



Veterans Day Special Recognition

By Jayme Sato

Veterans Day was celebrated on Tues., Nov. 11 at the Memorial Plaza at Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery (HSVC).

This Veterans Day was a special one. There were multiple presentations that were

vice yard, a road, landscaping, a memorial walk, an assembly area, a committal shelter, restrooms and supporting infrastructure to include landscaping and irrigation. The grant also includes design costs and equipment.



Dir. of the National Cemetery Administration Steve L. Muro, Dir. Punchbowl Cemetery Gene Castagnetti, Attorney General Mark Bennett, Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee and Dir. Mark Moses

not present at last year's Veterans Day ceremony.

During the ceremony there was a check presentation for the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery (WHVC) in Kona. The Dept. of Veterans Affairs approved a grant for \$2,755,694 million that the Office of Veterans Services (OVS) requested for the expansion and improvement of the WHVC in Kailua-Kona. The grant will provide 100 percent of the funding for the construction of in-ground cremation gravesites, columbaria, a storage facility with a fenced ser-

Schlemmer served in WWII as a U.S. Army paratrooper and participated in the Normandy Invasion and subsequent actions through the liberation march across Europe. He has been a VA Volunteer since 2002.

Schlemmer was recently recognized for over 2500 hours of volunteer work service and is a finalist for the 2008 Governor's Volunteer Recognition of the Year Award. In Aug. 2008 he moved his volunteer work to the HSVC. We thank Zane for his community service.

The construction is scheduled to begin in Jan. and we expect completion of this expansion by Veterans Day 2009.

Our OVS Dir. presented a certificate of appreciation to D. Zane Schlemmer at the end of the veteran's day ceremony.



OVS presents a Certificate of Appreciation to D. Zane Schlemmer for his community service.

Photos by Jayme Sato

Facts about the New Montgomery GI Bill effective Aug. 1, 2009

By Staff Sgt. JG Buzanowski
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- Dept. of Defense and Veterans Affairs officials are working out the details of a new education benefit recently approved by Congress that goes into effect Aug. 1, 2009.

"The absolute most important part of the new G.I Bill is that

none of it takes effect until next year," said Rita Hughson, the chief of education and training at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C. "No one should make any definite plans until the details are worked out."

The new education bill, commonly called the Post-9/11 G.I Bill, will govern payment and reimbursement plans for veterans and servicemembers who seek to further their education.

The new plan will be open to most servicemembers who served on active duty after Sept. 11, 2001. This includes people who have not been eligible for the Montgomery G.I. Bill, such as Air Force Academy

or ROTC graduates, those who declined to participate in the program, and those whose service started before it went into effect in 1985, she said.

According to Ms. Hughson, the implementation of particular benefits and how they will apply to former and current servicemembers have yet to be established. There are, however, a few facts that are known since the bill was signed into law:

TUITION -- The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will cover tuition with payments sent directly to the school. The formula for determining the amount of tuition and fees paid will be based on the highest cost of a state-supported bachelor's degree program. The tuition amount will be paid directly to the college.

HOUSING -- A housing

allowance will be made available to prior servicemembers who attend as civilian full-time students. The rate will be that of a staff sergeant with dependents.

BOOKS & SUPPLIES -- A maximum of \$1,000 per year will be allotted to the member to cover the costs of books and supplies needed for classes. The stipend will be divided by terms, so if someone attends a two-term school, the allot-

ment will be \$500 per semester, whereas the student will receive \$333 if they attend a three-semester school.

TUTORING -- \$100 a month for 12 months will be available for tutor programs should the servicemember require extra help outside of his or her studies.

For more information about the NEW GI BILL, go to www.va.gov

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Director's Message

**Maj. (Ret.) Mark S. Moses, U.S. Marine Corps
Director, State Office of Veterans Services**

Aloha to all of you, my friends and colleagues:

The Office of Veterans' Services (OVS) has recently had several personnel changes. Nicole Wong our Administrative Services Assistant, provided fiscal, budget, and personnel support to me and to the entire OVS statewide. We will greatly miss her. I wish to publicly welcome our new Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery (HSVC) Assistant Operations Manager, Margaret Okabayashi, as well as celebrate the promotion of HSVC's Terry Valente to Secretary from Clerk where she has served all of us very well for the past fifteen years.

OVS continues to provide Polyguard Burial vaults for all casket burials of Retirees, Veterans, Active Duty members, and dependents in veteran cemeteries statewide. These vaults help stabilize the grounds and reduce both the number and severity of settling gravesites so cemetery groundskeepers can devote more efforts to cemetery beautification.

Capitol Improvement Projects (CIP):
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West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery (WHVC):

OVS received VA grant approval based on our request and plans for the WHVC Phase IIC. The award of \$2,755,694 includes 100 percent funding for the construction of in-ground cremation gravesites, columbaria, a storage facility with a fenced service yard, a road, landscaping, a memorial walk, an assembly area, a committal shelter, restrooms and supporting infrastructure to include utilities, landscaping and irrigation. The grant also includes design costs and equipment to operate the cemetery.

Earlier we received a VA grant for \$435,000 for the WHVC Phase IIB expansion. That project was completed at the end of Mar., adding 260 direct burial plots, which more than doubled the size of the cemetery existing before.

Other Neighbor Island Cemeteries:

As I previously reported to you, during earlier Neighbor Island cemetery trips I determined that certain cemeteries were in need of repair or capitol improvements. Recall, that Neighbor Island cemetery operations, repair and maintenance is the responsibility of the respective counties, and OVS has coordinated with the Mayors and

Councils concerning repairs, and offered suggestions for state Capitol Improvement Projects (CIP) that may be eligible for federal reimbursements. Based on the assessments of these cemeteries I have submitted the following projects to the VA for pre-approval, and will submit them to the Legislature for funding:

East Hawaii Veterans Cemetery I is projected to have nine columbaria, which will provide 576 niches. Kauai Veterans Cemetery needs to have three columbaria, which will provide 192 niches. Other Kauai projects include a maintenance facility, entry gates, highway direction signs, and 5.1 acres additional land acquisition for Phase II expansion. For the Maui Veterans Cemetery, I am working to acquire 11 acres of land for Phase II expansion. Molokai and Lanai Veterans Cemeteries each need one columbarium to add 64 niches for cemetery.

Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery (HSVC):

Funded previously, OVS has begun a CIP project at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery (HSVC) to stabilize the slope behind the Memorial Plaza. The project is scheduled to be completed later this year, and may be eligible for VA reimbursement.

Another funded HSVC Capitol Improvement project, now in the consultant phase, is underway to install an additional 2036 niches to meet need. This project is in consonance with the original cemetery master plan.

OVS has direct responsibility for operations, maintenance, and repair of the HSVC.

OVS continues to purchase screened fill dirt to complete burials in the cemetery. This along with the burial vaults and an improved burial process will help to decrease the number and the severity of settling gravesites.

In Mar. 2008, HSVC started to hydro-mulch gravesites using "strawnet pellets" where no sod was available. The strawnet pellets allowed us to seed individual sites by hand instead of using the bulky hydro-mulching machine, which is still used to

seed large areas.

This summer, we prepared to advertise for a new HSVC burial contract by developing improved specifications and procedures for use at the cemetery.

Conditions included new equipment specifications to minimize damage - Excavators/backhoes not to exceed 18,000 lbs, mini excavator not to exceed 6500 lbs, and backhoe not to exceed 5500 lbs - previous backhoe weighed 30,000 lbs.

While backfilling plots, we specified soil tamping at each two feet with 4,500 lbs impact force or greater to minimize settling - previously tamping was about each 6 feet, with 2000 lbs impact force, and the soil used must be screened top soil instead of re-using excavated red clay.

Finally, we require that sod after being carefully removed, be replanted whenever possible.

We went to bid and secured the services of a new burial contractor possessing commercial excavating experience using the specified equipment. He demonstrated an understanding of the precision required for location and depth of plot preparation, showed an appreciation for the necessity to

minimize collateral damage to adjacent sites and access routes, and appears capable of adhering to our new procedures. Additionally, he is able to identify fill suitable for reuse to reduce cost.

As I reported in the last Hawaii Veteran, we began minor repair and maintenance projects at HSVC in

Jun. to address age deterioration of the Admin. Building and all Plaza areas. We completed repainting the Admin. Building, repaired and waterproofed the roof, replaced the downspouts, and repaired the glass sliding doors. We also finished resurveying three sections where survey points had been buried over-time with sediment from the slope. These sections are now available, increasing cemetery usable area. In addition, we repaired light fixtures throughout the cemetery, and re-leveled and repaired walkways at the Flag Plaza caused by an earthquake a few years ago.

We are waiting for parts to be manufactured to repair mechanisms and replace pulleys in all 4 flag poles.

Finally, our family at OVS would like to wish you and your family a Happy Holiday and a Wonderful New Year!



On Veterans Day, a check was presented to OVS for over \$2.7 million for new construction at the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery in Kona.

Behind Gene Castagnetti, Honorable John M. Mizuno State Rep. and Mark Moses is the slope stabilization and the newly planted golden glories.

Photo by Jayme Sato

HSVC Community Service by Active Duty



Navy Seal Team and their families cleaning and raising headstones.

Story and Photos By Willie Hirokane

"Community service at Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery (HSVC) by Active Duty Forces makes a difference." The Navy Seal Team rehabilitated 160 graves in Oct. 2008. I can't say enough about how hard they worked. The volunteers worked from 9 to 2 pm without a break in the pouring rain. They raised, leveled and cleaned the markers, and raised the vases. Twenty volunteers came from several different units and stated that they enjoyed doing this as a community service project. The 3rd Marine Regiment also comes once a month to clean the markers.

News from Kauai

Kaua'i remembers the POW's/MIA's

In two separate ceremonies, Kaua'i remembered and paid tribute to those who were unfortunately captured or never returned home from a war. The events were spear headed by Tony Elliot from the state Office of Veterans Services (OVS).

Veterans gathered in the council chambers on Wed., Sept. 17. President Bush signed on this date, a proclamation declaring Fri., Sept. 19th as the official National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The observance is one of six days throughout the year that the Congress has mandated the flying of the POW/MIA flag. An abbreviated ceremony was held in the office of Mayor Bill "Kaipo" Asing on Fri., Sept. 19.

In the ceremony within the council chambers, special emphasis was given to recognize the five missing Kaua'i soldiers who did not return from the Korean conflict. They are SGT Jose Balalong, SGT Sidney Kauai, CPL Mitsuyoshi Ishida, CPL Muneo Yaka and PFC Takeshi Sasaki. The numbers include 4,452 from WWI; 78,773 from War II; 8,056 from the Korean War; and 1,757 from South-east Asia.

A special certificate initiated by Mel Rapozo and Shaylene Iseri-Carvalho, was signed by all council members and read at the ceremony. The certificate read in part "We are grateful to all who served, and on National POW/MIA Recognition Day,

we give special honor to the extraordinary patriots who have been prisoners of war and to those who are still missing in action".

Tony Elliot from OVS introduced family members of PFC Sasaki who were present in the council chambers. They included Sasaki's sister, Akiyo Matsuyama and his brother, Hideo Sasaki. Elliot also introduced an exceptional group of veterans, the Veterans Honor Guard, who were there voluntarily upon request of the family to provide honors at a veteran's funeral.

He was equally proud to introduce a very special group, the Kaua'i Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association led by its Commander, Royce Ebesu.

Elliot explained that each year, the defense POW/MIA personnel office in Washington selects one entry from the hundreds of photos, designs and drawings from around the globe to be placed on its annual Recognition poster. After selection, the poster is distributed

throughout the nation for prominent display. A photograph depicting the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl was selected. This is also the final resting place for 2,941 unidentified veterans.

Inscribed across the upper portion of this year's poster are the words "In these gardens are recorded the names



In the Mayor's office. Front: Aida Cruz, Richard Kashiwabara, Mayor Bill Asing and Akiyo Matsuyama. Back: Tony Elliot, Kelly Braun, Johnny Rabasa, Larry Kashiwabara

of Americans who gave their lives in the service of their country – and whose earthly resting place is known only to God".

A large replica framed in a glass enclosure was presented to the council. Council member Kouchi requested recommendations from the veterans as to where it can best be mounted for view by the public. A similar one was presented to Mayor Asing.

A special table to honor the military members who are missing was prepared in the hallway adjacent to the door leading to the council chambers. Aida Cruz, wife of Vietnam veteran Frank Cruz (deceased) explained the uniqueness of the setting. It will remain outside the chambers for a few days.

The display symbolizes that members of those who bear arms are missing from their midst. They are commonly called POW's or MIA's, but the veterans remember them as "Brothers". A brief description at the table explains the significance of the settings.

On this special day, President Bush calls upon the people of our nation to join him "in honoring and remembering all former American prisoners of war and those missing in action for their valiant service to our nation."



Council member Mel Rapozo presents POW/MIA certificate to Bill Honjiyo, President of the Kauai Veterans Council. Office of Veterans Services Tony Elliot (center)



Tony Elliot with poster and Korean War veterans in the background.

Photos by Johnny Rabasa

Information

Korean War Veterans, would you like to revisit Korea?

The Hawaii Coordinator of the Korea Revisit Program is compiling a list of Korean War Veterans for the 2009 ROK-sponsored revisit to the Republic of Korea. If you are a Korean War Veteran or a widow/widower of a Korean War Veteran who served in Korea between June 25, 1950, and October 15, 1954, you may be eligible to participate in this program. Please contact: Harrison Lee, 808-235-5713, FAX 808-247-2101, or email: magnum44@hawaii.rr.com

Here's to the Heroes Salute

Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks are offering complimentary admission for active duty military representing all five service branches, active members of a reserve or National Guard unit, and/or up to three direct dependents. The offer is valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one of the following Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks: **SeaWorld** Orlando, San Diego, or San Antonio, **Busch Gardens** Tampa Bay or Williamsburg, **Sesame Place**, **Adventure Island** and **Water Country USA**.

For specific information on how to apply for the complimentary tickets, please go to: <http://www.herosalute.com>

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the Hawaii Veteran newsletter please mail your address to OVS at 459 Patterson Rd., E-Wing, Room 1-A103, Honolulu, HI 96819-1522 or email ovs@ovs.hawaii.gov. For any change of address please include both old address and new address.



Hawaii Veteran

State of Hawaii Department of Defense

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NEW GI BILL continued from page 1

AVAILABILITY -- Service members can take advantage of the program up to 15 years after they are honorably discharged or retire from the service.

CERTIFICATION -- An extra \$2,000 is available to pay for one license or certification test as approved by the VA.

Besides the listed benefits, a portion of the tuition stipend, as well as the tutoring allowance, may be available for servicemembers to transfer to family members. Many of the details for this, however, are still being worked out between DOD and the VA, Ms. Hughson said.

Although the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill tuition benefit will be available to most people while they are on active duty, it is actually most advantageous to use all the benefits after separating, Ms. Hughson said, "There are so many other educational programs and benefits people can take advantage of while they're on active duty, like the various free tests for college credit and tuition assistance funding," she said.

"But just like the current G.I. Bill, people will get the greatest benefit if they wait until they are no longer serving on active duty before they begin using it.

"That way they have the option to use all their G.I. Bill benefits for the longest amount of time," she added.

Once the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill becomes available Aug. 1, 2009, Ms. Hughson expects people who have already elected to participate in the Montgomery Bill program will have the option to use the new plan, if they wish; however, it may be in a member's best interest to stick with the Montgomery Bill for certain distance-learning programs or if they would prefer money be sent directly to them, Ms. Hughson said.

"Whatever they decide to do, people should do as much research as they can as details become available," she said. "As is normally the case with legislation, details remain sketchy until implementation guidance is made public, and since nothing goes into effect until Aug. of 2009, people shouldn't make any sort of determination until then."

For more information, visit the educational office on base or the VA Web site <http://www.va.gov/>

Motor Vehicle Tax Exemption effective Oct. 1, 2008

The new CS-L-50A forms, motor vehicle weight tax exemption for National Guard and Reserves, will be distributed by the National Guard Headquarters.

This form will be completed by the reservist and certified by his unit commander or authorized representative. The form is blue in color and 8.5" x 11" so there is no mistaking of the CS-L-50A and CS-L-50 forms. The National Guard Headquarters will accept only the original form that Motor Vehicle Control Section provided to them for distribution and no duplication of the form will be authorized. Similar to the current CS-L-50, the form is required each time an exemption is being requested. Exempt code: N will automatically exempt the motor vehicle weight taxes for the transaction being processed.

This same form will be required, as an attachment to the refund application form, if the reservist applies for a refund of motor vehicle weight taxes that had been paid before Oct. 1, 2008. The reservist will be entitled to a refund for the full remaining months

of the vehicle's registration period beginning Oct. 1, 2008 to the end of the registration period that was previously paid.

A vehicle that is leased to the qualified reservists as evidenced by the certificate of registration or the lease agreement qualifies for the weight tax exemption. It is possible that there may be several vehicles with this exemption at the same household - both spouses and adult child are members of good standing in the reserve. As long as the qualified member is noted as one of the registered owners, the husband, wife, and adult child are each entitled to one vehicle weight tax exemption.

We have not developed a separate form for active duty Hawaii residents assigned to a unit in the State. For active duty Hawaii residents assigned to a unit in the State, we shall accept the current CS-L-50 form indicating Hawaii as their home of residence and military organization as a unit in Hawaii; or the CS-L-50A form indicating something similar to Active Duty rather than National Guard or Reserves.

VA to Open New Leeward Oahu Outpatient Clinic

WASHINGTON - Veterans will have easier access to world-class health care under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plan to open 31 new outpatient clinics in 16 states.

"VA is committed to providing world-class health care to the men and women who have served this nation," Peake said. "These new clinics will bring VA's top-notch care closer to the veterans who have earned it."

With 153 hospitals and about 745 com-

munity-based clinics, VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country. VA's medical care budget of more than \$41 billion this year will provide health care to about 5.8 million people during nearly 600,000 hospitalizations and more than 62 million outpatient visits.

"Community-based medicine is better medicine," said Dr. Michael Kussman, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "It makes preventative care easier for patients, elps health care professionals have closer rela-

tionships with their patients and permits easier follow-ups for patients with chronic health problems."

The community-based outpatient clinics, or CBOCs, will become operational by late 2010, with some opening in 2009. Local VA officials will keep communities and their veterans informed of milestones in the creation of the new CBOCs.

VA's Proposed Sites for New Outpatient Clinics:

Hawaii - Leeward (Honolulu, 2010)

VA Reaching out with Mental Health Services

By Don Finley

San Antonio Express-News

Having promised to make care for post-traumatic stress and brain injury a priority, Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake said the VA is making a strong effort to reach out to vets - including lifting a long-time ban on paid advertising to promote its suicide prevention call center.

"We're really pushing hard at the VA to make sure we reach out," Peake said Monday at the 14th annual San Antonio Trauma Symposium at the Convention Center. "I'm actually convinced that those who need it most are the least likely to get help."

Peake, whose long Army career included a stint as head of the Army Medical Command at Fort Sam Houston, took over the embattled VA system in December.

Peake said the Bush administration is asking for a \$93.7 billion budget for the VA in 2009 and that Congress is likely to "plus that up" another \$3 billion. The VA will spend \$4 billion on mental health services, including a mental health "transformation" effort that includes hiring more psycholo-

gists and pushing mental health into the primary-care clinic setting.

"If you come into the VA and you have a mental health issue, you will be seen within 24 hours straight, and you will have (a treatment plan) within 14 days," Peake said.

Suicide rates among 18- to 29-year-old men receiving VA services were 26.94 per 100,000 population in 2005 - the most recent year complete data is available - compared with 19.35 for all U.S. men that age, Peake said. The rates for men 30 to 64 were the highest of any group at 40.66 - almost double that of the general population.

In response, the VA launched a hot line - (800) 273-TALK (8255) - staffed with mental-health professionals, added free-standing veterans centers around the country where vets and family members can receive counseling, and has researchers studying the problem. For the first time, the VA is using paid ads to promote the hot line, using ads on buses and the Metro in the Washington, D.C., area, Peake said.

In June, an e-mail from a VA psychologist in Temple to her colleagues suggested they make fewer diagnoses of post-trau-

matic stress disorder, or PTSD, in the wake of rising disability claims. Peake said at the time her remarks were inappropriate.

Peake told the audience that PTSD includes a "spectrum" of impairment that isn't well understood and noted the VA has a PTSD center trying to better understand the problem. He warned that the issue threatened to cast a shadow on all soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We've got to be careful about a mischaracterization of a generation that's the best-educated, the best-trained ... we've ever had."

Another major problem to emerge from the war is traumatic brain injury, which has many overlapping symptoms of PTSD and some common causes, Peake said.

Since April, the VA has screened 191,960 vets for brain injuries. Of more than 21,000 referred for comprehensive screening, 8,444 have been confirmed with brain injuries, 7,390 were ruled out and 5,158 are still pending.

Peake estimated that 5-10 percent of the force would be diagnosed with traumatic brain injury.