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# Veterans Day 2006 in Kaneohe

By Shelly Ichishita

The Governor's Veterans Day Ceremony at the Kaneohe State Veterans Cemetery, which has been held every year since 1992, had a few extra attendees this year in the form of a delegation from the Republic of Korea. The delegation was made up of members of the Korean American Partnership Association and People to People chapters from the Southern Korean cities of Daegu and Dong Suwon. The Korean delegation came to help honor the veterans that fought in the Korean War.

Honoring the massive number of veterans created by World War II and the Korean War was one of the reasons the 83rd Congress declared Veterans Day a legal holiday in 1954, adding the veterans from those wars to the veterans honored by Armistice Day. The Act of 1938 that established Armistice Day gave the following guidelines for the holiday: "the recurring anniversary of this date [the end of World War I] should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations." The attendees of the Governor's Veterans Day Ceremony endeavored to follow those guidelines.

The official theme of Veterans Day 2006 was, "We Love, We Honor, We Respect our veterans and the sacrifices they made for our freedom."



Shelly Ichishita photo

Two representatives of the Korean American Partnership Association make a presentation of leis at the Veterans Day ceremony.



Shelly Ichishita photo

Hibbert Manley from the 5th RCT and retired Col. Al Streck, USAF, pose together before the ceremony.

focused his comments on what OVS is doing for the veterans today. He encouraged the veterans present at the ceremony to make use of the resources offered, especially this newsletter, and to review the latest information on the Hilo veterans' home. Cruickshank concluded his remarks by saying, "the best veterans in the entire United States are veterans from here."

Office of Veterans Services Director Ed Cruickshank



Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Iha photo

Korean War veterans prepare to take part in the parade of colors.

**Editor's Note:**

Please see pg. 4 for a spread containing pictures from the ceremony taken by Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Iha and Shelly Ichishita.



## Director's Message

Col. Edward R. Cruickshank, U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Director, State Office of Veterans Services

As we go forward into 2007 it will once again be a very busy year for our office. For 2007 we have asked for an increase in our operating budget to continue to beautify our cemetery in Kaneohe.

Representative Cindy Evans is working on a legislative bill to provide casket liners for all the veterans' cemeteries statewide, and my office is in total support of this measure, I applaud her efforts. Governor Linda Lingle's administration has placed the funding for our newsletter in their budget and therefore our steadfast supporters, the Tanabes, won't have to do any testifying this year. Thanks in part to the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. James Tanabe, we were able to get the initial funding for the newsletter and we all owe them a great deal of appreciation for their efforts.

I hope all of you have read the last edition of the newsletter regarding the Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home being constructed in Hilo. Please review the last newsletter to see what the entrance requirements are, and get your name on the list for entrance, if desired. Feel free to call Dave Kowalski, the regional vice president for Avalon Health Care, Hawaii, if you have any questions. You may contact him on Oahu at 537-3371. The new administrator for our home is Neil Oyama, who will come on board in March of this year. Bed spaces at the Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home are limited because it's only a 95-bed home, so depending on your situation time may be of the essence to you.

Our Veterans Day was a great success. Retired Admiral Ronald Hays did a superb job as the master of ceremonies, and the Kamehameha

Alumni Glee Club, led by Aaron Mahi, was simply superb in the songs they sung.

Unfortunately for the Office of Veterans Services, our editor/layout artist Shelly Ichishita will be leaving us and moving on to work for State Civil Defense. This will be a real loss for us. I have thanked her for all the hard work she has done, not only getting the newsletter off the ground, but making it one of quality.

May 2007 be a great year for you and your family, and let us continue to pray for our troops in harms way, and never forget the sacrifices they continue to make for this great country.



Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Iha photo

**Conductor Aaron Mahi leads the Kamehameha Alumni Glee Club during a musical interlude at the 2006 Veterans Day ceremony.**

## Veterans Affairs news updates

### Replace lost DD 214 discharge certificates from your computer

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided a website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his or her DD-214 for employment, health care and burial benefits. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time. You can obtain a SF 180 form either online, or at the Honolulu VA Regional Office.

### Showers for homeless veterans program resumes at the Honolulu VA regional office

The homeless veteran shower program has resumed at the VA Honolulu Regional Office (E-Wing Tripler Army Medical Center) on Thursdays from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. E-Wing is located on the oceanside of the Tripler complex, Diamond Head end.

Contact Mr. Allan Kellogg ("AK") in room 1C101 on the first floor. Mr. Kellogg is available for emergencies anytime between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm, Monday thru Friday at that same location.

### VA develops website to assist surviving spouses of military members

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently activated a new website aimed directly at surviving spouses of military members who died on active duty and surviving spouses of veterans who died after serving their country.

The site, at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors>, not only has links to the VA pages describing survivor benefits but also to other government sites that may offer valuable information and assistance.

There is also a link to Frequently Asked Questions that answers most questions. For more specific questions, the site also tells how anyone can help to contact the VA directly.

For other questions and inquires visit the main VA website at <http://www.va.gov>.

### VA services available to women veterans

VA offers a full range of comprehensive medical services for women including health promotion and disease prevention, primary care, women's gender-specific health care; e.g., hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility (excluding In-vitro fertilization), acute medical/surgical, telephone triage, emergency and substance abuse treatment, mental health, domiciliary, rehabilitation and long term care.

VA researchers at many VA facilities also conduct medical research on women's health.

For more information on what is available for female veterans, call either the Honolulu VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000, or The Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center at 433-0600.

### How to replace lost service medals

An Internet search for "military medals" will generate considerable advertising links from private firms selling replica medals including miniatures. Retirees may wish to check with military exchanges or military clothing stores. Under certain circumstances official replacements for lost or damaged medals may be obtained from the government by veterans by sending a request to the appropriate branch of service.

More information and links to initiate requests are available at <http://www.va.gov/veteranspride>. Service histories are available from government archives to veterans and to their next of kin. Information about these sources and request procedures is available from the same web site listed above.



## Hawaii Veteran

State of Hawaii Department of Defense

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**Gov. Linda Lingle**  
Commander in Chief

**Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee**  
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**Col. (Ret) Edward R. Cruickshank**  
OVS Director

**Maj. Charles J. Anthony**  
Public Affairs Officer

**1st Lt. Regina Berry**  
Deputy Public Affairs Officer

**Shelly Y. Ichishita**  
Editor/Layout

**Stephen M. Lum**  
Associate Editor/Layout

[www.dod.state.hi.us/ovs](http://www.dod.state.hi.us/ovs)  
e-mail: [OVS@ovs.hawaii.gov](mailto:OVS@ovs.hawaii.gov)

459 Patterson Rd., E-Wing, Rm. 1-A103  
Honolulu, HI 96819-1522  
433-0420 (OVS), 433-0385 (OVS fax)  
733-4258 (DOD), 733-4236 (DOD fax)

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# More VA news updates

## VA will take care of veterans with Gulf War illnesses

Veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War who have disabilities from undiagnosed illnesses will continue to qualify for veterans' benefits and health care until Dec. 31, 2011.

The current policy of presuming that undiagnosed illnesses are connected to service began in 1994.

Researchers have not been able to isolate a single illness or disease as a cause, but the VA has assumed that those who served in the combat theater who have chronic disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses could receive disability benefits and be afforded other veterans' rights.

The VA has said that they are pushing for the extension to provide consistency in VA adjudication policy and preserve certain rights afforded to Persian Gulf War veterans and ensure fairness for current and future Persian Gulf War veterans. By future veterans, they are referring to people still on active duty who served in the Gulf War, who would be covered by VA benefits after separation. Research into Gulf War syndrome continues. The research is not limited to the deployments of the early 1990s but also includes veterans of current conflicts. This is an interim policy and expected to be final in late February. For more information contact the VA Honolulu Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000.

## VA creates centralized call center to assist with billing

On Mar. 8, 2006, the Department of Veterans Affairs started providing a new service to veterans. You can now call a centralized call center with any questions you have about your VA Billing Statement.

To call the center, dial the toll free number of 1-866-347-2353. The center is open Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

The call center is staffed by specially-trained VA employees at the VA Health Revenue Center in Topeka, KS.

The change was made to improve the services veterans receive and have their calls answered as quickly as possible. VA employees will use a com-

puter system to view information about a veteran's bill.

A patient's medical records and billing information will remain at the VA facility where they are receiving care. Your personal information remains secure and private. Only VA employees will have access to this information.

Because of this change, veterans may receive their VA Billing Statement in the mail at a different time of the month than when they had normally received it in the past. The change in when they receive their bill will be permanent, and is part of the process to centralize the billing call center.

These changes will help VA continue to improve the services it provides to America's veterans.

# Health News/ Miscellaneous

## VA's My HealtheVet website continues to expand

My *HealtheVet* (MHV) is a secure VA web site that provides a gateway to veteran health benefits and services. MHV is a powerful tool to help veterans better understand and manage their health. The software allows access to trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits, the Personal Health Journal, and now, online VA prescription refills. In the very near future, MHV registrants will be able to view medical appointments, copay balances, and key in portions of their VA medical records online, plus much more.

My *HealtheVet* also provides a portal to on-line electronic patient education sponsored by VA. It helps increase awareness of important health education to veterans related to disease process, symptoms and treatments. Information on these topics as well as other practical, user friendly educational materials is available for patients and staff through the MHV portal. An educated patient is more likely to participate and follow through with his/her healthcare plan.

For additional information contact the VA Medical Center at 433-7676.

## Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is treated by a variety of forms of psychotherapy and medication. Studies show that medications help ease associated symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve sleep. The most widely used drug treatments for PTSD are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as Prozac and Zoloft.

Psychotherapy that appears to be most effective are cognitive-behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, and group therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy focuses on the veteran's thoughts about the trauma. Exposure therapy involves having the patient repeatedly relive the traumatic experience(s) under controlled conditions to help him or her work through the trauma. Group therapy for war veterans may entail the discussion of the traumatic events and/

or current life with a group of people going through the same thing. Other forms of group therapy help treat certain symptoms, such as through anger management and stress management training.

Families who are experiencing difficulties may also want to get help as a unit. Families experiencing stress can benefit from couples counseling, couples communication classes, and family therapy. For more information on couples or family counseling, contact the Honolulu Vet Center at 973-8387. PTSD treatment information is also available from the Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Clinic by calling 433-0600 and ask for mental health, or by contacting the Pacific Center for PTSD located on Oahu at 566-1935.

## How to qualify for VA disability compensation for diabetes

To qualify for VA disability compensation, most veterans must have a diagnosis of diabetes and evidence that it began or was aggravated during active duty or within one year of release from duty. VA currently is paying disability compensation to more than 70,000 veterans with diabetes, many of them Vietnam veterans.

In 2001, veterans who served in Vietnam and later developed adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes became eligible for disability compensation on a presumption that the condition is connected to their military service. They do not have to present evidence that their diabetes began during or shortly after military service. This presumptive policy is an outgrowth of research into the potential effects of Agent Orange.

VA has made diabetes care a priority ever since it began treating chronic diseases on an outpatient basis several years ago. Its emphasis is: (1) patient education; (2) health care provider education and guidelines; (3) epidemiological assessment; (4) quality of care; and (5) basic science, clinician and health services research. VA is the largest integrated health care system to provide care to people with

diabetes. Nearly all veterans with diabetes are men; 2.4 percent are women. The largest group of veterans with diabetes is over 65 years of age.

More information on diabetes can be found at <http://www.va.gov/health/diabetes/default.htm>. If you need information on obtaining disability compensation for this disease, contact the Honolulu VA Regional Office at 800-827-1000.

## Obtain prescription refills and more online

Refer to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) for more information. The site has been in existence for some time and has been upgraded each year. The latest enhancements, effective Nov. 2005, include the ability for a veteran to record and track food intake by meal and day in a personal Food Journal; record and track daily activity or exercise regimen in a personal Activity Journal; and record and track Pulse Oximetry readings.

The improved website offers the ability to order prescription refills online with ease and convenience, and check on the status of refills anytime. Refills are delivered through the Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy.

Other new and improved features include the ability to access three (3) trusted sources of health information available in the Health Info section; you can record personal demographic information, military health history, treatment locations, over-the-counter medications, herbals and supplements, medical events, tests, immunizations, and allergies as part of your Personal Health Journal. A new Access Learn About feature allows you to select topics from A-Z, such as online computer training resources, and subject matter health education. You can also take advantage of an online virtual tour of the website.

To utilize the website, use the Registration Wizard to set up a new account. If you registered before Nov. 11, 2004, you will need to re-register. If you're a current user all you need to enter is your user ID and your personal password. My *HealtheVet* is another great ex-

ample of you and your VA working together for your health.

## Department of Veterans Affairs "Health Buddy" Program

The *Health Buddy* is an innovative form of telemedicine available to qualified VA patients. The device is a small telehealth appliance (5" by 9") that weighs just over one pound, and you don't have to leave home without it. It can travel with the veteran on trips and vacations as long as access to the Internet is available. It means that patients diagnosed with any of 45 disorders (including congestive heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, mental illness and hypertension) can transmit daily health status reports to their VA care coordinators. Veterans accomplish this by means of a text dialogue. By pressing one of four buttons, they answer multiple-choice questions about their breathing, weight and exercise. Since 2004, two extra ports have been provided that allow plug-in digital attachments that calculate weight, blood pressure and pulse oximetry. The data travels over the Internet to VA care coordinators, who then counsel patients on health strategies or alert them to the need for immediate medical intervention.

To be eligible for *Health Buddy* patients must have chronic ailments. They cannot be substance abusers or visually handicapped (voice text is not available yet, but is in development). Veterans or their caretakers must have the ability to work the program. Advantages are many but most important is that these devices build stronger patient/doctor/nurse relationships, and vets – especially those living on neighbor islands don't have the added stress of driving to the closest clinic or flying to Honolulu. The VA Pacific Islands Health Care System is utilizing *Health Buddies* and the program is growing. For more information on *Health Buddies* or how to qualify for one, contact the VA Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center at 433-0600.



Office of Veterans Services  
 459 Patterson Rd.  
 E-Wing, Rm. 1-A103  
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-1522