

CONNECTION



Connecticut Chapter 120

Greater Hartford
Over 34 Years of Service to Veterans

December 2017

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Meetings

The Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, December 28 at 7:00pm. Call the Chapter office for any changes in schedule. Chapter members are welcomed to attend.

Notice

If you have moved or changed your address, PLEASE notify us immediately. Call the Chapter office at (860) 568-9212, mail us at the address on the back of this newsletter or e-mail the Newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

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Vietnam Veterans of America
Connecticut Chapter 120

The 31st Annual

Holiday Dinner Dance

Saturday – December 9, 2017

7 – 11:30pm

Dinner at 7:45pm



Machinists Union Hall

357 Main Street

East Hartford, CT 06118

Phone: (860) 568-9212

Music By

DJ Jeff Morgan



Singles - \$20

Couples - \$35

BYOB/Setups Available – Raffles - Prizes

Open to the Public

Bring Your Family and Friends!

Proceeds Benefit Area Veterans and Their Families

**Please Note: The Machinists Union Hall is a Smoke-Free facility.
Smoking is allowed outside the building**

Happy Holidays to All!

From The

Chapter 120 Officers and Board of Directors

CHAPTER 120 OFFICE 568-9212

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All Telephone Numbers are Area Code 860 unless otherwise noted

Chapter/State News

Veterans Garden Dedication

The Goodwin College veterans invited the public to join them in their celebration of Veterans Day with the dedication of their Veterans garden on Thursday, Nov. 9, at 1 p.m. in the school's courtyard at 1 Riverside Drive.

In addition to the dedication, the Iwo Jima/World War II traveling museum will be on display between the hours of 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.



Chapter 120 members participated in the Veterans Day celebration at the college.

Veterans Day in Manchester

Chapter 120 members marched in the Veterans Day parade and participated in the ceremony in Manchester CT. The parade began at the American Legion post and ended with a ceremony at the Manchester Memorial Hospital. 1920 Manchester Memorial Hospital (MMH) opens on Haynes Street and is dedicated to the 45 Manchester men who lost their lives in World War I. In 1970, the hospital was rededicated as a memorial to veterans of all wars.



Chapter 120 members at Manchester Memorial Hospital after the parade.

Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes go to our members born in December. May you have many more!

<i>Donna S. Anderson</i>	<i>Albert J. Couture</i>
<i>Cedric C. Dilsizian</i>	<i>Patrick L. Dube</i>
<i>Craig Jordan</i>	<i>George R. Koehler</i>
<i>Robert A. Lathrop</i>	<i>Edward D. Lee</i>
<i>Leigh Lovering</i>	<i>Jeffrey Rohan</i>
<i>Claude D. Roy</i>	<i>Mitchell A. Slowick</i>
<i>Karl Smith</i>	<i>L. David Waggoner</i>
<i>Brian Wall</i>	<i>Chris B. Williams</i>

Happy Birthday!

Billee Culin inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame



Helen "Billee" Culin was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame on 27 October 2017. Born in San Antonio, Texas in 1946, Billee Culin was a secretary to General Westmoreland in the Pentagon during the Vietnam Era. After her Army service, she joined the Vietnam Veterans of

America (VVA) in Hartford, Connecticut, where she advocated for veterans by serving as Chapter Director, State Council President, and National At-Large Director. Relocating to Arizona in 2010, Billee founded West Valley Chapter 1043, VVA. Billee supports veterans with her Service Officer expertise, leadership of Chapter fundraising activities, and the Help-A-Vet financial assistance program they started. She advocates for veterans as a member of the National VVA Agent Orange Committee. To thank Billee for her tireless efforts, West Valley Chapter 1043 was re-named: The Billee Culin West Valley Chapter 1043, VVA.

The AVHOFs was established on 9 October 2007, blending together the unique backgrounds and talents of Veterans who have been recognized for their outstanding efforts and achievements to our communities outside of their military service.

Russell Ehlert Chapter 120 Life Member



Russell Ehlert passed away unexpectedly on September 23, 2017 in Live Oak, Florida. Russ was born on May 12, 1943 in Bridgeport, CT. He was predeceased by his parents William Fredrick Carlton Ehlert and Edna Baker Workman. Russ graduated from Andrew Warde High School, Class of 1961.

Russ entered the US Navy where he served as Engineman 1st Class on a landing craft in Vietnam. Russ served from 66-67 aboard

the LCU 1498. Upon his discharge in 1970 he moved to Danielson, CT and went to work at Electric Boat in Groton, testing high pressure air and hydraulic systems on submarines. In 1978, Russ went to work at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford operating equipment that tested jet engines for both commercial and military installations. Retiring in 1998 Russ then went to work at Foxwoods Resort and Casino where he worked as both a security officer and supervisor retiring on September 10, 2010. He moved to Tallahassee, Florida with his wife Karen in May of 2002.

Russ was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 120 in East Hartford, The Disabled American Veterans and VFW Post 1724. He also served as Post Commander of VFW Post 2650 in Danielson, CT. Russ was a member of Moriah 15 AF&AM in Brooklyn and a member of American Legion Post 13 in Tallahassee, FL. Russ was of the Southern Baptist Faith.

Russ is survived by his brother William S. Ehlert, four daughters, Kimberly Frances Ehlert (Port St. Lucie, FL), Tina Marie Ehrenberg (Andrew) New Hampshire, Becky Lynn Aldrich (Todd) of Danielson, CT and Stacie Renee St, Andre (Adam) of Dudley MA. Russ was predeceased by his wife Karen Louisa Smith Ehlert in 2008. Russ has four grandchildren, Jonathan Ehlert, Tyler Boston, Matthew and Bridget Ehrenberg. A memorial service was held at the United Methodist Church at 9 Spring Street in Danielson, CT on November 3, 2017 and a military burial in Stratford, CT.

Rest in Peace Brother!

POW/MIA News



POW/MIA Chair Unveiled

Lawmakers celebrated the addition of a new chair to the U.S. Capitol, honoring American prisoners of war and the thousands of service members missing in action.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and Rep. Sam Johnson, unveiled the commemorative chair during a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol's Emancipation Hall, Nov. 8, 2017. The chair will serve as a memorial to those who served, but have not yet returned home.



Among those speaking at the event was Representative Samuel Johnson. Johnson, a retired U.S. Air Force pilot, served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars and was held as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for nearly seven years.

The chair was made possible by the National POW/MIA Remembrance Act (Public Law 114-147) at the urging of veterans group Rolling Thunder who also raised funds to place the chair at the U.S. Capitol and worked with the architect of the Capitol on its design.

On The Hill



Bill Introduced to include presumptive Agent Orange exposure in Thailand

Arkansas Senator John Boozman introduced Senate Bill S.2105 on November 8, 2017 to modify the presumption of service connection for veterans who were exposed to herbicide

agents while serving in the Armed Forces in Thailand during the Vietnam era, to include benefits for children of these veterans born with spina bifida. Indiana Senator Joe Donnelly has co-sponsored the bill. The bill would mandate the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that if the Secretary creates a presumption of service connection between the occurrence of a disease and exposure to herbicide agents while serving in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era at a military base in Thailand, such presumption also applies to exposure to a herbicide agent while serving in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era at any military base located in Thailand without regard to where on the base the veteran was located or what military job specialty the veteran performed. Currently, presumption of exposure to Agent Orange/herbicides include only those veterans who can prove that their duties were performed at the perimeter of affected Thailand bases.

Veterans' advocates are encouraging veterans to contact their senators to sign on as co-sponsors of this bill.

VVA Press Release

Carper Introduces Bill to Eliminate Education Loophole that Robs Our Military, Veterans, and American Taxpayers

"Today [November 9, 2017], the senior Senator from Delaware, Tom Carper, unveiled the Military and Veterans Education Protection Act of 2017. When this eminently sensible bill is enacted into black-letter law, it will bring a modicum of fairness and sanity to a shameful though currently legal abuse of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

"Ever since the revelations by former Senator Tom Harkin's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee several years ago, VVA has sought to close what is known as the 90/10 loophole," Rowan said. "This enabled certain proprietary institutions of higher learning to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on federal revenues they are allowed to receive under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

"This has resulted in a rip-off of stunning proportions," Rowan said. "It victimizes military and veteran students seeking education to achieve their version of the American Dream but who, instead, receive worthless educations, coupled with unforeseen and nearly insurmountable debt. This perpetuates a

fraud on American taxpayers, who pick up the tab for a program perverted to enrich investors in this shoddy endeavor in higher education. "As Holly Petreaus explained when she was with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 'For every service member or veteran--or spouse or child, in the case of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill--enrolled at a for-profit college and paying with military education funds, that college can enroll nine others who are using nothing but Title IV money. This gives for-profit colleges an incentive to see service members as nothing more than dollar signs in uniform, and to use aggressive marketing to draw them in.'

"Ms. Petreaus was right on the money," Rowan said. "It's high time now for Congress to do the right thing and eliminate this legal gift," Rowan said.

Veterans Affairs News



Extracted from Tom Philpott, *Military.com*

VA delays adding new Agent Orange illnesses

After 18 months of review by his department, VA Secretary David J. Shulkin awkwardly announced Wednesday Nov. 1 that he plans to

"further explore" adding ailments to the list of compensable conditions VA presumes were caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War.

The decision to punt long-anticipated decisions on Agent Orange-related ailments will disappointment thousands of aging veterans with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension (high blood pressure).

Veterans and survivors were hopeful some or all of those conditions would be added to VA's presumptive list of ailments linked to wartime herbicides, based on the latest and final review of medical and scientific literature on Agent Orange from the National Academy of Medicine (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine).

Instead, on the Nov. 1 deadline date that VA itself had set for this packet of decisions, Shulkin issued a brief statement at 6 p.m. promising only more delay.

"After thoroughly reviewing the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)'s latest report regarding veterans and Agent Orange, and associated data and recommendations from [VA's] NAM Task Force, I have made a decision to further explore new presumptive conditions for service connection that may ultimately qualify for disability compensation. I appreciate NAM's work and the commitment and expertise of [my] Task Force, and look forward to working with the [Trump] administration on the next steps in the process."

A last sentence, not attributed to Shulkin, explained that the VA "will begin work with the administration to concurrently

conduct a legal and regulatory review of these potential presumptive conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.”

In the past, VA began a regulatory review only after the Secretary approved new ailments for the list. Shulkin hasn't named any new illnesses. In conceding that VA experts already had “thoroughly” reviewed the latest science, however, Shulkin seemed to signal that parties elsewhere in the Trump administration didn't want a VA announcement at this time rejecting or embracing new conditions.

“We thought we were going to get a decision sometime today,” said Rick Weidman, executive director for policy and government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America. “Obviously we were mistaken. What they issued, to quote Sarah Huckabee Sanders [White House press secretary], is a Nothing Burger.”

A spokesman for Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said he is reviewing VA's announcement. But Roe “believes veterans waiting for a final decision deserve certainty, and [he] hopes Secretary Shulkin will work quickly to finish the legal and regulatory reviews.”

Dr. Kenneth S. Ramos, associate vice president for Precision Health Sciences and a professor of medicine at the University of Arizona, chaired the committee of medical experts that produced the NAM report that Shulkin has deferred acting on.

Ramos said his “gut reaction” to the statement “is that it's positive. It's very encouraging that the recommendations brought forth by the committee were thoroughly evaluated and are being considered for reevaluation by the department.” Ramos added, “The tone suggests receptivity to the seed that the National Academy has provided...When you look at past experience, any change in compensation policies seems to take time moving through the system.”

NAM delivered its report, *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014*, to VA in March last year, after reviewing medical and scientific literature published from Oct. 1, 2012, through Sept. 30, 2014. NAM found evidence to support changing the strength of association between herbicide exposure and several ailments.

For bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, it found “limited or suggestive” evidence of an association to herbicide exposure, an upgrade from “inadequate or insufficient” evidence found earlier. For some ailments, including

Parkinson's and ischemic heart disease, limited or suggestive evidence has been judged strong enough to add the illnesses to the presumptive list. For other diseases, including hypertension, which is common in an aging population, it hasn't been enough.

The NAM review also looked again at cardiovascular conditions and herbicide exposure. It didn't upgrade the link to heart ailments but it did affirm limited or suggestive evidence that hypertension is linked to herbicide exposure.

It also studied whether conditions with Parkinson's-like symptoms should fall into the same limited or suggestive category as Parkinson's disease itself. NAM found “no rational basis” for excluding Parkinson-like symptoms from the same risk category. Parkinson's disease was added to VA's presumptive list in 2010.

Under a law Congress let expire in 2015, the VA Secretary had 180 days to consider a NAM report before deciding whether to expand the list of presumptive diseases to trigger automatic eligibility for disability compensation.

Shulkin is under no such deadline. But a VA study group, followed by a VA task force, reviewed the NAM report. At one point a senior VA official predicted that by July 2016 then-VA Secretary Bob McDonald would have what he needed to decide on new presumptive ailments. Yet a year passed and McDonald opted to leave those decisions for the Trump administration. Shulkin had been McDonald's top health official during the NAM review period.

By late summer this year, Shulkin promised a decision on new ailments to the presumptive list by Nov. 1. Weidman said he suspects the White House's Office of Management and Budget blocked any plan to add new ailments to the list.

Weidman said members of Vietnam Veterans of America “are going to be really angry” with more delay, because “there is probably enough evidence now for the Secretary to declare other ailments” as tied to Agent Orange exposure, “glioblastoma first among them.” And sailors and Marines who served aboard ship off Vietnam, the Blue Water Veterans, should have been deemed eligible like ground forces for compensation for presumptive ailments long ago, Weidman said.

“The ball is now in Trump's court,” he added. “It's not something now that Obama did or did not do.”



VVA Press Release

Blue Water Navy Vets Foiled Again: House Committee Tables H.R. 299

“We, at Vietnam Veterans of America, felt a crushing blow of disappointment when H.R. 299, legislation designed to restore eligibility for VA health care and disability compensation for some 90,000 Blue Water Navy veterans, was put on hold yesterday in the House Veterans' Affairs Committee,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

“We maintain that the service of sailors and other personnel in Yankee and Dixie Stations should be equated with the service of boots-on-the-ground troops in Vietnam,” said Rowan. “While we appreciate the ‘pay-for’ rules Congress imposed on itself, we have long opposed any effort to take funding from one veterans program to pay for another.”

“While it is the role of the veterans’ service organizations to make the case for funding programs and initiatives to meet the legitimate needs of veterans, it is up to Congress to figure out how to pay for these efforts. It is an egregious failure of will to, yet again, pass over the demonstrated need of thousands of veterans who are suffering from the same health conditions as their in-country comrades.

“Caring for veterans is part of the continuing cost of the national defense,” Rowan added. “Regrettably, Congress has fallen down on its responsibility to tens of thousands of Navy veterans and their families. Despite this setback, VVA and our fellow VSOs will continue the fight to make the case and work with Congress to find a satisfactory funding mechanism to pay for the anticipated costs of this very necessary legislation.”

VA's quiet plan to widen private care with TRICARE stirs ire



As part of its effort to expand private health care, the Department of Veterans Affairs is exploring the possibility of merging its health system with the Pentagon's, a cost-saving measure that veterans groups say could threaten the viability of VA hospitals and clinics.

VA spokesman Curt Cashour called the plan a potential "game-changer" that would "provide better care for veterans at a lower cost to taxpayers," but he provided no specific details.

Griffin Anderson, a spokesman for the Democrats on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said the proposal — developed without input from Congress — would amount to a merger of the VA's Choice and the military's TRICARE private health care programs. Committee Democrats independently confirmed the discussions involved TRICARE.

News of the plan stirred alarm from veterans groups, who said they had not been consulted, and sharp criticism from congressional Democrats who pledged to oppose any VA privatization effort that forces veterans "to pay out of pocket for the benefits they have earned with their heroism." VA is seeking a long-term legislative fix for Choice by year's end.

"Today, we see evidence that the Trump administration is quietly planning to dismantle veterans' health care," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "House Democrats will fight tooth and nail against any efforts to diminish or destroy VA's irreplaceable role as the chief coordinator, advocate and manager of care for veterans."

Health care experts also expressed surprise that VA would consider a TRICARE merger to provide private care for millions of active-duty troops, military retirees and veterans. The two departments generally serve very different patient groups — older, sicker veterans treated by VA and generally healthier

service members, retirees and their families covered by TRICARE.

TRICARE is insurance that is paid by the government, but uses private doctors and hospitals. The VA provides most of its care via medical centers and clinics owned and run by the federal government, though veterans can also see private doctors through VA's Choice program with referrals by VA if appointments aren't readily available.

"My overarching concern is these are very dramatic changes in the way health care is delivered to veterans," said Carrie Farmer, a senior policy researcher on military care at Rand Corp., who has conducted wide-ranging research for VA. "There haven't been studies on what the consequences are in terms of both costs and quality of care."

Navy Commander Sarah Higgins, a Pentagon spokeswoman, confirmed it was exploring with VA "many possible opportunities to strengthen and streamline the health of our service members and veterans." She declined to comment on specifics "unless and until there is something to announce."

In its statement to The Associated Press, Cashour explained that VA Secretary David Shulkin was working with the White House and the Pentagon to explore "the general concept" of integrating VA and Pentagon health care, building upon an already planned merger of electronic health care records between VA and the Pentagon. Because Shulkin has said an overhaul of VA's electronic medical records won't be completed for another seven to eight years, an effort such as a TRICARE merger likely couldn't happen before then.

"This is part of the president's efforts to transform how government works and is precisely the type of businesslike, commonsense approach that rarely exists in Washington," Cashour said.

At least four of the nation's largest veterans' organizations — The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS and Disabled American Veterans — called a TRICARE merger a likely "non-starter" if it sought to transform VA care into an insurance plan.

"VA is a health care provider and the VFW would oppose any effort to erode the system specifically created to serve the health care needs of our nation's veterans by reducing VA's role to a payer of care for veterans," said Bob Wallace, executive director of VFW's Washington office.

Louis Celli, director of veterans' affairs and rehabilitation for The American Legion, said any attempts to outsource services away from VA medical centers and clinics would be financially unsustainable and likely shift costs unfairly onto veterans with service-connected disabilities.

He noted something similar occurred with TRICARE — military retirees were promised free care from military base hospitals. But then TRICARE began offering insurance to use private-sector care, and TRICARE beneficiary co-pays are now

rising. "The precedent the TRICARE model sets is not something we would accept on the VA side," Celli said.

During the 2016 campaign, President Donald Trump pledged to fix VA by expanding access to private doctors. In July, he promised to triple the number of veterans "seeing the doctor of their choice." More than 30 percent of VA appointments are made in the private sector.

Some groups have drawn political battle lines, with the left-leaning VoteVets and the American Federation of Government Employees warning of privatization, and Concerned Veterans for America, backed by the billionaire conservative Koch brothers, pledging a well-funded campaign to give veterans wide freedom to see private doctors.

Rep. Tim Walz of Minnesota, the top Democrat on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, called for an immediate public explanation "without delay" for the quiet discussions to integrate TRICARE with VA's Choice.

"The fact that the Trump administration has been having these secret conversations behind the backs of Congress and our nation's veterans is absolutely unacceptable," said Walz, the highest-ranking enlisted service member to serve in Congress.

A spokeswoman for Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee, the Republican chairman of the House committee, said he planned to proceed with his bipartisan legislative plan to fix Choice without integrating TRICARE.

VA Prioritizes Improving Veterans' Access to Pro Bono Legal Services

On November 13, 2017, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), together with the American Bar Association, The Veterans Consortium and National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium, signed a Memorandum of Agreement aimed at improving Veterans' access to free legal services.

Veterans often face stressful legal problems — such as eviction, foreclosure, child support, or drivers' license revocations — that can affect their ability to gain or maintain employment and housing or focus on medical treatment. In VA's annual Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups survey, legal assistance repeatedly tops the list of homeless Veterans' unmet needs.

"We are encouraging VA Medical Centers and other VA facilities to engage with their local communities to establish legal clinics and Medical Legal Partnerships to address Veterans' legal needs that threaten their health and well-being," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "By signing this agreement, we are documenting a shared commitment to better facilitate Veterans' access to legal services."

Currently, VA hosts at least 165 free legal clinics in its VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers across the country by partnering with external, legal-service providers, such as local bar associations, legal-aid organizations and law school clinics.

In Connecticut, free legal services are offered by The Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC), a nonprofit based in West Haven, Connecticut. CVLC assists veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness with overcoming legal barriers to stable housing, income, and health care. CVLC contact:

Nikki Kelsey
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Connecticut Veterans Legal Center
114 Orange Avenue, 2nd Floor
West Haven, CT 06516
nkelsey@ctveteranslegal.org
Tel: 203-794-4291 | Fax: (203) 479-8001

From the Service Rep's Desk



Vets May Now Be Able To Get Higher Disability Ratings for Service-Connected Injuries

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims issued a decision that could make it easier for veterans with injuries to the back, neck, and joints to obtain higher disability ratings, even in cases where veterans are already receiving disability benefits for such injuries.

The recent case, called Sharp v. Shulkin, reviewed the Department of Veterans Affairs' current system for assessing the origin and extent of a veteran's disability and clarified the responsibilities of Compensation and Pension examiners and the Board of Veterans Appeals when it comes to giving an opinion on pain flare-ups caused by musculoskeletal disabilities. The court ultimately ruled that the system was inadequate, because not all C&P examiners consider flare-ups and pain when determining what disability rating a veteran should receive.

Bobby P. Sharp, an Army Korean War veteran who suffers from numerous musculoskeletal injuries, argued that VA medical examinations he received were inadequate because the examiner failed to "ascertain adequate information — i.e., frequency, duration, characteristics, severity, or functional loss — regarding his flares by alternative means," according to court documents. Sharp contended that the 10% disability rating he received for his injuries was insufficient because his "September 2015 evaluation was inadequate for evaluation purposes and the Board's finding to the contrary was clearly erroneous." In September 2017, the claims court agreed.

The court's decision means that the VA must now enact measures to ensure that C&P examiners do not overlook flare-ups and pain when assessing a disabled veteran. The VA must attempt to schedule a C&P examination when the veteran is experiencing a flare-up, but if it can't the practitioner is still expected to offer a professional opinion on how the veteran could be "functionally limited during a flare-up," notes Douglas

G. Jackson, managing attorney at The Law Firm of Douglas G. Jackson.

In theory, this will give examiners a more comprehensive understanding of the injury in question. If this isn't feasible, the examiner must prove they've collected as much information and evidence as possible before saying to the board that they can't offer a medical opinion "without resorting to speculation." Further, the appeals board bears the burden of ensuring the examiner has done their due diligence or find an examiner experienced enough to offer a more informed medical opinion.

So, if a C&P examiner doesn't witness the flare-up, how can they form a non-speculative opinion about it? As Douglas G. Jackson reported, the court decided that veterans themselves can submit evidence for consideration, such as their own description of the flare-ups and pain they experience, or "buddy statements" — written statements from people who know the veteran and can testify to the extent of their suffering.

All of which will make it a lot easier for veterans to secure higher disability ratings for injuries they sustained in the military. Meanwhile, the Sharp v. Shulkin case, which ruled that Sharp was entitled to another C&P assessment consistent with the new guidelines set by the court provides a precedent for other veterans who want to challenge their disability ratings. If you think this applies to your case, then we recommend you reach out to a veteran service officer to help you navigate the appeals process.

50 Years Ago

- **December 6** - ANGELO J. LITEKY, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **December 15** - ALLEN JAMES LYNCH, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **December 21** - LARRY E. SMEDLEY, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **December 24** - CHRISTMAS CEASE FIRE ENTERS INTO EFFECT. A Christmas cease fire is put into effect for 24 to 25 December. Airstrike operations and armed reconnaissance flights are halted for two days.

Newsletter articles/stories/photos

Any articles, stories and/or photos submitted for the newsletter must be received by the "cut off" date for any given month. Photos must be accompanied by text which describes the event, names, dates and any other pertinent facts so our readers understand the story behind the photo(s). The newsletter editor will announce the "cut off" dates at each Chapter meeting. The "cut off" date for our January newsletter is 15 December 2017. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.



Receive "The Connection" by E-Mail

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 96 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter over \$600 in postal fees annually. The newsletter is available in Adobe format (.pdf), attached to your e-mail. If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail the newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com



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