

VA SAYS PROCESSING OF AGENT ORANGE CLAIMS COMPLETE

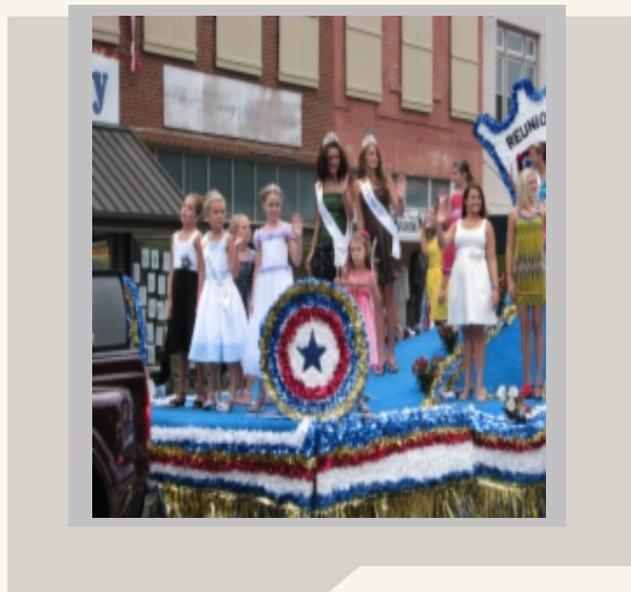
As of June 2012, the VA has announced that it has nearly completed the processing of 230,000 claims for the three newest recognized Agent Orange Conditions. The new conditions include Ischemic Heart Disease, Chronic B-Cell Leukemia, and Parkinson's disease.

With the completion of these claims it will free up 1,200 VA employees to begin addressing the backlog of disability claims. Over \$3.6 billion were put into the hands of Vietnam veterans and their survivors by the completion of these claims.

These claims also included over 150,000 claims that had to be adjudicated under the order of the US District Court for the Nehmer vs. VA case.

The VA has created a website, www.fastrack.va.gov, which is dedicated to aiding veterans in filing claims for the three new conditions related to the effects of exposure to Agent Orange. This site will give veterans automated, program-assisted menus in order to capture information that is needed for faster claims decisions.

To be eligible for benefits relating to Agent Orange, you must have been exposed during duty or visitation in Vietnam, between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, exposed along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971; or exposed due to herbicide tests and storage at military bases within and outside the United States.



123RD ANNUAL SOLDIER'S REUNION

The 123rd Annual Soldiers Reunion will begin festivities on August 9 and last through August 19, 2012.

Events this year include Cruisin and Car Show; Baby Parade, Street Dance, Pet Mania, Beach Music, Gospel Music, Softball Tournaments, and the Reunion Service and Parade.

This year to honor soldiers who are still deployed, veterans are asked to march in uniform. If you would be interested in marching please contact Heather Rivera at 828-228-2666.

For a complete list of times and dates, please visit the City of Newton website at:

<http://www.newtonnc.gov/>

AUGUST 2012

REVISED STOLEN VALOR ACT WOULD STAND UP

WRITTEN BY FANG A WONG: NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

When Timothy Michael Poe appeared on the reality TV series "America's Got Talent," he had an inspirational story to match his singing ability. Claiming he'd been hit in the head by a rocket-propelled grenade while serving as an infantryman in Afghanistan, Poe had overcome his resulting speech impediment by singing in the shower. Throughout the televised competition, he wanted to demonstrate before sympathetic fans that any disability could be overcome with hard work.

It was moving and emotional story. It was also a complete lie. Poe had in fact served in Afghanistan for 32 days before leaving for medical reasons. He had been a driver, not an infantryman, and his injury resulted from falling off a truck, not from an RPG attack. The photographs he used to document his service in Afghanistan were of a different soldier altogether.

His was a case of stolen valor, plain and simple, with the clear objective of profiting from it. Until June 28, the Supreme Court had never held that intentional false statements of fact are worthy of constitutional protection. Congress originally passed the Stolen Valor Act, which legalized the making of false military service claims. Opponents wrongly described the act as a slippery slope toward outlawing barroom boasts. Instead, it simply recognized congressional authority under the Constitution to safeguard and protect reputation and meaning of military decorations and medals. A new version, introduced in 2011 in the form of H.R. 1775, focuses on the harm caused by fraud rather than the diminishment of awards for military achievement.

Prior to the U.S Supreme Court's 4-2-3 plurality ruling to overturn the Stolen Valor Act, one circuit court held that "false statements of fact do not enjoy constitutional protection, except to the extent necessary to protect more valuable speech. Under this principle, the Stolen Valor Act does not impinge on or chill protected speech, and therefore does not offend the First Amendment." The nation's highest court saw it differently this time, but left the door open to a "less burdensome" remedy to the problem of phonies trying to profit from false claims of service.



"Individuals who lie about military honors to gain tangible benefits should be punished not only because their untruths undermine the importance of military achievements, but also because harm can be done when someone is elected or gets a big record deal, a better job or public support on the basis of a lie." Fang A Wong



KISS SUPPORTS WOUNDED WARRIORS

“I came to America as child of 8 with my mother. I soon learned it was my responsibility to learn to speak English, if I wanted to access all the freedoms and opportunities America had to offer. I also learned it was my responsibility to know America’s proud history, and to understand that if it wasn’t for America, the world would be in chaos. Sometimes my love for this country strikes people as awkward. I don’t care.”

If you have ideas for a story or would like to learn more about a certain topic, please feel free to email me and give me your ideas.

This newsletter is meant to help reach out to veterans and their families. We would like to supply news that is interesting as well as informative.

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“The greatness of America, the freedoms we have and the opportunities we are given are made possible by the proud men and women of our military. Wars are not won by talking, which is why KISS has always been proud to sponsor our troops and veterans. A dollar from every single ticket sold on the last tour went directly to wounded warriors. And we are taking active steps today to hire vets.”

“It’s the least we could do. It’s the least America should do.”

Gene Simmons: Bassist and co-vocalist