

# The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor  
Tom Applegate - Director

Fall 2007

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Fall Edition

## Indiana Highway 1 Designated as Purple Heart Memorial Highway

*The following article, entitled "Our Purple Heart Highway" appeared in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette on August 2, 2007. Pictures by SGT Michael B. Krieg.*

AUBURN – Gov. Mitch Daniels and state officials August 1st unveiled a sign naming Indiana 1 the Purple Heart Memorial Highway.

State officials chose to make the announcement at Auburn's World War II Victory Museum in front of active-duty military members and Purple Heart recipients.



*IDVA Director, Tom Applegate,  
with Purple Heart recipient,  
Joe Clock*

The idea for the highway came from Purple Heart recipient Joe Clock, who approached Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe, about the possibility in May 2006.

In February, Clock, a Vietnam veteran, was invited to the Statehouse to be part of a presentation on the idea. Clock said he was shocked how fast the wheels turned.

Although Vietnam's national highway, also numbered "1," inspired the choice of Indiana 1, "This is for all vets, not just Vietnam veterans," he said.

Daniels, on his second day in northeast Indiana, told the crowd the story of Purple Heart recipient Staff Sgt. Richard Blakley of Avon.



*Governor Daniels and Joe Clock unveil the sign that will be used to designate Indiana Highway 1 as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway. Purple Heart recipients Larry Shaw and Tibor Bierbaum (right), as well as three recent recipients from the Indiana Army National Guard (left), participated.*

On a tour of the Mideast in the spring of 2006, Daniels presented Blakley with the Purple Heart for injuries he suffered from sniper fire.

Just a few weeks later, Blakley, who had insisted on rejoining his team the afternoon after his first injury, was hit by sniper fire, this time fatally.

Daniels said Blakley's story illustrates how much Americans owe members of the military.

"We love you, and we appreciate you," he said.

He commended another Purple Heart recipient in attendance, Vietnam veteran Tibor Bierbaum of Fort Wayne.

Bierbaum, an immigrant from Hungary, served 21 years in the Army and was wounded during the Vietnam War.

"He took a bullet in the hip for a country in which he was not born, and his is not a unique case," Daniels said. "I'm always moved when I meet someone like you, sir, and I thank you again for your service to America."

*(Continued on next page)*

After the ceremony, Bierbaum said he'd seen the Purple Heart signs on highways in other states before and wondered why Indiana didn't have something similar.

Bierbaum is pleased that the road signs will be a reminder to anyone who passes them of the sacrifices Purple Heart recipients make, he said.

"Not because of me, because of all the servicemen, especially now," he said.

The Indiana Department of Transportation in the next few months will begin putting signs at county lines along the highway, which runs nearly 180 miles from Angola to Lawrenceburg near the Ohio River, said Stacie McCormick, INDOT spokeswoman.



IDVA Director, Tom Applegate was proud to stand with the Guard's recent recipients of the Purple Heart, from left, SSG Patrick Shannon, SSG Cory Bourn & CPL Jason Kokotkiewicz. They were all three riding in the same vehicle as SSG Bradley King when he was killed on April 2, 2007.

## Notes from the VA Regional Office Director's Meeting

Filling in for VA Regional Office Director, Dennis Kuewa, Assistant Director Beth McCoy conducted the August VSO meeting in the Director's conference room.

IDVA Director Tom Applegate attended and took the following notes:

Dean Slicer has replaced Tony Pedigo who recently retired. IDVA would like to congratulate Dean while,

at the same time, wish Tony good luck in his retirement.

This change of positions will have no effect on the special telephone number which has been set up for County Veterans' Service Officers.

### Claim Files

Due to recent changes to the law regarding the privacy of records, veterans are no longer authorized access to their claim file (C-file), even if they personally come to the Indianapolis VA Regional Office. They may, however, request that a copy of the C-file be made and sent to them, but even in that case, they will not receive the Social Security portion of their C-file (if those records are contained in the file).

### DD Form 214

Sometimes the veteran or the CVSO requests a copy of the DD Form 214 from the VA Regional Office. The privacy issue has become so severe that it may come to pass that the VARO will not release a DD Form 214 which contains unfavorable information which could be derogatory to the veteran. This is especially true of requests from members of the family. The new FOIA regulations are driving some of these changes.

### Notice of Disagreement

When assisting the veteran in filing a Notice of Disagreement (NOD), the CVSO should advise the veteran to be specific about which items the veteran is in disagreement with. If it is the rating, the NOD should say so. For instance, if the veteran is disagreeing with being rated as 10% disabled, but would be satisfied with a rating of 30%, the NOD should specifically state that, especially if that rating would be accepted as a full grant for that specific disability.

Likewise, the veteran should ask for a *de novo* review up front, instead of a hearing. Asking for these things specifically, from the very beginning could get the veteran the rating he or she is looking for much sooner.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Hoosier WWII Sailor Laid to Rest



WORTHINGTON — Paul Kennedy had finished a midnight-to-4 a.m. watch and was sleeping soundly when a siren summoned him onto the deck of the USS Sacramento early the morning of Dec. 7, 1941.

“I looked up and saw a Japanese plane flying about 40 feet above us and watched him launch that first torpedo into the water ... I looked across and saw three men standing on the port side of the Oklahoma, and when that torpedo hit, they were blown up into the air and then into the water.

“I’ve wondered — one of those men could have been Alfred.”

Alfred Eugene Livingston, born and raised in Worthington, was 22 years old when he went to Indianapolis to join the U.S. Navy on Jan. 13, 1941. The enlistment office already had its quota for the day; Livingston went back on the 14th. Less than a year later, he was dead, one of more than 3,000 Americans killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Livingston’s body was recovered near the remains of the USS Arizona, and was identified only by a letter and number: X-99. The Navy third-class fireman was buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii with a grave marker that read “Unknown.”

Then in June, more than 65 years later, his family got news that Livingston had been identified and that his remains would be sent back home to Worthington.

Saturday afternoon, July 21, 2007, he was buried in a family plot at the town cemetery. Hundreds of people — relatives, veterans, patriotic citizens — gathered for the graveside service.

“You know, sometimes we get the impression people don’t care, but then you have something like this happen and all of these people come out and you realize they do care about freedom and their country,” said Bob Foster.

The 82-year-old World War II veteran had driven his pickup truck over from Linton for the service. This was not his first veteran’s funeral; he’s attended many. He didn’t know Livingston, but wanted to be there. It’s what veterans do — honor their own.

“It’s remarkable that after all these years,” he said, “the efforts of just one man made this happen.”

He referred to Ray Emory, a Pearl Harbor survivor who lives in Hawaii and works to identify men buried in graves marked “unknown.”

Ray traveled to Worthington Saturday to see Livingston, the fourth Pearl Harbor victim he has helped identify, buried in the town he left a lifetime ago. “It’s satisfying to see a small town with a turnout like this,” he said.

Paul Goodyear of Phoenix, Arizona is a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. He was on the USS Oklahoma when the torpedoes hit. “I happen to be alive because I was on the signal bridge.”

He said remains of 380 USS Oklahoma sailors still are unidentified. “It’s kind of disturbing to us that we’ve had just this one,” he said after Saturday’s burial. “There are 380 other families out there as anxious to have their loved one brought home as this family was.”



USS Oklahoma, pictured in 1941. The inset is a picture of the skipper, Captain A.J. Foy. According to its web site, “The USS Oklahoma has almost been completely forgotten, and she had the second highest casualties during the battle for Pearl Harbor 1941.”

# Governor Daniels First to Sign Proclamation for Silver Star Day



The Silver Star Families of America primarily presents Silver Star Banners and Certificates to our Veterans who have been injured in a war zone and fills the gap between the Blue Star and the Gold Star. The organization serves as advocates for wounded and their families and offers programs geared to help. SSFOA is a member of the VAVS NAC and donates and interacts with VA hospitals across the states.

SSFOA drafted Proclamations at the beginning of this year and sent to the 50 states and many cities that declared May 1 as Silver Star Day for our Wounded. Proudly, Indiana was the first to sign this proclamation and 43 states followed.

SSFOA offers hand-held games to help in therapy, food cards, and an extensive PTSD resource center with the help of GiveAnHour which will provide an hour of free mental health care. Recently, SSFOA teamed up with the Thank You Foundation and gives a Remembrance of Service Thank You Certificate for those injured outside the war zone who do not qualify for the Silver Star Banner. All can be requested thru the website [www.silverstarfamilies.org](http://www.silverstarfamilies.org)

Our newest program "Hear4You" is an online support team for service members and Veterans and families having a rough time during and after deployment that need a listening ear. SSFOA volunteers man the Hear4You instant messaging and email support line and it is intended as a support line only and in no way offers any other advice. Hear4You is found at <http://www.silverstarfamilies.org/Hear4You-Support-Intro.html> or follow the links on the Home page.

SSFOA is a member of America Supports You and attends summits at the Pentagon, visits and/or sends care packages to military hospitals and Veterans

Hospitals, med facilities in Iraq, and is recognized by local American Legions and VFWs, MOPH, as well as many other troop-support organizations.

During a meeting with the American Legion National Commanders Office in DC, a definition of "wounded" was agreed upon. Veterans and service members meeting this criteria are able to receive the Silver Star Banner. "Any Armed Forces personnel either currently serving honorably or those who have served honorably from any war, who having served in a war zone has been wounded by enemy action or who have been injured or contracted a serious illness that could be rated at least 10% disabled by the Department of Veterans Affairs. All wounds, injuries or illness must have originated in a war zone and includes Purple Heart recipients, victims of friendly fire, kids injured in a war zone, those who suffer from PTSD, Agent Orange effects and Gulf War syndrome."

More articles and news can be viewed on the SSFOA web site [www.silverstarfamilies.org](http://www.silverstarfamilies.org)

On September 2 SSFOA will participate in recognizing the 357 8th Fighter Group in Linton Park. What a great honor to meet these great heroes! This past month, July 6th, along with the City of Linton, SSFOA honored 65 Veterans with a Certificate of Remembrance of Service and other Veterans were presented the certificate that could not attend the event.

Serving our wounded and Veterans through The Silver Star Families of America is a great privilege. Please contact me if I can be of help to you. And please help spread the word that SSFOA is available to ALL Veterans, past, present and future.

Respectfully,

Janie Orman  
SSFOA National Vice President  
and Indiana State Coordinator  
[janieorman@silverstarfamilies.org](mailto:janieorman@silverstarfamilies.org)  
812-847-7030

<http://silverstarfamilies.org/News-Links.html>



# Governor Daniels Greet the Military and Veterans' Benefits Board



From left: Michael Colby, Ron Martin (American Legion), Paul Curtice (VFW), Major General R. Martin Umbarger (State Adjutant General), Tom Applegate (IDVA Director), Governor Daniels, Steve Wise (Chairman), Perry Collins, Donald Inns II, State Representative Dick Dodge. Not pictured, AMVETS representative, Les Compton, State Senators Mike Delph and Frank Mrvan, and State Representative Scott Reske. Photo by staff member, Marques Pflum

On August 7th, Governor Mitch Daniels hosted the members of the Military and Veterans' Benefits Board. The board, established by Senate Enrolled Act 480 and signed into law as Indiana Code 10-17-13, will administer both the **Military Family Relief Fund** and the new **Veterans' Affairs Trust Fund**.

The Veterans' Affairs Trust Fund has been described by Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Tom Applegate, as "perhaps the most important piece of legislation for veterans in the State of Indiana in decades."

The fund is established to provide assistance to veterans and their families. The Military and Veterans' Benefits Board will establish or designate programs, including existing programs administered by state agencies for the benefit of active duty military personnel, veterans, and their families, to be funded by the fund.

In establishing these programs, the board shall consider the following needs:

- A) Education
- B) Economic Assistance, including grants and loans
- C) Health and medical care
- D) Housing and transportation needs
- E) Employment and workforce issues
- F) Any other issue the board determines is appropriate.

Where the Military Family Relief Fund was established to assist National Guard and Reserve families who might need financial assistance because of the deployment of the service member, the Veterans Affairs Trust Fund is not so restrictive in its eligibility criteria and can assist those service members currently serving on active duty, as well as veterans and military retirees. It basically covers those persons not specifically covered by the Military Family Relief Fund, and is patterned after the Wisconsin Veterans' Trust Fund.

Board members were carefully selected for their experience in education, including higher education, vocational or adult education, experience in investment banking or finance, and membership in veterans' organizations; and it includes members of the Senate and the House.



The State Adjutant General and the IDVA Director serve on the Board by virtue of their positions. All other members are appointed. Pictured from left are Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Tom Applegate, Governor Mitch Daniels, and the Chairman of the Military and Veterans' Benefits Board, U.S. Army COL (Ret.) Stephen R. Wise.

## **The State Approving Agency Welcomes Program Director James Melton...**



The State Approving Agency is busy, very busy, so busy that they have added a new staff member to their ranks. Big welcome to James Melton, retired Air Force, who has transferred over from the Department of Health. All three of the Program Directors are Air Force veterans. Hmm...

---

---

## **...and Says Goodbye to SAA Director Tim Maley**



Tim Maley, Director of the State Approving Agency has decided to move on, Tim has left us to join the staff at the Roudebush VA Medical Center here in Indianapolis. Tim's new job title is Customer Service Manager. Its been really great working with you Tim, good bye and good luck, from the IDVA Staff

---

---

## **Ron Rousch Selected as New SAA Director**



The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce that Ronald Rousch, a retired United States Air Force Senior Master Sergeant, has accepted the position of Director of the State Approving Agency side of IDVA to replace the outgoing Tim Maley, effective September

17, 2007.

Ron, who has been an Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs SAA Program Director since March 27, 2006, retired from the Air Force in 2002. He has

extensive supervisory experience as well as strong organizational skills, and has conducted an aggressive veteran's outreach program in the northern Indiana sector, forging new methods to reach veterans, improve education and increase their opportunities.

---

---

## **State's SAA's to Consolidate Under IDVA**

Most people are unaware that there are two State Approving Agencies in Indiana.

The SAA we all know about is the one with the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. It's program directors perform supervisory visits to state-supported colleges and universities to ensure they are up to standards with VA rules and regulations. Additionally, they make it possible for veterans to use their GI Bill when they hire on with an employer who requires on-the-job training or an apprenticeship program.

The little-known SAA is the one with the Commission on Proprietary Education (COPE). The program directors with that SAA perform the same function as the IDVA SAA program directors, but do so with the private colleges and universities.

Effective 1 October 2007 these two State Approving Agencies will consolidate within IDVA. The staff will grow from our current SAA Director with a staff of three, to a staff of five. One new person will be a program director who will join the other three, and the second will be a program coordinator who will coordinate office functions and duties.

We at IDVA are very excited about this consolidation and think we will be better able to serve the educational needs of Hoosier veterans in the future. The State Approving Agency is up to the task of caring for both the public and the private educational institutions in Indiana.

---

---

## **Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Welcomes Two New Staff Members**

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery has two new employees, Alan Burnham and Lance Sever, both who have come to us from the Department of Corrections. Alan is the new Cemetery Superintendent, Lance is the newest addition to the landscaping crew, another big welcome from IDVA.

# **IDVA 2007 FALL CONFERENCE**



**Clifty Inn**  
**at Clifty Falls State Park**  
**Madison, Indiana**  
**October 25, 2007**

**Featuring Speakers from the VA Regional Office**  
**on topics such as:**



**Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Changes in VA Benefits**



**Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities**

**Protection of Veterans' Papers & Documents**

**Continental breakfast for those who register to stay overnight on**  
**October 24th, including guests. Coffee for all others.**  
**Lunch Buffet for all attendees and guests.**

**Conference runs from**  
**9:00 a.m. until 11:50 a.m.**  
**followed by lunch and a**  
**tour of the**  
**Indiana Veterans'**  
**Memorial Cemetery**



## Huntington County Vietnam Veteran One of the First to Receive Delayed High School Diploma under Expanded Program



Pictured, from left, Bruce Stanton, Huntington County Veterans' Service Officer, Kevin Gilbert, Board President Kevin Patrick, IDVA Director, Tom Applegate, and School Superintendent, Tracey Shafer.

Kevin Gilbert, Huntington, Indiana, was one of the first Vietnam veterans in the state to receive a delayed high school diploma under a revision of the law enacted by Senate Enrolled Act 480.

The law previously allowed schools to award diplomas only to World War I and World War II veterans who quit school or were drafted out of school before receiving their diploma. Senate Enrolled Act 480 extended the benefit to veterans of the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

Mr. Gilbert, who served in Vietnam in 1974-75, proudly received his diploma on Monday night, July 16, 2007 at a regular school board meeting.

IDVA Director Tom Applegate was asked to attend this special portion of the Huntington County School Board meeting because of his work on Senate Enrolled Act 480 and the original bill which made this benefit possible.

Bruce Stanton, the current Huntington County Veterans' Service Officer, knew the law was going to be signed and effective July 1st so he had the paperwork processed and ready to go so Mr. Gilbert would get his diploma as soon as possible.

County Service Officers are encouraged to work with their school systems to have actual diplomas awarded rather than a generic certificate. The diploma means so much more to the veteran.

## 2007 Navy Week Held in Indianapolis

At a Statehouse ceremony on August 20th, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman proclaimed this week, August 20 to 26, as Navy Week in Indiana. Skillman was joined by Rear Admiral Gerald R. Beaman, USS Indianapolis survivors, World War II veterans, active and



Eighteen Navy women joined Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and IDVA's Kris Bertrand at the luncheon at the Governor's Mansion to kick off Navy Week.

reserve sailors, and members of the Navy Club and Navy League for the proclamation.

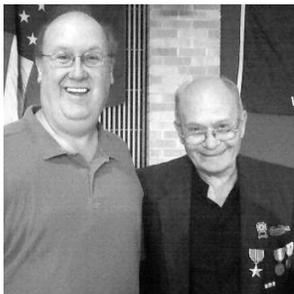
The week was kicked-off with a special Navy Women Luncheon at the Governor's Mansion, attended by IDVA State Service Officer, Kris Bertrand, a Navy veteran who also serves as the state's Women Veterans' Coordinator.

The purpose of Navy Week is to highlight the Navy in communities that do not traditionally have a local Navy presence, and to celebrate the partnership between the Navy and Hoosiers. Indy Navy Week is one of 26 Navy weeks planned across the country this year. "Indiana has a long, proud history of supporting the military," said Lt. Gov. Skillman. "We are indebted to those who serve in the Navy, as well as in all branches of the military. Navy Week gives us a chance to showcase the Navy to all Hoosiers."

Many different events were scheduled for the week, including a reception and opening ceremonies at the Indiana War Memorial, parachute jumps by the "Leap Frogs" Navy Parachute Team, and performances by the "Blue Angels" Flight Team. In addition, area sailors will participate in community service projects around Indianapolis.

## Hoosier Veterans Receive Long Awaited Honors

Aug 21, 2007-WISH TV 8



*Tippecanoe County Veteran Service Officer, Randy Fairchild, pictured here with Vietnam Veteran Larry Davis*

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - There was a long awaited honor Tuesday, Aug. 21st for Hoosier veterans. Congressman Steve Buyer and military leaders gathered at the Indiana Veterans' Home to present service medals to World War II, Korea and Vietnam vets.



*Congressman Steve Buyer presents the daughter of the late Eugene Linder with his long-overdue medals*

One veteran wounded in 1968 during his service in Vietnam received his Purple Heart medal.

"That was a hard time, very hard time. It brings back some memories and at the same time I feel very proud and honored to receive this. It's important for us as a country to recognize individuals who have given so much," said Specialist Five

Donald Claxton, Vietnam Veteran.

Family members accepted on behalf of those who have passed away.



## National POW/MIA Recognition Day is September 21 *Help Identify Missing Heroes With DNA*

Rolling Thunder News Release

On Sept. 21, 2007, Americans will have the solemn privilege to honor our military service personnel who became Prisoners of War or Missing In Action (POW/MIA) while serving in conflicts around the world. Service personnel from all wars still remain POWs - missing or unaccounted for.

Advances in technology have made it possible for family members of MIAs to help identify these missing American heroes by providing a sample of their DNA, specifically those who share the same mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). This type of DNA is inherited only from the mother - each individual's mother, brothers, sisters' children and many other relatives share the same kind of mtDNA. The sex of the missing person and the donor are irrelevant.

Those who donate a sample of their mtDNA can be assured that the sample will only be used to help identify remains, and will not be used for any other purpose, nor will it be released to other government agencies or any other organization.

Those interested in learning if they might qualify as a donor for this program should visit the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) web site at [www.jpac.pacom.mil](http://www.jpac.pacom.mil)



## **Military Community Receives Business Help from SBA**

A new loan initiative announced by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will help the Indiana military community gain access to business capital, in order to start or grow small businesses. This new initiative is Patriot Express.

Patriot Express loans are available for up to \$500,000. These loans can be used for a wide range of small business needs -- from lines of credit, to the purchase of a building. Most importantly, Patriot Express offers SBA's longest loan maturities:

- Real Estate -- up to 25 years
- Equipment -- up to 10 years
- Working Capital -- up to 10 years

To apply for a loan, prospective borrowers should take their business plans directly to SBA certified lenders. Patriot Express loans are available to members of the following communities:

- Veterans
- Service-disabled veterans
- Reservists and National Guard members
- Active-duty service members eligible for the military's Transition Assistance Program
- Current spouses of any of the above groups
- The widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service or from a service-connected disability

SBA provides other business services as well. Free business counseling and low cost training are available from SBA's resource partners -- Indiana Small Business Development Centers, SCORE and Women's Business Centers. These organizations provide local and online assistance with writing a business plan and managing or expanding a business.

Nationally, SBA guarantees approximately 8,000 business loans to veterans totaling more than \$1 billion each year.

For a list of participating Patriot Express lenders, counseling locations or more information about

SBA loans, visit [www.sba.gov/in](http://www.sba.gov/in) or telephone SBA Indiana's Veteran Affairs Officer at (317) 226-7272.

---

---

## **True to the Corps: The New Face of Warrant Officer Training**

by SGT. Robert G. Cooper III  
Indiana National Guard

In September 2006, Indiana set a landmark throughout the Army Warrant Officer Corps' history by graduating 119 warrant officer candidates during the first Warrant Officer Candidate School-Reserve Component (WOCS-RC). This year, the program continued its training, graduating 108 candidates on August 4 at the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis. But it's not stopping there; as a result of last year's successes, the program has grown considerably.

Prior to 2006, the only way to receive warrant officer training was to attend a five-week course at Fort Rucker, Ala., making it unfeasible for traditional National Guard and Reserve Soldiers to attend. The WOCS-RC program customized the training into something more practical; one weekend a month for five months of on-the-job training, followed by a two-week leadership course.

"Unlike commissioned officers, we have no direct appointment process," said Chief Warrant Officer Frank T. Vaughn, Command Chief Warrant Officer of the Indiana National Guard. "It needs to be earned. This program is unique in that it allows Reserve and National Guard members more flexible opportunities to complete this necessary training with the same high standards of Fort Rucker. It gives them a chance to become what they aspire to become without compromising their careers or families."

The course, which tests the physical and mental capabilities of each individual candidate, stresses leadership and task prioritizing. Training days incorporate early morning physical fitness followed by long days of training that require each candidate to

constantly follow strict guidelines that hone their ability to interpret and analyze orders. In addition to classroom education, candidates also receive weapons and urban combat training, conduct land navigation missions, operate and maintain forward operating bases in hostile environments, and perform squad tactical exercises that form them into a cohesive fighting team.

Following graduation from the course, the candidate will then go on to complete the Warrant Officer Basic Course, which varies depending on the individual's occupational specialty. Jennings said that the two-week course prepares them for whatever awaits them in their assignments.

Although the history of the Warrant Officer Corps dates back to 1918 when the first warrant officers served as mine planters with the Coast Artillery, the WOCS program was created in 1985. Despite accreditation, the WOCS-RC is receiving high marks from Fort Rucker. Col. Mark T. Jones, commandant for the Warrant Officer Career Center there, praised the accomplishments of the program

"This program is more than necessary," he said. "Where the Army is right now, we could not be doing this any other way." Jones went on to exemplify Indiana's training capabilities.

"How Indiana and Camp Atterbury are allowing other states to come in and train at our standards is without peer," he said. "Chief Vaughn, along with (Indiana Adjutant General) Maj. Gen. Umbarger and (Indiana Joint Force Land Component Commander) Brig. Gen Tooley deserves a ton of credit for ensuring that these officers are produced at such a high caliber. I've been there to watch how they train and prepare them, and I told them, 'How you get there may differ, but the standard is not compromised.'

"This program is very powerful and very positive, and I like to see more states step up and see the importance of this program," Jones added.

Currently, 21 states have participated in the WOCS-RC program by sending their candidates through the course.

"Will other states get involved? Hopefully," Jones said, "but Indiana is leading the pack."

---

---

## **Indianapolis Roudebush VA Medical Center (VAMC) Closing its TRICARE Clinic**

Military retirees and their dependents are receiving letters from the Indianapolis VAMC noting that TRICARE service will no longer be available at the Indianapolis VAMC effective September 30, 2007. The VA letter quotes space concerns for serving VA patients as one of the reasons for closing the TRICARE Clinic. TRICARE patients currently enrolled at the VA TRICARE clinic should begin looking for an alternate health care provider now. If necessary, they may contact the TRICARE Service Center at 5807 North Post Road, Harrison Quarters, Indianapolis, Indiana 46216; telephone, 877-874-2273. The VA Medical Center will retain the patient's TRICARE medical records until the patient's new medical provider makes an authorized request.

*This article from the American Legion's Service and Legislative Update dated July 31, 2007.*





From left, photographer Kwan Kim; Chief Kyong Kang (Sergeant Major); In Park (Pastor); Gyu H. "Billy" Hwang (President); IDVA Director Tom Applegate; Bud Albright, Commandant of the Marine Corps League; and Tae H. Kwak (Finance Director). Not pictured are Hak Oh, the Chief's wife; Brigadier General Jung Lee; Sang Jee (Advisor) and Song Kang (Interpreter). The group brought with them a replica of a patriotic bell. The bell will sit on Lt. Governor Skillman's desk. The original is in Seoul, Korea.

On September 10th, 2007, members of the Korean/US Marine Corps Fellowship Association came to Indianapolis. IDVA Director Tom Applegate had the pleasure of meeting them and welcoming them to Indiana.

Chief Kyong Kang, a retired Sergeant Major, was the leader of the organization which represents 700,000 members of active and retired Korean Marines, and has been working to strengthen the "life-long" friendship between Korean and US Marines.



Applegate presents each member of the delegation with a special Indiana State Pin for their lapels.

They came to Indiana after

meeting in Washington D.C. with USMC General Conway and General Thiessen. Kang's son, Song, resides in Carmel, Indiana and was a policeman for that city. He acted as interpreter for the group.

Since Governor Daniels and Lt. Governor Skillman were occupied with other business, Applegate was asked to meet with the group and extend the usual Hoosier hospitality. Applegate reported that it was "great fun, and a real honor to meet this group of brave men."



Business cards were exchanged. Chief Kang explained to Applegate that his card was in English on the front and Korean on the back. Applegate told him his card was only in English.



# VA Medical Center Polytrauma Unit Seeing Younger Patients

Aug 17, 2007 06:30 PM

By Mary McDermott  
News 8 @ 5:30



INDIANAPOLIS - Veterans of many wars have sought healing at VA hospitals. Now doctors are facing new challenges as they treat patients injured in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the veterans are not always elderly and gray.



"There's a large influx of young patients," said Dr. Andy Moser, V.A. Medical Center.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have produced thousands of casualties. Roadside bombs and car bombs have often been the culprits. Better body armor and quicker medical attention than in previous wars means more men and women are surviving the blasts.

"Whenever you get better protection and better response, you're going to have a higher survival rate and you're going to see people that you wouldn't see before," Moser said.

One year ago the V.A. Medical Center in Indianapolis opened what is called a polytrauma unit. Jeremy Austin is one of nine in-patients at the unit now. The last few years have brought him injuries from a stateside motorcycle accident and a bomb blast in Iraq. He has injuries to his eyes, brain and more.

"Part of my right arm, and my whole right side," Jeremy said.

Jeremy may end up doing physical therapy in a special fitness room where some of the equipment is specially designed so patients can get into and out of their wheelchairs.

Brain injuries like Jeremy's are common in veterans hurt in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We're finding more and more that with the blast injuries even people who only sustain what most people would call a mild concussion still have some residual effects from that. So whether it's mood irritability or concentration issues, it doesn't take much to suffer some consequences from even a mild concussion," Moser said.

It sometimes takes months for veterans on the unit to get well enough to go home. Jeremy Austin says for him, that day cannot come soon enough.

---

---

## The Indiana Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation Enduring Freedom Memorial Wall

---



Army Staff Sgt. Roy P. Lewsader Jr., 36, Clinton, Indiana.

Died Saturday, 16 June 2007, in Afghanistan when his vehicle was struck by enemy fire, the Department of Defense announced. He was assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Riley, Kansas.



U.S. Army Pfc David A. Wilkey Jr., 22, family resides in Elkhart, Indiana.

He was in a Humvee convoy in Iraq on Monday, June 18, 2007 when he was killed by a roadside bomb. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas.



U.S. Army Spc. Carter A. Gamble Jr., 24, of Seymour, Indiana

Died Sunday, 24 June 2007, in Duraiya, Iraq, from wounds he suffered from enemy small arms fire, the military said.



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. William Ryan Fritsche, 23, Martinsville, Indiana.

A member of the US Army's 'Old Guard', Staff Sgt. Fritsche was killed in a battle near Kamu, Afghanistan. Fritsche died of injuries on July 27, 2007. He was the son of Morgan County Sheriff's Department Detective Sgt. Volitta Fritsche.



U.S. Army Cpl Willard M. Powell, 21, Evansville, Indiana.

Died August 16, 2007, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, in Balad, Iraq, of wounds suffered from enemy small arms fire during combat operations in Taramiyah, Iraq.



U.S. Army Specialist Zachariah J. Gonzalez, 23, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Died August 1, 2007 in Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Specialist Gonzalez was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Washington.



U.S. Army Cpl Ryan A. Woodward, 22, Ft. Wayne Indiana

Died September 8, 2007 in Balad, Iraq. He was assigned as a scout javelin gunner to the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg N.C.



U.S. Army Pfc Shawn D. Hensel, 20, Logansport, Indiana.

Killed August 14, 2007 in Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom when caught in a cross-fire.



U.S. Army Sgt Nicholas J. Patterson, 24, Rochester, Indiana

Died September 10, 2007, in Iraq. He was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg N.C.

---

### On Eagle's Wings

your soul soars high where eagles fly, proud and free.

may you find strong winds and peace to carry you on your journey that has just begun.

American Soldier...no mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great...

American Soldier, our patriot, true to the flag...

American Soldier through and through...American Soldier gone too soon.

On eagle's wings you soar so high...

American Soldier, our hero...

Your family, your friends, and the Lord knows why.

*Written by Lindsey Levitz, in honor of her friend Nick Hartge*

# **IDVA June Conference Will See Changes in Training**

**By Tom Applegate**

For many years now the training at the IDVA Conference has been divided between training the new service officers and training the service officers who are not new.

After I was appointed as director I arranged for John Hickey with the American Legion to focus on the service officers who had been hired since the last conference. The new service officers were broken out after the welcome and introductions were over, and John took them into a separate room for the rest of their training that day. John has done an excellent job with that and I want to extend to him my thanks.

A couple of things were wrong with that which will be fixed with the new system of training.

Firstly, the new service officers will not be broken out on the first day, normally Tuesday. They will remain with the group for the entire day and receive the same IDVA and VA updates as the rest of the group and will also be able to hear the other topics on the agenda for that first day.

On the second day of training, Wednesday, the new service officers will break out into their own training with John Hickey, who will have them for the entire day. They will not be administered a test on that day. They will be tested with the rest of the group on Thursday morning. Their test will consist of the subjects they were taught on Tuesday and Wednesday.

All the other service officers will start out together on Wednesday morning and they will receive the general training which is usually administered by the department and national service officers from the veterans' organizations.

On Wednesday afternoon this group will split into two groups. One group, which we will call the intermediate group, will remain in the same room and will continue the general training. On Thursday morning, they will be tested on the subjects they were taught on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The second group which we will call the advanced group will repair to another room and will be taught those subjects and tasks which are considered by the national and department VSOs and by VA to be the

“advanced” subjects. These classes will be administered by the department and national VSOs from the veterans' organizations and by VA personnel such as the Decision Review Officers and by Service Center personnel.

On Thursday morning this group will be tested on the subjects they were taught on Tuesday, on Wednesday morning, and the subjects they were taught in the “advanced” class on Wednesday afternoon.

\*\*\*

## **How is it decided who will be in each group?**

Except for the new service officers, who will automatically be placed in the “New Service Officer” group, and the second year service officers, who will automatically be placed in the “Intermediate” group, the remaining CVSOs themselves will determine which group they feel they belong in.

The results of the tests after this first year of training will accurately reflect which group those CVSOs should be in. Those in the “Intermediate” group who score very high, might be better served if they moved up into the “Advanced” group. Likewise, a low-scoring “Advanced” group participant might be better served by moving to the “Intermediate” group.

\*\*\*

## **Changes in the test**

We have asked the department and national VSOs from the veterans' organizations to submit their test questions to us by the first week in April of each year. We will combine those questions with the IDVA and SAA questions and prepare the two tests (one for the “Intermediate” and one for the “Advanced” groups. The new service officers test will combine the IDVA and SAA questions with John Hickey's test questions.

The INVSOA will select certain CVSOs to be pre-tested on the intermediate and the advanced tests. Feedback from those tests will be used to correct any questions which are misleading or not well-worded, or just plain wrong.

Admittedly, these pre-test takers will be taking the test without benefit of first getting the classes, but we feel this is the best way to insure that a quality test is administered to everyone. The pre-testers who would like to take the test again after they've attended the classes, will be offered the opportunity to retest on Thursday of the conference with the rest of their group.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Director's Comments

I reported on page 6 that the state's two SAA's will be consolidating under the roof of IDVA. This is another historic event in Indiana. These two agencies, both performing essentially the same work, one with the private schools and one with the public schools, have always operated independently, and sometimes in conflict, of each other.

The veterans of Indiana with questions concerning their education and their use of the GI Bill will now have one central source of information - IDVA. I am extremely proud to have been the director when this event occurred. I firmly believe that Hoosier veterans will be better served by IDVA's program directors, all veterans, than they were by the civilian program directors under the commission.

\*\*\*\*\*

I predict many other good things happening in the legislative arena which will benefit Hoosier veterans

and County Veterans Service Officers. This past legislative session redefined the eligibility criteria for CVSOs and others who work in the veterans' offices around the state, as well as those who work at IDVA and for the SAA.

This has paved the way for Indiana to become accredited to represent veterans with their claims for benefits with the VA. Sometime in the near future I can see me hiring a third State Service Officer, one who will perform the same duties for IDVA that the National and Department Service Officers do for the veterans' organizations.

This third State Service Officer will review claims sent in from the CVSOs for completeness and will also make a determination on the well-groundedness of the claim. He will contact the CVSO who sent in the claim on those which require further documentation or more explanation to make it a well-grounded claim.

For those CVSOs who need it, the third State Service Officer will act as a pre-submission agent who, after reviewing the claim, will forward it to the organization chosen by the veteran as their POA, or work with the CVSO to bring it up to standard.

---

---

Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs  
302 W. Washington Street E-120  
Indianapolis, IN 46204