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VBA sees automation tools as ‘game-changer’ to keep up with record workload



The Department of Veterans Affairs broke a productivity record for processing benefits claims last year. But that’s just the start of what it needs to do.

The VA needs to keep breaking new records for claims processed, if it hopes to keep pace with a workload surge under the burn-pit toxic exposure legislation signed into law last summer.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) completed a record high of 1.7 million total claims in fiscal 2022. VBA processed over 390,000 total claims for benefits in fiscal 2023 so far, about a 13% increase compared to where the same period last year.

At his confirmation hearing to permanently hold the job, acting Undersecretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs told the Senate VA Committee that the VBA has received more than 300,000 claims under the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, since the legislation was signed into law last August.

VBA, Jacobs added, expects to receive 700,000 PACT Act claims by the end of fiscal 2023. Those account for a portion of the approximately 5 million total claims the VBA will receive this fiscal year.

“The bottom line is we’re going to see a significant increase in the number of claims filed, because for the first time ever, the PACT Act is allowing us to provide benefits to generations of veterans who haven’t been able to get those benefits under law,” Jacobs said.

Jacobs, if confirmed, would permanently lead more than 25,000 Veterans Benefits Administration employees across 56 regional offices. The VBA disburses about \$100 billion in benefits every year.

Jacobs previously served as deputy staff director for the committee, and worked for Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) for nearly a decade.

Meetings

Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 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, March 30 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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Chapter/State News

Wall that Heals Memorial Items Exhibit Dedication

Commemorative Partner: Bristol Public Library

Website URL: www.bristolctlib.com

Point of Contact: Scott Stanton

Scottstanton@bristolct.gov

860-584-7787

Event Location: 5 High Street, Bristol, CT, 06010

Description: This event will dedicate a permanent display of memorial items left at the traveling Wall that Heals by family & friends in Bristol, CT. The display case will be purchased by donations from The Friends of the Bristol Public Library and the general public. The memorial items have been donated permanently to the Bristol Public Library by American Legion Post 2 in Bristol, CT. The memorial items and messages left for deceased or missing Vietnam Veterans will be identified as to where placed at the Wall and will be accompanied by any information or stories we have been able to collect about the veteran being memorialized and the special meaning of each item, if known. The Case will be dedicated on National Vietnam Veterans Day in honor of the all Vietnam veterans living or deceased. Living veterans, spouses and family members will be able to receive the appropriate pins and certificates during the ceremony. The ceremony will bring awareness to the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam Veterans and their families as well as the cost of defending freedom.

Birthday Wishes

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

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Norman P. Alderman | David Barrows |
| Joseph E. Billera | Maurice L. Collin |
| Maurice Deschaine | Ted Graziani |
| Stephen E. Hesse | Howard C. Huestis |
| Angelo Licata | J. Andrew Livingston |
| Albert G. Michaud | Richard J. Olson |
| Richard Pikulski | Charles L. Ravenell |
| Willie E. Scott, Sr | Peter R. Sorensen |
| William Taylor | Joseph Tkacz, Jr. |
| Francis M. Zizzamia | Elizabeth Zizzamia |

A special birthday wish to Jacob Cutler, grandson of Chapter members Mike Belliveau and John Cutler.

POW/MIA News



From Connecting Vets

Army vet, former POW celebrates 103rd birthday

Army, World War II veteran and former POW Ellis Allen Sr. recently celebrated his 103rd birthday at the Washington DC VA Medical Center.

Allen's family made the celebration special by joining in the fun virtually. He is the proud father of nine, grandfather of 19 and great-grandfather of 13.

Born Jan. 23, 1920, in Dalton, Missouri, Allen was pursuing a degree at Lincoln University when he was drafted into the Army in 1942, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

After completing basic training, Allen was assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas where he worked at post headquarters and served as post bugler before being sent to Europe in 1944.

A member of the 957th Quartermaster Company in England, Allen helped set up the first Petroleum, Oil and Lubrication depot at Utah Beach. The unit was also tasked with gathering and processing the bodies of American service members who died when their ship was either torpedoed or hit a mine in the English Channel.

In December of 1944, Allen's unit was sent to Nancy, France, where they took over a German Prisoner of War camp until the end of the war.

Allen left the Army after the war ended in 1945 and moved back to Slater, Missouri, but he still felt a need to serve. He re-enlisted in 1947 and attended administration school in Fort Lee, Virginia.

Allen was assigned to the 503rd Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington from 1948 to 1950, when he deployed with the 503rd to Korea.

He recalls arriving in Pusan on an August afternoon and joining his first fire mission by sunset. On Dec. 1, 1950, his unit was overrun by enemy forces at Kunu-Ri Pass, near the Chinese border. Allen became a prisoner of war. During his first winter of internment, Allen witnessed approximately 1,200 American soldiers die of starvation and malnutrition.

The freezing temperatures made it difficult to dig deep enough graves for the deceased and he remembers helping to rebury his fallen comrades in the spring. Allen remained a prisoner of war for 33 months until he was released on Oct. 5, 1953.

Despite his experiences as a POW, Allen continued serving and was reclassified as a communication non-commissioned officer. In 1965, he was stationed in Bamberg, West Germany, when his wife of 23 years, Arzelia, passed away. Overnight, he found

himself facing a new struggle: balancing his career in the Army and being a single parent of five children.

After her death, the Army sent the Allen family stateside, to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri where he joined the 5th Construction Battalion. It wasn't long before they were called to join the fighting in Vietnam. With two wars and 23 years of service already under his belt, Allen had invaluable leadership experience to offer in the war-torn country, but as the only non-commissioned officer in the Army at the time who was also an only parent, the Army chose to keep Allen home with his family.

In 1968, after 26 years of service to his country, Allen retired from the Army and moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where he went to work for the Bendix Corporation as an electrical inspector. During his 17-year career there, Allen worked on modifying fire sets for the Minutemen Missile and tested electronic components of the Pershing Missile, among other projects, until his retirement in 1985.

Allen married Bettie in 1971 and added four stepchildren to his family. His two oldest sons went on to become Vietnam veterans, another joined the Air Force, and his youngest, Jeffery, climbed the Army ranks to colonel before retiring.

Allen is living with dementia and Jeffrey provides him with around-the-clock care with assistance from the Caregiver Support Program.

"Some days I feel like I'm not cut out for this," said Jeffrey, speaking of the challenges of being a caregiver. "But he's my dad and he supported me throughout my life, so it's my turn to be there for him."

Today, the Allen family tradition of service continues through his granddaughter, a commissioned Army officer who will put on the rank of captain this summer.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Notifying Chapter 120 of changes to your mailing address and e-mail address is very important if you wish to continue receiving the Chapter newsletter. Over the past few months, several members' newsletters have been returned to us as undeliverable. This means that we will not mail/e-mail future newsletters until a correct address is received.

Please notify the Newsletter Editor of any change of mailing address or e-mail address at ctchapter120@aol.com or leave a voicemail message at 860-282-7470.

On The Hill



From *Military.com*

Defrauding Veterans Would Be a Federal Crime under Bill Pushed by Senators

Defrauding veterans of their benefits would be its own federal crime under a bipartisan bill recently reintroduced in the Senate.

Under the bill from Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., fraud schemes that target veterans' benefits would be punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine or both.

"Anytime the federal government provides essential benefits to our constituents, there's going to be predators out there to take it away," Cortez Masto said in a phone interview with *Military.com* on Tuesday Feb. 14. "So we have to make sure that we are imposing the appropriate enforcement to protect those individuals so that their benefits are not taken."

The bill, which Cortez Masto and Rubio formally reintroduced Friday, has been introduced in previous Congresses and has even passed the House several times. Most recently, in 2021, the House overwhelmingly approved the bill in a 416-5 vote. But it has never been taken up by the Senate, meaning the legislative process has to start from scratch again this year.

According to data released by the FTC in February 2022, reports of fraud against veterans, service members and spouses jumped 69% in 2021 compared to the previous year.

Within that group, veterans and military retirees reported being targeted the most, with 87,343 fraud reports. The total 110,827 fraud cases reported by military consumers resulted in an estimated \$266 million lost.

Concerns have also been raised that scammers could target veterans more in the wake of the passage of the PACT Act, the sweeping legislation that expanded benefits for millions of veterans exposed to toxins.

While fraud is already a crime regardless of whether the target is a veteran, Cortez Masto, who previously served as Nevada's attorney general, said creating a new offense specifically addressing veterans benefits fraud will give prosecutors more tools to go after criminals. For example, she said, "pension poachers" may escape mail or wire fraud charges if they present themselves as an investment specialist trying to help a veteran.

"If a defendant cloaks themselves as some sort of professional that was just trying to help for a fee, even though their intention all along was to defraud these individuals out of their money

and not necessarily help them and still get to a fee, sometimes it's difficult for prosecutors to use the existing offense," she said.

While the bill, called the Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act, has stalled in the Senate in previous years, Cortez Masto vowed to continue pushing until it gets across the finish line.

"This is something we can all get behind, so I think we're both going to do everything we can to get it going and get it passed on the Senate side," she said, referring to her and Rubio. "It is important for our veterans, not only to protect them and their benefits, but [to] hold people accountable that want to defraud them and scam them."

Bill would launch clinical trials on cannabis use for vet's pain, PTSD

A key Senate panel on Thursday Feb. 16 advanced legislation for the first time which would require Veterans Affairs officials to hold clinical trials on using medicinal cannabis for the treatment of chronic pain and post-traumatic stress.

The measure, dubbed the Medicinal Cannabis Research Act, passed out of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in a closed session after a brief discussion among lawmakers. Related legislation has advanced in the House in recent years, but Thursday marked the first significant movement for the proposal in the upper chamber.

In a statement accompanying the bill introduction, committee chairman Jon Tester, D-Mont., called the proposal an important step in giving veterans more options in how to deal with lingering health issues.

"Our nation's veterans deserve options when it comes to treating the wounds of war, which is why VA needs to have a better understanding of how medicinal cannabis plays a role in their healing," he said.

"Our bipartisan bill ensures VA is listening to the growing number of veterans who find critical relief from alternative treatments like medicinal cannabis, while working to empower veterans in making safe and informed decisions about their health."

The measure was co-sponsored by Alaska Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan and could be considered by the full Senate in coming weeks. Companion legislation has been introduced in the House by Reps. Lou Correa, D-Calif., and Jack Bergman, R-Mich.

It would authorize VA to implement a comprehensive research plan into medicinal cannabis, to include how its use can impact veterans overall quality of life.

The clinical trials would look at not only the direct impact on specific ailments but also the effects of different forms, potencies and methods of cannabis delivery. The legislation does not specify how many veterans would be involved in the research, but calls for a "large scale" study into the issue.

In 2017, the National Academy of Sciences found “conclusive or substantial” evidence that cannabis is helpful in treating chronic pain problems, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders.

But federal research into marijuana-based products has been stalled by the Food and Drug Administration’s classification of the drug as a Schedule I controlled substance, reserved for chemicals with the potential for high abuse risk and considered having no clinically accepted medical use.

Veterans groups and cannabis activists have pushed for changes to that status for years, saying that anecdotal evidence shows significant health benefits for individuals who use medical cannabis.

“Medicinal cannabis is already in use by thousands of veterans across the country, but we don’t yet have the data we need to understand the potential benefits and side effects associated with this alternative therapy,” Sullivan said in a statement.

VA doctors cannot prescribe marijuana, even in the 37 states where it is legal to use. Department officials have said that participation in “state marijuana programs” will not affect veteran eligibility for department care or services.

Thursday’s move drew praise from Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, one of 20 veterans groups to sign a letter of support for the legislation late last year.

“Since 2017, IAVA has made it one of our top priorities to empower veterans who are calling for the medicinal use of cannabis,” said Jeremy Butler, CEO of IAVA, in a statement.

“Eighty-eight percent of IAVA members support the research of cannabis for medicinal purposes and veterans consistently and passionately have communicated that cannabis offers effective help in tackling some of the most pressing injuries we face when returning from war.”

Veterans Affairs News



VA and NFFE reach key agreements to better serve Vets and support VA employees

In February, VA reached three key agreements with the National Federation of Federal Employees

(NFFE) that will help VA better serve Veterans and support VA’s employees. Specifically, VA and NFFE agreed to memorandums of understanding that will:

- Significantly expedite the hiring process for NFFE’s bargaining unit employees, which will help VA implement the PACT Act and deliver toxic exposure-related care and benefits to millions of Veterans;

- Allow NFFE’s bargaining unit employees to use an additional 160 hours of unpaid leave related to the birth of a child, adoption, or foster care;
- Allow the President of NFFE to delegate official time, which will help NFFE grow and develop future leaders and successors.

These new agreements are part of VA’s broader efforts to support bargaining unit employees and execute President Biden’s Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment. More than 9,000 of VA’s public servants are represented by NFFE, including VA nurses, medical officers, pharmacists, and social workers.

“These new agreements provide critical support for VA’s public servants – which, in turn, helps us better serve our nation’s Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “A unionized VA workforce is a strong VA workforce, and we at VA are proud to work with NFFE to continue delivering for Vets.”

More than 79% of all VA public servants are bargaining unit employees, and VA is committed to supporting them as they serve our nation’s Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Over the past two years, VA has taken several key steps to support these employees, including 1) reestablishing the National Partnership Council, a forum for open communication between labor leaders and VA leadership; 2) restoring official time for Doctors, Nurses, Physician Assistants, and other Title 38 employees, meaning that these employees can use work hours to conduct union business and advocate on behalf of their coworkers; 3) reestablishing yearly and Semi-Annual Labor Management meetings with VA union partners; and 4) including the unions in the decision-making process for critical employee-centric decisions, such as the creation of the VHA REBOOT Task Force to address employee burnout.

Winners revealed in VA’s \$20M Mission Daybreak Grand Challenge to reduce Veteran suicides

On Feb.16, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced the 10 winners of Mission Daybreak, a \$20 million grand challenge aimed at developing innovations to reduce Veteran suicides.

During this challenge, VA received more than 1,300 innovation submissions from Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, community-based organizations, health technology companies, startups, and universities – with solutions ranging from lethal means safety concepts, to targeted virtual care programs, to other promising suicide prevention solutions that offer healing and recovery to Veterans. Mission Daybreak is the largest cash federal incentive prize since the establishment of the Prize Authority. An overview of the winning solutions is outlined below.

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA’s top clinical priority and a top priority of the Biden-Harris Administration. This effort is a key part of VA’s 10-year National Strategy for Preventing

Veteran Suicide and the Biden-Harris administration’s plan for Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide. In September, VA released the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, which showed that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

“Our Veterans need and deserve suicide prevention solutions that meet them where they are, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach, and that’s exactly what Mission Daybreak has delivered,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D. “By drawing on a range of focus areas and life experiences, the Mission Daybreak winners have developed innovations that will save Veterans lives – and there’s nothing more important than that.”

The two first-place winners will each receive \$3 million:

- Stop Soldier Suicide’s Black Box Project is a technology solution that identifies and analyzes data from digital devices of Veterans who died by suicide to develop machine learning models that can identify never-before-known risk patterns. Paired with evidence-based, suicide-specific intervention services, the Black Box Project will accelerate precision methodologies in suicide prevention for the Veteran community.
- Televeda’s Project Hózhó is the first mental health app and comprehensive operational plan for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) populations. Televeda designed the tool in partnership with AIAN and Veteran communities for Navajo Veterans with plans to adapt and expand for use with other tribes. The solution incorporates traditional healing practices like storytelling and talking-circle interventions to reduce Veteran suicide and improve access to VA resources.

The three second-place winners will each receive \$1 million:

- ReflexAI is an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tool that can help the Veterans Crisis Line train and maintain a team of responders that can meet the needs of every Veteran who reaches out. The tool utilizes a three-pronged approach of simulation, feedback, and quality assurance, which is nationally recognized as an innovative and responsible use of AI in crisis services.
- Sentinel is a mobile app designed to reduce Veteran suicide by encouraging safe storage of firearms. The application integrates smart firearm and medication locking devices with a Veteran-specific learning and community support network that facilitates strong connections with other Veterans, family, and friends.
- Battle Buddy is a virtual human-led mental health and wellness application that promotes resiliency among Veterans at risk for suicide. The application’s interactive, conversational AI utilizes content from VA’s Suicide Safety Planning program during brief daily check-ins with Veterans. The mobile application will also connect with wearable sensors to leverage sleep, exercise, and other health signals. Battle Buddy

is a partnership between the USC Institute for Creative Technologies and the SoldierStrong Foundation.

The five third-place winners will each receive \$500,000:

- Even Health’s Cabana® is a virtual reality-based group support platform for Veterans who have survived a suicide attempt. The solution adapts an established support group model shown to reduce suicide and associated factors as well as increase resilience and a sense of belonging.
- NeuroFlow is a two-sided technology platform that offers Veterans tailored resources and digital care 24/7 while measuring their evolving behavioral health needs to inform care teams of potential crises before they happen. Providing virtual and in-person support for Veterans who would typically fall through the cracks, NeuroFlow assesses and triages Veterans and caregivers to get them to the right level of behavioral health care and community services based on their available benefits, geography, and clinical presentation.
- Overwatch Project is a peer-based intervention program that empowers Veterans to intervene with at-risk buddies, offering to temporarily hold onto their guns or take protective storage measures before it is too late. This comprehensive program includes training, community engagement, and communications initiatives crafted in a direct, authentic Veteran voice. The Overwatch Project, an initiative of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit FORGE, aims to transform the conversation about firearms and suicide prevention through an approach modeled after the “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” campaign.
- OxfordVR’s gameChange, a digital therapeutic with the Food and Drug Administration’s Breakthrough Device designation, treats severe social isolation common to PTSD, psychosis, and severe depression, and a precursor to suicidal thoughts and behavior. Through virtual reality gameChange offers an immersive and scalable opportunity to treat Veterans where they are before a crisis moment.
- Team Guidehouse’s data platform integrates social determinants of health and social media data into the health record and an external dashboard to identify Veterans at risk in real time and provide actionable insights for suicide prevention. Team Guidehouse is a partnership between Red Hat and Philip Held, Ph.D., Rush University Medical Center.



From Military.com

Black Special Forces Officer to Receive Medal of Honor after Decades of Delays

When reinforcements finally arrived on the afternoon of June 18, 1965, Capt. Paris Davis was able to rescue the last of his wounded men from the battlefield. Hours before, he received an order to abandon them, one that he disobeyed while engaging in harrowing combat for 19 hours.



Now-retired Col. Davis is set to receive the Medal of Honor after the Army inexplicably lost the paperwork for the military's highest award at least twice. (U.S. Army photo)

Davis, disregarding his own safety, saved at least three Americans under the command of his Special Forces unit, which was taking heavy machine-gun and mortar fire from hundreds of Viet Cong fighters. The backs of his legs were peppered with bullets, and part of his finger had been blown off by a grenade -- part of an inventory of at least eight wounds.

He had personally killed more than a dozen enemy fighters with a pistol, M16, machine gun, grenade and a 60mm mortar he set up on his own, according to an after-action report published by the Army -- "stacking bodies the way you do canned goods," he would say in a later interview.

Davis was only 26 then. Fifty-seven years later, now-retired Col. Davis -- one of the first Black men to join the Green Berets -- is set to receive the Medal of Honor after the Army inexplicably lost the paperwork for the military's highest award at least twice, and even after several pushes from his comrades, according to The New York Times.

President Joe Biden called Davis on Monday Feb.13, informing him of the award, according to a family statement.

"As I anticipate receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, I am so very grateful for my family and friends within the military and elsewhere who kept alive the story of A-team, A-321 at Camp Bong Son," Davis said in the statement. "I think often of those fateful 19 hours on June 18, 1965, and what our team did to make sure we left no man behind on that battlefield."

Davis also said in the statement that the call from the president "prompted a wave of memories of the men and women" he served with, friends who had pushed over the decades for the retired colonel to receive the mark of valor he was owed.

Those supporters questioned why the Army lost his Medal of Honor paperwork, and whether Davis' race had played a role in his being overlooked. After the documentation was lost the first time, Davis' commander pushed for an inquiry to find out where it went, but no clear answers emerged.

The award was resubmitted, according to The New York Times. And for a second time, the paperwork was lost. Nonetheless, Davis received the Silver Star and a Purple Heart for his actions.

The civil rights movement was at a fever pitch, and racism was still overtly baked into American institutions like the military. Many of Davis' supporters and teammates, including Davis himself, said that racism delayed his award during an interview with CBS.

"I don't think, I know race was a factor," he said in 2021.

In a 1969 interview on the "Phil Donahue Show," Davis recounted the bravery of his soldiers with reverence, including Spc. Robert Brown, a medic who was struggling with his wounds at the time of the interview.

When asked what he told the colonel who had ordered him to leave Brown behind on the battlefield, Davis said, "I told him, 'Sir, I'm just not going to leave. I still have an American out there.'"

Later, Donahue asked, "You're a Black man who was in a command position of an all-white outfit, and you risked your life, and your career when you refused that order -- that could have been the ball game, couldn't it?" "It sure could have," Davis said, going on to add, "In the dark, brown is just as black or white as anyone else."

Military.com requested comment from the Army as to why Davis' award was delayed, but the service referred questions to the White House.

In November, Military.com learned that Davis' nomination had been approved by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley. Since then, it went to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin for approval and then on to the president.

The White House said that Biden was looking forward to the medal presentation, though did not specify when, according to The Washington Post.

From Fox News

Vietnam veteran's dog tag found in rice field, returned to family 57 years later: 'Means the world'

USMC Corporal Larry Hughes lost his dog tag in 1966 while serving near the Da Nang Province he family of a late Vietnam veteran received a piece of their loved one's time in the Marine Corps decades later, FOX 13 Tampa Bay reported.

In 1966, USMC Corporal Larry Hughes lost his dog tag while serving near the Da Nang Province in Vietnam. Hughes was a humble man who didn't talk much about his service, according to his son Carl, and never said a word about losing the important piece of identification.

In October 2022, former Virginia Senator Jim Webb and Notre Dame Professor Michael Desch took a group of students to visit the province. While exploring near an airstrip used by the U.S. military, a villager approached them and said he had six dog tags that were found plowing rice fields over the years.

Desch said the villager had one of the tags on a keychain, so he asked if they could have it to bring it back to the states. The man obliged, and the tag made its way back to America.

Webb, a former Navy secretary, got to work locating the person it belonged to. After finding out Hughes had died, Webb discovered the veteran's son and sister were alive in Levy County, Florida.

In a joint effort with the Pentagon, Webb arranged for the dog tag to be brought to Hughes's family in Inglis, Florida.

Patricia Hughes Prickett said she couldn't believe it and receiving her brother's ID was like "a step back in time."

"I was always so proud of Larry," she said. "There was never a moment when I was not proud of him, and I'm just glad that he's been recognized."

His family said getting the special piece back five decades later from a place halfway around the world that used to be enemy territory is a "lesson" for us all.

"The two sides hated each other, and look how they come together now, how quickly you can build that friendship, that bond," Carl said. "And that's what the world needs, is everybody can get along and love each other."

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 April 2023 newsletter is 24 March 2023. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

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