



THE IRONMAN—A DOUBLE ENDER’S NEWSLETTER

Membership Scorebox

Current	44
Lifetime	14
Past Due	150
Snail Mail Ad-	174
Email Address	516
Total Shipmates	4,159

Dues Notice!

Please be sure to check your mailing label or email notation. If it doesn't say Current or Life above your name at the top of the label, you should renew your annual dues. To reach the greatest number of shipmates, we will publish the complete Association newsletter to any valid email or snail mail address. Your dues payments make this possible.

Join us in Providence Rhode Island for the 2018 Reunion

It is my pleasure to announce that we have confirmed our reservations for the 2018 USS Reeves Association Reunion. The 2018 reunion is to be held in Warwick (just outside of Providence) Rhode Island on the fourth through the eighth of October, 2018.

We started looking into the Providence area because of all the great naval history associated with the state of Rhode Island, its proximity to many great attractions, and the fact that October in New England is just a spectacular place to view all the Autumn leaf colors. The Navy has been a major factor on that coast line for a few hundred years now, so there are plenty of places that would interest us.

We've signed a contract with the Crowne Plaza Hotel Providence – Warwick, which is a beautiful property near the Providence Airport. The selection of the Crowne Plaza was really quite simple. For starters, they are a **very nice hotel**... and were on our short list based on information we had learned through other reunion groups. Those groups praised the hotel for their accommodations, absolutely loved their service, and praised the Providence area for all the great things there are to do. So we distributed our Request for Proposals (RFP) in the area to see what deals could be had. The Crowne Plaza Hotel responded very quickly with a proposal that met every one of our requirements. That alone is a first for us. Their response eliminated any of the arguments or negotiations we have had to settle in the past, by nailing down everything we told them we wanted. The normal sticking points; like free breakfast, full hospitality room access, free airport transportation, free parking, and banquet, were all resolved up-front by their agreement to our RFP. We got everything we wanted.....

The room price was reasonable based on the location and time of the year. Turns out it can be quite expensive to book rooms in a nice

hotel, in New England, in the very height of the annual leaf watching migration. Who knew? We apparently managed to get our bid in ahead of that crowd, and had no trouble securing our normal reunion dates. The location near the Providence Airport solves a lot of transportation problems for getting our folks to and from the hotel. As we were reminded in Austin, free hotel parking is a big deal. The Crowne Plaza has plenty of complimentary parking available. They are even able to accommodate RVs for parking only. There are no hook-ups available, but they have plenty of room for large rigs in a well secured area. That's a bonus for anyone who would consider the reunion as an RV touring stop on their way to check out the leaves.

The Providence location also places us in close proximity to a wide variety of places to see, and plenty of things to do. Especially Navy and nautical things. I've included some of the attractions that are available, but this is just a tentative listing of what we would like to consider. As time gets closer we will work with the local tourist council and get a much better idea of what tours are recommended. Once we get a better list of options, we can start working on setting up tours and bus trips to the attractions we like. There will be a lot more of that information headed your way. You can also go on-line to check-out the hotel at www.crownehotelwarwick.com/

In the meantime, we've accomplished what we set out to do, and that was to nail down a date in the upper right hand side of our country to hold the next "best Reeves Reunion" you ever been to. We scored even better by finding a really nice hotel in the process. We all know that San Antonio will be a tough act to follow, but we have the crowd to do exactly that. So for now, please pencil the 4-8 October 2108 dates onto your calendar, and start thinking about joining us in Providence.

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The President’s Page



Greetings to the Reeves Association Family

Here we are at the start of Summer '17, and it seems like forever ago since we were all wandering around the River-

walk in San Antonio. I have some very fond memories of our last reunion, and they are the only thing that help kick-start the new year. Particularly when the new year has really nothing going on that celebrates us as the USS Reeves Association.

While it’s still a bit far away to envision packing for the next reunion, the next reunion is exactly what we’ve been working on since our last newsletter. The work on that process is completed, and we’re officially on for the next big “Reeves” thing. There’s plenty written about the reunion plans throughout the newsletter, so I won’t bore you with it here.

What I did want to talk about was the decision process to get us to Providence. While in San Antonio, we actually established a committee to explore our next reunion location in the Northeast. There was a lot of talk about New England and New York, and other upper east coast locations. We were all definitely headed back east to blend in with our west, middle, east reunion rotation pattern, but we weren’t sure quite where we wanted to land. We drafted a committee to steer the selection process, as there were plenty of variables to consider.

Unfortunately, that committee never real-

ly got off the ground. There were a few miscues at the start, and one of the prominent leaders of the committee found that they were not able to support the time required to move the committee along. Mike Robertson, our former Reunion Planner (who by the way is trying to get out of the reunion planning process for health concerns) ended up with the reunion planning process back in his lap.

Mike, realizing that we had missed the first few critical months of the planning process, made the initial steps to steer the reunion to a location he knew was probably one of the best choices in New England. Before Mike could get the RFPs out, however, he had additional health concerns. After speaking with Mike about the timing of our efforts, and the timing required to secure an October 2018 reservation in New England, we elected to move forward with distributing our existing Request for Proposal (RFP) to the hotels in the Providence RI area. The RFPs are a written tool that explains to a hotel exactly what we want, when we want it, and what we want to pay for it. Our RFP is a living document that is tuned-up again every time we learn something else about reunions. It’s Mike’s baby, and he’s done a great job of documenting all the things we have learned over the last ten years. It’s so good that all you have to do is change the location and dates to get exactly what we want from the next group of hotels that want our business.

The RFPs sent north and east were met with quick success, and we were able to select a winner pretty easily. But that’s not what I’m concerned with here. My concern is that the reunion location pro-

cess that we, as an organization, selected ... was not used. I don’t think it’s fair to blame anyone for the loss of our plan. It was an un-tried concept that didn’t get off the ground, and we should let it go at that. There’s simply no value in placing blame or making excuses.

What I would like to celebrate is the fact that the miscue did not slow down the objective of securing a great hotel in the ideal location for our next reunion. I celebrate the fact that Mike Robertson took control the second he realized that we were wandering away from the timing needed to make reservations for New England in prime tourist season. We owe Mike quite a bit for all the reunions he has single-handedly planned in the past. We also owe him a debt of gratitude for saving us “one more time” after we told him we would take over the reunion planning process.

Unfortunately, Mike is still having health issues, so I have relieved him of the any future responsibilities as our reunion planner. I have assumed control of the reunion process, and can only hope to be as effective as Mike has been in our past. Even with Mike as my mentor, I’m sure I will need support from my shipmates to keeps things moving in the right direction. So please don’t be surprised if you get a call asking for support to help us amateurs replace a true professional in the reunion planning business. We’re the Reeves, we can make this work!

Here’s wishing you Fair Winds and Following Seas

//tom
Tom Bailey BT2 (SW) 84-87

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All comments, suggestions, submissions and criticism are welcome. My email is always open..

Life Memberships

At the 2014 reunion in Portland, shipmates voted for a Life Membership. After researching various Associations, it was decided that the US Navy Cruiser Sailor Association’s plan was best for the USS Reeves Association. Monies for life membership are placed in an interest-bearing account and not mixed with operating funds.

The schedule is simple:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Under 50	\$500
Under 60	\$400
Under 70	\$300
Under 80	\$200
80 or older	\$100

We already have 14 life members.

Emails, Etc.

To bobvdk@yahoo.com
Mar 16 at 11:00 AM
Hi Shipmate

I served on the Reeves 70-72, in fact made Chief onboard, so always a happy memory of my time onboard (just sent in my dues for the Reeves association).

The reason I am writing is in response to the Presidents Page, actually a request for information. I am a member of the Navy Postal Clerk Association, and they are planning a reunion next May in San Antonio, and I was wondering if you could provide with the Lessons Learned from your San Antonio Reunion, might help us avoid a pitfall or two.

Thank You

Mike Bertalan
PCCM, USN Ret

I called the other day. This number: 855-948-2311, is a number for VETS if they have complaints or other problems. When called a person will answer. You might need to hold for a short time. I called on Blue Water Navy disability. I was told that someone will notify me by e-mail or phone call. I thought of you, maybe something to put in our News Letter. Thank you for your time.

Tony Borba, 70-71, USS REEVES.

From the Treasurer

Regarding the use of credit cards, I cancelled our service since it is costing us a fortune that no one is using. We need to publish this in the newsletter.

Michael Robertson
Treasurer
USS Reeves Association

Mothballed Fleet ► Not A Factor in Fleet Buildup

It was a compelling image in 1982: The president of the United States standing in the shadow of the battleship New Jersey's enormous 16-inch guns, recommissioning the World War II behemoth for a final run in the fleet — the centerpiece of Ronald Reagan's famed goal of a 600-ship Navy. Navy leaders say there probably won't be a similar ceremony for President Trump on the decks of the now-mothballed cruisers and destroyers sitting on the banks of the Delaware River in Philadelphia. In a recent interview, the admiral in charge of building and main-

taining the Navy's fleet told Defense & Aerospace Report that the mothballed fleet at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard was probably not going to be a vital factor in getting the Navy to its new fleet goal of 355 ships — up from its current 275.

Vice Adm. Thomas Moore, head of Naval Sea Systems Command, told Defense & Aerospace Report's Vago Muradian that most of the ships in the inactive fleet are too far gone to make a major revival worth it. Some analysts have floated the idea of revitalizing the CG-47-class cruisers Ticonderoga, Yorktown and Thomas S. Gates, easing the burden on the Navy's strained

and fast-wearing cruiser force. But Moore said the cruisers are not easy to bring back and have been picked over in recent years. "Most of those ships, from a combat systems perspective, are pretty obsolete," Moore said. "We probably wouldn't bring them back and they've kind of been spare-parts lockers the last couple of years."

Moore said the frigates, which had largely been used for low-end counter-drug and partner-support missions, might be OK to bring back. The carrier Kitty Hawk remains a possibility as well. "We'll go look at the FFGs, see

(Continued on page 5)

Providence RI Reunion Ideas



Battleship Cove – Located on scenic Mt. Hope Bay, Battleship Cove harbors the largest collection of preserved US Navy ships in the world. The fleet includes five National Historic Landmarks: Battleship *USS Massachusetts*, Destroyer *USS Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.*, Submarine *USS Lionfish*, and PT Boats 617 and 796. Battleship Cove is also home to numerous exhibits including the National PT Boat Museum, the National Destroyermen's Museum, and exhibitions to those who served on the *USS SAINT PAUL* and on Radar Picket Ships. The “Women Protecting US” exhibit, located on board the battleship, is a tribute to the service of women in wartime highlighting their contributions in science, math, medicine, engineering, and technology during WWII.

Benefit Street – Home to the oldest concentration of colonial homes in America, featuring a grand mix of Federal style and colonial homes from the late 1700's situated in a more urbanized setting, adorned by world famous architects. Some must-see attractions on Benefit Street include; the **First Baptist Church of America** established by Roger Williams and the first meeting house in New England to have a steeple, the **Providence Athenaeum Library** where Edgar Allan Poe first met Sarah Whitman, the **John Brown House** considered to be one of America's grandest mansions when completed in 1788, the **RISD Museum of Art**, Rhode Island's leading museum of fine decorative art,

housing a collection of 84,000 objects of international significance and the **Governor Stephen Hopkins House** a modest colonial house dating back to the 1700's and original home to Rhode Island's nine time Governor Stephen Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first Chancellor of Brown University.

Culinary Art Museum – The Culinary Arts Museum is an educational resource for Johnson & Wales University, the community at-large, food scholars, and the food service industry. The Culinary Arts Museum seeks to both preserve and interpret the broad culinary and hospitality heritage addressed by the university. It is a showcase for the work of students, faculty, alumni, and distinguished visiting chefs. Through exhibitions and special events, the museum strives to interpret the evolution of food preparation and presentation, the development of culinary equipment and technology, the diverse menus offered, and the places where people partake of food.

Naval War College Museum – Located in Newport, Rhode Island, The Naval War College Museum is one of fifteen official museums operated by the U.S. Navy, under the direction of the Naval History & Heritage Command and in co-operation with the Naval War College. Today, the Naval War College Museum displays exhibits on three themes: the history of the Naval War Col-

lege since 1884, the history of naval activities in the Narragansett Bay area since the colonial period and the history of the art and science of naval warfare since ancient times.

Rhode Island State House – Designed by architectural firm Mc Kim, Mead and White the State House is sculpted from white Georgia marble and sits ever present atop Smith Hill in downtown Providence. This narrated free tour will find you engaged in the grand crowning glory of Rhode Island. Where you will explore all three floors of this magnificent building only to find the famous Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington completed in 1802. (Gilbert Stuart was considered the leading portrait artist in America during the Revolutionary period.) The state house is also home of the 4th largest self-supporting dome in the world. (The largest being the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, followed by the dome of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul, and the Taj Mahal in India.)

Seabee Museum and Memorial Park – The Seabee Museum and Memorial Park is committed to keeping the proud history of the US Navy Seabee's accomplishments alive at their original home. Davisville, Rhode Island is the original home of the US Navy Seabees, it was here that these “Fighting Builders” were first trained and formed. The Seabees are the

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Construction Forces of the US Navy. The famous Quonset Huts used all over the world were designed, tested and built here. The Seabees history at Davisville began during WWII and continued up to Operation Desert Storm. Seabees served in every theater of operation from WWII up to and including Afghanistan, Operation Iraqi Freedom and where ever else they may be called upon to serve. Come and visit this important historical site located on a 5 acre naturally wooded site which including walking trails, picnic tables, free parking and a peaceful location.

Submarine Force Museum, Home to the Historic Ship Nautilus – The Submarine Force Museum, located on the Thames River in Groton, Connecticut, maintains the world's finest collection of submarine artifacts. It is the only submarine museum operated by the United States Navy, and as such is the primary repository for artifacts, documents and photographs relating to U.S. Submarine Force history. The museum's collections include more

than 33,000 artifacts, 20,000 significant documents and 30,000 photographs. With so many holdings, the displays change frequently and a return visit will be a new experience. The 6,000 volume reference and research library is a world-renowned collection relative to the history of U.S. submarines and is open to anyone looking for information on submarines or submarine history.

Quonset Air Museum – The mission of the Rhode Island Quonset Air Museum is to preserve, interpret and present Rhode Island's aviation history through collections, research, education and exhibits. Founded in 1992, the air museum educates the public in the state's rich aviation legacy and displays collections that document the contributions of Rhode Island to the growth and development of aviation and space exploration. Housed on 3 acres in an original Naval Air Station Quonset Point hangar built in 1945, the museum has a large and valuable collection of aircraft, aircraft parts, and other historical artifacts. The 28 aircrafts currently on display or under restoration include civilian, military

and prototype aircraft dating from 1944 to 1983.

USS Constitution The oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world, and the USS Constitution Museum. USS *Cassin Young*, refitted and modernized in the yard's drydock, represents the type of ship built in the yard during World War II. The US Navy offers free tours aboard USS *Constitution* on a first-come, first-serve basis during their operating hours. Please be aware that visitors must pass through a security inspection and show federal or state photo identification, such as a driver's license or passport, before embarking on USS *Constitution*. Visitors under the age of 18 do not require a photo identification card. **USS Constitution Museum** - USS Constitution Museum serves as the memory and educational voice of USS Constitution. The USS Constitution Museum is located in the Charlestown Navy Yard, across the pier from USS Constitution the nation's Ship of State. We are open daily (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day).

(Continued from page 3)

Mothballed Fleet

if there is utility there," Moore said. "We'll look at the combat logistics force, see if there's utility there. Of the carriers that are in inactive force, probably Kitty Hawk is the one that you could think about. But we studied that when we decommissioned Enterprise, and the carriers are pretty old. So, there is limited opportunity in the inactive fleet but we'll look at it ship-by-ship." Bringing back inactive ships is an incredibly expensive process and wouldn't give the Navy a lot of utility in return, said Bryan Clark, a retired Navy officer and analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "You could do that but what you'd get is essentially a frigate, capable of low-end missions. What you're not getting is a lot of capability — it's not going to be a ballistic missile defense shooter on patrol in the eastern Mediterranean."

The Navy announced in December that it had raised its ship-count goal from 308 to 355, five more than President Trump targeted while on the campaign trail. It's unclear, however, how the Navy plans to get there, with a number of programs like the littoral combat ship and DDG-2000 being truncated over the past decade. The Navy is looking to transition from the littoral combat ship to a more heavily armed frigate, but it has not announced what such a ship would look like or how soon it could get to the fleet. [Source: NavyTimes | David B. Larter | June 6, 2017 ++]

FY 2017 Financials

FY 2017 Operating P&L To Date

Income

Dues	\$220
Lifetime	\$200
Donations	\$80
Ship’s Store	\$46
Misc	\$40
Cost of Goods	-\$24

Total Income \$562

Expense

Advertising	\$56
Newsletters	\$-13

Total Expense \$43

Net Income \$519

Total Assets \$10,017

Charitable/Educational Objectives

The USS Reeves Association is an educational, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service, FEIN 86-1163983. For that purpose at the 2010 business meeting, it was recommended that future excess funds be used for donations and scholarships as determined at business meetings starting in 2012.

Shift Colors

To receive the Navy’s Shift Colors newsletter via email send the following information to Mill_ShiftColors@navy.mil -- First name; Last name; E-mail address; Title (Mr., Mrs., rank, etc.); and Military affiliation (retiree, surviving spouse, veteran, other). There is no longer any funding for hard copies to be printed and mailed. To receive Shift Colors it does not matter whether or not you’re retired, active duty, a veteran, a surviving spouse, or just someone who’s interested in receiving the newsletter.

Exchange Online Shopping Update 10 ► Verification Site Not A Scam

Exchange officials have verified 18,011 honorably discharged veterans for online shopping privileges, including nearly 15,000 in the first four days of the new verification process, officials said 9 JUN. And no, the site that handles the verification, www.VetVerify.org, isn't a scam. A number of veterans have contacted Military Times and exchange officials with identity theft concerns, but "there is no need to worry about the security or authenticity of the site," said Chris Ward, spokesman for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which administers the verification process. "VetVerify.org is a shared service for all the four military exchanges with the sole purpose of supporting the newly approved veterans online shopping benefit."

The verification process began 5 JUN allowing honorably discharged veterans to get their credentials in order before the online exchanges open to veteran shoppers 11 NOV. The new benefit is for online shopping only, and doesn't extend to exchange stores on installations. The exchange provided a breakdown of the verification process as of noon 9 JUN:

- Of the 38,622 applications, 18,011 have been approved. Of those approvals, 3,200 came as part of a soft launch of the process, prior to Monday's announcement.
- Of the applicants who likely are honorably discharged veterans, about 73 percent have completed the process successfully. The site relies on veteran records that exist in the Defense Manpower Data Center database; if a veteran's records are not there or aren't complete, the veteran will receive instructions on how to upload the information.

- Nearly 14,000 applicants either weren't veterans or already were eligible to shop at exchanges.

All 3,200 veterans who were verified prior to Monday's launch received early access to the online exchanges, part of a beta testing program that will give some veterans the chance to shop prior to 11 NOV. Officials will add more beta shoppers as they continue to verify veterans for shopping privileges, Ward said. "We are allowing them to shop and provide us feedback on their online experience," Ward said. "Beta testing is critical to verify that the entire process from verification, to the ability to set up a profile, to the shopping experience, is a great one." Along with evaluating the technical support end of the veterans benefit, exchange officials will monitor shopping patterns so they'll stock the right mix of items on their online sites. At this point, among the veterans who have been shopping, officials have not seen any major differences in online shopping patterns compared with current shoppers, Ward said.

Actual online pricing can be seen only by those who are authorized to shop at the exchange websites:
www.shopmyexchange.com;
www.shopcgx.com;
www.mymcx.com;
 and www.mynavyexchange.com.

Veterans who have problems with the verification process can contact the VetVerify.org customer call center, toll-free, at 844-868-8672. [Source: Breaking Defense | Sandra Erwin | May 17, 2017 ++]

Ship's Store

Ships Photos (\$10) + s/h



1968— Entering Sydney Harbor



1985—Yokosuka from Australia



1975—Departing Pearl Harbor



1992—Seattle Sea Fair Festival

Challenge Coins (\$14) + s/h



Ball caps (\$12 each) + s/h

2009—San Diego

2010—Chicago

2012—Charleston

2016—San Antonio



Golf Shirts—all sizes (\$20) + s/h (2XL/3XL-add \$2)

T-Shirts—allsizes (\$15) + s/h (XL/3XL-add \$2)

Mousepads (\$10) + s/h

Ship—DLG 24

Ship—CG 24



USS Reeves Association – Ship's Store Order Form

Price	S/H	Total	Description
		Total	

Shipping and handling:
Shipping is via USPS Priority or Fedex. Please add the following for each item to cover the Association's packaging and postage costs:

- Photos: \$2 per photo
- Ball caps: \$4 each
- Mousepads: \$3 each
- Challenge Coins: \$2 for 1, \$.50 for each additional coin
- Shirts: \$5 per shirt

Shipping Label

To: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Send order to: USS Reeves Association
c/o Michael Robertson
15709 N Sycamore St
Mead, WA 99021



Photo and Comments from Admiral Centers Facebook page

This Memorial Day our community of Edmonds, WA will dedicate the Veterans Memorial Plaza - a park-like area across the street from our city hall. To fund the project, the committee sold pavers on which donors could honor vets. I bought this one to honor REEVES and all who sailed in her. — in [Edmonds, Washington](#).

Agent Orange Project Update

We know it's been awhile since we've updated you on our [Agent Orange project](#), but we've been busy behind the scenes. ProPublica has two lawsuits ongoing against the VA, seeking documents under the Freedom of Information Act. Moreover, we've been reporting additional stories. Today, we wanted to alert you to a few things a lead analyst within the Department of Veterans Affairs' compensation service recently said.

Jim Sampsel, a key federal official at the VA who helps adjudicate claims by veterans who say they were exposed to Agent Orange downplayed the risks of the herbicide and questioned the findings of scientists, journalists and even a federal administrative tribunal that conflict with his views.

He told a VA advisory committee in March that he believes much of the renewed attention to Agent Orange is the result of media "hype" and "hysteria," according to a transcript of the meeting released to ProPublica. Read our [story](#).

"When it comes to Agent Orange, the facts don't always matter," said Sampsel, himself a Vietnam veteran who also handles Gulf War-related illness questions. "So we have to deal with the law as written."

Some other things he said:

Sampsel criticized the prestigious Institute of Medicine, a congressionally chartered research organization hired by the VA, which in 2015 determined that the evidence suggested that a group of Air Force reservists could have been exposed to Agent Orange years after the Vietnam War when they flew aboard the C-123 planes that

had been used to spray the herbicide. "One scientist from Harvard or somewhere said that dried, solidified TCDD dioxin never stops emanating molecules into the air," Sampsel said. "Hardly anybody bought that at the time, but the IOM went with it." He added a bit later: "I don't think the science supports it. Most scientists don't think the science supports it, but the law is what it is." The Institute of Medicine, now called the National Academy of Medicine, found that the dioxin present on the aircraft could have exposed reservists who flew the planes years later. In its report, it said one contention of the VA and its expert, Alvin Young, was "inaccurate," another "appears to be conjecture and not evidence-based" and a third was based on a study funded by Dow Chemical Co., one of the herbicide's makers. In its statement, the VA said the Institute of Medicine "provides a valuable service to VA."

He said he believes Agent Orange contained "very, very small amounts" of dioxin, which was quickly destroyed by sunlight and the open air. "That's not commonly acknowledged by advocates," he said. Moreover, Sampsel said, U.S. planes did not spray it when American troops were in the area. In fact, a report by the Aspen Institute notes that on leaf and soil surfaces, dioxin will last one to three years and that dioxin under the surface could have a half-life of more than 100 years. Moreover, scientists have said that there are numerous ways in which American troops may have been exposed to the herbicide and some disagree that few troops were exposed.

Read more of his statements about Agent Orange here: <http://propub.li/2sIXD0Y>

One last thing: We've heard from a number of you asking about the VA's review of last year's Institute of Medicine report and whether the VA will add new diseases to its presumptive list. We're wondering too. Here's what a VA spokesman told us last week: The Agent Orange Task Force met the week of June 5 "to consider the recommendations of the work group. If the Task Force agrees with the recommendations, a meeting will then be scheduled to brief the Secretary. If they do not agree or have other concerns, the draft report will be returned to the work group for further review." Recommendations have not gone to the secretary for his consideration. So it looks like this process is going to take more time.

We'll keep sending updates as we write them. In the meantime, please stay in touch with us (you can reply directly to this message) and alert us to any important news or information you may have surrounding your situation or this issue.

Thank you again for contributing.

Best,
Terry Parris Jr.
Charlie Ornstein
ProPublica

VA End of Life Care Update 04 ► No Vet Dies Alone Program

A VA-wide team of hospice and palliative care employees has developed new resources, including a comprehensive tool kit, orientation guide, and other educational materials, for hospice volunteers who contribute their time to the “No Veteran Dies Alone” program. These resources are designed to train and support volunteers who provide presence, companionship and reassurance at the bedside when family and friends are unable to be with a Veteran at end of life. In addition, this provides a set of national standards for volunteers to continuously raise our level of practice across the country.

“In our focus group with volunteers, we heard the passion and presence and willingness of people from Minneapolis to California, from New York to Martinsburg West Virginia,” says Sheryl Terkildsen, RN, MSN, VA Loma Linda Healthcare System, who led the initiative. “We want to support these volunteers who provide comfort to the Veterans and their families.” Terkildsen headed a task force of VA employees who defined and developed the toolkit and educational program. Working together via conference calls and email since December 2010, the group began by collecting information for the toolkit and purchasing the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) Hospice Volunteer Program Resource Manual as a framework to adapt for the VA health care environment. The manual addresses key issues including volunteer recruitment and retention, training and evaluation, and program development.

Terkildsen, a fourth generation Veteran whose husband is a hospice volunteer, credits the leadership of Dr. Scott Shreve and the enthusiasm, expertise and work of the members of the task force. “We have been supported by leadership at the medical centers and in voluntary services departments. We may not have the same resources as

the private sector, but we have a passionate commitment that no Veterans will take their last breath without someone with them at that moment. We have volunteers in their 20s, and in their 70s and 80s. Their hearts are in this work.” Over 140,000 volunteers gave more than 11 million hours in service to America's Veterans. It is impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing that these VAVS volunteers provide to Veteran patients. VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers are a priceless asset to the Nation's Veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Following are four volunteer opportunities that are available at varying VA facilities throughout the nation. If one or more of the opportunities peaks your interest, go to the Veterans Administration Volunteer or Donate page at <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/apps/VolunteerNow> to complete an introductory application and specify in the comments field your preference. When you click SUBMIT an email will be generated to the VA Voluntary Service Program Manager in your area. Once the email is received, someone from your local VA will contact you, either by phone or email (your choice) to provide you with further information and to possibly set up an appointment for an interview. If you prefer to volunteer in person contact your local VA Medical Center's Voluntary Service Office (click here for VA directory). Tell them of your interest in volunteering. An appointment will be scheduled for you to come in to tour the facility and learn more about the many ways to serve America's heroes.

- **VA Homeless Veterans Program** -- VA offers a wide array of special programs and initiatives specifically designed to help homeless veterans live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible. In fact, VA is the only

Federal agency that provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless persons. Although limited to veterans and their dependents, VA's major homeless-specific programs constitute the largest integrated network of homeless treatment and assistance services in the country.

- **VA National Cemetery Administration** -- The National Cemetery Administration honors veterans with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service to our nation.
- **VA Volunteer Transportation Network** -- VTN was established to provide needed transportation for veterans seeking services from a VA facility and/or authorized facility. VTN guidelines permit volunteer participation in providing transportation to veterans using a volunteer's privately-owned conveyance or a government-owned vehicle, including donated vehicles, county vehicles, DAV Department (State) or Chapter (local) vehicles, public transportation and contracted transportation.
- **VA Welcome Home Celebrations** -- VA sponsors Welcome Home events around the country for returning military service members and their families. The events provide important information and guidance on accessing health care and other benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Use the schedule below or contact your local VA Voluntary Service office for more information.

[Source: <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/faqs.asp> | June 7, 2017]

Commissary Click2Go Program ► Online Shopping Locations

More commissary shoppers soon will be able to order their groceries online and pick them up curbside thanks to an expansion of the Click2Go program, officials said, though new locations for the service haven't been revealed. Commissary officials expect to announce a timeline for the expansion shortly, according to Ronald Kelly, a spokesman for the Defense Commissary Agency. Click2Go was launched as a pilot program at three commissaries in the last half of 2013 — Fort Lee, Virginia; Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; and Travis Air Force Base, California. Under the Click2Go program, customers of those commissaries choose their items online, choose a the time they want to pick up their items, then go to a designated curbside location to pay for and pick up the grocery order.

Along with expansion plans, commissary officials are considering a fee for the curbside pickup service that would be in line with civilian grocery retailers, Kelly said; the

fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act gave commissary officials that authority. Fees for such services offered by private-sector stores generally are low (less than \$3 in the case of one Washington, D.C.-area chain) or nonexistent: According to the Walmart Grocery website, that retailer doesn't charge a fee for the curbside pickup, or add any markups on items.

The “click and collect” concept is “rapidly moving from the experimental stage in the U.S. to an integral aspect” of many traditional brick-and-mortar retailers, according to a March report by the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Boston Consulting Group. They noted that Walmart, Target, Kroger and Whole Foods are quickly building out these services. The curbside pickup is available at more than 400 Walmart stores in 60 markets, the report stated.

In the three commissaries that have been testing the Click2Go, an average of 2 percent of overall sales

comes from curbside service, according to DeCA's Kelly — a figure he said is in line with civilian grocery retailers. Click2Go customers have an average basket of items worth about \$105, which is more than 60 percent higher than the average shopping basket of customers who shop inside the stores, Kelly said. The service is mostly used for “pantry loading” orders, with a wide spectrum of items that include perishable items, Kelly stated. Other statistics of the curbside customers using the Click2Go pilot programs:

- 65 percent have two to four family members.
- 60 percent are active-duty military, 29 percent are retirees and 9 percent are National Guardsmen or reservists.
- 53 percent are between E-4 and E-9.
- 68 percent are between the ages of 25 to 44

[Source: MilitaryTimes | Karen Jowers | June 13, 2017 ++]



Photo Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Reeves_\(DLG-24\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Reeves_(DLG-24))



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