Inside This Issue

Chapter/State News
Chapter Elections
POW/MLA News
On The Hill
Veterans Affairs News
PRC-25 Radio
On The Lighter Side

Meetings
Chapter 120 membership meeting and Elections will be held on Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford. State and East Hartford COVID-19 guidelines apply.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, May 26 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 Newsletter Editor at (860) 282-7470, or e-mail the Newsletter Editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

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Please join Chapter 120 to march in East Hartford’s Memorial Day parade, May 30th, 10:00 am step-off from 9 Riverside Drive to the Fallen Star Memorial located at Goodwin University. It’s a short walk – about six-tenths of a mile. All are welcome to come and join your Chapter.
### Chapter/State News

#### Chapter Elections this Month

As a quorum was not attained at the April Chapter 120 meeting, elections could not be held at that meeting. We urge members to attend the Chapter meeting on 5 May so a vote can be made to elect officers, Board of Directors, State Council delegates and Election Committee members. Please attend if at all possible.

#### Connecticut Chapter 120 Election Rules

Revised November 2, 2006

**Section 1. Annual Elections**

A. The Chapter officers will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term in office. They are the following: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

B. The Board of Directors will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term of office.

C. The State Council Delegates will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term of office.

D. The Delegates to the National Convention will be elected on odd numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term in office.

E. The three (3) member Nominating Committee will be elected at the April meeting and will serve a one (1) year term.

**Section 2. Candidates**

A. Candidates must have been a member for a minimum of fifteen (15) days prior to the election.

B. Candidates must have on file with the Chapter, or present to the Nominating Committee their DD-214, or other proof of qualification for membership.

C. Candidates may be nominated from the floor on the night of the election. Candidates must be present to accept the nomination or have submitted a letter of intent to the Nominating Committee.

D. Candidates will be allowed five (5) minutes to speak at the April meeting if desired.

E. Candidates may use the membership list for a mailing pursuant to the Chapter rules and Federal laws governing the membership list.

**Section 3. Voters**

A. To be eligible to vote, you must have been a member for fifteen (15) days prior to the election. This would include new members or reinstated members that are not paid up for the prior year.

B. Voting members must have on file with the Chapter, or present to the Nominating Committee their DD-214 or other proof of qualification for membership.

C. Voting members must have paid their dues for the current fiscal year. Membership may be renewed the night of the election, but must be paid prior to casting their vote.

**Section 4. Election Procedures**

A. The voting period will be from the close of nominations until 8:00 PM.

B. The quorum required to hold the election should be 10 members.

C. A candidate can request a recount of the ballots for his or her office if the margin between the candidates running for that office is 10% or less based on the number of total votes cast.

D. The ballots will be kept for one (1) year in a sealed envelope signed by the Nominating Committee or their appointees.

E. Results will be announced the night of the election.
F. If a Nominating Committee member is running for an elected position, they shall appoint a volunteer vote counter from the floor.
G. The vote will be taken by a secret paper ballot.

Robert "Bob" Venti
Chapter 120 Life Member

Robert “Bobby” Donald Venti, 75, of East Hartford, beloved husband of Roberta A. (Farrell) Pacheco, passed away peacefully at home with his loving family by his side on Saturday, March 26, 2022. Born in Hartford on July 24, 1946, he was the son of the late Joseph and Eleanor (LaMacchia) Venti and had lived in the East Hartford area his entire life. Bobby was a graduate of East Hartford High School.

He was a proud decorated veteran of the U.S. Army, serving during the Vietnam War, earning a Bronze Star medal. Bobby worked as a lithographer in the printing business for many years. He was a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 120 of Greater Hartford, American Legion Post #133 of South Windsor, and VFW Post #2046, where he was currently serving as Post Commander. He also belonged to the Army/Navy Club of Manchester and the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 17. He was an organizer and Master of Ceremonies of the Manchester Veteran’s Parade and was involved with Veteran’s Row at the Manchester Road Race. Bobby was also an animal lover and avid gardener, who was especially proud of his award winning roses.

In addition to his wife Roberta, Bobby will be forever missed by his two sons, Adam Pacheco of Derby and Joshua Pacheco and wife Chelsea of Broad Brook; and his two adored grandchildren, Robert C. Pacheco and Caroline J. Pacheco, both of Broad Brook. He is also survived by his brother, James Venti of Bristol; five sisters, Gloria Venti of Ellijay, GA, Joan Lugo and husband Rene of Cummings, GA, Elizabeth Pinney of East Hartford, Carol Schwager of Port Ritchie, FL and Mary Jacques and husband Robert of Glastonbury; as well as many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews; and dear friends. He was predeceased by two brothers, John Venti and Joseph Venti.

Calling hours were Saturday, (April 2, 2022) from 9-10:30 a.m. concluding with a Celebration of Life Service at 10:30 a.m. at the D’Esopo East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter Street, East Hartford. Burial with military honors followed in Hillstown Road Cemetery-Veteran’s Field, Manchester.

Donations in Bobby’s memory may be made to Disabled American Veterans Chapter 17, 20 American Legion Drive, Manchester, CT 06040. To share a memory of Bobby with his family, please visit www.desopoeh.com.
The Wall That Heals coming to Norwalk Veterans Memorial Park

The Wall That Heals will be in Norwalk CT from June 2 (8:30am) through June 5, 2022 (2:00pm) at the Veterans Memorial Park Norwalk, CT. The Wall is being sponsored by The Military & Veterans Liaison Committee of Norwalk and The Frank C. Godfrey American Legion Post 12. The three-quarter scale Wall replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point.

Like the original Memorial, The Wall That Heals is erected in a chevron-shape and visitors are able to do name rubbings of individual service member’s names on The Wall. The names are listed in order of date of casualty and alphabetically on each day. Beginning at the center/apex, the names start on the East Wall (right-hand side) working their way out to the end of that wing, picking up again at the far end of the West Wall (left-hand side) and working their way back in to the center/apex. The first and last casualties are side by side at the apex of the Memorial.

The replica is constructed of Avonite, a synthetic granite, and its 144 individual panels are supported by an aluminum frame. Modern LED lighting from the top of The Wall provides readability of The Wall at night.

About The Military & Veterans Liaison Committee
The Military & Veterans Liaison Committee supports all City of Norwalk’s residents who are serving on active duty, National Guard, or Reserves, and all veterans. Our goal is to facilitate the City of Norwalk’s services to its resident Service Members, Veterans, and their families; and to provide benefits and programs similar to those available on active duty bases and stations. Our focus areas are Business and Employment, Education, Finance, Healthcare (including counseling and substance abuse), Housing, Legal, and Military (those still serving). See: https://norwalkvets.org/

POW/MIA News

From Task & Purpose

Why it took the Army almost 57 years to recognize a captured US soldier as a ‘prisoner of war’

The soldier was held captive for almost two weeks in 1965.

Ron Dolecki, 76, lives in Maryland. But in 1965 he was a specialist with the 64th Topographical Engineer Battalion, part of a classified mapping campaign with the Ethiopia-United States Mapping Mission.

During one mission, on July 12, 1965, Dolecki along with Jack Kalmbach, an Army helicopter pilot, and a local interpreter were captured by members of the Eritrean Liberation Front, an armed guerilla group opposing the Ethiopian government. For 12 days the men were marched 150 miles through harsh conditions into neighboring Sudan.

Dolecki then escaped and was repatriated at the Sudanese-Ethiopian border. Kalmbach and the translator were eventually repatriated as well.

Despite being held captive, Dolecki was repeatedly turned down for the Prisoner of War Medal by the Army Awards and Decorations Branch. According to Army officials at the time, because the United States was not in conflict with either Ethiopia or Eritrea, Dolecki was not eligible.

The Prisoner of War Medal, first signed into law in 1985, extends retroactively all the way back to April 5, 1917, when the United States entered World War I. It is given to service members who are taken prisoner or held captive while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; and while serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

In 2013, Congress voted to amend Title 10 of the U.S. Code, expanding eligibility for the award to personnel who had been held captive “under circumstances which the Secretary concerned finds to have been comparable to those under which persons have generally been held captive by enemy armed forces during periods of armed conflict.”

This included cases such as U.S. airmen detained in Switzerland during World War II who had attempted to escape their internment camps and had subsequently been imprisoned. Because Switzerland was a neutral country and not hostile, the
men hadn’t been eligible for the medal despite being detained in prison.

Dolecki applied for the Prisoner of War Medal four times, with his case eventually catching the attention of military historians, Army battalion commanders as well as former and current Senators including Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), among others.

Van Hollen eventually included language clarifying Dolecki’s eligibility in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. On Thursday, Van Hollen’s office announced that the Army would award Dolecki the Prisoner of War Medal. Kalmbach, who passed away in 2015, would also receive the medal posthumously.

“I’m glad the Army also awarded a POW medal to my helicopter pilot and dear friend, Jack Kalmbach, who has already passed away. I only wish we could have received our medals together while he was still alive,” Dolecki said in a press release from Van Hollen’s office.

In an interview with The Baltimore Sun, Dolecki said that, “As far as the medal goes, it has been a long, long struggle to obtain it,” adding that, “After all this time, I’ll certainly treasure it all the more.”

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On The Hill

New Bill Takes Aim at Veterans Records Backlog

A measure considered as part of the Biden administration’s Build Back Better domestic policy bill, which passed the House last November before running into opposition in the Senate, is back in the form of a legislation introduced by chair of the House Oversight Committee, Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.).

The bill would give $60 million to the National Archives and Records Administration to address swelling backlogs of requests from veterans for the military records needed to access critical government benefits.

According to Maloney, the backlog of records at NARA’s National Personnel Records Center currently sits at 600,000 requests. The military and medical records are necessary for benefits like medical treatment and emergency housing. Most are paper-based, making their retrieval difficult during the pandemic.

“It’s clear that our veterans’ records system is in desperate need of reform,” said Maloney in a statement. “This commonsense bill will help provide the funding the National Personnel Records Center urgently needs to modernize its information technology and shore up its workforce to ensure records processing is just a click away.”

The provision of the millions in funding is an echo of a provision in the Build Back Better bill that passed the House, although the new bill also includes other requirements for NARA to give the House Oversight and Reform Committee a plan for the backlog, including timeframes for its reduction, within 60 days of the law being enacted.

The $60 million could be spent on improving cybersecurity and the digital preservation of records.

Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), Cori Bush (D-Mo.) and Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) co-sponsored the bill.

This isn’t Maloney and other lawmakers’ first attempt at bringing down that backlog.

Last fall, a bipartisan group asked the inspector general at NARA to weigh in on how the records center can eliminate the backlog.

House Oversight and Reform members have also urged the Department of Defense to aid the NPRC, and encouraged NARA to tap into the Technology Modernization Fund to modernize systems and clear the pileup of requests.

The agency told lawmakers last summer that the agency wants to eliminate the backlog by the end of 2022; NARA head David Ferriero has also cited an October 2022 date for the backlog to be eliminated.

From Government Executive

Aviator Cancer Bill Would Push VA to Study Toxins Air Crews Faced, Assess Links to Cancers

Just like the fighter pilots they supported, many troops who fueled, armed, and maintained warplanes have suffered from cancer or seen their former colleagues diagnosed with the disease. There’s no data yet on how many ground crew members have gotten sick, but a new bill introduced Thursday
Apr. 14 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify the cancer incidence in the entire aviation community, as well as what toxins they faced, and whether there could be a link to their illnesses.

The “Aviator Cancer Examination Study Act” would require the VA to not only determine the cancer incidence rates for air and ground crews, but also identify the “chemicals, compounds, agents, or other phenomena” they were exposed to. Additionally, it would require the VA to conduct a concurrent study to determine whether there is “a scientifically established causal link between such a chemical, compound, agent, or other phenomena and such cancer incidence or mortality risk.”

The bill differs from another major piece of legislation passed in the 2021 defense authorization act that also includes ground crews, in that toxin identification is required regardless of whether an overall elevated cancer incidence is found. It’s a difference that bill sponsor Rep. August Pfluger, R-Texas, hopes could help sick aviators get their care covered more quickly by the VA.

Pfluger is a colonel in the Air Force Reserves, and an F-15 and F-22 fighter pilot with almost 2,000 flight hours.

“I’ve served with many pilots that had cancer,” Pfluger told Defense One in a phone interview Thursday. “Some of them didn’t survive.”

The bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Colin Allred, D-Texas; former F/A-18E Super Hornet Navy pilot Rep. Mike Garcia, R-Calif., and many others, to assist pilots and maintainers now sick with cancer.

Helping those aviators is part of a larger push by veterans groups and comedian Jon Stewart to finally address the many ways service members have gotten sick with cancers and other illnesses after war and deployments due to the toxins they were exposed to.

A major new bill to give the troops who were exposed to burn pits an easier path to VA care was passed by both the House and Senate earlier this year; President Joe Biden signed another burn pit-related bill into law in 2021.

However, aviation-specific cancers are still being addressed by Congress, and aircrews are facing the same uphill battle more than 260,000 burn pit registry troops faced: Getting the government to recognize potential links between their exposures and illnesses.

But recent studies have suggested that pilots and aircrew are experiencing higher rates of cancer than their non-flying peers.

An Air Force study released last year found that when compared to non-aviation service members, fighter pilots and their flight crews were 29 percent more likely to be diagnosed with testicular cancer; 24 percent more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma; and 23 percent more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Clusters of cancers have already been identified. At Seymour Johnson Air Force Base between 2002 and 2005, six F-15E Strike Eagle pilots and weapons officers between the ages of 33 and 43 were diagnosed with urological cancers; and a separate study found a cluster of seven brain cancers among Air Force Special Operations Command C-130 aircrews between 2006 and 2009. The crew members diagnosed were all between the ages of 31 to 46.

The Pentagon is expected to report soon the results of a data review required by Congress in Section 750 of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act of cancers among aviators and ground crew across all services. But that study will only require a much more in-depth follow-up—and to identify potentially-linked toxins “if … the [Secretary of Defense] concludes that there is an increased rate of cancers among covered individuals.”

If Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin does determine a follow-up is needed, then the next study would break down the cancers by aircraft and by occupation of each service member, by locations deployed, and would identify any “operating environments, including frequencies or electromagnetic fields, where exposure to ionizing radiation (associated with high altitude flight) and nonionizing radiation (associated with airborne, ground, and shipboard radars) occurred in which covered individuals could have received increased radiation amounts.”

Former pilots have questioned whether they were shielded well enough from high-powered radar emissions and the power sources inside fighter jet nose cones. Pilots and crews spend hundreds of hours sitting above that gear as they fly missions, and ground crews are also exposed as they work on the jets.

Pfluger’s bill would require the VA to identify potential toxins now. It would also require the VA to use non-DOD death registries that may capture cancer deaths among individuals who reported military service but did not complete a 20-year career, such as many of the young enlisted troops who service jets for a few years and then get out. Those individuals would not have qualified for lifetime enlisted troops who service jets for a few years and then get out. Those individuals would not have qualified for lifetime DOD health care and are less likely to have ever used the VA health care system.

“It comes down to expanding the sample size enough so that you can see whether or not there's scientific correlation,” Pfluger said.
Veterans Affairs officials are failing to consistently notify state medical boards when department physicians are fired for malpractice or incompetence, a situation that could put the public at risk, according to a new investigation by the VA inspector general.

In a report released last week, the watchdog office found that “for a majority of cases involving separated healthcare professionals, VA medical facility directors failed to follow mandatory processes for reporting [those individuals] to state licensing boards.”

Officials warned that “failure to comply with these reporting processes leaves [state officials] unaware of a healthcare professional’s practice deficiencies and ultimately violates an important VA commitment to protect the health of veterans and the public,” the report states.

The review was prompted by a series of cases in 2020 involving the dismissal of poor-performing VA medical staffers. Officials from the Inspector General’s Office said those cases revealed broader concerns about how well facility directors understood and followed rules regarding notification to outside medical review boards.

Under current rules, the Veterans Health Administration requires those leaders to submit a report to state licensing boards or the National Practitioner Data Bank “when substantial evidence supports a reasonable conclusion that the professional’s clinical practice raises a reasonable concern for the safety of patients or the community.”

VA rules only cover physicians and dentists, but not other health care professionals. The reports allow outside officials to bar the problematic physicians from working in other public-sector or private-sector posts where they might repeat the same mistakes.

But in 107 cases reviewed by the inspector general, only 44 were deemed fully compliant with those reporting rules.

In some cases, the lack of action was a result of confusion over who was responsible for generating the report to state officials. In about one-third of the cases, facility leaders failed to conduct an initial review to see if such reporting was necessary.

“The inspector general found that the noncompliance was linked to facility staff misunderstanding of VHA policy and poor facility processes,” the report states.

“The noncompliance led to lapses in reporting practices that resulted in delays or failures in reporting healthcare professionals whose clinical practice or behavior substantially failed to meet generally accepted standards.”

In response to the report, Veterans Health Administration officials promised changes to the process in coming months. They include new oversight of the issue by the Office of Quality and Patient Safety and new training of health facility leaders on the topic so they better understand their responsibilities.

That work is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The ‘Most Important Tactical Field Item’ in the Vietnam War Wasn’t a Weapon

Shortly after 11 a.m. on July 1, 1970, Capt. Bill Williams, commander of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, and two radio telephone operators with AN/PRC-25 radios jumped from their Huey helicopter. They immediately drew fire. The North Vietnamese Army placed a high priority on destroying the radios or killing their RTOs.

Developed in the late 1950s as a replacement for the Korean War-era AN/PRC-10, the AN/PRC-25, or “Prick 25,” incorporated pioneering solid-state circuitry. Additionally, it was water resistant, simple to operate and easy to maintain. Its 50 Hz “squelch feature,” muting routine background noise when a strong signal wasn’t detected, simplified tuning.

The radio had two antennas, a 3-foot standard antenna for most missions and a 10-foot long-range antenna carried in a canvas bag attached to the radio’s side. U.S. Special Forces and long-range reconnaissance patrols developed improvised “jungle antennas” that extended the range even farther.

Almost soldier-proof

The AN/PRC-25 pack consisted of two metal cans. The lower can contained the battery pack; the upper the transceiver. The radio proved to be almost “soldier-proof” in the field. The handset, however, was vulnerable to moisture.
Most RTOs pulled the battery pack’s clear plastic wrapping over the handset, securing it with a rubber band. The batteries were good for two to three hours of heavy use and could last for several days if used sparingly. The radios also could run off a vehicle’s power supply. The battery packs had to be destroyed when expended since the NVA used them in booby traps.

The “Prick 25” entered Vietnam in 1965 and was carried on virtually all land vehicles, riverine craft and aircraft. Gen. Creighton Abrams, deputy commander and then commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, called the Prick 25 “the single most important tactical field item in Vietnam.” Adopted by more than 30 U.S. allies, the AN/PRC-25 remained in service well into the 1980s.

From RAO Bulletin

Aphorisms

This is a statement of truth or opinion expressed in a concise and witty manner. The term is often applied to philosophical, moral and literary principles. Here are a few:

- I read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. Not to cause any trouble, but shouldn't that be an even number?

- I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.

- When wearing a bikini, women reveal 90% of their body. Men are so polite they only look at the covered parts.

- Relationships are a lot like algebra. Have you ever looked at your X and wondered Y?

- America is a country which produces citizens who will cross the ocean to fight for democracy but won't cross the street to vote.

- You know that tingly little feeling you get when you love someone? That's your common sense leaving your body.

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John F. Kennedy on Memorial Day

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words, but to live by them.”

John F. Kennedy