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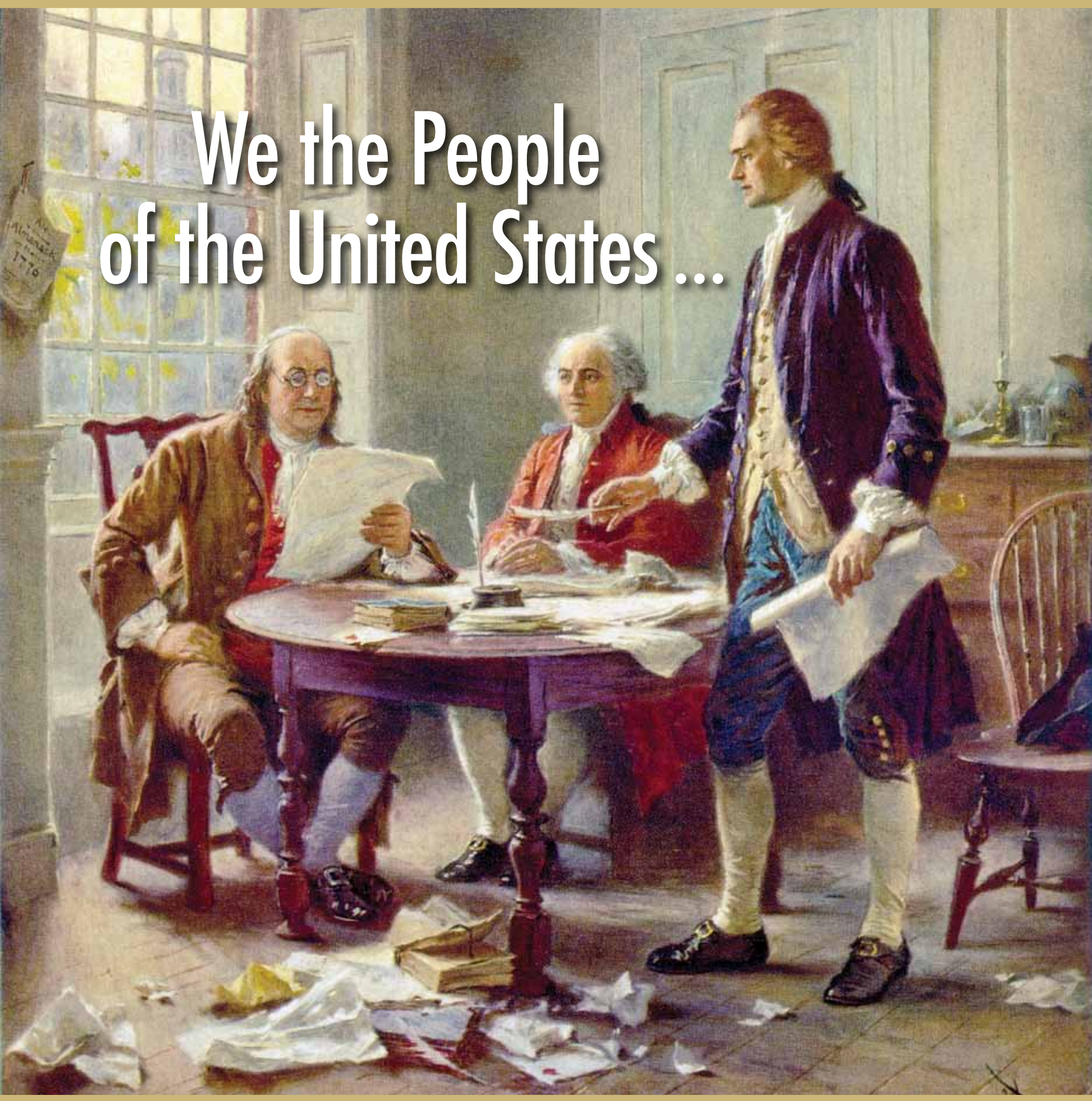
CHRONICLE

The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 5

JULY/AUGUST 2014

We the People of the United States ...



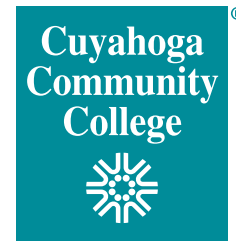


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CHRONICLE

The Newspaper for Veterans and All Who Love Them.

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STAND AT EASE By John H. Tidyman, Editor

To the Men and Women and Their Businesses Who Use DD 214 Chronicle to Get Their Messages to Their Markets

Let's get down to brass tacks. *DD 214 Chronicle*, now in its fourth year of publishing for veterans in a five-county service area, is a very good newspaper for an important audience: veterans and all who love them.

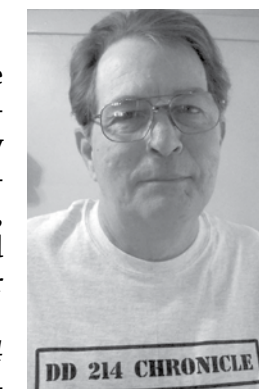
DD 214 Chronicle is delivered without charge to libraries, colleges and universities, Veteran Administration offices, Veteran Administration health centers, the Veterans Service Commissions in five counties, veteran groups such as the VFW, American Legion, Jewish War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans, AMVETS, and

others. We deliver to three or four saloons, our favorite cigar shop, dry cleaners, coffee houses, some restaurants, a growing list of paid subscribers, and our advertisers.

Fact is, *DD 214 Chronicle* is a three-legged stool: our advertisers, our readers, and the editorial staff.

Kick out any leg of the stool and ka-boom, we are unable to publish.

At our last editorial meet-



ing, managing editor Ann Marie Stasko said, "Before we talk about anything else, let's talk about our advertisers. If our advertisers didn't use our newspaper to get their message to people in our service area, we'd be lost."

The conversation went longer than I thought it would, and I have to say, it was a valuable meeting, a wakeup call for the staff.

Our advertisers are a diverse

group: colleges, veteran service commissions, the Greater Cleveland Fisher House, Hospice of the Western Reserve, the Community West Foundation, Dominion, and a host of business card ads.

We went around the table, talking about the way to express our gratitude to our advertisers.

The best suggestion was the simplest. "Tidyman, why not use your column and just say 'thank you?'" The vote was quick and unanimous, 6-0.

To our advertisers, all six of us raised our steins and thanked you.

Mail Call

John "KIKS" Kikol; No regard for freedom of speech or right to assemble

Some old sayings came to mind while attending the 12th annual Rally for Troops yesterday on Cleveland's Public Square, my first appearance at the annual event, since this year the weather was more hospitable than in past years.

I wore my 1966-vintage U.S. Army field jacket given to me before I left Fort Bragg, NC, replete with a peace button pinned to the jacket pocket over the right side of my chest and my Veterans for Peace logo button pinned over my left chest pocket. I also carried my peace flag—but furled, so that only its red and white stripes were visible. Not visible was the white peace symbol on a blue field, in lieu of stars, as on the American flag.

The first old saying that popped into my head was "timing is everything." I mused about when would be a good time to unfurl my peace flag, but ultimately decided it would not be in my best interest to do so at ANY time, in light of the tsunami of "patriotic" jingoistic rhetoric I was forced to listen to from otherwise intelligent people who simply march in lockstep to whatever manipulative fear-mongering, war-mongering politicians of both major political parties proclaim. I decided—and here is the second old saying, from Shakespeare's play *Henry IV, Part I*—"discretion is the better part of valor." I feared boos, name-calling and perhaps even physical assault from the sea of black-leather-jacket-adorned motorcyclists comprising most of the audience if I unfurled my peace flag. I wanted to experience at least one more sunrise in my lifetime. Some of the militarists in the crowd noticed my peace buttons as I walked around the southwest quadrant of Public Square, but said nothing. At least I gave them something to think about. Mission accomplished. (Where have I heard that before?)

The third old saying has to do with "choosing your battles." I did not want blood—specifically mine—spilled on Cleveland's Public Square.

The reason for my caution in keeping my peace flag furled was because John "KIKS" Kikol, organizer of the

event since its inception, indicated early in the program that he is very hostile to peace messages. He said that when he learned anti-war demonstrators were on the same southwest quadrant of Public Square more than a dozen years ago shortly after the Iraq war began that he wanted to drive downtown and run over the protesters, but that it would be an "accident." The comment was met with approval by many in the crowd. That was enough for me to keep my peace flag furled.

Kikol, a graduate of the Cleveland Marshall Law School, is therefore an attorney who I assume, is quite familiar with the United States Constitution. Maybe he skipped law school classes focusing on the First Amendment and its "freedom of speech" clause which protects, of course, peaceful public protest.

Before the program began, a veteran walked up to me—Tom, a biker from North Olmsted on the west side of Cleveland but a graduate of Brush High School in Lyndhurst on Cleveland's east side—and we started chatting. He served during the Vietnam War but was stateside during his entire tour of duty. He was very simpatico with my comments during our conversation, perhaps because he had noticed the peace messages on my chest. He nodded in agreement when I mentioned "I support the troops and the best way to support them is to bring them home alive and not dead in aluminum coffins, or wounded or mentally ill."

My new friend and fellow veteran, Tom, got me on a roll.

"More than 58,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam and for what? Such a waste. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army posed absolutely no threat to United States security. Now communist Vietnam is our ally against China."

Tom mentioned that several U.S. firms are doing business in Vietnam, shaking his head at the tragic irony of us being relatively friendly with a communist nation where more than 58,000 young American lives were squandered.

"We were told if we didn't defeat the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese we would be fighting them on the streets of San Francisco," I said, "Well, that didn't happen."

Tom mentioned the "domino theory," which postulated that if South Vietnam fell to the communists—now our friends—neighboring countries would also go communist. "That didn't happen," I said. "Cambodia went communist independent of any invasion from the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army."

Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11 and had no weapons of mass destruction, resulting in George W. Bush and Barack Obama dispatching hundreds of young Americans to early graves, not to mention tens of thousands of Iraqi men, women and children, with this enormously wasteful, bloody, unjustified history being replicated in Afghanistan.

It is impossible for a uniformed military to defeat adversaries wearing civilian clothes and living among civilians, which was the Viet Cong's very strategy in Vietnam, adopted by al Qaeda in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The only way to deal successfully with such a strategy is plainclothes undercover work to gain terrorists' confidence, infiltrate their cells, discover their plans, then arrest, indict and put the suspects on trial.

Oh, did I mention Kikol NEVER served in the military nor did his fellow flag-waving, non-thinking, puppet Monica Robins, who emceed the event? It is likely, therefore, they do not have a memory, as I do, of a fellow soldier in Vietnam having his head blown off by mortar shrapnel, nor another friend who lost his life when his Navy jet went down over North Vietnam, nor another friend --- the husband of a cousin --- killed in an ambush in South Vietnam.

All of these lives were wasted, as were those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The biggest problem in this country, evidenced by Kikol's and Robins' mindless rhetoric, is a refusal to question authority. The second-big-

gest problem is that we do not empathize with the people we victimize.

Louis H. Pumphrey

Drafted in 1966, Pumphrey was a reporter for, then editor of, the First Infantry Division ("Big Red One") newspaper in Vietnam, 1967-68.

Serendipity

I happened upon the May/June issue of *DD214 Chronicle* in the waiting room of a hospital about three weeks ago. My first reaction was, "It's vastly better than the usual left-behind reading material in such places," and then I found it is not only *better*, it is *good*.

I'm struck by the range and diversity of the articles – and, for that matter, the ads – by the different perspectives, different opinions, and different expressions all united around the theme of veterans' issues: concerns, opportunities, memories, needs, hopes. Unlike most publications, you reflect the reality that veterans are a diverse group – different ages, different priorities, different opinions, and different races – and that helps me remember that veterans are not a separate category, a "different kind" of Americans, but are an expression of the vast variety of people who make up this country.

I was especially struck by the Ken Kirchner article, "Hollywood, WWII, and Korea," in which he cites the service records of 93 actors, writers, and other "star" types who served in the Second World War or Korea (and Randolph Scott in WWI!) Ronald Reagan (conservative Republican) was in the same list as Paul Newman (liberal Democrat). I knew Henry Fonda was a Democrat, and Jimmy Stewart a Republican, but had to go on line to find Tony Curtis a Democrat and Robert Montgomery a Republican, and to find some other interesting facts about these "star veterans."

Charlton Heston was famously conservative on some issues (gun ownership,) but his liberal leadership on racial integration has faded from memory. I was surprised to find Marine vet Lee Marvin was a lifelong, committed Democrat, and pleased to discover Republican Chuck Connors was a two-sport professional

Continued on page 17



Born on the Fourth of July

By Terry Meehan

George M. Cohan composed this patriotic ditty in 1904, and Jimmy Cagney sang it in the 1942 movie *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Patriotism ran high during both of those eras, just as it did in the early sixties when John Kennedy challenged us to "ask what you can do for your country." A Wisconsin youngster, Ron Kovic, who was actually born on the Fourth of July in 1946, answered that call and joined the Marines right out of high school. A year later, he was in Vietnam.

A lot happened to Kovic in the years that followed. His patriotic zeal gave way to agony as he fought for his life on the operating table and eventually lost the use of his legs. He became bitter toward the treatment of veterans; later, after the 1970 Kent State shootings, he also became bitter toward the treatment of protesters. He published *Born on the Fourth*



of July in 1976 and became America's foremost anti-war activist.

Not exactly a story with a Hollywood ending, but that didn't stop Oliver Stone from making a movie. I was in the audience as Stone recently hosted a 25th anniversary screen-

ing of the 1989 movie at the Roger Ebert Film Festival in Champaign, Illinois.

He introduced the film by saying he had not seen it in a long time, and was wondering if it still held up. I was wondering the same thing. Both Stone and Kovic got Oscar nods for their screenplay and Stone picked up an Oscar for Best Director, just as he did three years earlier for *Platoon*.

Once the movie was over, Stone answered ques-

tions, many of which were about events he dramatized which did not actually occur. For example, Kovic accidentally shot a fellow Marine in a friendly fire incident during an ambush. Stone's movie included a scene where Kovic journeys to the soldier's

home to apologize to the family. That never happened. "Why did you film a confession that did not really take place?" a fellow audience member asked. "The whole movie was a confession," replied Stone.

So, does the movie hold up after 25 years? It does provide an accurate historical view of the era, but it also comes off as somewhat dated. The best reason to watch it today is the same as it was in 1989: The acting of Tom Cruise. Nothing he did before (*Top Gun*) or since (*Mission Impossible*) compares to the Oscar-nominated performance he gives as Ron Kovic.

Kovic's story is another matter. Stone's movie is just one of many he has made; but to Kovic, this narrative has been his entire life, a narrative that transcends any movie and continues to this day. He is reportedly at work on a sequel.

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at Lorain County Community College

The Student Veterans Services office at LCCC assists all veterans, guardsmen, reservists and their spouses with making the transition to a successful educational career. You've done your duty, now let us help you prepare for your future.

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 Lorain County Community College

WW II Vet “Rosie the Riveter” Honored for Service by Hospice of the Western Reserve

For more than seven decades, a World War II veteran and a real-life “Rosie the Riveter” have continued a love affair that began when both were teens. The pair, Joe and Helen Wilkinson, currently living in Avon Lake, were honored for their service to the country at a “pinning ceremony” sponsored by the Hospice of the Western Reserve.

The couple, as well as several of Joe’s family members spanning three generations, received patriotic pins and were lauded for their service. The ceremony for the couple, which began dating 74 years ago, included friends, family and nine members of the American Legion Post 211.

Joe, 91, was drafted at age 17, serving in the Army’s air corps (the forerunner to the United States Air Force) in World War II. He was appointed company clerk because he was the only newly-drafted soldier in the company who knew how to type. He also worked loading B-26 Marauder bombers.

Joe frequently wrote to Helen when he was overseas, finally telling her, “I’m coming home, get the wedding dress ready.” The couple married

on Sept. 23, 1945, after Joe returned. While he was serving overseas, Helen remained in the United States, working in a “Rosie the Riveter” position, securing airplane wings with bolts in Indiana.

The pinning ceremony, which honors veterans with flag pins and certificates, regardless of age or affiliation with Hospice of the Western Reserve, was a multi-generational affair and included pins for Joe’s son Randy Wilkinson (Marine Corps), grandson Michael Rowe (Air Force), brothers Paul Wilkinson (Army Corps of Engineers) and Jack Wilkinson (Tank Corps), and the father-in-law of his daughter Nancy, Russell Rowe (World War II).

Helen was honored with a certificate, as was Joe.

The event allowed Joe, who spent almost three years overseas, to remember not only his service to the country, but the courtship that began before he served and culminated in marriage.



she was 16,” Joe said. “I’ve known her since she was a little kid. I was best friends with her brother. Our first date was at a party her family threw for her on her 16th birthday.”

The couple took several opportunities to exchange quick kisses after the ceremony which was led by Hospice of the Western Reserve volunteer and Navy veteran Greg Weiss.

For Weiss, the pinnings are an important way to commemorate and honor veterans. He has conducted more than 125 on behalf of Hospice of the Western Reserve since 2012.

“These are some of the most humble people I can meet,” Weiss said. “It’s an honor and a privilege. Watching Joe’s face I could see he was so proud. I could see it meant so much to him. And to have

three generations of the family also involved is so special.”

The veterans’ recognition ceremony is part of Hospice of the Western Reserve’s *Peaceful & Proud* program, which provides assistance to veterans.

Veterans Walk of Honor

Surrounding Old Glory at the Ames family Hospice House in Westlake is a beautiful garden and walking path dedicated to veterans of all ages and those currently serving in the armed forces. For a donation of \$250, patrons can inscribe a brick for a veteran one wants to honor. All bricks are 4”x 8” and allow a personal inscription of 3 lines of 14 characters. This special section of the Tribute Gardens honors the shared sacrifice of all who put their lives on the line to defend their country.

The couple, who were raised in Carbon Hill, Ohio and have known each other since they were children, will celebrate their 69th anniversary this fall.

“I knew I wanted to date her but her parents wouldn’t allow it until

DD 214 Chronicle Kicked Out of Mentor City Hall; “Don’t have room for it,” office worker says

by Patrick T. Toomey

A Mentor City Hall employee insisted DD 214 Chronicle no longer be delivered. The employee at City Hall instructed the DD 214 Chronicle driver to cease and desist delivery.

She said, “We don’t have room for (DD 214 Chronicle).”

Veterans and friends of veterans can still



pick up copies of DD 214 Chronicle at AMVETS and the VFW in Mentor, among many other delivery sites in Lake County.

DD 214 Chronicle began publishing four years ago, creating a

newspaper for the tens of thousands of veterans in a five-county area: Lake, Lorain, Summit, Medina, and Cuyahoga.

Make Your Garden Grow This Year: Free Manure from the VA

Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson made the following statement in Phoenix, Arizona:

“No veteran should ever have to wait to receive the care they have earned through their service and sacrifice. As the President said last week, we must work together to fix the unacceptable, systemic problems in accessing VA healthcare. I believe that trust is the foundation for everything we do – VA must be an organization built on transparency and accountability.”

Little late.

Yet Another Reason Reading is Vital

The American Federation of Labor was founded by Samuel Gompers in 1886. Gompers, born in 1850, came as a boy with his parents to America from the Jewish slums of London; he entered the cigar-making trade and received much of his education as a “reader” (a worker who read books, newspaper stories, poetry and magazine articles to fellow employees to help break the monotony of their work in the shop) and became a leader of his local union and of the national Cigar Makers Union.

A statement by the founders of the AFL expressed their belief in the need for more effective union organization. “The various trades have been affected by the introduction of machinery, the subdivision of labor, the use of women’s and children’s labor and the lack of an apprentice system—so that the skilled trades were rapidly sinking to the level of pauper labor,” the AFL declared. “To protect the skilled labor of America from being reduced to beggary and to sustain the standard of American workmanship and skill, the trades unions of America have been established.” Thus the AFL was a federation that organized only unions of skilled workers.

News from a Parallel Universe

Suites at First Energy Stadium to be Leased

Cleveland, O. — Fred Nance, Senior Advisor and Special Counsel to the Cleveland Browns, announced today luxury suites at First Energy stadium will be leased to men and women with lots of money and no common sense. At a news conference attended by two part-time reporters from Sun Newspapers and one journalism student from Cleveland State University, Nance explained, “First Energy Stadium is simply not producing the revenues we predicted when we started the project.”

National Hockey League Approves Marine Corps Team; Injuries Expected to Triple

The NHL today approved the Camp Pendleton Jarheads’ application to the NHL. Negotiations for the Jarheads were delayed as the NHL sought an insurance carrier.



White House Announces Contest: Where Should We Have Our Next War?

Citing poor sales and diminishing profits for arms and weapons suppliers, President Obama decided to let the American public decide which country we should invade.

Chairman of the War Profiteers Council Henry Schwartz told NBC News, “I can’t sit by and watch my members lose millions and millions and millions of dollars just because the U.S. of A. no longer has any wars, police actions, or arms assistance to third-world countries.”

The Commander-in-Chief

added, “To seek peace instead of war will mean the loss of thousands of good-paying jobs in the weapons industry. Our military cemeteries will have to lay off personnel. It’s not just big jobs, but small ones, too. Think about liquor sales to officers clubs, laundries near posts, hookers whose primary market has been young men getting out of basic training, war correspondents, and more.”

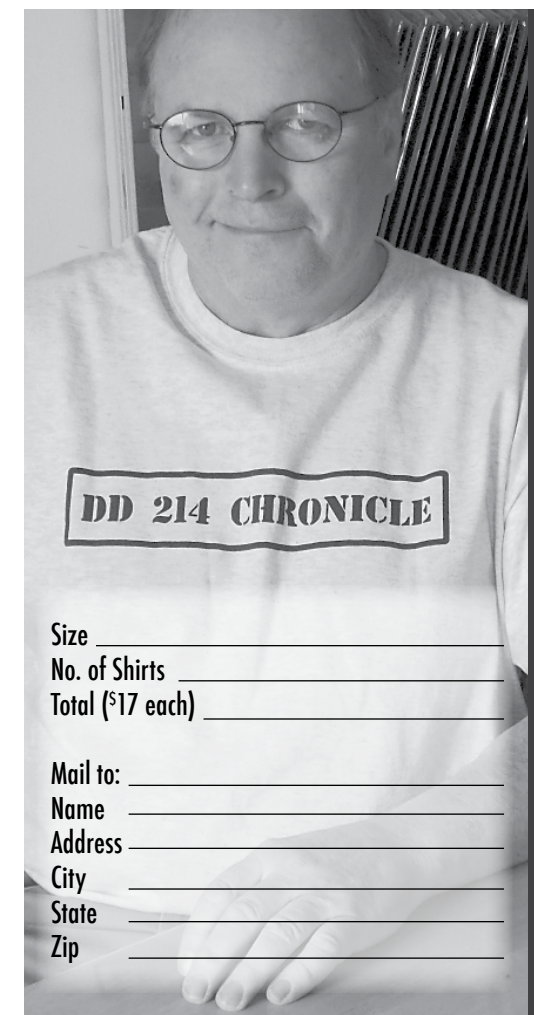
While rules for the contest are not yet completed, the president said, “We want to keep war close by, so Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and California might be good places.”

Winners will have their choices of: Canadian whisky, Mexican vacation for *Cinco de Mayo*, which marks the Mexican military victory over the French in 1862, Cuban cigars, or California electric shock therapy.

Top Ten Reasons for the Timely Cessation of Smoking

By Ben Story

1. You no longer have to support sports stadia in downtown Cleveland. This is especially reasonable given the poor W-L records. Tell yourself when the Tribe wins the World Series, you can light up again.
2. You stink. Quit and you won’t. Not from cigarets, anyhow.
3. When you carelessly run out of smokes, there are fewer and fewer smokers to whom you can ask, “Got a cigarett?”
4. If you toss your cigaret money in an old whiskey barrel, soon you’ll have enough for that Harley-Davidson you’ve been dreaming about.
5. After a few months, you will notice your jeans no longer fit. What a great reason to buy new jeans.
6. You get bragging rights. “I quit,” is one of the most satisfying lines you will ever speak. Right up there with, “Honey, I’m going to the Harley-Davidson store.”
7. You might live longer, though your family and friends might not see that as a benefit.
8. Your smokers’ cough will disappear. Especially valuable if you’re a burglar.
9. No longer will you be banished from your favorite saloon, your favorite bartender ordering you, “You gonna smoke? Outside.”
10. Some people believe you will better taste food. Must be, because smokers who have quit tend to further develop their beer bellies.



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Baldwin Wallace University; Where Veterans Are Welcomed, Educated, and Sent Off to Make the World a Better Place

Baldwin Wallace University's place in American education is secure. The college, created a century and a half ago, is also proud of its history of inclusion: In addition to white, male students, BWU, with no regard for race or gender, has always accepted and educated young men and women.

Think about it. A highly-regarded, liberal arts college in the small Midwest town of Berea, welcoming all manner of men and women who sought the American Holy Grail: education.

BWU also rolls out the welcome mat for veterans. The young troops find an administration eager to assist veterans who go from military life to life as a student. It isn't always easy; military and civilian are two different lifestyles.

A student veteran at BWU added another dimension when he

said, "Vets know all about hallowed ground. When you think about it, Baldwin Wallace is also hallowed ground. The university has a history of inclusion and a reputation for academic excellence. Here's the BW hallowed ground part: When women and minorities had little chance for education, BW just referred to its own charter. It was there to educate."

When *DD 214 Chronicle* writes about veterans and the colleges and universities in its service area, it has been missing an important point: College life can be wonderful.

No reveille.

No starched pants and shirts.

No forced marches.

No inspections.

No saluting.

Instead, campus life marches to a vastly different beat.

Everyone on campus — administrators, faculty, students — shares a common goal: Education. Not everyone goes about it the same way; not everyone follows the same path. But the essence of the university is to teach, to inspire a deep love and respect for education. Another word for education might be exploration. For all we know, we have barely scratched the surface.

On campus, the social life is purely wonderful. Berea, after all, is a sweetheart of a town. Music of every stripe, sports, all sorts of visiting artists, restaurants, and MetroParks (what veteran can resist a walk in the woods, book in one hand and cold beer in the other?)

Baldwin Wallace University, it should be noted, is a Yellow Ribbon School, honored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In practical

terms, it means veterans can attend this private school tuition-free.

There's more: BW has been designated a Military Friendly School for its excellence in serving the needs of America's military service members and veterans. This recognition ranks BW in the top 20 percent of all colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide.

"BW is committed to providing a supportive environment and staff dedicated to meeting the needs of our veterans as they move from military life to the classroom," said Nancy Jirousek, director of adult and continuing education/veteran services at Baldwin Wallace University.

"We value their contributions to this country and are devoted to working hard to help them achieve academic success while they are here."



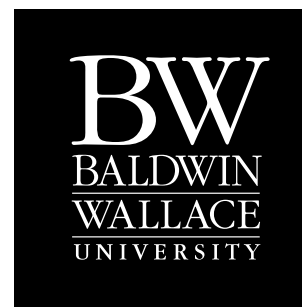
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For Further Information:

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On The Cover:
PFC Matthew Zajac, U.S. Army
with his father, Mike Zajac



THE VOW

*"We will wait and pray 'til they all come home."
That was our anthem during World War II.*

*Today, we add this: "...and if they are broken...
we will fix them as best we can...and we will
do it with the help of their families...and the
Greater Cleveland Fisher House."*

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Greater Cleveland Fisher House is a registered 501c3 non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible. Contributions can be made at any Key Bank branch.

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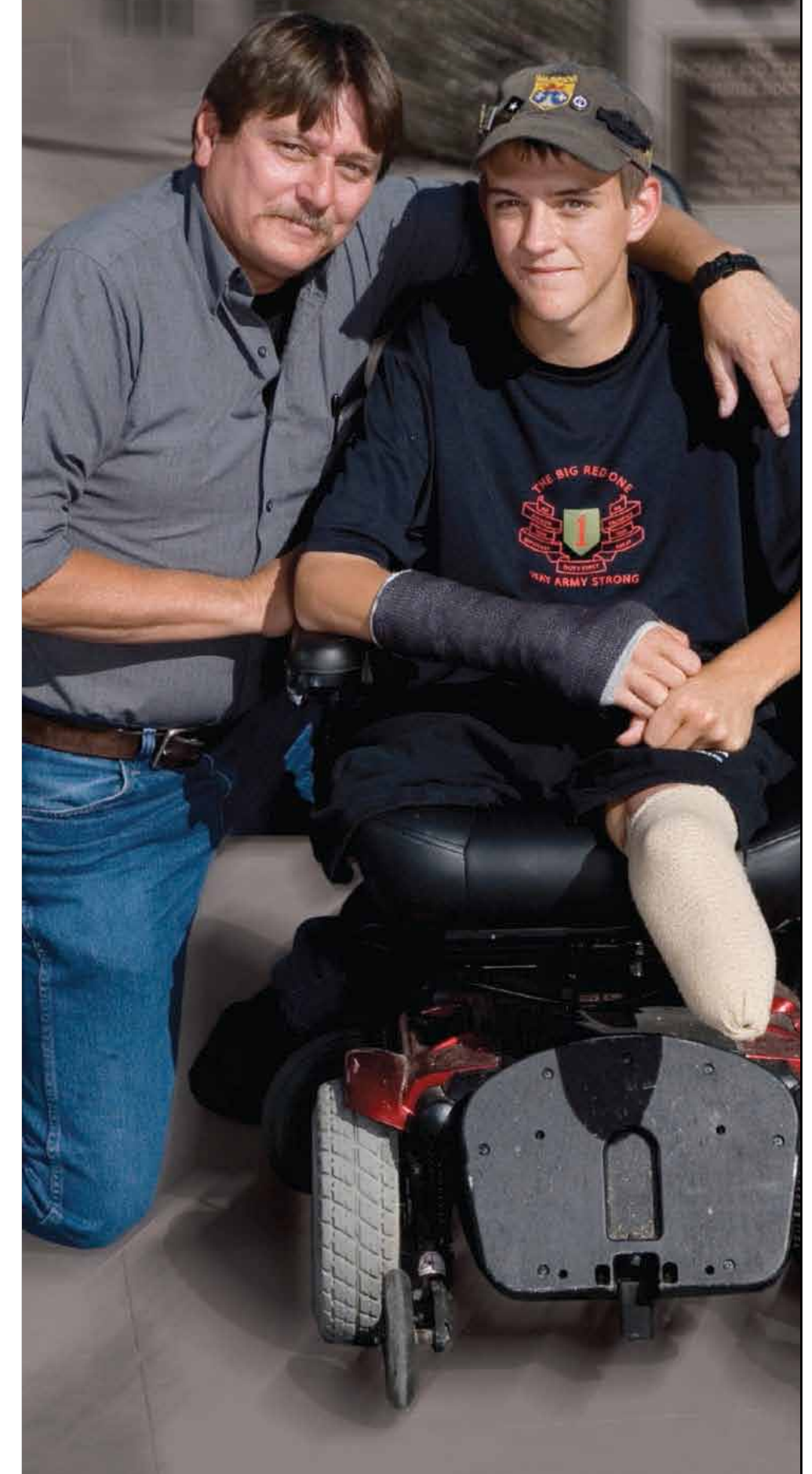
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THE GREATER CLEVELAND FISHER HOUSE



Dead Men Flying - Victory in Viet Nam - The Legend of Dust Off: America's Battlefield Angels

A book review by JC Sullivan

I first learned of Patrick Henry Brady several years ago while watching stories on America's Medal of Honor recipients. What I remember most was learning of his youthful accidental plunge into the deep end of a swimming pool. A non-swimmer, and because of his clear-headed thinking and absence of panic, he simply held his breath and walked on the bottom until he emerged at the shallow end. I have often related this story since that time. That ability served him well in Vietnam and continues in his post-active duty life.

Dead Men Flying is a story of the courage of men and women he served with; some are named, others not. Co-written by Brady, a retired Army Major General, and his daughter Meghan Brady Smith, the story revolves around many Army officers, enlisted men and nurses in Viet Nam and elsewhere, in particular the late Major Charles

Kelly and the co-author himself. He describes the combat operations of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) during his first tour, beginning in 1964, when the war was hot but America had not yet contributed many soldiers or American lives to it. His second tour, with the 15th Medical Detachment, which he eventually commanded, ended in 1968, the year of the Tet offensive.

Brady has been described as the top pilot and most highly-decorated soldier of the Viet Nam war. He is a man of strong faith and incredible luck. He earned numerous decorations for valor, to include several *Purple Hearts*, two *Distinguished Service Medals*, one *Distinguished Service Cross* and the *Medal of Honor*.

The book describes many of America's unsung heroes and the

colorful characters Brady knew. He unabashedly describes heartfelt love for Georgian Charles Kelly, the father of *Dust Off*. Killed on just such a mission, Kelly's last words were, "When I have your wounded." Brady has dedicated the book to Kelly and



his family and "all the Kelly twigs," meaning those who were tutored in Kelly's ways. Kelly was unique in the degree to which he possessed all forms of courage, which is, of course, the bedrock of leadership. A man of humble beginnings and humility is

a constant mark of great leaders," Brady wrote. He also found in Kelly what he believes is the key to courage: faith. "I have not known many people of constant repetitive courage who were not also people of faith. Kelly was a man of deep faith founded in World War II and fostered throughout his life."

So many who survived Viet Nam are alive due to the actions of "dust offs", the air ambulance operations and their helicopter pilots and crewmen. Brady's service in Viet Nam saved over 5,000 wounded during his 2,500+ combat missions. His influence in educating those right out of flight school undoubtedly saved many lives as well.

General Creighton Abrams, Commander of U.S. forces in Viet Nam, said this about *Dust Offs*, "Courage above and beyond the call of duty was sort of routine for them. It was a daily thing, part of the way they lived. That's the great part and it meant so much to every man who served there. Whether he ever got hurt or not, he knew *dust off* was there. It was a great thing for our people."

General Brady has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Seattle University and an MBA from Notre

Continued on page 15

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Ohio War Orphans Scholarship

The Ohio War Orphans Scholarship awards tuition assistance to the children of deceased or severely disabled Ohio Veterans who served in the Armed Forces during a period of declared war or conflict.

"Disabled" means having a sixty percent or greater service-connected disability or receiving benefits for permanent and total nonservice-connected disability, as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

To be eligible, students must be enrolled for full-time undergraduate study and pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree at an eligible Ohio college or university. Ohio residency is required. Applicants must be under the age of 25.

How much aid is available? Scholarship benefits cover a portion of instructional and general fee charges at two and four-year public institutions and a portion of these charges at eligible private colleges and universities.

How do I apply? Application is made to the Ohio Board of Regents/State Grants & Scholarships Department. Applications are available from the Ohio Board of Regents/State Grants and Scholarships Department, high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, Veterans Service Offices or online

at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/ohio-war-orphans>.

The application deadline is July 1st of each year.

The Ohio War Orphans Scholarship Board meets annually, usually in July.

The Board met July 31, 2013 to approve new applicants for the 2013-2014 academic year. After reviewing the program budget, they chose to maintain coverage at 93% of tuition/general fees for students attending Public Universities and Community Colleges. For students attending independent (non-profit or for-profit) institutions, the annual award will be \$6,628.

Students must attend full-time, and prior recipients must meet appropriate cumulative GPA requirements (minimum 2.00).

Dependent's Educational Assistance (DEA) (chapter 35 of title 38, U.S. Code)

The DEA program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents and survivors of certain Veterans.

- Veterans that are permanently and totally disabled as the result of, or dies of, a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of or be aggravated by active duty.
- Veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability who dies from any cause.

- Service member who is missing in action or is captured in line of duty and is currently being held by a hostile force.
- Service member who is currently being forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

To determine if you qualify for either program please contact the Lorain County Veterans Service Office.

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America's Greatest Talent Pool: Veterans

By Edward Senko

A good friend of mine observed, "No wonder companies want to hire veterans -- they're the only ones who know how to work."

Thought provoking, that idea. My friend is nearing sixty and works harder than a draft horse. His experience and observations are worthy of study.

I asked what factors contributed

to his observation, and he said, "My own experience." His judgment may be apocryphal, but that doesn't mean it's inaccurate.

He went on to say the virtues taught in the military are darn near tangible.

He continued: "Think about it. Veterans bring values and virtues to the job site. I don't care if they're

computer designers, house painters, university professors, long-distance truck drivers, nurses, or dentists. Prep school for them was the military."

True. Perhaps we fail to understand what veterans bring to the workplace. Veterans understand teamwork better than the Cleveland Browns. They bring a sense of responsibility to the workplace and understand how valuable their contributions are to company goals. When paychecks are passed out, they can look into the eyes of the paymaster.

See the big picture and their part in completing that picture. My added observation is that veterans are mission-oriented. They understand their place in the scheme of things. They know that any missing link means the chain is useless.

Complaining that I sound like a war-weary, crabby, dyspeptic, old fart will do you no good. My friend

is more right than wrong.

I don't blame the irresponsible younger generation. If their parents can pay Catholic high school tuitions upwards of \$40,000 for one graduate, the value of money is undermined. If students are driven to and from school, little wonder they suffer obesity. If the news media tells young students that they will have trouble finding work and when they do find it, it will pay far less than their parents were paid, there is little incentive to build the foundation for a good life.

All of which is bunk.

The negative effects may be long in coming, but I think they await, not unlike a well-concealed booby trap. If a student doesn't learn enough to enter a highly competitive work force, the die is cast.

When Sigmund Freud was asked by an associate, "What does man need to be happy," Freud said only, "Why, work and love."



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A Nurse Named Helen; Thank You and Godspeed

By Eli Beachy

They loved another red-head other than Lucy long ago in Medina County. Local lore says anybody who met County Health Nurse Helen Smathers and didn't fall in love was a candidate for the insane asylum. The carrot topped bundle of energy won the hearts and minds of everyone she met. Given the nature of the job in 1941, she'd managed to meet just about everybody.

In a school one day and sitting at a farmer's kitchen table the next, Miss Smathers combined the advent of modern medicine with the last gasps of ancient administration. She fought measles epidemics and outbreaks of chicken pox seven days a week. It was a job she loved but there was a greater love for the sweetheart of Medina: America.

It goes with the nursing profession that occupation is all about duty. For Helen Smathers that duty to the needs of a nation was far greater than all the assistance she could render little old Medina County. With a fond farewell and promise to stay in touch,



the Medina County nurse was off to help save the world.

Within a few weeks of Pearl Harbor, County Health Nurse Helen was Lieutenant Smathers, sailing into Manila Bay as part of an Army relief mission. Instead of chicken pox and mumps, it was dysentery and cholera to be treated on a peninsula called Bataan. Instead of broken bones, it was bullet wounds but the hours remained the same. It was twenty-four hours a day of duty. The Japanese were coming and weren't going to be stopped.

American strategy in the Philippines had been based on fighting a delaying action until relief forces could be mobilized from the United States. Unfortunately for the War Department in Washington, the Japanese hadn't read that strategy manual, preferring a relentless assault. The islands were lost, all that was left was to remove as many as possible to Australia no matter how much she objected.

Lieutenant Smathers left in the last hours of freedom, protesting all

the way down the dock. It was duty; critical care nursing was far more important in her mind than her own safety. For the Army it was another matter. They were out to make Helen Smathers a celebrity.

The noble nurse with the unforgettable looks had little time for administering injections Down Under. The Army made her a fashion model for new uniforms, the public face of the noble nurses. It was never Helen Smathers intention to be anything but a nurse but it was orders all the same. She was a most valuable asset to the war effort but about to become even more valuable to a reporter named Martin.

The humble nurse who served in Hell only to become the fashion model only to become the devoted wife of NBC Chief Reporter Martin Agronski. A happy ever after, even in that horror known as World War II.

Eli Beachy is author, historian, and very nice man. His stories for DD 214 Chronicle are among the best-read and interesting.

Meet Gunny; You're Going to like this Guy

By Kathy Steenblik

For veterans in Cuyahoga County, the Veterans Service Commission is one of our best resources. Note: It is not part of the Veterans Administration. VSC was created many wars ago and its mission, simply put, is to extend a helping hand to veterans.

The Commission knows of what it speaks. All the counselors there are veterans. Each brings different talents to serving us; their shared knowledge and experience makes it one of government's most efficacious services. When a veteran's situation doesn't fit neatly into the program, it becomes the subject of a round table discussion. With round table experience, no problem is too great.

Seeking solutions is almost like having the conference table sur-

rounded by Columbo, Sherlock Holmes, Magnum, P.I., Mike Hammer, Andre Baugher, and Lenny Briscoe.

Money solves some problems, but not all; that's where The Team comes in, sharing ideas, suggestions, resolutions, and advice.

If The Team doesn't have the answer, likely the wrong questions were asked. The Team can find the right questions and the right answer.

But The Team is not filled with miracle workers. Instead its ranks are filled with educated, experienced, dedicated, knowledgeable veterans whose mission is to lend a professional hand to those among us who need it. And, let's face it, at one time or another, we all need a helping hand.

Brian "Gunny" McGoun is one of the staff who knows both sides of the street. A 20-year man in the Marine Corps, he still wears his hair shorter than a knock-knock joke.

In his position, he brings vast experience to the position. He knows how troops think, how they speak, what they need, and what they want. He is realistic and oriented to his mission: Offering all The Team can do for us.

He leans on one of his former assignments, recruiting. With his training with The Team, he knows which questions to ask and when follow-up questions are necessary to get the whole picture.

While he asks the right questions, he waits for the right answer,

his eyes focused on the veteran in front of him.

Many veterans would be surprised at the training necessary to work with The Team. Gunny was fortunate because instead of a crash course, he started part-time, and learned full time. One of the virtues of the men and women who are members of The Team, each is eager to share.

His success is helping more than 100 veterans better focus, and return to the work force. He is mindful veterans understand the chain of command, and that if any link is weak or broken, the chain becomes weakened.

He misses the Marine Corps but is committed to us.

Hook, Line, and Sinker: Fishing for Veterans

By Amanda McCoy
Cuyahoga Community College

Henry David Thoreau once said, "Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." This is partially true for Ohio native Joe Temkiewicz, a Vietnam veteran and avid fisherman. Every summer, the Temkiewicz family (Joe, his wife and three sons) travel to Canada to fish and relax. Along with fishing and enjoying the outdoors, the goal of the trip is family bonding, and they achieve this by disconnecting from technology. One of Temkiewicz's rules is that his sons are not permitted to bring electronic devices. The Temkiewicz clan has kept this tradition alive for the past twenty-five years.



while blind — a feat most of us would not be able to imagine. He has overcome many life challenges with grace and perseverance. Since graduating from VUB, Leeth achieved one of his life goals by becoming the founder of the Othella House, a nonprofit organization named after his mother that serves veterans and other individuals in need of food, shelter and other basic life necessities.

"We're expanding and opening another home in Cleveland," says Leeth. "I'm going to be busy all summer so this trip will be a wonderful and needed break."

Though it took Temkiewicz 18 months to find veterans, the trip is finally happening, thanks to the help of many sponsors and generous donors. This August, Temkiewicz and three friends will be taking the two visually-impaired veterans, Lonnie Leeth of Cleveland and Wayne Comstock of Sandusky to Sioux Lookout in Canada.

Despite Thoreau's words, they will be focused on fish for some of their trip. But these deserving veterans will also experience relaxation and camaraderie while breathing in the fresh Canadian air.

the difficulty he experienced finding veterans.

When I heard of his struggle, I recommended a former student named Ronnie Leeth. Leeth, who is legally blind, was one of my first students in the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program at Cuyahoga Community College where I've been working the past five years.

Teaching for VUB has been one of the more rewarding experiences of my career. Veterans are not traditional students and working with

them encouraged my growth as a young teacher. Leeth, in particular, pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best possible way.

I'd never taught someone visually impaired before and I learned to adapt both my lessons and teaching style to ensure I was reaching him. He was a pleasure to have in the classroom and encouraged all those around him to be the best individuals they could be.

I recommended Leeth because he is an inspiration: he learned to ski

Gabriel (no, not the angel) is looking for you

By Christopher Sandford

Gabriel Partners provides financial advisory, financial analytics and risk and compliance solutions to banks, law firms and their clients, securities firms, private equity firms and hedge funds, insurance companies, corporations and governments both domestically and globally. The firm's professionals possess distinctive skills and experience in the areas of data and intelligence analytics, dispute analysis, corporate investigations, business valuations and transactional due diligence. With a client list and transaction history that includes some of the world's largest law firms, banks other financial institutions, Gabriel Partners is the specialized advisory firm brought in to provide highly technical, focused approaches to providing solutions for our clients.

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Two key areas for which the company is seeking immediate assistance is with data mining and financial analytics in our Risk and Compliance practice. In this practice, our analysts provide our financial institution clients with solutions to the Bank Secrecy Act's Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing obligations, for whom we provide comprehensive outsourcing solutions.

It is in our Risk and Compliance that Gabriel Partners has an immediate need for several Associates, Senior Associates and Managers, as those positions are described below:

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Senior Associate

Assist in the development and execution of work plans provided by management, conduct higher-risk analyses and assist with preparing reports for clients.

Manager/Director

Provide leadership on client engagements and be responsible for day-to-day client interactions, client deliverables, project management,

budgets, quality assurance, supervising and coaching. Managers and Directors will also develop and maintain relationships with prospective clients and actively participate in pursuing engagement opportunities. While a military intelligence background is not a requirement, Gabriel Partners is proud of its robust veterans recruiting initiative. Veteran candidates who are good at working at gathering data and doing research, as well as working with numbers, can be good fit. Military backgrounds that include Accounting, Procurement Specialists, Data Technicians, Engineers, Storekeepers, and IT Specialists might find this a good opportunity.

Veterans with applied backgrounds in understanding and applying tactical intelligence have proven successful in this position. To learn more about Gabriel's veterans initiative, please click on <http://www.gabrielpartners.com/veterans-program>.

Resumes from prospective candidates should go to Christopher Sandford at csandford@gabrielpartners.com.

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Continued from page 10

Dame University. He and his wife Nancy had six children, Shaun, Casey, Kelly, Shannon, Terry and Meghan, a veteran of the war in Iraq. They reside in San Antonio, Texas.

To read the full story of *Dust Off*, order the book at www.wndbooks.com or order an autographed copy at www.generalbrady.com.

Sullivan, an internationally-published writer, is a U.S. Army veteran who served in the U.S. and Europe with the 2nd Armored Division. He resides in Northfield Village, Ohio.

Oil Change

While synthetic oil was created by the German scientists in order to account for the extreme shortage of its natural counterpart, synthetic rubber was invented in the US shortly after. It is necessary to mention that the polyethylene oils were utilized in powering the famous Luftwaffe air force throughout the entire World War II. Synthetic rubber on the other hand was needed by the Allied Forces because the Axis controlled the vast majority of natural rubber suppliers by the American scientist Waldo Semon.

Ironically, the British scientist Sir Frank Whittle finalized the functioning prototype for jet engines long before the Germans, but the government showed limited interest in the invention and awarded him very low funds. This is the reason why the German army that poured massive funding and manpower into the development of this technology was able to reap the benefits sooner. The Messerschmitt ME 262 (fighter jet) and the Arado Ar 234 (bomber) were among the most feared weapons of the Axis, particularly the former, which was allegedly able to gun down five Allied planes on average before being destroyed. The principle behind the original jet engines is still used for commercial flights nowadays.

Unanticipated Disease Hobbled Troops in World War I

We likely don't know anyone who suffers or has suffered trench mouth. Or trench feet. Both were side effects in World War I and trench warfare.

Both were caused by lack of sanitation. Gums were bleeding and had painful ulcers. Feet were just as bad.

Did some troops wonder, "Well, which is worse? Sitting in this wet and dirty trench with my mouth bleeding and my feet, too? Or should I join the assault and get shot?"

Little wonder trench warfare as a military tactic is in decline.

Lorain County Veteran Service Officers: Where They Come From and All They Do For Us

A Veterans Service Officer (VSO) is first a veteran, and second a dedicated servant to issues concerning Veterans. VSOs advise Veterans and their dependents of their rights under Veterans Benefits Act and other relevant legislation.

They assist in presenting claims or obtaining rights and/or benefits under any law of the United States, Ohio, and Lorain County.

They evaluate and determine validity of a claim by reviewing a client's medical reports and service history in relation to governmental regulations, legislation, and precedent.

Our VSOs attend national, state, and Veteran Service Organization schools to enhance job proficiency and maintain required State and National certifications.

They must retain knowledge of Title 59 of the Ohio Revised Code, and Department of Veterans' Affairs rules and regulations. They keep abreast of federal and state legislation pertaining to veterans' issues and various organizations that provide veteran benefits and assistance.



They act as a liaison between Veterans/dependents and the Department of Veterans' Affairs and national Veteran Service Organizations.

VSOs demonstrate genuine concern for the veterans they serve and delve further into the veteran's life and situation.

That allows VSOs to better advise on possible benefits available to the veteran and their dependents.

Case in point: Senior Lorain Veterans Service Officer Alshi K. Williams (U.S. Marine Corp) recalls a client who came in to update his dependent information. During their

conversation, Williams realized there were additional benefits available to the client's children.

"While conversing with the veteran I found he was in receipt of 60 percent service-connected compensation and that one of his children has been in college for the past two years but has not been receiving any educational benefits available under the father's status. I informed him of the Ohio War Orphans Scholarship and assisted in obtaining the forms to apply for the benefit. Upon further discussion I found that his children might be qualified for benefits outside the Veterans Service Office. I referred him to Ohio Means Jobs which also occupies our building. His children were qualified for the Summer Youth EDGE Program, which will earn them money while attending school."

Not only are VSOs the duty experts on veterans benefits, they also understand stressors and issues confronting the military veteran, including PTSD, drug and alcohol addictions, homelessness, financial, social and emotional stressors.

Bucci's: The Best Last Meal

By Karl Cantrelle

I don't know which was better last night: Bonita, our waitress, or the platters of pasta and red sauce she served us at Bucci's.

Bucci's is at 19373 Hilliard Road, Rocky River. The place has been serving big, steaming platters of pasta since Truman was in the White House.

Bucci's hasn't prospered for almost a half century because of location. It has prospered for the best of reasons: Great food. Well, great food and good service. I like the way Bonita introduces herself and way more important, I'm crazy about her service; when

the pasta arrives, it is too hot to eat. And I like the way she keeps on eye on us.

"Mo, you put cheese and sauce on a winter glove and it'll taste delicious."

It's an informal joint, with three, big, round tables down the middle, and eight booths lining the sides. The big tables are often filled with families,

and every so often, I watch one of the families and wonder, are there three generations there?

A month ago, we went and had a couple house specialties, veal marsala (\$22.95) and eggplant parmesan (\$16.95).

I'll never understand the popularity of eggplant parmesan. I say that because eggplant is virtually tasteless. Romeo Palumbo and I used to golf together. He disagreed, saying, "Whaddya mean? You put cheese and sauce on it, it's delicious." I said, "Mo, you put cheese and sauce on a winter glove and it'll taste delicious."

My plate of veal, however,

was tender and delicately flavored. Added a small side of spaghetti to it. With hot bread and seasoned butter, it could be a dinner served to new arrivals in heaven. (Maybe if you go to hell or purgatory, you're served the eggplant. One of many reasons to live right.)

Last night we both enjoyed spaghetti and meatballs (\$15.95,) and if you can clean your plate, you're a better man than I. We usually take the leftover pasta home, and the next morning toss it into a cast iron skillet. Crack a couple eggs on it, cover it and you have a meal that will

carry you until suppertime.

The wine list has 11 reds, a half dozen whites, eight beers and seven house wines. As if wine went with pasta. In my overblown and often ignorant opinion, the best drink with a plate of great pasta is beer. It tastes wonderful and cleanses the palate.

Or as my wife said, "What do you know? You're half Irish and half German."

I know one thing. If I were on death row and the guard asked me what I would like for my last meal, I would say, "Bucci's spaghetti and meatballs. It's clear I ain't goin' to heaven."

Hope in a Place of Death and Desperation

By Brittany Williams
Executive Director, Republican Party of Cuyahoga County

In addition to the information below, Lieutenant Henry G. Lee was removed from the Cabanatuan prisoner camp in the Philippines just before it was liberated, and sent to Japan for slave labor. The prison ship he was on was bombed and sunk by American aircraft. World War II was an event riddled with tragedy.

This first incident he somehow survived, but the second Japanese craft was sunk in the same way and he went down with it. The title of his collection of poems Nothing but Praise is a reflection of a bitter realization that no help was coming.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson said he had nothing but praise



for these courageous men, and it turned out true. At that point in the war there was nothing more he had to give them. Lee became a prisoner of war in April 1942 when what was left of the U.S. command on Bataan surrendered

to the forces of Imperial Japan.

A survivor of the infamous Bataan Death March, Lt. Lee was, like his fellow prisoners, reduced to rags and starvation at the Cabanatuan concentration camp, and did not survive his captivity.

Author of several fine poems, most of them scratched into a secret notebook, the lieutenant buried his work somewhere on the prison grounds just before he died. Discovered when the camp was liberated, the poems later published as Nothing but Praise.

In this piece, Lt. Lee imagines the wretched concentration camp burying grounds transformed into a stately military cemetery after the war:

We'll have our small white crosses by and by
Our cool, green lawns, our well-spaced, well-cared trees
Our antique cannons, muzzles to the sky,
Our statues and our flowers and our wreaths.
We'll have our bold-faced bronze and copper plaques
To tell in stirring words of what we saved
And who we were, with names and dates; our stacks
Of silent rifles, spaced between the graves.
We'll have our dedications by and by
With orators and bands to set us free
And shining, well-fed troops. Above will fly
The planes with stars we never lived to see.
We'll have our country's praises, here below
They'll make a shrine of this small part of Hell
For wide-eyed tourists; and so few will know
And those who know will be the last to tell
The wordless suffering of our lives as slaves
Our squalid deaths beneath this dripping sky
The stinking tangle of our common graves,
We'll have our small white crosses by and by.

Trillion Here, Trillion There; Pretty Soon You're Talking About Some Real Money

The financial costs of war: WW I is estimated from \$288 billion to \$348 billion. Of course, those were WWI dollars. The war in Iraq estimated at \$2.2 trillion, and the wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan are estimated at \$4 trillion.

Continued from page 4

athlete: baseball (Dodgers, Cubs) and basketball (Rochester Royals, Boston Celtics). He was even drafted by the Chicago Bears, but never suited up.

Wikipedia does not report the political leanings of every "Hollywood vet" on Kirchner's list, but there were other points of diversity. Raymond Burr and Rock Hudson were gay (their political orientation is not mentioned.) Other celebrities on Kirchner's list had as many as six marriages on their résumés.

Political affiliations are a snapshot in time, but people change with time: Ronald Reagan began as a Democrat, supported Helen Gahagan Douglas in her Congressional campaign against Richard Nixon, and served several terms as president of the Screen Actors' Guild (union), before becoming Republican about 1961.

Sterling Hayden may have moved across the widest range. During the war he was so impressed by the courage of the Yugoslav partisans he met while serving in the OSS that he briefly joined the Communist Party. He later co-operated with the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and still later deeply regretted and repudiated that decision – from "far left" to "far right" and back toward the center again. (Ronald Reagan also had qualms about cooperating with government "anti-communist" investigations).

But they were all patriots, and they were all veterans.

I do have one challenge to Mr. Kirchner's article. He cited Pat Tillman as a recent example of a public "star" who set aside his career and a fortune by enlisting in the Army following 9/11, and serving in Afghanistan, where he died in 2004. Kirchner

asserts that Tillman, instead of "being lauded for his decision to put his country before his career, was mocked and derided by many of his peers and the liberal left wing."

I have no memory of how Tillman's peers reacted, so I can't speak to that, but I do object to the characterization that criticism was directed by "the liberal left" against Tillman personally. Some people wondered if they would have been able to do what Tillman did, but the criticism I have heard was not criticism of Tillman, but of the way the military bureaucracy dealt with the news of his death. Many – not only on the "liberal left wing" – felt (and still feel) that the Army bureaucracy exploited Tillman by trying to "re-write" the facts of his death to change the event from a tragic case of "fog of battle" or "friendly fire" into an "inspiring," heroic sacrifice.

Tillman served honorably, and died tragically, but honorably. The initial official reports of his death distorted the facts to serve the public relations goals of the military bureaucratic establishment. The criticism of the case centers on that. It does not come solely from the "liberal left" by any means, and it is not directed against Pat Tillman; I believe Mr. Kirchner should be corrected on that point.

To restate, however: Kirchner's own article points out that patriots – and patriots of dedication and depth – arise from all points of our political and social spectrum, serve honorably and sacrificially, and their lives reflect the broad and colorful fabric of America. I thank Mr. Kirchner for the article, and thank DD 214 for publishing it.

Glenn Loafmann
Oberlin

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for the staff needed to process claims that there wouldn't be the wait times to receive benefits? That question answers itself! Why is it that we can send so much money to other countries with little or no accountability expected, but we can't adequately fund our VA System to take care of those who actively protect us or were harmed protecting us? One other thing regarding funding, we are able to provide retirement and other benefits to Senate and House members no matter how long they have served. Some changes there might provide for the VA coffers."

"I worked for the VA for almost two decades. It's an organization full of staff dedicated to serving our veterans. It's also incredibly centralized, top-down, one size fits all in its command structure and directives, and hypersensitive to political and media pressure. The result is that often a great deal of time, energy, and money is wasted in following bone-headed orders from the top, and top management show almost no interest or ability in tailoring resources and energies

to the needs of individual facilities in serving vets. We started having problems meeting the access demands put out by VA Central Office as soon as they were issued, but instead of insisting, "Hey, we need X Number at our facility to meet the standard," directors and middle-managers often found ways to manipulate the numbers and hide problems. Central didn't want to hear about why we couldn't meet the goal, they wanted compliance. Should Shinseki resign? Yes. Will the VA find a way to reorganize that breaks them out of a top-down, rigid model? Probably not, because VA top managers will be in charge of the reorganization plans.

"Call your local clinic to set up care. Start timing now since that is the time that the VA uses (not when you see the doctor which the private sector uses). Better yet, call a psychiatrist and ask to be seen today. If you get in within 14 days, post it.

"I don't anticipate many posts. You will not see similar stories in the private sector because you are not a patient until you see the provider. Keep things in perspective. What was done

(if it is proven to have occurred) is totally improper. That being said, the VA is the only health care organization where all are blamed for the sins of a few. If we get universal healthcare you can expect to see

much worse in the private sector as all are held to the same data. There are problems in parts of any large organization. Hold Ft. Collins and Phoenix VA leadership accountable. Not the whole VA."

Greater Cleveland Fisher House; A Way to Thank Our Troops and for the Sacrifices Made by Their Families

At this rate, and with the financial help from all of us, the Greater Cleveland Fisher House will be a source of pride in the veteran community and the generous community at large.

At present, America and its veterans are blessed with more than five dozen Fisher houses and a few overseas. The Fisher House Foundation is dedicated to our wounded troops who are at the Cleveland Veterans Hospital.

Powerful examples of the Fisher House mission are legion. Fisher House apartments host family members here when out-of-town veterans are here for special medical procedures.

And why not? Our VA hospital is one of three teaching hospitals for Case Western Reserve Medical School.

The Fisher House will also give us the opportunity to say to our seriously wounded comrades in arms, "We'll never forget your sacrifice, nor the sacrifices made by your family."

The Greater Cleveland Fisher House will be a 16,000 square foot home with

16-20 suites and will accommodate up to 42 family members. The house itself will be built on the grounds of The Louis Stokes VA Medical Center in University Circle. The cost to build The

Greater Cleveland Fisher House will total approximately \$7 Million. The goal of The Greater Cleveland Fisher House Task Force is to raise \$3 Million. To date, \$1,100,000 has been raised for this initiative, primarily from local veterans' groups and other grassroots organizations. The Foundation will match the goal.

A big event for the summer is being done in partnership with the Cleveland Indians. The July 11 game against the Chicago White Sox has been designated as "Cleveland Fisher House Night," with partial proceeds from ticket sales going toward the Fisher House initiative. Can you go? Enjoy a game while supporting our veterans and their families.

You can? Great. I'll buy the first round of beer and we can toast our veterans.

"Fisher House: "Put a face on it and put families in it."



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The Louis Stokes Veterans Administration Hospital in Cleveland; a Standard for the Rest of the VA

By Patrick Toomey

A couple decades ago, I insisted a fellow vet, a friend of mine, go to the VA Hospital. He thought he was having intermittent panic attacks. I thought it was more because he would sometimes find himself unable to speak. He could only garble. These incidents lasted only a minute or two, but he was willing to ignore them.

I wasn't. At that time, I was a paramedic and knew it wasn't simply panic attacks.

On a Friday evening, he went to the Cleveland VA hospital where a physician said to him, "Why don't we cut the crap and you tell me what kind of drugs you're on?"

Talk about your bedside manner. A CAT scan was scheduled for Monday and he was asked to spend the weekend at the hospital. Not after that reception, he said. He went home and came back Monday morning.

The CAT scan procedure was pretty much a disaster. He had been shot up with a contrast agent. As he was being pushed into the machine, he had a major seizure. He woke up in a bed and was surprised he had wet his pants.

When a proper CAT scan was performed, the news was not good. My friend had a giant aneurysm in his brain. The size and location, according to the VA physicians, made it inoperable. They prescribed anti-seizure drugs and sent him home.

He said the silver lining in this cloud was, "When it blows, I'll be dead before I hit the ground."

He wisely went to Metro Hospital, as it was then known, and met with the justly-famous Robert White, M.D., the Harvard Medical School graduate who virtually created the hospital's neurosurgery department.

White studied the CAT scans and told my friend that the aneurysm wasn't inoperable. On the other hand, he couldn't figure out how to do it. However, he said, somebody will know how to do it, and the CAT scans would be sent across the country and around the world.

White could do that because in addition to teaching brain surgery at Case Western Reserve Medical School, he lectured internationally. He served as medical consultant to a couple of popes.

White said that while he was confident in finding the right surgeon, his search would begin in an adjoining office occupied by his colleague, Yoshiro Takaoka, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Tak, as he was known, was held in the highest professional esteem by White. Dr. Tak was a small man with huge talent and experience. White said he considered Dr. Tak one of the top three neurosurgeons in the world. White would know.

Okay, long story made shorter: The surgery was successful and the nurses referred to my friend as, "The Miracle Man." My friend said, "I wasn't the Miracle Man. Dr. Tak was the Miracle Man."

Which brings me to the current scandal regarding VA hospitals. Today, my friend said, the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center is outstanding. He brags about it. As a matter of fact, I have to tell him, every so often, to shut up about it.

But my friend is correct. The VA hospital here is one of Case Western Reserve Medical School's three teaching hospitals. The other two are Metro and University Hospitals.

Talking about the current scandal, highlighted by the deep-sixing of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, we wondered why the VA hospital here is so damn good, but so damn shabby (even murderous) in other parts of the country.

The VA here doesn't talk to the media. A shame, because it has lots to say about the VA health services.

How bad is the situation in other places? Here are some Facebook comments that are frightening, indeed:

"Wakeup soldiers! My advice to all soldiers who are about to join a war caused by lies and greedy corporate war machines is to say like the smart people did during the BIG VIETNAM LIE....HELL NO, I WON'T GO! Now we spit on our soldiers by letting



them wait and die! The USA is the WARLORD of the universe and can care less about its warriors. They are just pawns sacrificed by greedy evil people like Bush and Cheney! I say convert the library for our

murdering presidents like Bush and Nixon into veterans care centers for suicide prevention. Vets kill themselves every day because they feel like they have been taken advantage of and were forced to kill innocent people to make cash for evil corporations like Boeing and Lockheed who brag about how many bombs they make during their killing seasons!"

"Two weeks ago I was at my local clinic and met with my doctor. He suggested that I get an injection to help with a gout flare up. Doctor told me to have a seat in the waiting room and the nurse will come and get me. I waited 30 minutes for the nurse. Went to the registration desk to find out what is taking so long. As the girl was retrieving my info from the computer, the nurse walked by. The girl explained what was going on and the nurse said "No one told me about an injection and I'm getting ready to go home soon". The girl at the computer looked at me, shrugged her shoulders and said "sorry". Couldn't find anyone to complain to or inquire why this nurse is allowed to work like this. I am

now in the process of transferring to another clinic farther away."

"We need to force our Senators and Congress people to once a month visit the VA Hospitals in THEIR state and talk with staff and PATIENTS on rating their facility and care. They only work 2-3 days a week, so they should have a lot of time for visits."

"It is a shame that Sen. John McCain from the state of Arizona, who is a retired Navy officer, a military brat whose father is a retired Admiral, a former POW, AND has one of the WORST VA Hospitals in the country. Phoenix VA Hospital is one of the worst VA Hospitals in the country. Phoenix is NOT THE ONLY terrible VA hospital in the country; most seem to be in the Southern states but not exclusively. Michigan has two within 40 miles of each other. One is fantastic (Ann Arbor VA) and the Dingle facility in Detroit (ain't so good).

"We need these politicians to understand that THEY are the controllers of the purse strings. They vote to fund a war, and they also vote to pay for the health care for the soldiers that go to war. The politicians forget they are the cause of the military's men and women needing the expensive healthcare.

"Write your Senator and Congressperson demand that it be part of their job to visit EACH VA HEALTHCARE FACILITY IN THEIR STATE MONTHLY. Only they can correct the problems with these VA facilities."

"I worked for the VA for 25 years. Yes, they are top heavy and yes, the executive staff comes up with ideas that make a person wonder when, or if, they ever worked in the field. That said, we could find ways to work with those issues.

However, what we couldn't work well with was lack of adequate funding to hire adequate staff to deal with everything that needed to be done. A very big 'for instance' is benefits. Do you suppose that if there was funding

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