across the tarmac to a USAF Colonel, saluted, reported in, and boarded our Hanoi Taxi to freedom.







Mary Schantag, Chairman  
P.O.W. Network  
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## The Untold Story

About a year and a half ago, a friend asked me to help a classmate of his, Donald Harms, to get some records on his dad who had been a POW. It was quite a complicated process, and my hopes were not high that anything would be found due to the 1973 fire that burned millions of Army WWII military records at the repository in St. Louis.

I usually get these calls from family when dad CLAIMED to have been a POW, and there is nothing, anyplace to confirm the story. For almost 27 years I have worked at recording the true stories of our Vietnam POWs and exposing those that steal the honor of our veterans with false claims.

So when my friend called back early this summer, and said "I have a copy of the records," I jumped at the chance to read the file. After a 4 hour, page by page review of 92 pages, being awed and amazed and shocked and frustrated all at once, I went to do more research.

What I found was the amazing story of a unit from the 94th Inf. Div., that eventually was recorded in history by story, and film and photos. A story that took place during WWII - 73 years ago!

So, on October 21, the JayCee Hall in Cole Camp was filled with family and friends of the late PFC John A. Harms. They gathered to hear "the untold story" of their neighbor, relative, or the local kitchen cabinet maker. The family friend and classmate, Vietnam Veteran Elmer Wischmeier, and I, teamed up to tell the story so few

were aware of in their small community.

John Harms left a young wife and was sent overseas in 1944 with the Army's 94th Infantry Division to fight in France.

Out of ammunition, and surrounded by the enemy, Harms unit, the 301st Infantry Regiment of the 94th, surrendered to the Germans occupying the area on October 2, 1944. Harms himself and a number of men in the forty-five man unit, were wounded.

The story continued to unfold with news reel and actual photographs showing the battle, surrender, capture and negotiations for a prisoner exchange that took place between an American Red Cross worker, Andrew Hodges on behalf of the Americans and the Germans. 45 days later, the first POW exchange of WWII took place thanks to Hodges. It included several Jewish service members that escaped detection by burying their dog tags when they were captured. PFC Harms was seen in a photo at the exchange, carrying the litter of a wounded comrade on the boat that brought them from their island prison to the shore of Lorient France on Nov 15.

After his success with the 79 men of US and British forces, Hodges went on to arrange other POW exchanges during the war for the U.S. and the Red Cross. None appear to have been given the same attention from the military or the press, as the 94th's members return was noted in newspapers across the county.

Harms underwent multiple surgeries and rehab before he was able to return home to Lincoln, MO months later to raise a family. He never spoke of his experiences.

During the afternoon reception, LTC Tony Monetti, USAF (Ret) of Warrensburg, presented brothers Donald and Rick Harms shadow-boxes with the full set of military awards and decorations earned by their father. Harms earned the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, POW Medal, Good Conduct Medal, 2 Campaign Medals, World War II Victory Medal, both the Combat and Expert Infantry Badge, and the Honorable Service lapel pin.



The family's burial flag was returned to oldest son, Don and a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol in John Harms' honor was presented to the Benton County Museum.

Legion members and auxiliary members of Post 305 posted colors, and aided in the service. The Ladies Auxiliary served refreshments. The "White Table Service" was performed to remember the individuals still missing as the recognition went on. Many captured during WWII remain unaccounted for to this day. More than 73,000 are still noted by the Department of Defense as POW/MIAs. 12,000 who were liberated from prison camps - disappeared - and never came home.

That day, we told a true story. A story about one man, in a unit of 45, out of the 2 million 300 hundred thousand that served. We related a homecoming - and a miracle. A farmers journey from small town Lincoln, MO, to the battlefields of France, the agony of wounds, the desolation of captivity and the joy of coming home that we will not let be forgotten. The most overheard comment seemed to be "I never knew "

Now they do. We fulfilled the POW's Networks' mission - to educate.

*Pic: L to R, Rick Harms, Don Harms, LTC Tony Monetti*

# civilians

## An Amazing Prediction

By Sascha Jansen  
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Dwight David Eisenhower, nicknamed Ike, graduated from West Point in 1915 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army. He was assigned to the 65th Engineers and was due to be shipped to France after the U.S. declared war on the Axis Powers in 1917, but instead was assigned to the new Tank Corps as Brevet Lieutenant Colonel to train tank crews, and never made it to the WW I battlefield. The Army grew from 100,000 men in 1915 to over 4 million during the war, but when it ended it shrank back to almost its prewar size and Ike reverted to the rank of Captain. With the reduced size of the Army, young officers had little opportunity for promotion. By 1935 he had risen one rank, to major, when he shipped to the Philippines, then as Chief military aide to General MacArthur, he was promoted to permanent Lieutenant Colonel in 1936. When the U.S. started preparing for war again in 1941, long awaited promotions started coming rapidly, first with promotion to Colonel, then 5 more promotions in less than 4 years, and by 1944 he had attained the rank of General of the Army, the highest rank achievable with the coveted 5-stars. But who could have predicted these events, and Ike's later election as 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States? But someone did, and Sascha Jansen's family was there to witness this seminal event. Here is her story.

During the Commonwealth years in the Philippines, in 1935 to be exact, General Douglas MacArthur returned to the Philippines on the President Hoover. Along with him came his staff, Major James B. Ord,

Major Howard J. Hutter (MD) and Major Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In those days of the 30's the Philippines was thriving and Manila was named the Pearl of the Orient. Big business reigned. Polo, Jai a Lai, Golf, and Baseball were in the front-line of sports, while lavish parties were de rigeur. On hot tropic nights, activities started late. Cocktails on the verandas of the Army Navy Club and late suppers at clubs and restaurants were teasers for what was to come. Dancing way into the early mornings at the Manila Hotel saw beautiful women in gowns befitting the tropics, escorted by dapper gents in white sharkskin suits or uniformed military officers.

Invitations to day time events at Malacañang Palace were coveted. Swimming, Tennis, Bridge and Mah Jong at the various clubs ran full force, and the wives of planters and businessmen took to club and restaurant lunches with normalcy and ease.

During some of the lunches the women enjoyed inviting Madam Habibe to join them. Madam Rebecca Habibe's presence was indeed much in demand, having a most reputable history as a spiritual psychic.

This unique, sweet lady, modest and intriguing, was right on target in her psychic predictions. So much so, that even my mother, who was a staunch Catholic, went to her regularly for readings: a big no-no in the Catholic Church. Madame Habibe told my mother she was pregnant when the baby was only 1-week old, and he would be a 10-pound boy but the pregnancy would be difficult due to kidney stones, thus she would have to make some difficult decisions regarding her health. These events became realities as with other dire predictions of war. Now

that you have some idea of where you are in this unique story setting, lets attend a reception of note.

It was a rather large garden party reception which Manilianos attended including members of the Military. As happenstance has it, MacArthur's staff was in attendance but without the General. As Madame Habibe strolled among the guests she came across Major Eisenhower, and with a small hesitation, stopped in front of him. Others noted this odd couple deep in conversation for a lengthy time and wondered about the story passing between them. They continued to be intrigued when the Major threw back his head and laughed heartily.

Madame Habibe, it seems, had a strong pull to the Major when she stopped to chat. Mamie Eisenhower enjoyed telling her friends of their intimate chat. Habibe had predicted the upcoming war in Europe and that Ike would be a leader with much power during this time. She also foresaw a long absence from his Mamie. But the catcher, which tickled the Major into laughing out loud, was the prediction that he would become the 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Good naturedly, the Major then promised Mrs. Habibe, tongue in cheek, that as soon as he becomes President he would look for her and send a note reminding her of their meeting.

My mother and father told that story for years as they were present at this garden party of note and had hosted the Eisenhowers on occasions at the plantation. Well, I need not tell you that the above came to pass for Dwight David Eisenhower. And as a final ending to this tale, let's jump on to 1958.

We went to visit our good friend Maria Martinez for lunch at her home in San Francisco. As we

civilians, cont'd...

came into the house she announced she had a surprise for us. Yes, it was Madam Habibe who came to live with Maria for a few months. We were thrilled to see her again and sat down for a wonderful visit. Of course, our conversation immediately turned to Eisenhower and her prediction for the presidency. Beaming, she produced a framed, hand written note from President Eisenhower thanking her for having so much faith in an unknown Major way back when.

Madam Habibe then proceeded to predict a wonderful filled life for me with lots of traveling across oceans, "many, many interesting people" in my life and much adventure to propel me onward. I remembered her often as I conducted tours to the Far East with "many many interesting people" I bring along with me.

The first President I was allowed and eligible to vote for was Ike.



To have your event listed, please email the editor at [axpoweditor@comcast.net](mailto:axpoweditor@comcast.net) at least 90 days in advance. Thank you.

March 3, 2018. USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association & Next Generations will host a 'Day of Remembrance' at USS Houston CA-30 monument, Sam Houston Park at the Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby Street, Houston, TX at 2:30PM. [usshouston.org](http://usshouston.org); [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org).

# News Briefs

## Utah POWs recognized for their courage, sacrifice

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Deseret News



*Ex-POWs honored at a luncheon at the Capitol in Salt Lake City, on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017.*

SALT LAKE CITY — While many may see their 21st birthday as a symbol of new social freedom, 70-year-old Dale E. Rigby remembers his 21st birthday for the time he was spent in North Korean captivity.

Rigby, a Centerville native, was a baker aboard the USS Pueblo in 1968. On Jan. 23, he and 82 other Navy crewmen were surrounded by North Korean military vessels. Chased by a pair of fighter jets, three subchasers and two patrol boats, and with only a single working machine gun and no help on the way, the crew of the USS Pueblo was outgunned, outmaneu-

vered and forced to surrender.

For the next 11 months, Rigby said he was held under brutal prisoner conditions by his North Korean captors.

"There was a lot of animosity toward us," he said, noting the country's remaining bitterness toward Americans, even after the open hostility of the Korean War ended with the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement.

Rigby and the rest of the crew were eventually released on Dec. 23, 1968. The ship was never returned.

Rigby said it became a politically awkward diplomatic situation for the U.S. to recognize them as prisoners of war from the Korean War.

But he said it took him even longer to learn to personally forgive his captors.

"I hold no animosity toward the Korean people, any of them," Rigby said. "But it took me a long, long time to get to that point."



*Dale Rigby shakes hands with Cory Pearson, director of veterans services at the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs*

He said through personal faith he has learned to include the Korean people in his prayers in hopes that the continued tension between North Korea and the U.S. will one day be resolved.

news, cont'd...

## American Ex-POWs National Commander Visits Long Beach Township's New Veterans Park

As a prisoner of war for 14 months near the end of World War II, Charles Susino Jr. could never be sure he would live to see the following day. But through strength of will and a daring escape during an 86-day forced march, he and several of his fellow G.I.s survived to tell their tale.

Susino, who will turn 94 in September, travels recurrently to Surf City from his primary home in Metuchen, and this summer, he and his family discovered a new space on Long Beach Island that they were eager to visit: the recently constructed Veterans Park in the Beach Haven Terrace section of Long Beach Township. As numerous members of Susino's extended family gathered at the park last week, he arrived in a car marked with his title as the National Commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, a not-for-profit, congressionally-chartered veterans service organization advocating for former POWs and their families.

"It represents all conflicts of war, prior and future," son Charles A. Susino said of the organization, which was established in 1942. Surrounded by relatives in the park's spacious gazebo, the elder Susino recalled his youth in Yorkville, N.Y., where he fell in love with Lillian, his wife of 70 years. "I met this lovely doll when she was 13," he said, gesturing to his partner, seated beside him. "She lived on the next block."

Their family grew to include son Charles and daughter Diane



Photo by: Ryan Morrill

Harrington and now includes nine great-grandchildren, all of whom were present at Veterans Park for a family photo op.

As Susino explained, he joined the military in 1943, when he was 19. "I was sworn in at Grand Central Station" on the day Lillian graduated from high school, as she recalled.

"I ended up in Florida, in the Air Force," said Susino, and then attended training in various places. "People were learning how to engage in war all over the country."

As Susino's biography on the AXPOW website, [axpow.org](http://axpow.org), states, "I served as a staff sergeant in the Army Air Force, assigned to a B-24 Bomber, as a gunner flying in the European theatre. On March 5, 1944, over France on our 13th mission, our bomber was shot down," its crew parachuting out into enemy territory.

"I was lying in the grass, alone, hiding from the Germans," Susino

recalled. "I thought they'd passed, and so I got up, and a German said, 'Raus mit dir!' ('Out with you!')."

"I was one guy with a .45, surrounded."

Susino had also been injured by shrapnel in both legs, but received no medical treatment following his capture. "The Germans held us prisoners in deplorable conditions for 14 months," his bio explains. "We never knew what or when we were going to eat and drink again, or even if."

The prisoners were moved among several camps during their captivity, until the forced march during which Susino escaped. "We were hunted by German soldiers with dogs, but we managed to elude them," he noted in the bio. "We survived on whatever we could find to eat. We eventually ran across a U.S. Army truck, which drove us to safety and to the 48th Field Hospital in Hanover (Germany). We arrived on May 8, 1945."

He added, "Facing the enemy twice, once on the battlefield and then again in their prison camps – and then at their mercy – is a life experience that never leaves your mind."

## news, cont'd...

As a civilian, Susino has for decades been active with veterans organizations, taking on various leadership roles, principally as a member of the American Ex-Prisoners of War. In addition to serving as AXPOW'S national commander, he has served as senior and junior vice commander, New Jersey state commander and national director of legislative affairs, and has sat on the organization's board of directors.

In addition, Susino, as an accredited national service officer, has counseled other veterans on their benefits eligibility.

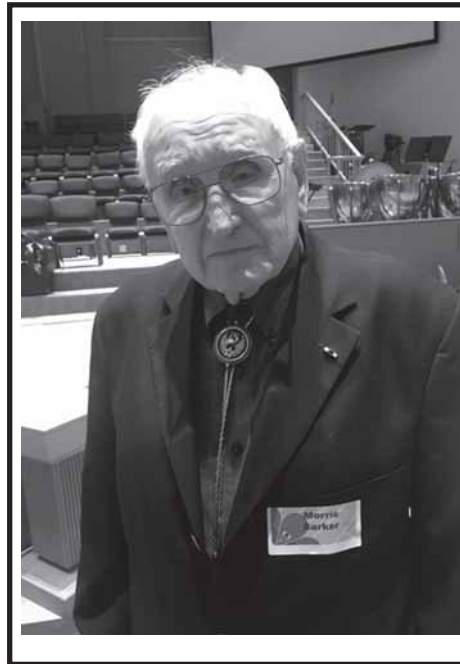
He also provides testimony to Congress on behalf of American ex-POWs, including this past March, when he gave a statement before the congressional Committees on Veterans' Affairs.

Susino has received the French Medal of Honor, Cavalier Level; a Purple Heart; an Airman Medal Cluster; and a POW Medal. The medals were not quick to arrive, as son Charles pointed out. In November 1990, 45 years after the war, Susino got a box in the mail containing medals the U.S. military hadn't given him. And about 10 years ago, he was invited by France to the French Embassy in New York City to be awarded its highest civilian honor.

Certainly, though, the medals are less significant than the family Susino created with Lillian after he returned home, safe, to the United States.

And as Susino noted, "Whenever I'm in a memorial park, I always think of those who are not here. The real heroes are the ones that couldn't make it back."

— **Juliet Kaszas-Hoch**  
[juliet@thesandpaper.net](mailto:juliet@thesandpaper.net)



PNC Morris Barker  
takes his story to the  
schools  
in Texas



## 2018 VA Disability Rates

The 2018 VA Disability rates saw a 2.0% increase effective December 1, 2017 and is the largest increase since 2012. The 2017 VA Disability rates saw a small increase of 0.3 percent. This is after seeing no increase in 2016. Eligible veterans with disabilities can receive up to \$3,527.22 per month as a tax free monetary benefit.

## Flu Shots

Flu Season is here! Veterans protect yourselves and get a NO COST flu shot!

The cold and flu season is upon us and the Department of Veterans Affairs has once again teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to be able walk into any of the over 8000 Walgreens nationally (and the Duane Reade pharmacies in the

New York metropolitan area) to receive a vaccination at no cost. Vaccinations will be available through March 31, 2018.

Veterans wishing to receive the no cost vaccination simply need to present a Veterans Identification Card and a photo ID, at any participating Walgreens to receive the vaccination. The Group ID is: VAFLU

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine Walgreens will transmit that information securely to VA where it becomes part of the patient's electronic medical record.

VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and during this flu season, vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. No matter where you live, visit your local VA clinic or Walgreens to get a no cost flu shot.

## VA Hotline

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the White House VA Hotline is now fully staffed with live agents working to serve Veterans 24-

## news, cont'd...

hours a day, 365 days a year. The hotline, which became 24-hour operational in mid-October, is now staffed by a team consisting of 90 percent Veterans or employees who have a Veteran family member, and is in response to Veterans' requests to talk to agents who could relate to their experiences.

"The White House VA Hotline provides our nation's Veterans with a direct, dedicated contact line that allows them to interact with highly trained, live agents to answer their needs and concerns," said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. "Since the initial launch of the hotline in June, we listened to our Veterans, who indicated that they prefer speaking with other Veterans and Veteran family members, and we adjusted our hiring based on that feedback," added Shulkin. "We're proud that the hotline is now staffed 24/7 by a team of mostly Veterans or Veteran family members who have direct knowledge of their particular concerns and can use their experience to address them in the best way possible with the resources of the VA. This represents a true win-win for Veterans and their loved ones."

Since 24/7 coverage began in October, the hotline has served more than 10,000 callers.

Hotline agents answer inquiries, provide directory assistance, document concerns about VA care, benefits and services, and expedite the referral and resolution of those concerns. Agents undergo regular updates and training on VA services based

on hotline trends and are assisted by newly implemented tracking software to help VA capture and improve its response, referral and resolution processes to best support Veterans. The hotline can be accessed at 855-948-2311 and is VA's first non-clinical, non-emergency around-the-clock call center. It provides Veterans a supplemental option to report issues if they are not being addressed through VA's normal customer service channels. The hotline's agents are located at a VA facility in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Agents have access to a multitude of resources and contact information to help Veterans. The hotline also generates real-time reports to VA experts who can help address the specific issues of Veterans as well as make better-informed decisions on where program improvements are needed.

## Homeless Funding

On December 6, 2017, VA Secretary Shulkin made the following statement in response to media reports:

"There will be absolutely no change in the funding to support our homeless programs.

We will not be shifting any homeless program money to the Choice program.

The President has increased VA homeless program funding by \$66 million in his fiscal year 2018 budget.

Over the next six months, I will solicit input from our local VA leaders and external stakeholders on how best to target our funding to the geographical areas that need it most.

Based on that input we will come forward with proposals for fiscal year 2019 on how to improve the targeting of our homeless program funding."

## New Treatment for PTSD

VA to Provide Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy to Some Veterans with Chronic PTSD

In November 2017, VA announced it will offer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) as a treatment option for a small number of Veterans with persistent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms resistant to standard options.

Providers from the Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System and the VA Northern California Health Care System will partner with HBOT providers at the Tulsa Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center at Oklahoma State Medical Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the David Grant Medical Center on Travis Air Force Base, California, respectively, to provide this care.

"There is nothing more important to us than caring for our nation's Veterans, and that care must include finding different approaches that work best for them," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "We have to explore every avenue, particularly for our most medically vulnerable Veterans, and be open to new ideas and strategies for their optimal health and well-being."

HBOT is a procedure that increases oxygen in the body, under pressure, to encourage healing. Currently, HBOT is commonly used to treat carbon monoxide poisoning, divers' sickness, enhanced healing of some wound problems, skin grafts, heat burns, crush injuries and other acute health-care issues that involve too



## news, cont'd...

little blood flow to a part of the body.

This use of HBOT for treatment of PTSD is considered an "off-label" use and will occur under the supervision of a trained physician. Separately, VA and the Department of Defense are planning a multisite research study to examine more fully the use of HBOT for patients diagnosed with PTSD.

As health-care leaders interested in innovative approaches to care, the VA Center for Compassionate Innovation (CCI) is facilitating use of HBOT for a subset of Veterans who have noticed no decrease of symptoms after receiving at least two evidenced-based treatments. CCI uses innovative approaches to treat conditions where traditional methods have been unsuccessful. VA will monitor the HBOT clinical demonstration project and the HBOT research study to help inform the potential for HBOT usage to treat a larger number of Veterans with PTSD.

## Veterans Choice

The Veterans Choice Program is a benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

If you are already enrolled in VA health care, the Choice Program allows you to receive health care within your community. Using this program does NOT impact your existing VA health care, or any other VA benefit.

### Am I eligible?

You must have been enrolled in VA health care on or before August 1, 2014, or be eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran. You must also meet at least one of the following criteria:



## Veterans ID Card

Honorably discharged veterans of all eras can now apply for a new veterans ID card, according to officials with the Department of Veterans Affairs. To receive the card veterans must log in to Vets.gov using either the ID.me verification system or a DS log-in. Users will then be able to apply for the hard-copy card by verifying their personal details through the website and by submitting a copy of a valid government issued-ID as well as a shoulders-up photo to the site. Once the application is complete, users can expect to receive their new ID card within 60 days, officials said in a release. Officials said users will also be able to receive a digital copy of the card by mid-December.

The ID cards are meant to offer a way for veterans to prove their service without carrying a copy of their DD-214 form, which contains sensitive personal information, such as veterans' Social Security numbers. The new IDs will not, however, qualify as official government-issued identification for air travel or other uses.

The ID card program is voluntary. The VA was ordered to provide the cards in a law passed by Congress in 2015. Some veterans, such as those who receive health benefits from the VA and military retirees, already have IDs that can provide proof of service.

You are told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment from the date clinically determined by your physician, or, if not such date is provided, our preferred date. Your residence is more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility. You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home.

You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons.

### What do I do if I think I am eligible?

Call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 to verify your eligibility and set up an appointment.

# a little history lesson

## 50 years of captivity

On January 23, 1968 USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) was attacked in international waters by North Korean forces. Eighty-two surviving crewmembers were captured and held prisoner for eleven months.

on the cover: Original oil painting by artist Richard DeRosset for USS PUEBLO crewmember Tom Massie. North Korean hull and aircraft have their actual numbers of the attacking forces.

## US demands release of seized ship

By Richard Scott  
The Guardian  
January, 1968

The seizure of an American naval vessel on the high seas by North Koreans last night is regarded here as a serious international incident with potentially dangerous consequences. Informed sources said tonight that the US nuclear powered aircraft carrier Enterprise was on its way to the area from Japan. A Pentagon statement to-

day said that the vessel, the USS Pueblo, 906 tons, a naval auxiliary used for the collection of intelligence, was surrounded by four armed North Korean patrol boats shortly before midnight about 25 miles off the North Korean coast.

Two North Korean MiGs flew overhead, it was stated. An armed force of North Koreans boarded the Pueblo, which had a crew of 83, and four American sailors were wounded, one of them critically. The ship was taken into the North Korean port of Wonsan.

The United States Government immediately asked the Soviet Union "to convey to the North Koreans our urgent request for the immediate release of the vessel and crew." The State Department also said that the matter would be taken up directly with the North Koreans at a meeting of the Armistice Commission at Panmunjon called for tonight.

## Limit in dispute

Not since the American Civil War has an American naval vessel been seized and boarded on the high seas. The North Koreans claim a 12-mile territorial waters limit. The US recognises only a three-mile limit. In any event, it says, the Pueblo was roughly 25 miles offshore and so, by any account, in international waters. A North Korean broadcast today claimed, however, that the Pueblo, which was admittedly occupied in the gathering of intelligence, was conducting hostile activities inside Korean waters.

The Pueblo is a smaller version of the USS Liberty, which was en-



USS Pueblo

- In January 1968 North Korea captured a U.S. Navy spy ship—the Pueblo—off the coast of Communist North Korea.
- The United States claimed it was in international waters and called up troops.
- The North Koreans released the crew, but kept the ship.

## Johnson's Foreign Policy: Pueblo Incident



gaged in intelligence activities in the Eastern Mediterranean during the six-day summer war between Israel and her Arab neighbours, when she was attacked by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats. The Pueblo, which had been in the Sea of Japan for the past two weeks, carried oceanographic equipment as well as a great deal of electronic and communications gear.

So far the Administration here has refrained from any detailed comment on the incident, although Mr Dean Rusk described it as "a matter of the utmost gravity." The White House spokesman said it was "a very serious situation."

There is some speculation that the seizure of the vessel was part of a North Korean campaign of harassment which has already resulted in a dramatic increase in incidents along the demilitarised zone and an attempt at the week-end by a party of North Koreans to assassinate the South Korean President in the capital of Seoul.

Congress is likely to demand strong action by the Government unless the Pueblo is rapidly released. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Richard Russell, has already characterised the incident as "almost an act of war" and has urged the President to take "a very strong position" in demanding the ship's release. Senator Mansfield described it as "a clear violation of international law."





## A matter of timing



Photo/Donald Gregg

*The USS Pueblo remains docked and on display at a large river in North Korea's capital city of Pyongyang. The writing on the side, 'GER-2,' displays part of the ship's signature number: AGER-2, standing for Auxiliary General Environmental Research vessel.*

Former ambassador believes return of captured USS Pueblo from North Korea a possibility

By DENNIS DARROW  
*THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN* ~ 2004

Today the USS Pueblo remains a seldom-visited military trophy docked on a river in North Korea's capital city, according to an expert who recently toured and photographed the ship.

Donald Gregg, a former U.S. ambassador to South Korea and current chair of The Korea Society based in New York City, said he also saw no anti-America propaganda which reportedly once was displayed on the ship. Gregg visited the Pueblo earlier this month on his third trip to North Korea.

Meanwhile, Gregg said he thinks he and others can help convince North Korea to return the ship, but the timing isn't good right now given the strained relations between the United States and North Korea over the issue of nuclear weapons research and development. He's willing to try,

Gregg said. "I think (Korean leaders) are aware it is a card for them to play but that this is not the time for them to play it." For his part, "It's certainly something I could keep alive. (And) when the time seems right, I will certainly make a major pitch."

In the interim, he has spoken to several Pueblo community leaders about the project, he said.

The ship remains mechanically sound and still goes on periodic test runs but for most of the time the vessel remains docked as part of a riverside military display, Gregg said. The same site features a mural depicting other battles, including the attack on the USS Sherman, sunk by Korea in 1866. The point of the whole display: Two encounters at sea with the United States, two victories, Gregg said.



Koreans maintain that in 1866 the crew of the USS Sherman robbed graves and molested women. "They say, 'This was our first con-

tact with the United States and it wasn't a very positive one,' " Gregg said.

Gregg said he toured the Pueblo for 45 minutes, escorted by a female museum guard. "I was taken all over the ship. I saw shrapnel holes, radio equipment. They also had a film of the capture of the ship and picture of the crew and so forth."

The ship is docked on a 200-yard-wide stretch of the main river in North Korea's capital of Pyongyang, he said. On the day he visited, nobody else was on board except for uniformed sailors. The Korean tour guide characterized the ship as a "war trophy."

Gregg could emerge as a highly influential contact in the Pueblo community's ongoing bid to get the city's namesake vessel returned by North Korea for display in the

city; and his offers to help in any way he can could prove invaluable.

For four years, from 1989 to 1993, he served as the U.S. ambassador to South Korea, the culmination of a 30-year career spent as a top CIA specialist on Asia. Upon his retirement from the CIA, he

timing, cont'd...

became national security adviser to then Vice President George Bush for six years, traveling to 65 countries.

Given his extensive experience and contacts, he was asked to chair The Korea Society, a nonprofit organization charged with improving relations and understandings between the U.S. and Korean people. The agency organizes student exchanges, public forums, trips and other programs.

Through his work he remains on close terms with North Korea leaders, among them the North Korea ambassador to the United Nations, who is based in New York, Gregg said. His August trip to North Korea was the third of his visits.

Gregg said he holds his own fascination with the future of the Pueblo. Years ago he approached North Korean leaders about returning the ship, maybe the first time anyone from the United States put the idea directly to the country, he said. "This had never occurred to them before and they took it quite seriously."

However, the country backed away in 2002 as tensions mounted between the United States and North Korea over the country's nuclear weapons research and development, Gregg said. Still, Korea left open the possibility of resuming talks if relations between the two countries improve. Now in his talks, Gregg said he makes frequent mention of the city of Pueblo's growing interest in hosting the ship's return.

"I think if it were known in North Korea that the people of Pueblo really have plans if the Pueblo were given back, that would make an impression," Gregg said.

# 50 years and counting

. The USS Pueblo was a U.S Navy spy ship taken by the North Koreans in January 1968, leading to a crisis which saw calls for Kim Il-Sung to be threatened with nuclear attack

. Vessel was spying on Soviet submarine activities and North Korean signals when it was taken in what Navy was adamant was international waters

. The Pueblo Crisis was one of the tensest moments between the reclusive Communist regime in North Korea and the U.S. until recent weeks, but was overshadowed in 1968 by the Vietnam War

. Crew were beaten and tortured and its captain 'confessed' to spying after North Koreans said they would execute his men in front of him - but they still showed defiance to their captors

. Now the vessel is used by the North Koreans as a 'museum' of anti-American sentiment in their capital, Pyongyang

*By Louise Boyle For Dailymail.com*

Kim Jong-Un is holding 'captive' a U.S. Navy vessel - almost 50 years since it was seized by his grandfather's Communist regime, precipitating a crisis with echoes of the current stand-off between Donald Trump and North Korea.

The USS Pueblo and its crew were captured by North Korea in 1968 and it is the only U.S. navy vessel still in active commission that is officially listed as 'captive'.

Now it is more than just a captive vessel - it is also being used by Kim's own regime as a 'museum' of anti-American propaganda on Potong River in the nation's show-case capital, Pyongyang.

The U.S.-North Korea impasse, which has simmered since the end of the Korean War in 1953, has grown more tense this month over fears that the North's nuclear weapons program is nearing the ability to target the U.S. mainland.

Pyongyang tested two intercontinental ballistic missiles last month and on Tuesday Kim announced he was standing back from his threat of an imminent attack on Guam - but the official state news agency said: 'He said that if the Yankees persist in their extremely dangerous reckless actions on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity, testing the self-restraint of the DPRK, the latter will make an important decision as it already declared.'

But in 1968, it came as close to boiling point as any time since the armistice which ended the war, in a stand-off which was known as the 'Pueblo Crisis', but which has received little attention thanks to an accident of timing.



The ship was seized in 1968 just a week before one of the largest

## counting, cont'd...

military actions of the Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive.

The Korean Peninsula had been divided by the Soviet Union and the U.S. into independent North and South at the end of WWII.

The North Korean Army, supported by the Soviets, invaded South Korea in June 1950. The U.S. stepped in to defend South Korea in a 'police action' and the conflict escalated as China and the Soviet Union became involved. The ultimate death toll is estimated at 2.5 million, the vast majority civilian.

An armistice was signed in 1953 to suspend combat and exchange prisoners of war but it was not a permanent peace treaty.

Nor did the agreement curb North Korea's aggression under the leadership of Kim Il-Sung, the grandfather of the current dictator, Kim Jong-Un. He turned to random acts of terrorism instead of all-out war.

These acts included the hijacking of a South Korean airliner while on approach to a Seoul airport by agents from the North in February 1958. The passengers and crew were released a month later.

On January 22, 1968, North Korean agents attempted to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee.

That set off a chain of events - and the following day, the USS Pueblo, which was not aware of the assassination attempt, was intercepted by North Korea.



It was gathering signals intelligence on North Korea, but also looking for what Soviet submarines

were up to in international waters nearby.

The Communists claimed

the Americans had sailed into their territorial waters - and attacked with submarine chasers, torpedo boats and two MiG-21 fighter jets. One sub-chaser opened fire on the U.S. ship, killing Fireman Duane Hodges.

The U.S. Navy was adamant that the Pueblo, a Banner-class ship which had been attached to Navy intelligence for spying purposes, was in international waters, but, under threat and virtually unarmed compared to the forces she faced, the Pueblo surrendered, giving its crew time to attempt to destroy some of the large volumes of sensitive information on board.

Its captain, Lloyd Bucher, was ordered to shore by the North Koreans and the boat was seized in the port city of Wonsan, where the crew were tied up, blindfolded and beaten.

In Washington D.C., President Lyndon Johnson's White House and prominent members of Congress were at odds on what to do next.



The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Democrat Mendel Rivers, suggested that President Johnson threaten North Korea with nuclear attack if they did not return the boat. Others cautioned against aggravating the situation, fearing the Pueblo crew would be killed by the reclusive regime.

Johnson decided to damp down the crisis, and it was largely overshadowed by the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, which unfolded at the same time as negotiations over the Pueblo's crew.



North Korea released propaganda photographs and films of their American prisoners but the men undermined their captors by flicking 'the middle finger' - and then the servicemen were transported to prisoner-of-war camps where they were starved and tortured.

The crew was released 23 December, 1968. The USS Pueblo remains in North Korea. It is the only ship of the U.S. Navy still on the commissioned roster currently being held captive.

# contributions

## GENERAL FUND



Please send donations to:  
National Headquarters, PO Box  
3444, Arlington, TX 76007-3444

Checks must be made payable to  
AXPOW or American Ex-Prisoners  
of War.

Garden State #1, New Jersey  
In memory of Clara Poore, by  
Camille Page  
In memory of Isadore Willinger,  
by Shirley Bramhall  
In memory of Lt Melvin Everding,  
by Theodore Blausen Sr  
In memory of PNC Maurice Sharp,  
by Bonnie Sharp  
In memory of PNC Maurice Sharp,  
by the Ronald Irvin Family  
In memory of my father and  
mother, Truett & Mary Ford, by  
Gretchen Smith  
In memory of Ron Lissner, by  
Linda Adquazzino  
In memory of Walter P Thomas,  
by Paula & Don Clark  
In memory of Walter P Thomas,  
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In memory of Josephine Boldt, by  
George W Boldt

*Thank you!*

*for the generous donation  
from Garden State Chapter #1  
Commander Bob Levine*

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## The Meaningful Gift

A number of years ago, one of our members made the decision to establish a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He felt strongly that he truly cared about the future of AXPOW and wanted to leave a legacy to us. He and his wife are now gone, but their generous gift enabled them to demonstrate in a very meaningful way their commitment to the organization. Most recently, Garden State Chapter #1 in New Jersey made a most generous donation in honor of the chapter members and commander Bob Levine. A one-time scholarship to Andersonville and support for the Bulletin became the beneficiaries of that generosity.

You, too can take action today to help ensure that the American Ex-Prisoners of War is there for returning POWs, their families and their dependents through your will or living trust. This gift can be funded with cash or securities, mutual funds or other investments that are not serving your current needs. This special gift will benefit future generations as well as we transition to a legacy organization.

It's very simple to make a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. Simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner and they can add the following to your will or living trust:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the American Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 3444, Arlington, TX 76007-3444, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_(named investment) or \_\_\_\_\_percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate."

Your generous support of our programs over the years has made a tremendous difference to ex-POWs and their families. I hope you will seriously consider whether a final gift to AXPOW will be the right option for you and your family.

Please take a few minutes of your time to help. And feel free to contact CFO Marsha Coke at 817-649-2979/axpow76010@yahoo.com or CEO David Eberly at (757) 508-8453 /eberlydsl@verizon.net

Thank you!

---

Ex-POW Bulletin

Jan-Mar 2018

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# new members



National Headquarters  
PO Box 3444  
Arlington, TX 76007-3444  
(817) 649-2979

request for  
membership application  
American Ex-Prisoners  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Membership is open to US  
Military and Civilians captured  
because of their US citizenship  
and their families.

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e-mail: HQ@axpow.org



WELCOME!

Cynthia Hall  
William Hall  
Sanford NC 27330  
Daughter of Donald  
Sjaardema, ETO



## Prisoner of War Certificate of Captivity

Name  
Serial Number  
Branch of Service  
Unit when captured  
Prisoner of War #  
Camp names & locations

American Ex-Prisoners of War  
Arlington, Texas

## Certificate of Captivity

Suitable for framing, this  
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printed on 8½" x 11" quality  
paper, proudly displays your  
history as a prisoner of war.  
Each certificate background  
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please order from National  
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can place your order in the  
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need your name, service  
number, branch of service,  
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number (if known), camp  
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can call 817-649-2979 or  
email:  
axpow76010@yahoo.com.

You may include a picture  
with your order.



# taps



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

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BAIRD, Ralph E., of Woodward County, OK died June 11, 2016. He was 94. During WWII, he served in the AAC, flying out of England. His plane was shot down and he was held 3 years in German POW camps. He was a member of the Panhandle Chapter, AXPOW. Ralph leaves 2 daughters, 1 son, 8 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren and their families, and a large extended family.

BERNINGHAUS, Delbert Herman, of Emmetsburg, IA passed away Nov. 3, 2014 at the age of 91. He was captured while serving with the USA during the Battle of the Bulge and held until liberation. Survivors include 3 daughters, 1 son, 16 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren and their families and many other relatives and friends.

BOLDT, Josephine, of Pierre, SD (formerly of Isabel) died Sept. 24, 2017. She was 89. Josephine was a life member of AXPOW; she enjoyed reading, traveling, and sewing. She leaves her husband of 69+ years, George, 1 son, 3 granddaughters, 1 great-grandson, 1 sister and numerous nieces and nephews.

COULTER, Delbert Byrd, of Oklahoma City, OK, 95, passed away Oct. 26, 2017. He served with the 448<sup>th</sup> BG during WWII; his plane was shot down, he was captured and held 14 months until liberation. He was a life member of AXPOW. Delbert's surviving relatives include Myra, his beloved wife of 65 years, 1 son, 1 daughter and their families, nieces, nephews and a host of friends.

COX, Jamie Todd, 52, died September 13, 2017, in Largo, FL. She was the NOK of Homer E. Still Jr.,

who served as a B24 pilot. He was shot down over Germany and held as a POW by the Germans for 8 months. Jamie is survived by her mother Ann Old Still, her father J. Larry Todd, stepmother, brother and step-brothers, and a large extended family. She was a very active member of the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter, American Ex-Prisoners of War and will be missed.

CRANMAN, Herman Lewis, of Savannah, GA passed away Apr. 2, 2017. He was 93. Serving with the 15<sup>th</sup> AF, he was shot down of Hungary and held captive until liberation. Surviving are his wife of 72 years, Helen, 1 daughter, 2 sons, 10 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and their families. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend.

DONOHUE, Jack M., 94, of Spokane, WA died Aug. 6, 2017. He was captured soon after Pearl Harbor while serving with the 21<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Squadron. He survived the Bataan Death March, Camp O'Donnel, Cabanatuan, Lumban, Davao Penal Colony and the Lasang airfield. He escaped when the Shinyo Maru was sunk and he was eventually evacuated by the submarine USS Narwhal. He leaves one grandson and one son-in-law, both of Alaska.

DUNLAVY, Betty, life member of Fresno Chapter #1 AXPOW, passed away August 26, 2017 at the age of 93. Betty and her late husband, Harry, were very involved in the chapter as Commander and Adjutant for many years enabling

many of our members to receive their VA benefits. Betty retired after 30 years of service, her last being an integral part of our local VA Hospital in Fresno. Betty will be remembered as a lady with strong work ethics and a real love for God and country. Surviving are 2 daughters and spouses, 4 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren and a host of friends.

DYER, Carl S., 93, of Oglesby and formerly of Tonica, IL died Nov. 9, 2017. He served with the U.S. Army. He was a POW in Japan for 3½ years. He was a member of AXPOW and ADBC Memorial Society. Carl is survived by 1 son, 9 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandson and their families.

FERGON, Edgar P., of Bermuda Dunes, CA passed away Aug. 11, 2017 at the age of 95. During WWII, he served in the AAC; he was shot down, captured and held in Stalag Luft III. Edgar leaves his wife of 71 years, Joann, 6 children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

GROTZ, Walter O. 92, Delano, MN died May 14, 2017. He was captured while serving in the 8<sup>th</sup> AF, 445<sup>th</sup> BG, 703<sup>rd</sup> BS and was held in Stalag Luft IV. Walter was a member of the Agua Fria Chapter of Sun City Arizona. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mary, 4 children, 6 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

JOHNSON, Joseph Quitman Jr., Sun City West, AZ passed away June 24, 2017. He was 91. Joe was a member of the Agua Fria Chapter, Sun City, AZ and the author of the book "Baby of Bataan". He was assigned to the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regi-

## taps, cont'd...

ment and sent to Manila, Philippines where he was taken POW.

KREBS, John Alden, 97, of Austin, TX (formerly of Waco) died Sept. 6, 2017. He was preceded in death by his wife of 68 yrs, Irma and one daughter. Survivors include 2 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. John joined the US Army during WWII. He was sent to the Philippines where he was captured by the Japanese on Corregidor and was a POW in Manchuria for 3 years. He was active AXPOW on a local, state and national level.

KUCHINOS, Walter, 95, of Wescosville, PA passed away September 9, 2017. He was the husband of Tessie (Mazur) Kuchinos, with whom he shared 70 years of marriage. Walter served the US Army Air Corps during WW II and was a prisoner of War in Poland and Germany. He was a member of the Lehigh Valley Chapter, AXPOW. Surviving are 1 son, 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren and their families. He was the last of eight brothers.

LAUX, Joseph J. Sr., of Sun City West, AZ passed away August 8, 2017. He served as Machine Gun Squad Leader, European Theater Operations, Co. L, 423<sup>rd</sup> Inf., 106<sup>th</sup> Div., Platoon 2A. After his capture, he was taken to Stalag 2A. Joseph was a member of the Agua Fria Chapter, AXPOW. He leaves 3 children, 7 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

MOENING, Charles B. "Flash", of Elida, OH died Sept. 19, 2017. He was 95. He was working as a civilian contractor for the Morrison - Knudsen Corporation on Wake Island and was captured on December 23, 1941. He was released on August 15, 1945 after 44 months of captivity. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Patricia,

2 sons, 2 daughters, 14 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, 1 sister and their families.

NELSON, Russell K., of Elgin, IL passed away Sept. 30, 2017 at the age of 89. He was captured in Korea while serving in the Army. Russell was a life member of AXPOW. He leaves two sons, three grandchildren and one sister-in-law.

PLUME, Henry Horace died August 28, 2017 at the age of 97. "Hank", as he was known to his friends, was captured while serving in the 8<sup>th</sup> AF, with the 390<sup>th</sup> BG, flying out of England. He was shot down, captured and held in Luft 1, Barth. Hank considered his life to have been richly blessed by his wife and life-mate, Kay, his children and their spouses, his grandchildren, his parents and siblings, and his many, many, friends.

RAMIREZ, Francisco "Frankie" Angeles, 96, a long-time resident of Killeen TX died November 8, 2017. A native of Corregidor, Philippine Islands, he was a member of the 91<sup>st</sup> CA, Philippine Scouts. He was captured on Corregidor and held until liberation. Frankie was a life member of AXPOW and the Tex Chapter #1, the Philippine Scout Heritage Society and the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. He is preceded in death by his first wife, Hisako "Sally", and 1 son. He is survived by his wife, Christa, 2 daughters, 1 son, 1 step-son, 5 grandsons and their families.

REICHLE, William J. died August 13, 2017. During WWII, he joined the US Army Air Corps, serving as a B24 bombardier/navigator. He was shot down over Austria in 1944 and served 15 months as a German POW. He is survived by 1 daughter and 2 sons. He was a

loyal member of the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter, AXPOW.

RUDLOFF, George L. Sr., of Wilmington, DE passed away July 10, 2017. He was captured after his plane was shot down over Schweinfurt, Germany in 1944 while serving with the 8<sup>th</sup> AF, 95<sup>th</sup> BG, 334<sup>th</sup> BS. Rudy is survived by his wife of 72 years, Ruth, 5 children, 12 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

SEDORY, Philip A., 95, of Peoria, Arizona passed away September 24, 2017. He served in the US Army, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. and was taken POW in Italy and held until liberation. He is survived by a daughter and four grandchildren. Philip was a member of the Agua Fria Chapter, Sun City, AZ.

SEELEY, Vergie L., of Red Bank, TN died Sept. 1, 2017. She was 92 and the wife of Ex-POW Jesse (AAC, then Air Force). As a military wife, she and Jesse lived all over the world, but she always considered Red Bank home. Survivors include her husband of 74 years, two sons and their families. Vergie will be greatly missed.

SHEEHAN, George F., of Bay Shore, LI, passed away Sept. 17, 2017. During World War II, he served as a Bombardier-Navigator in the Army Air Corps, 356<sup>th</sup> BG. He flew over 35 combat missions before being shot down over Germany, taken prisoner and held in Stalag Luft I, Barth until liberation. George taught his family to follow his motto of "faith, family, country". He was the beloved husband of the late Margo Sheehan; devoted father two daughters and one son (son George predeceased him); cherished grandfather of eleven, great-grandfather of eight and a loving extended family.

STAPLETON, Fannie 'Frances', San Antonio, TX, widow of deceased Ex-POW Edward B. (WWII, 28<sup>th</sup> BS, Clark AB, PI) passed away October 11, 2017, at the age of 93.

She and Edward were life members of AXPOW Chapter #1 in San Antonio. Frances had a full life and was loved by all who knew her. She is survived by a daughter and son, and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

STULTZ, Arlene P, 96, of Hialeah, FL died Sept. 13, 2017. She was a life member of AXPOW and an active member of the Gold Coast Chapter. Arlene was part of the group in 1994 to visit Luft IV in Poland for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary remembrance. She leaves her husband of 72 years, Ex-POW Jerry, 2 daughters and 1 son and their families.

TWARDZIK, Raymond J, 93, of Bradenton FL passed away August 12, 2017. Ray served with the 106<sup>th</sup> Div Sig. Co. He was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and held in Stalag IVB, IIIB and IIIA until liberated. He was a past Commander of the Manasota Chapter and member of AXPOW. Preceded in death by one daughter, he leaves his beloved wife of more than 67 years, Isabel, three daughters and 2 grandchildren and their families. He will be missed.

VanDUZER, Janet, widow of Ex-POW Ray, died November 18, 2017, in Largo Florida. Ray served in the 28<sup>th</sup> Div., 112<sup>th</sup> Reg., 3<sup>rd</sup> Medical Battalion. He was captured and held in Camps XIIA, IIIB, XIA.

He served as Florida State Commander. Ray and Janet were long-time members of the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter. Janet is survived by two daughters and a son.

WILSON, Patricia C., of Juneau, AK (daughter of Ex-POW Jack Donohoe) passed away May 20, 2017. She was 68. Patricia leaves her husband, James and one son.

ZABKER, Edward F., of Fort Myers, FL died Oct. 31, 2017 at the age of 93. Ed served in WWII with the 106<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. in the Battle of the Bulge. He was captured and held until liberation. Survivors include his wife, Margaret, 1 son, 1 daughter, 2 sisters, 2 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

## chaplain



Benny  
Rayborn

There is a story told of a prison in the "Far North" of Canada. One notable thing about this prison is that no one escaped from the prison. The incoming prisoners were showed the three foot thick walls and most if not all thought it was impossible to dig through that much concrete. No one tried. Eventually the prison closed and the government sold the property. The new owner dismantled the prison buildings and discovered that the massive three foot thick

walls were actually paper mache. Paper, water and glue. The prisoners could have pushed their way through the walls at any time but none tried due to their ignorance.

Ignorance is defined as a lack of knowledge or wisdom combined with a lack of motivation. Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."

Many people say they believe in God but few actually read the Scriptures to learn about God. Unfortunately this means that many people never learn what God expects from His creation, that's you and me. It appears they make a decision to reject God. They never learn the way to God and follow instead their whims and the teachings of other people.

Before we learn about God we must be motivated. We must have a desire to learn. A "Want to" to learn. With out the motivation we often will read a chapter or two and never pick up the book again. By not knowing what God wants we are lead into sin which could be defined as a crime against God. An example of that is Numbers 22: 34 where Balaam tells "the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not..." Balaam did not know.

I close with this prayer: "Lord, grant to each of my readers the desire and motivation to learn more about you so that they will not sin and that they learn the way to you. In our Savior's Name, Amen.

**Benny**







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## AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR VOLUNTARY FUNDING PROGRAM

The AXPOW Voluntary Giving Program parallels that of other VSOs, whereby the entire membership, including life members, is given the opportunity to contribute to the operation of our organization, based on ability and willingness to contribute.

All contributions are to be sent directly to National Headquarters to be used for the operation of the organization. A complete accounting of contributors will appear in the Bulletin each issue.

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Ex-POW Bulletin

Jan-Mar 2018

# Veterans Day 2017



**VETERANS DAY**  
 THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
 IS ENSHRINED FOREVER  
**November 11, 2017**

*"To care for him who shall have borne the battle..."*  
 ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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**35<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL  
 READING OF THE NAMES**

The Reading of the Names will take place at The Hall for 48 hours over a four day period.

Volunteers will read names for approximately eight hours from 4 p.m. on November 7 to 11 a.m. on November 8. Participants will then read the names for 18 hours daily from 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. on November 8, 9, and 10. If you would like to know the scheduled reading time of a particular name, please visit our online at <http://www.VA.org/ROTN>

The following are approximations of when names will be read according to date of casualty:

Year	11-07	11-08
Warfare, November 07	11:00 AM	11:00 AM
Warfare, November 07	11:00 AM	11:00 AM
Warfare, November 07	11:00 AM	11:00 AM
Warfare, November 07	11:00 AM	11:00 AM





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