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VETERANS
MONTHLY INFORMATION PACKAGE

FLAGLER COUNTY

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Feel free to make copies and distribute throughout your organization.
President Donald Trump on Monday presented the nation's highest award for valor to a former Green Beret medic for his heroism on a secret operation during the Vietnam War.

At a White House ceremony, Trump presented the Medal of Honor to retired Army Capt. Gary Michael "Mike" Rose for treating as many as 70 wounded soldiers during Operation Tailwind from Sept. 11 to Sept. 14, 1970.

For many years after the war, Rose never spoke of the operation until it was declassified in 1998. "For many years the story of Mike's heroism has gone untold, but today we gather to tell the world of his valor and proudly present him with our nation's highest military honor," Trump told an audience, which included nine surviving Medal of Honor recipients.

In front of Rose's wife, Margaret, their three children and two grandchildren, Trump described the sacrifices Rose made while
acting as the only medic for the 136-man force on Operation Tailwind.

"Helicopters dropped the unit into Laos; before they even touched the ground, enemy fire struck three men," Trump said. As the unit pushed deeper into enemy territory, it ran into more enemy forces, and took more casualties. Rose, a sergeant at the time, moved through the enemy fire to treat the mounting numbers of wounded, firing at the enemy in order to get to the wounded men. Gunfire was so intense that Rose had to crawl from position to position to treat the wounded.

Rose received the most severe of many wounds on the second day of the mission. During an assault by a company-sized element of North Vietnamese Army, one of the Montagnards was wounded 40 to 50 meters outside the company area. Rose ran, crawled, and maneuvered his way to this wounded man, shielding the soldier with his own body as he treated him. Rose then dragged the wounded soldier back to the company with one hand while holding back and engaging the enemy with his weapon in the other hand. "Soon after they returned to their unit, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded nearby and shot smoldering metal into Mike's back and into his leg," Trump said. "He was seriously, seriously wounded. The shrapnel left a gaping hole in Mike's foot. "For the next, excruciating 48 hours, he used a branch as a crutch and went on rescuing the wounded."

The company had taken so many wounded that a medevac helicopter was called. The helicopter was unable to land in the small opening where the company sought cover, and Rose, standing and fully exposed to the withering enemy fire, attempted to pass the wounded up to the crew on the hovering helicopter. So intense was the enemy fire, the medevac pilot aborted the mission, and the severely damaged helicopter crashed a few miles away.

Using close air support, Rose's unit was able to break out of their defensive position. Rose improvised litters for the wounded, which now numbered over half the company. On the last day of the mission, after destroying an enemy base camp, Rose's unit was notified by the forward air controller that over 500 NVA were moving on their position. The company was ordered to a helicopter extraction point as Air Force assets cleared their path, guiding the company to the next landing zone.
The enemy attacked from all sides. Rose's unit set up a perimeter around the LZ. Rose moved under intense fire from the assaulting NVA to retrieve the friendly dead and wounded and return them to the company defensive perimeter. The extraction helicopters arrived, but Rose waited to board the last bird, firing at the enemy while he hobbled up the loading ramp.

Shortly after takeoff, the helicopter was "hit by enemy fire," Trump said. "Mike. This is serious stuff," Trump said, using a touch of humor. "This was not a good four days." The audience chuckled, listening intently. Then Marine door gunner was soon shot through his neck. Rose rushed to his aid and treated him that saved the Marine's life before the helicopter crashed.

"Mike was thrown off the aircraft before it hit the ground, but he raced back to the crash site and pulled one man after another out of the smoking and smoldering helicopter as it spewed jet fuel from its ruptured tanks," Trump said. Rose continued treat the injured until another helicopter arrived on the scene to extract the men. "In every action during those four days, Mike valiantly fought for the lives of his comrades, even if it meant the end of his own life," Trump said. "Mike, I have to say, your will to endure, your love for your fellow soldier, your devotion to your country inspires us all. ... Nations are formed under the strength and patriotism that lives in the hearts of our great heroes."

Trump took a moment to recognize the 10 members of Rose's former unit that served alongside of him on Tailwind. Trump asked them to stand as he called each of their names to the audience's applause. Mike went on to become an officer in the Army, and served for over 20 years, Trump said. Now, Mike and his, wife Margaret, live in Huntsville, Ala., where he lives by "a core conviction," Trump said.

"You serve your country by fixing your block or fixing your neighborhood," Trump said, describing how Rose volunteers for the American Legion, the Knights of Columbus and many other organizations. "He volunteers at a local soup kitchen, fixes appliances for the elderly and disabled neighbors, donates his hair for those suffering from cancer, makes lunches for children in need and organizes community gatherings to bring people closer together."
"Mike we honor you, we thank you, we salute you and with hearts full of admiration and pride we present you with the Congressional Medal of Honor."

Trump placed the prestigious medal around Rose's neck as he stood at attention with a solemn expression fixed on his face. Dressed in his Army dress blue uniform, Rose shook hands with the president and then rendered a salute.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 1, 2017

Statement from Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions

Today, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin announced that he is considering possible new presumptive conditions that may qualify for disability compensation related to Agent Orange exposure.

“After thoroughly reviewing the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)’s latest report regarding Veterans and Agent Orange, and associated data and recommendations from the NAM Task Force, I have made a decision to further explore new presumptive conditions for service connection that may ultimately qualify for disability compensation,” Secretary Shulkin said. “I appreciate NAM’s work and the commitment and expertise of VA’s NAM Task Force, and look forward to working with the Administration on the next steps in the process.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs will now begin work with the Administration to concurrently conduct a legal and regulatory review of these potential presumptive conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 16, 2017

VA Announces Veterans Coordinated Access & Rewarding Experiences (‘CARE’) Act

Replaces Current ‘30-day/40-mile’ System With Patient/Provider-centric Decision-making

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has presented the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees with the administration’s draft proposal of the Veterans Coordinated Access & Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act, designed to improve Veterans’ experiences with and access to health care, building on the best features of VA’s existing community care programs and strengthening VA’s ability to furnish care in its facilities.

In order to meet Veterans’ needs quickly and in a way that is easy to understand, the bill aims to:

- Clarify and simplify eligibility requirements,
- Set the framework for VA to continue to build a high-performing network,
- Streamline clinical and administrative processes,
- Implement new care coordination support for Veterans, and
- Merge and modernize community care programs.

“We want Veterans to work with their VA physicians to make informed decisions that are best for their clinical needs, whether in the VA or in the community, and this bill does just that, while strengthening VA services at the same time,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin.

The bill would replace the current wait-time and distance eligibility criteria under the Choice Program (“30-day/40-mile”) with criteria that:

- Place the Veteran and his or her physician at the center of the decision process on how and where to get the best care available,
- Ensure VA is improving medical facilities and staffing levels to meet Veterans’ needs in areas where VA care is substandard, and
- Offer options for Veterans to use a network of walk-in clinics for minor illnesses and injuries.

The CARE Act also includes:

- Proposals for new workforce tools to assist in maintaining and strengthening VA’s world-class medical staff,
- A number of business process enhancements to improve financial management of the Community Care program,
- Provisions that would strengthen VA’s ability to partner with other federal agencies and streamline VA’s real property management authorities.

More information about access to care at the VA can be found at https://www.accessstocare.va.gov/.

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As we come together to honor the contributions of our state’s more than 1.5 million veterans during the Veterans Day weekend, many Floridians are still recovering from the long-term impact of Hurricane Irma.

Florida’s network of county veteran service officers, many of whom sheltered in place, are helping to connect local area veterans and their families to earned benefits, services and support. Veterans’ Claims Examiners from the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs are also connecting veterans to earned services and support, as well as augmenting Disaster Recovery Centers operating in the hardest hit areas of our state.

Our colleagues from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs were also busy prior to and immediately after the hurricane knocked out power to millions of Floridians. While all VA Medical Centers remained open, more than 50 VA clinics in the path of the storm were closed as a result of Irma’s landfall. Thanks to their emergency preparedness, most VA health care facilities had reopened within the week and were adjusting patient appointment times. The last impacted facility, the Key West Community Based Outpatient Clinic, reopened on Sept. 25.

As the state agency charged with representing Florida’s veterans, their families and survivors, we also were prepared for the impacts of Irma.

The medical and support staff of each of our six veterans’ nursing homes and one domiciliary home participate each year in an annual Hurricane Preparedness Exercise, hosted by Florida’s Division of
Emergency Management. As our seven veterans’ homes are built to shelter in place with a variety of in-house generators, shutters and wind-resistant glass, we practice serving our residents in a near normal environment, while preparing for the anticipated loss of utility power and access to additional supplies and relief health care staff.

Indeed, our plans call for the sheltering of families and pets of both residents and staff, to help those in need and ensure the availability of critical health care staff in the immediate hours and days following the impact of a major storm.

Our planning paid off, as five of our seven veterans’ homes lost main power in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Irma. One home, the 120-bed Baldomero Lopez State Veterans’ Nursing Home in Land O’ Lakes, was on generator power for five days until utility power was restored. Home Administrator Marlies Sarrett and her team hosted more than 300 people and a variety of pets during and immediately after the storm, and she and her team excelled in providing care to their residents without missing a beat. I’m very proud of their efforts, and those of all our veterans’ homes impacted by Irma.

A comprehensive list of county veteran service offices and FDVA Veterans’ Claims Examiners is available on our website at www.FloridaVets.org or by calling (850) 487-1533. If you would like to know more about our network of award-winning state veterans’ homes, please visit our website or call (727) 518-3202, Extension 5562.

On this Veterans Day, let’s pause, reflect and thank our nation’s veterans who have defended the principles upon which our country was founded.

Thank you for your service. We are pleased to serve you.
Military Times: **In medical marijuana debate, more veterans head to Capitol Hill**

**By: Leo Shane III**

WASHINGTON — Nick Etten thinks a Navy SEAL in a suit is the perfect person to convince lawmakers that marijuana isn’t scary.

“There’s so many parts to the cannabis debate that it can be too much,” said Etten, a former Navy lieutenant and current executive director of the Veterans Cannabis Project. “It’s a political issue. It’s a security issue.”

“But for veterans, this is just a health issue,” Etten said. “We need to convince (elected officials) to treat this for what it is: an effective medicinal plant that could be a game changer.”

Etten, whose team of former servicemembers spent parts of last week meeting with individual lawmakers, is part of a growing coalition of veterans groups trying to jump start the medical marijuana issue on Capitol Hill.

Officials from The American Legion have been among the most vocal on the topic in recent months, pleading with lawmakers to lift restrictions on cannabis testing to potentially provide alternatives to addictive opioids for a range of war wounds. Other groups have followed their lead, framing the research debate as integral to long-term veterans’ health care.

VCP’s focus is even simpler. They argue that current regulations already allow for more research of cannabis and that lawmakers need to put pressure on administration officials to open up cultivation licenses and testing opportunities to help clarify the potential benefits of marijuana.

“They can do more now to learn about this,” Etten said. “But all this is being held up now, because some politicians are putting ideology in front of the health of veterans.”

Those politicians are members of U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration in the eyes of the VCP lobbyists. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has repeatedly said he opposes marijuana
legalization efforts and has sought broader authority to go after distributors, even in states where the substance is legal.
The Department of Veterans Affairs has also repeatedly rebuffed outreach efforts from the cannabis community, citing federal statutes on the drug. “As long as the Food and Drug Administration classifies marijuana as schedule one, VA health care providers may not recommend it or assist veterans to obtain it,” the agency’s website states.
Etten believes the key to softening those stances — thereby allowing better research to start — is convincing lawmakers to be less afraid of the debate.
His group of lobbyists included several military academy grads, each of whom spoke to lawmakers about the challenges of opioid addiction among veterans and the benefits they’ve seen from marijuana studies. He said their reception, especially among Republican lawmakers, has been positive.
“We’re really trying to professionalize the mission, give these lawmakers a different view of what the fight is about,” Etten said.
He hopes that work along with the efforts of other groups “moves the needle” on the issue.
Already, multiple bills regarding loosening restrictions on cannabis research are pending before the House and Senate. Advancing them will require some of those lawmakers to turn from receptive listeners to loud advocates.
“This is where we need to be to do that,” Etten said. “They need to see veterans for this. This is the right message and the right conversation to move this forward. So we’ll keep coming back until we get it done.”

Military Times: **US lawmakers begin wrangling over annual defense policy bill**

**By: Joe Gould**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House and Senate conferees on a massive 2018 defense authorization bill met Wednesday to launch negotiations between the chambers’ competing bills. Lawmakers are expected to wrestle over a House proposal to create a new Space Corps as well as the size of the Army and the total number of F-35 fighter jets — among myriad other provisions. Staffers have been working for weeks, and this pass-the-gavel meeting was the first formal sit-down.

At a news conference to kick off the talks, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., and House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, told reporters they expect to find agreement on a conference report quickly.

“There is a widespread consensus that we need to do better for our military,” Thornberry said. “Just like Sen. McCain said, I am optimistic that we can deliver better in a pretty short amount of time given the similarities between the House and Senate bills.”

Both versions propose increases well above the president’s defense budget request. The Senate bill calls for $640 billion in Pentagon and other national security spending, blowing past the $549 billion limit set by statutory budget caps. The House bill calls for $621 billion in national security spending.

Complicating matters, there’s no consensus on lifting budget caps or a broader budget deal for fiscal 2018, and the federal government has been operating on a stopgap spending measure, called a continuing resolution, since last month.
The HASC’s top Democrat, Rep. Adam Smith, of Washington, used the news conference to lament the use of continuing resolutions and urge the passage of appropriations and defense policy bills.

“Month to month, week to week is no way to go,” Smith said. “We have to get an authorizing bill passed and an appropriations bill passed. If the money is there, the men and women serving in uniform at least know what is being asked of them.”

For his part, McCain continued to link defense budget caps to recent mishaps in which dozens of troops were hurt or killed, describing it as a “critical situation.”

“This legislation cures some of those problems but they’ve been building up for a long time,” McCain said. “The responsibility to a large degree lies with the Congress of the United States for not providing sufficient funds for them. We hope to turn it around this time.”

The House named 46 Republicans and 27 Democrats as conferees, while the Senate sent every member of the SASC, 14 Republicans and 13 Democrats.

The lawmakers are expected to reach a bipartisan agreement on a conference report for the 56th year in a row. Thornberry noted the House passed its bill with 79 percent of the vote and the Senate passed its bill with 89 percent.

The conference report would then need to be adopted by both chambers and signed by President Donald Trump to become law.

**Stars & Stripes:** Former special ops commander: US troops engaged in Niger firefights for years

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. forces operating in Niger have been shot at numerous times during the past two years.

They’ve hit a roadside bomb in a remote northern part of the country. And they’ve gone on reconnaissance patrols, where no enemy contact was expected but violence suddenly flared.

“We’ve had guys in firefights there before as a result of our partners getting in firefights. That happens,” said Donald Bolduc, who commanded special operations forces in Africa until June.

Outside the public eye, troops have suffered minor injuries in connection with those incidents, Bolduc said Wednesday in an interview with Stars and Stripes. One soldier died earlier this year in a vehicle rollover not far from where four U.S. soldiers were killed in an Oct. 4 ambush.

Bolduc recounted such incidents, which all occurred during his 26 months in command at Special Operations Command Africa. During that time, Niger became a major focal point for the military in Africa.

“It is dangerous. Our guys are operating in areas very similar in environment to Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, but not with the same kinds of authorities and resources,” Bolduc said. “We’ve had several, a number of combat casualties there under my command.”

The U.S. military has a growing presence in Niger, where there are now 800 troops supporting a campaign to help local forces battle violent extremist groups. But the ambush of a 12-man U.S. special operations team, on patrol with a Nigerien contingent of 30 troops, shook the political establishment in Washington. Some lawmakers said they were largely unaware of military activities in the region, despite White House letters advising Congress of troop levels.
Much confusion still surrounds the Oct. 4 operation, which is now under military investigation. Authorities are trying to determine what went wrong and how the body of one soldier — Sgt. La David Johnson — wasn’t discovered until nearly 48 hours after fighting began. Part of a U.S. Africa Command probe into the incident is looking at whether the forces had gone beyond the scope of what was billed as a civil-military reconnaissance mission. Several media reports, citing unnamed military sources, have said the team was directed to extend its patrol to help get information on a high-value target believed to be in the area. In doing so, they may have been entering an operational gray zone.

The U.S. and Nigerien soldiers are believed to have been set up by local villagers, who worked to distract and delay the unit’s departure while militants prepared an ambush.

The possible shift in mission focus has raised questions about whether U.S. forces violated a policy that restricts soldiers from joining missions where enemy contact is deemed likely. Determining the likelihood of combat isn’t an exact science, said Bolduc, who said any decision on the ground to hunt down a target for kill or capture would be a clear violation of the rules of engagement.

“They don’t have the authorities in place to do that on the fly,” he said.

Any decision to arrange a capture or kill mission in Niger would require not only higher headquarters approval but also a green light from the White House, he said. However, if the decision on the patrol, which began Oct. 3, was to expand the mission to gain intelligence, U.S. forces would still be working within approved authorities if enemy contact was deemed unlikely, Bolduc said.

Such decisions often are made by the commander on patrol, a Green Beret captain leading a 12-man detachment.

“By all means he (the captain) has the authority to do that,” Bolduc said. “If he is following bread crumbs of the mission they were out there to do, to gain information, and it wasn’t something where he believed contact was likely, then we have to trust them to figure out what that point is.”

Conversations between his command team back at camp, headed by a lieutenant colonel, and the main operational camp in Niger are frequent and factor into decision-making, Bolduc said. “Sometimes there is a tactical pause. I saw that happen numerous times. There is a tremendous amount of trust for how these guys operate.”

AFRICOM declined to comment on the decision-making chain of command in Niger, citing security issues.

Bolduc, however, said it was highly unlikely that soldiers had decided on their own to launch a capture or kill mission given that it would be such an obvious violation.

Reconnaissance ground patrols were routine during his time in command, Bolduc said. And those missions are not without risk as violence in the region has picked up over the past year, he said. In the case of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, “the assets are certainly not adequate,” he said.

AFRICOM’s desire for more intelligence and surveillance capability — voiced in a March request to Congress for additional support — came as violence around Niger was on the rise. Various militant groups, such as al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, have long been active, but earlier this year it and other militant strands forged closer ties under the banner of the Group to Support Islam and Muslims, Bolduc said.
“Not only did our partners see this (increased violence) coming, we knew it was coming, AFRICOM saw it coming and SOCAFRICA saw it coming,” Bolduc said. “We knew exactly what was going on and the enemy was more active in this area and more effective in this area.” Though the area has gotten more violent, U.S. forces still need to conduct missions with Nigerian forces while trying to conduct careful risk assessments, he said. Meanwhile, Washington should pay closer attention to operations in Africa, Bolduc said. The controversy over the deaths of four soldiers has been politicized, he said. “I am sorry that all the sudden that everybody just turns on to the fact that this is a volatile, uncertain, complex area. I am sorry you guys (Congress) just woke up to this in Washington, D.C.”

Military Times: Dunford, Mattis visit South Korea amid heightened tensions

SEOUL - Top U.S. military leadership converged in South Korea Thursday to discuss Seoul’s military defenses amid new threats by North Korea that it is preparing to detonate a second hydrogen bomb. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, U.S. Pacific Commander Navy Adm. Harry Harris and U.S. Forces-Korea commander Gen. Vincent Brooks were scheduled to meet with their Korean defense counterparts in Seoul over the next two days for technical discussions on the various military capabilities South Korea is pursuing to better defend itself against North Korea’s evolving ballistic missile program. On Saturday those discussions will be followed at the defense ministerial level between Mattis and his counterparts on a broader political discussion over the region’s security challenges. The regular military conference between the two countries has taken place since the 1970s, but is unique this year due to heightened security environment, Dunford said. “With the unprecedented missile testing and nuclear testing under Kim Jong-un this is certainly a tense period on the peninsula,” Dunford said to reporters traveling with him. This week North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho issued the country’s latest threat, stating at a United Nations meeting in New York that the regime intends to detonate a Hydrogen bomb above the Pacific Ocean. Dunford and Mattis are in South Korea at the same time the U.S. has dispatched the aircraft carriers Nimitz, Reagan and Roosevelt to the Pacific. Dunford downplayed the timing, noting that it was the second time the Navy had sailed three carriers in the region this year, and said the movement had been scheduled months in advance. He emphasized that the three carriers were “not there specifically targeted at North Korea.” Having three carriers in the Pacific did send a message, he noted. “First and foremost it gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the Pacific region. It gives us an opportunity to demonstrate our ability to meet our alliance commitments,” Dunford said, adding, “from an operational perspective, there’s some utility in bringing together the three carriers and operating in that regard.” One of the key defense items under discussion is a request by South Korea to further revise a 1979 agreement with the U.S. that would allow it to increase the payload on its own ballistic missiles from 500 kg to 1000 kg. In the original bilateral agreement, South Korea accepted limits
on its payloads and missile ranges in exchange for U.S. assistance on missile technology. The
agreement has been twice revised to allow for larger range but not for increased payload.
However this September President Donald Trump indicated he was supportive of the payload
being increased as well.
Increasing South Korea’s missile capabilities could reduce some of the demand on U.S. forces to
provide those defenses, Dunford said.
“They’ve been on a path toward increased South Korean capability for a long time so the more
they can do for themselves clearly the better,” Dunford said.
Lisa Collins, the Korea chair for the Center for Strategic and International Studies said the
agreement revision would “lift the weight limits on South Korean missiles and allow for more
advanced missiles.”
“South Korea wants to send a very strong message to North Korea,” Collins said.
The defense heads will also discuss South Korea’s progress toward meeting the conditions-based
transfer of operational control over the approximately 28,000 U.S. forces stationed there. U.S.
and Korean forces at present are under U.S. command and control in the case of attack. But that
operational control could one day be transferred to South Korea if certain conditions are met.
“Inherent in the responsibilities of OPCON transfer and a Korean being in command means they
then need to deliver all of the capabilities necessary to effect OPCON transfer,” Dunford said.
“That’s largely command and control capabilities, personnel, staff, organization.”
The visit also occurs days after the U.S. officially installed the Terminal High Altitude Area
Defense system, or THAAD as a permanent component of the 35th Air Defense Artillery
Brigade in Seonju, Korea.
The first phase of the system, including two launchers, was dispatched from Fort Bliss, Texas,
this spring. South Korea wavered on completing its assembly after intense pressure from China
which protested that the defense system’s radar would be turned on its territory. Korea later
renewed calls for the system to become fully operational after a constant barrage of North
Korean nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches this spring. The last remaining four launchers
and the full complement of 48 interceptors are now operating in Seonju.
Following his meetings in Seoul, Dunford is scheduled to travel to Hawaii for a trilateral meeting
with South Korea and Japan’s defense chiefs.

Military Times: Air Force says Santa isn't real, regrets it immediately

A spirited Twitter spat between Air Force bases turned unexpectedly dark Wednesday when the
Air Force’s official Twitter account dropped a bombshell: Santa isn’t real.
The intra-service Twitter feud between Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota and Whiteman
Air Force Base in Missouri began boiling over Monday as each claimed their bombers were
better.
Not my fault you're ancient. I'd say more, but I was raised to respect my elders.

12:02 AM - Oct 24, 2017

Much to learn you still have, @Whiteman_AFB. Hrmnm, pic.twitter.com/ujJ1ZB70a4
— Minot Air Force Base (@TeamMinot) October 24, 2017

The gif- and meme-laden scuffle escalated until the Air Force’s main account tried to separate the two Tuesday morning by declaring, “Alright that’s it! You guys leave me no choice! No television for a week!”
But like quarreling siblings, the two continued at it despite the parental intervention. Minot tattled “@Whiteman_AFB started it!” to which Whiteman posted multiple gifs declaring Minot’s assertions were lies.

And that’s when things went very, very wrong. “We didn’t want to have to do this, but if you 2 can’t get along we must,” the Air Force’s main account tweeted Wednesday morning. “Santa will bring you nothing this year...becuase [sic] he isn’t real!”

The bickering bases appeared shocked and chastened. Whiteman responded with three shocked face emoji and a gif declaring the Air Force’s nuclear option “Savage.”
Minot agreed with Whiteman, and noted that the declaration of Santa’s fictional status ran counter to decades of Air Force policy, since NORAD has tracked Saint Nicholas as he delivers presents every Christmas Eve since 1955.

After a few hours — and the publication of a Washington Examiner story about the dustup — the Air Force acknowledged in a tweet to the two bases, “Ok, maybe we took that one too far. Santa is real. Thankfully you 2 are better at deterrence than we are at comedy.”

Shortly thereafter, the Air Force tweeted out the Examiner story to more publicly declare, “Santa is real @Anna_Giaritelli! Bluffing to get @Whiteman_AFB @TeamMinot in line.”

And to all a good night.
Air Force confirms Santa Claus isn't real while chiding quarreling bases on Twitter

by Anna Giaritelli | Oct 25, 2017, 11:49 AM

Santa is real! Bluffing to get @Whiteman_AFB@TeamMinot in line. Tracking him in Dec. 

Follow @usairforce

@Anna_Giaritelli! Bluffing to get @Whiteman_AFB@TeamMinot in line. Tracking him in Dec. 

3:09 PM - Oct 25, 2017
Passage of coin bill a sign of respect for American Legion

Before it was passed Sept. 25, the House version of The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act (H.R. 2519), had garnered more cosponsors (385) than any other coin bill authorized in the past decade.

That kind of support for the legislation, which was signed into law Oct. 6 by President Donald Trump, is proof to U.S. Sen Todd Young of the respect members of Congress have for the Legion.

“This commemorative coin bill, like all commemorative coin bills, is not exactly easy to get through Congress,” Young told Legionnaires and the media during an event Oct. 10 at the Legion’s National Headquarters in Indianapolis. “Commemorative coin bills require at least 67 senators to cosponsor, and at least 290 members of the House of Representatives to cosponsor before they can be considered before either chamber.

“When’s the last time you saw 67 senators agree on anything? Or 290 members of the House? That really tells you something about how highly regarded the Legion is on Capitol Hill.”

The Indiana senator was joined at the event by American Legion National Commander Denise Rohan, who praised Young for his role as lead sponsor of the legislation in the Senate, where it had 75 cosponsors. “When asked to lead this veterans-centric effort, it took him all but 10 seconds to say yes,” said Rohan.


Young, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and member of The American Legion Department of Indiana, praised his colleagues in both parties in the House and Senate for their support and efforts. “Politics is a team sport, and you cannot get consequential things done unless you’re working in a bipartisan way on behalf of the common good,” he said.

Passage of the coin bill was possible, Young said, because of all that the Legion does for the nation. “The American Legion is a critical advocate for veterans, and for promoting patriotism and service,” he said. “Legion members are instrumental in the betterment of our communities and our nation as a whole. Through your commitment, collectively and individually, to supporting and caring for our veterans, protecting our national security, promoting patriotism and American values, and providing valuable programs for our children, The American Legion reminds us of what is best about America.”
The legislation requires the Department of Treasury to mint and issue gold, silver and half-dollar clad coins in celebration of the centennial of the Legion, for one year, beginning in January 2019. All surcharges received from the sale of The American Legion centennial coin will help raise money for Legion programs that support veterans, servicemembers and their families, as well as commemorate important aspects of American history and culture.

The funds gained from sales will support caring for those who served and are currently serving in the armed forces, and programs that maintain patriotic values, strong families and assistance for at-risk children.

Congress only authorizes the minting of two new coins each year.

“There are those who question why The American Legion put so much energy and focus into passing a centennial coin bill,” Rohan said. “The answer is rather simple and veteran-centric: The funds generated from the coin will directly help our nation’s heroes and their families.

“Without Legion family members getting active, calling their members of Congress – and sometimes it was more than just once – this would have never happened.”
Education program to teach students about the Great War

The American Legion

The relationship between The American Legion and the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission continues with the inception of a professional education program that will hit six cities across the country by the end of the current academic year.

“Teaching Literacy Through History” will be presented by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the nation’s leading American history organization dedicated to K-12 education. The intent of the program is to help educators better teach the Great War to their students, especially by using primary sources – direct or firsthand pieces or accounts, such as letters, diaries, printed books, newspapers, photographs and more – to bring the era to life, rather than relying strictly on secondary sources like textbooks or other articles written after the fact. Literacy skills and tools for using these primary sources will be provided; the educators will leave with lesson plans and other resources, and the hope is that this new focus will benefit student understanding and performance.

The program is funded by a $50,000 grant from the Legion and sponsored by the commission, which will provide curriculum content, communication resources and more. Seminars will be held in six cities by the end of the 2017-2018 school year: Louisville, Ky.; Anchorage, Alaska; Albuquerque, N.M.; San Diego; Detroit; and Providence, R.I. Attending educators will hear lectures and discussion meant to deepen their own knowledge of the war by leading historians like Michael Neiberg, chair of war studies and professor of history at the U.S. Army War College, and Christopher Capozzola, associate professor of history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“Teaching Literacy Through History” is meant to come at World War I from a variety of angles – its causes, conduct, human aspects, results, and ultimate consequences and lessons. Jack Monahan, The American Legion’s representative on the centennial commission, lauded the program as an example of both organizations’ “mutual efforts to increase public awareness of World War I.”
Veterans’ Home in Daytona Beach Has Residential Openings

DAYTONA BEACH – The Emory L. Bennett State Veterans’ Nursing Home in Volusia County has openings for qualified veterans.

The 120-bed skilled nursing facility, located at 1920 Mason Avenue in Daytona Beach, has a number of available rooms for both male and female veterans. Basic admission requirements for all state veterans’ homes include an honorable discharge, Florida residency, and certification of need of assisted living or skilled nursing care as determined by a VA physician.

“We are a tight-knit family of residents and staff,” said Home Administrator Gray Kilpatrick. “Every day we focus on serving our residents with compassion, sharing their lives and providing peace of mind for their families.”

Each of the facility’s two wings has a nursing station staffed 24 hours by Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants. A full complement of physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy staff is maintained at the home.

The modern, state-of-the-art facility offers:

- Spacious semi-private rooms
- Semi-private screened porches
- TVs over each resident’s bed
- Direct TV satellite service in every room
- Daily housekeeping and laundry services
- Restaurant-style dining
- U.S. Postal Service daily delivery
- Extensive in-house library
- Complete in-house pharmacy service
- Barber and beautician services
- Daily activities and field trips

For more information, call (386) 274-3460.
Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine has received funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to research the efficacy of K9s For Warriors service dogs in mitigating the effects of PTSD on veterans and their families. The research is being led by Dr. Maggie O'Haire, Assistant Professor of Human-Animal Interaction, of the University's Center for the Human-Animal Bond.

The research results are expected to close the knowledge gap between the apparent and proven therapeutic effects of service dogs. This study has been deemed imperative, based on the growing number of veterans experiencing the debilitating effects of PTSD, the depression and anxiety it causes their family members, and the lack of success rates of existing PTSD treatments. The Veterans Administration (VA) has never funded PTSD service dogs, citing insufficient scientific data. This study aims to resolve that. Currently, the treatment can only be found in small-scale organizations who take it upon themselves to train and provide the canines.

“We are overwhelmingly confident that this research will prove what all of us dedicated to the mission of saving our veterans already know — that service dogs work,” said Rory Diamond, CEO of K9s For Warriors. “Once this scientific data is published, it will help put more leashes into the hands of disabled veterans in the battle against veteran suicide.”

According to O’Haire, although the prevalence of service dogs for PTSD appears to be on the rise, there are no published clinical trials available to validate their efficacy. “Many veterans are increasingly seeking complementary interventions for PTSD, including service dogs,” Dr. O’Haire says. “Yet, even with the well-meaning intentions of service dog organizations that are working to meet the demand, our systematic review of scientific literature confirms a lack of published, empirical research on the effects that service dogs have on veterans and their spouses.”

O’Haire explains that, historically, research in this area has relied on anecdotal evidence and emotion rather than science. “Without scientifically sound studies that establish proof-of-concept for the therapeutic efficacy of PTSD service dogs, this animal-assisted intervention strategy will continue to be minimized as an unsupported and potentially unsound practice, despite anecdotal reports that the dogs may have a significant impact.”

This study will create a scientific evidence base for the effects of service dogs on veterans with PTSD as well as their spouses.

O’Haire and her research team hope to learn how service dogs are incorporated into the lives of veterans and what changes they may confer in terms of PTSD symptomology, social functioning and
physiological biomarkers. They will use standardized survey instruments as well as objective measures of physiology to track stress and functioning. They also will use a novel ecological momentary assessment protocol to capture the role and function of the dogs in everyday life.

“This project represents a substantive departure from the status quo by applying rigorous research methodology to an area that has historically been characterized by a reliance on emotional intuition rather than evidence-based science,” O’Haire says.

The study is funded by NIH’s Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). The funding is part of a public-private partnership established in 2008 between NICHD and the WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition, Mars Petcare’s fundamental science research centre, to establish a human-animal interaction (HAI) research program to support studies related to child development, health, and the therapeutic inclusion of animals in interventions for individuals with disabilities or those requiring rehabilitative services.

Merrick Pet Care, a prominent supporter and Strategic Research Partner of K9s For Warriors, is also a major funder of the study, contributing $250,000 to the project. Merrick has been the exclusive provider of all food and treats used in the K9s For Warriors training program since 2015. The pet care brand will continue to expand this partnership through its Hero’s Banquet recipe, now available year-round with a donation of the item’s proceeds helping to further underwrite research.

To schedule an interview with a K9s For Warriors representative, please contact Tahoma Guiry at tahoma@k9sforwarriors.org, or call (904) 686-1956.

To schedule an interview with Dr. O’Haire, please contact Allison Guffey at lamb32@purdue.edu.

About K9s For Warriors K9s For Warriors is the nation’s largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Military Sexual Trauma as a result of military service post-9/11. Their goal is to give a new leash on life to rescue dogs and military heroes, empowering warriors to return to civilian life with dignity and independence. Learn more at www.k9sforwarriors.org or visit http://www.facebook.com/k9sforwarriors for regular updates.
The Flagler County Board of County Commissioners

and the

Veterans Advisory Council

Invite you to attend a Veterans Day Ceremony starting at 10 a.m., Friday, November 10, 2017

The ceremony will take place at the Flagler County Government Services Building 1769 East Moody Boulevard, Bunnell, Florida

This year’s ceremony will feature Army National Guard Brigadier General Mike Canzoneri, who is assistant adjutant general, and commands nearly 10,000 soldiers and has management authority over all Florida Army National Guard programs. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he served as the Executive Officer for the 3-124th Infantry Battalion, and led Operation Inspired Gambit in Pakistan as the commander of the 1-153rd Cavalry Squadron.

General Canzoneri is a recipient of the U.S. Army’s Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award, which recognizes company grade officers who demonstrate the ideals for which General MacArthur stood – duty, honor, and country.

The general was also awarded the following: the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Hourglass Device and Mobilization, Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal with bronze service star, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon with numeral 3 device, Army Service Ribbon, and The Order of St. Maurice.

Besides featuring Canzoneri as guest speaker, the “Flagler County Colonel Gary E. DeKay Veteran of the Year” award recipient will be announced.

The Veterans Day event is sponsored by the Flagler County Commission and the Flagler County Veterans Advisory Council.

Veterans groups to participate include: American Legion Post 115, Amvets Post 113, DAV Chapter 86, Italian American War Veterans Post 7, Marine Corps League 876, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart 808, Flagler County Veterans Service Office, VFW Post 8696, and the Knights of Columbus 2264 Color Corps, as well as local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
Veterans Appreciation Breakfast

Name: Veterans Appreciation Breakfast
Date: November 9, 2017
Time: 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM EST
Event Description:
To thank and honor those who have served, the Flagler County Chamber of Commerce will host a Veterans Appreciation Breakfast on Thursday, November 9th. Our guest speaker is Navy Captain Dale Maxey, Commodore.

There will be a special ceremony, recognition of veterans in attendance and a presentation by Captain Maxey.

Members are asked to bring a veteran as their guest to attend the event.

Location:
Grand Haven Golf Club
500 Riverfront Dr
Palm Coast, FL 32137
Date/Time Information:
November 9, 2017
8:00am-9:30am
Contact Information:
Heather Edwards, 386-206-0952
Send an Email
Fees/Admission:
Members are invited to attend with a Veteran as their guest. Seats are $25.00 per person.