

Newsletter for SGT Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter 750 Military Order of the Purple Heart

<http://moph-chapter-750.com>



From the Commander

Next Meeting: March 10 at the Veterans Home of California, Ventura. LAMOPH meets at the same time, same place as the Patriots. If you have not done so, it is important that you let me know if you are attending the meeting, we need a count for food and a food organizer.

Passing of a Patriot



John C. Barber October 31, 1947 - January 27, 2016.

Son of the late Cotis Barber and Susie Shandy was born on October 31, 1948 in Oxnard and departed this life on January 27, 2016.

John served in the United State Army with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. He was awarded the Purple Heart and joined Chap. 750.

He was employed by State of California Youth Authority and retired after many years of service. John enjoyed life, attending sporting events, playing dominos and fishing and especially being with his family and friends. He leaves his loving daughters, Lalicia Barber Christian of Ventura, California and Monica Barber of Sacramento.

God be with you, John.

Commander's Comments

This is another long newsletter filled with content for you.

Purple Heart Trail – Santa Barbara County Saga

It looks like Chap. 750 has a break through with Caltrans, Patriot Hugh Claybaugh, who was a Ventura County professional engineer took over the dialog with Caltrans, with a professional engineer and made progress. This will be an meeting agenda item as the Caltrans engineer said there was a seven month backlog of installations so the question is do we accept this or challenge. I see two challenges 1. The chapter started this process two years ago. Ventura signs went in Veterans Day 2014. So we should have a earlier installation. 2. Contact Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson who wrote the legislation to authorize the PH Trails in both counties.

Department of California MOPH 2016 Convention will be held in Clovis May 16 - 18, 2016. Registration and hotel Information in next month's newsletter.

Election of the Chapter officers will be held at the March meeting as the April meeting will be an outing, the installation of elected and appointed officers will be at the May meeting.

For those who do not attend meetings, Chap. 750 is a known charity and we are all about vets helping vets. Veterans come to us for help. The chapter has veteran assistance requests for consideration, plus chapter charitable programs in place. All members should be part of the decision process and even kick in some manual or other labor to help. Maybe a donation, too. Come to meetings and see what interests you, it's good to help others, and you may need it someday. You probably have been helped in your life; someone did you a good deed, you cannot always repay that person so you repay it to others. This is what we do at Chapter 750.

Unit 750 LAMOPH

It was great to have so many of us together for the February meeting. The Unit had a remembrance of Sue Hutton and with support from members made a donation to the Brain Support Network in her memory. MaryLee Maline reported on the Department's mid-term convention in Clovis and the success of a raffle benefiting the Department's scholarship fund. The Chapter's food basket program plans for Thanksgiving was discussed and Jane Hieter and Roseanna Bravo volunteered for the planning Committee. Following the meeting, a dinner of ham and scalloped potatoes was hosted by Jane and Dave Hieter with Carol, Linda, MaryLee, Gloria and Roseanna providing salads, desserts and beverages. Thank you so much Jane and all the members for a delicious dinner!

At the March 10th meeting the Unit will open nominations and elect officers for the new 2016-2017 term. We will also be making plans for the Saturday May 14 annual installation meeting and family picnic at the home of Jon Williams (Jane suggested a chili cook off – bring your ideas) And we'll discuss fund raising ideas and how we may help with needs of Veterans.

Linda Weston is taking the lead on the March meeting potluck with plans for a pasta casserole. Who would like to bring a salad or dessert or snack or beverages? Let me know that you will be attending – it's really important for planning. Be there - don't miss the fun.

Reminders: LAMOPH Department of CA is accepting applications for two \$1,000 scholarships to MOPH/LAMOPH members pursuing higher learning, have 3.0+ GPA and submit an essay *Why is it important not to forget our Vietnam Veterans?* **Deadline** is March 31st. Details at calpurple-heart.org. The Department's annual meeting will be held in Clovis, CA on May 16-18.

Thank you ladies for all that you do in caring for our Patriots and Veterans. Questions or ideas you'd like to share – call or email me at 805-565-3759 or ms@west.net. Sally Irving, President.

Pierre Claeysens Veterans Foundation for the Santa Barbara Granada Theater Events

The cost is \$10 for theater events and \$5 for the movie series. Let me also know if you want a ticket and/or need assistance at the theater.

Elixir of Love 3/6/2016 Public Opera Santa Barbara
 A Decade of Kabaretti 3/12/2016 8pm Public SB Symphony
 A Decade of Kabaretti 3/13/2016 3pm Public SB Symphony
 Ragtime The Musical 3/29 - 3/30/2016 7:30 PM Public Theater League
 Sounds of the Ocean 4/9/2016 8pm Public SB Symphony
 Sounds of the Ocean 4/10/2016 3pm Public SB Symphony
 Gianni Schicci & Suor Angelica 4/22/2016 Public Opera Santa Barbara
 Gianni Schicci & Suor Angelica 4/24/2016 Public Opera Santa Barbara

Committee Members Needed

No. 1. The chapter has a food basket program. We need volunteers and worker bees. Who do you know that can help, I mean, besides you? David Hieter, Hugh Clabaugh, Tony DiRaimondo and Bill Hutton have stepped up.

No. 2. Ladies and Patriots to coordinate, gather and store clothing for veterans and their families. Hopefully, we can get storage at the Ventura Veterans Home or the Santa Barbara Veterans Memorial Building.

Violas and Collection Cans Available at the Meeting

The money goes to support Chap. 750, collection cans and violas are for public donations.

Chapter 750 April 16 Getaway on a Saturday

Patriot Jon Williams suggested a chapter group tour and lunch at a museum, as we did at the September 13, 2014 getaway at the Nethercutt Collection car museum. Details will be in the April newsletter.

10 A.M. J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1687

Calendar of events and available tours: <http://www.getty.edu/visit/cal/days/20160416.html>

At the March meeting we will have food and drinks. Our little pink porcine friend will be there, too, he needs to be fed and your donation goes to the Chapter.

May 14 Saturday Meeting Annual Family Picnic

Mother's Day is May 8.

Patriot Jon Williams is generously hosting the Picnic at his home in Camarillo.

This meeting the chapter and unit incoming officers installation.

Needed: A food committee to take charge of feeding the throngs.

If you plan on attending tell me your name and number of guests. If you do not we may run out of food for you, seriously, an accurate head count is import for food planning.

Chapter Meeting Schedule for 2015

Need a ride to the meeting? Contact me. Members may be able to car pool with you. Meetings are generally on the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm at the Veterans Home of California, Ventura (805-659-7500); located at 10900 Telephone Road Ventura: Santa Paula Freeway (Rte. 126); Exit South Wells Road (Rte. 118) then to Telephone Road. LAMOPH meets same time/same place as the Patriots.

Upcoming Meetings

March 10 – April 16 (Saturday) - May 14 (Saturday)

President's budget calls for opening a new VA clinic in Ventura County
Ventura County Star: Feb. 03, 2015

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama’s administration budget unveiled this week includes \$569.6 million to open a new Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic near Oxnard, prompting one veteran’s advocate to call the commitment “amazing.”

“It’s a fantastic thing,” said Kim Evans, founder of the Ventura County Military Collaborative. “I could not be more excited for the veterans of Ventura County right now ... This is amazing.”

The location of the proposed clinic remains undetermined, according to Mike McManus, who handles veterans affairs for Ventura County. But he said veterans have requested that it “stay centrally located along the 101 corridor.” He said the Obama administration commitment “is most certainly a big deal.”

(Chap. 750 member) Richard Camacho, president of Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, said the VA has overlooked Ventura County for too long and said he hopes that what’s proposed comes about. “I think it’s great if it comes through,” he said, but wondered if it would be “staffed by the VA or contractor personnel?” Camacho said the proposed expanded services for audiology and optometry would be a big improvement. He currently travels 77 miles round-trip to the Sepulveda clinic to have work done on his hearing aids. If Sepulveda can’t book a timely appointment, he said, “it’s West L.A., which is even further.”

Chapter 750 Members in the News

February 5, 2016

By Michael Doyle

Congresswoman Champions Medal of Honor for Vietnam Vet Who Fought In Laos

WASHINGTON — Retired Air Force pilot Philip J. Conran fought bravely in an inconvenient place. Now the 78-year-old Santa Barbara, California, resident has captured congressional attention for his Vietnam War valor. Revisiting one of the war's most sensitive chapters, Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara, has introduced legislation that would authorize President Barack Obama to award Conran the Medal of Honor.

"His story is so compelling, not just for one event, but for a history of events," Capps said in an interview. "He's an example of the kind of veteran who deserves attention." There is just one problem: Conran's heroism was demonstrated in Laos, a country where at the time the United States was not officially fighting. The military referred to it as "a classified location in Southeast Asia" and the Nixon administration worked hard to make sure the American public was kept in the dark about how the war had spread.

Conran said a general had told him that was why he didn't receive the Medal of Honor the first time he was nominated. Instead, he received the Air Force Cross. Awarding Conran the Medal of Honor, some think, might have shed too much light on a shadowy war. "I understood it," Conran said of the decision, "because, let's face it, the Nixon administration was in a terrible bind."

More than 46 years later, Capps, whose congressional district spans San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, thinks it's time to recognize Conran's heroism. One of about 41,500 veterans in Capps' congressional district, Conran exemplifies the search to clarify records and honor history. He does so with becoming modesty.

"It was their operation," Conran said of the soldiers he ferried, and then helped save, in his remarkable Oct. 6, 1969, mission. "I was just the bus driver."

Capps and Conran are the same age, survivors. Both have lost adult children to cancer. Conran's son Shane passed away last year at the age of 56. Capps' daughter Lisa passed away in 2000 at the age of 35.

Both Capps and Conran experienced the '60s tumult, but differently. Conran was a career Air Force pilot, conservative in his politics but audacious in combat. Capps was a school nurse married to a liberal religious studies professor eventually famous for a class titled "The Impact of the Vietnam War on American Religion and Culture."

Now Conran helps lead veterans groups and a Central Coast homeowners' association. Capps is concluding her congressional career, which began in 1998 following the death

of her husband, Walter Capps. Securing the nation's highest military medal for a constituent could be one of her last official acts.

It could also be a long shot, "The Air Force, and the military in general, is very careful about who they give medals to," Capps acknowledged, adding that "we'll leave no stone unturned."

Conran was initially recommended for the Medal of Honor in 1969 for his actions as a helicopter pilot with the 21st Special Operations Squadron."

Since the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. role in Laos has become more public. In 2010, following the declassification and passage of legislation, the Medal of Honor was awarded to the late Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger for his courage in defending a clandestine radar base in Laos. Etchberger, like Conran, originally had been given the Air Force Cross in 1968. "Among the few who knew of Dick's actions, there was a belief that his valor warranted our nation's highest military honor, but his mission had been a secret," Obama recounted, in language similar to that now used by Conran's allies. Conran's final Vietnam War mission, too, was classified. According to an Air Force summary, Conran took off on the morning of Oct. 6, 1969, from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand as part of a flight of five helicopters. His call sign was Knife 62. Once in Laos, the lead helicopter was shot down, leaving its crew members stranded.

Low on fuel, Conran landed his CH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter so the 26 Hmong soldiers he was ferrying could help fend off the enemy, who numbered in the hundreds. Small-arms fire then rendered his helicopter inoperable. Conran was now a ground-pounder, too.

For the next six hours or so, Conran rallied soldiers, directed airstrikes and exposed himself to fire as he retrieved weapons and equipment from the downed helicopters. By the time two U.S. rescue helicopters could extract the men, just before dark, Conran had taken a bullet in his left leg, "It's still there, as a matter of fact," he said.

Conran subsequently received his Air Force Cross and served out his time in the military and subsequent business career without, he said, giving the Medal of Honor much more thought. He was one of 179 recipients of the Air Force Cross during the Vietnam War, and it seemed honor enough.

Years later, retired in Santa Barbara, Conran came to know Hazel Blankenship. Married to a former Navy aviator, Blankenship is co-founding director of the Santa Barbara-based Pierre Claeysens Veterans Foundation.

Once she heard Conran's story, Blankenship began advocating on his behalf. The 67-year-old former CIA analyst has worked every angle, Capps said with an appreciative laugh. Blankenship lobbied multiple lawmakers. She cajoled the campaign manager shared by Capps and Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, and she educated a Santa Barbara County supervisor who's now running for Capps' seat.

"It just seems like the right thing to do," Blankenship said, adding that Conran "wasn't even talking about it that much, which is very typical of Phil."

Starting in 2013, Capps and Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-San Diego, wrote the Pentagon separately. In an April 2014 response, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James acknowledged that "Colonel Conran's commander nominated him for the Medal of Honor" but added "there is no independent verification or official documentation that the original nomination was downgraded due to the political sensitivities or the classified nature of the mission's location." Subsequently, Capps introduced her bill in December to authorize the Medal of Honor. It's considered a "personal" bill, as it affects a single named individual. It also confronts high Capitol Hill hurdles.

Though they were once commonplace, resolving specific immigration disputes and the like, Congress passed only three personal bills from January 2010 to December 2015, records show, "I haven't introduced bills on behalf of individuals very often, if ever," Capps said.

Several other bills have been introduced in this Congress authorizing the Medal of Honor, for potential recipients ranging from the late Navy SEAL sniper Scott "Chris" Kyle to a World War II veteran now living in Colleyville, Texas, named James Megellas.

Capps said her own bill's best chance would come as part of a bigger package. In the meantime, Conran's advocates plug away on behalf of a man who, when it counted, kept on fighting. "Major Conran," an Air Force officer wrote, in recommending him for the Medal of Honor, "would neither give up hope nor allow anyone to panic."

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article58652478.html>

The 2016 the Nearly \$170 Billion Veterans Administration Budget.
Who benefits most?

The President has proposed a \$168.8 billion budget for the Department of Veterans Administration (V.A.) in fiscal year 2016. The budget includes \$73.5 billion in discretionary funding, largely for healthcare. And \$95.3 billion for mandatory benefit programs such as disability compensation and pensions.

V.A. health care system is one of the largest in the country with approximately 9.4 million enrollees.

Other services for veterans

- \$266 million to administer the V.A.-run system of 133 national cemeteries;
- \$4.1 billion for information technology, including modernizing veterans' electronic health records, improve veterans' access to benefits.
- \$1.7 billion in construction, extended care grants to include nine Veterans Health Administration construction projects and four gravesite expansion projects.

This funding will provide:

- A disability compensation benefits for 4.3 million veterans and 400,000 survivors;
- A pension benefits program for 306,000 veterans and 216,000 survivors;
- The tenth largest life insurance program, covering both active duty service members and enrolled veterans;
- An education assistance program serving nearly 1.2 million students;
- Vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits for over 137,000 veterans;
- A home mortgage program with over two million active loans guaranteed by V.A...
- The largest national cemetery system with projections to inter 130,000 veterans and family members in 2016.

As of September 30, 2014, there were an estimated 22 million veterans living in the U. S. and its territories. In addition to these veterans, an additional 25.7 million family members and dependents are eligible for benefits from the V.A.

Let's break down some of this.

Veterans Administration *medical care* will cost taxpayers \$63,200,000,000 in the coming year:

9,400,000	This is the V.A. number of enrollees in V.A. health care system
\$6,723	Medical care costs taxpayers per veteran

Total Budget veterans Administration	\$168,800,000,000
22,000,000	Estimated # veterans living in the U.S.
\$7,673	Per veteran

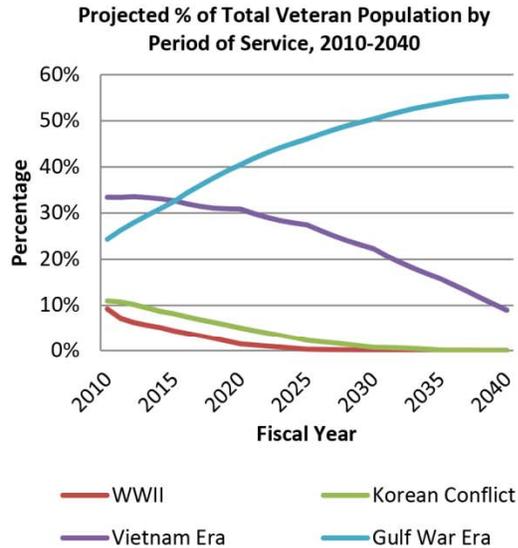
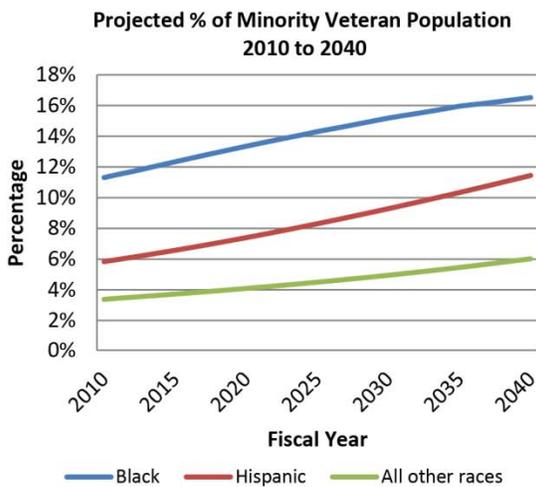
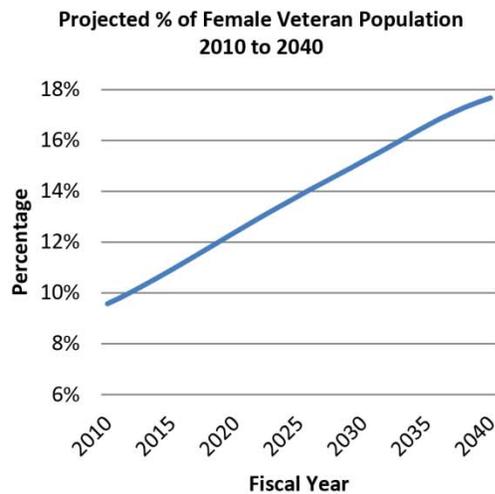
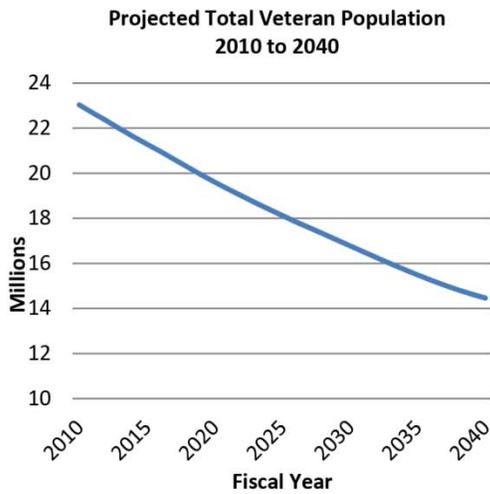
Most of the 22-million veterans do not use the V.A. I did not use the V.A. medical care for decades. This is a lot of money for medical care ranging from veterans in their early twenties to centenarians.

I know a veteran who is a medical doctor who completed his internship and residency in the V.A. system, he says just give veterans I.D. cards and let them go wherever they want. Eliminating the medical care sector of the V.A., taxpayers will save money and the veterans will get more responsive care. Then work on one or more of the other parts of the V.A.

Who benefits most? Ask a vet who enrolled in V.A. medical care. Or ask a vet who has a pending or completed claim with the V.A.

Below are illustrative charts courtesy of the V.A.

Veteran Population Projections: FY2010 to FY2040



Note: Categories are mutually exclusive.
 'All other races' includes American Indian/Alaska Native,
 Asian, Pacific Islander, and Other.

Source: Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projections Model (VetPop2011) tables 1L, 3L and 2L





VA Benefits & Health Care Utilization

Number of Veterans Receiving VA Disability Compensation (as of 09/30/14):	3.95 M
Number of Veterans Rated 100% Disabled (as of 09/30/14):	439,461
Number of Veterans Receiving VA Pension (as of 09/30/14):	304,579
Number of Spouses Receiving DIC (as of 09/30/14):	364,946
Number of Total Enrollees in VA Health Care System (FY 13):	8.92 M ¹
Number of Total Unique Patients Treated (FY 13):	6.48 M ¹
Number of Veterans Compensated for PTSD (as of 09/30/14):	722,044
Number of Veterans in Receipt of IU Benefits (as of 09/30/14):	326,688
Number of VA Education Beneficiaries (FY 14):	1.09 M
Number of Life Insurance Policies Supervised and Administered by VA (as of 09/30/14):	6.59 M
Face Amount of Insurance Policies Supervised and Administered by VA (as of 09/30/14):	1.27 T
Number of Veterans Receiving Voc Rehab (Chapter 31) Benefits (FY 14):	99,839
Number of Active VA Home Loan Participants (as of 09/30/14):	2.14 M
Number of Health Care Professionals Rotating Through VA (FY 13):	118,799
Number of OEF/OIF Amputees (as of 12/01/14):	1,652 ²

Source: DVA Information Technology Center; Health Services Training Report; VBA Education Service; VBA Office of Performance Analysis & Integrity; ¹ VHA (10A5); ² DoD. Produced by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.

Veterans Demographics

Projected U.S. Veterans Population:	21,999,000	{Female 2,020,000 9%}
Projected Number of Living WW II Veterans (as of 9/30/2014):		1,017,000
Estimated Number of WW II Veterans Pass Away Per Day:		514
Percentage of Veteran Population 65 or Older:		45.23%
Veteran Population by Race:	White 82.3%	Black 12.2%
	Asian/Pacific Islander 1.6%	Other 3.2%
	American Indian/Alaska Natives 0.8%	Hispanic 6.8%

About VA

Number of VA Employees in Pay Status:	347,883
Number of Full Time VA Employees:	321,378
Number of VA Hospitals:	150
Number of VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinics:	819
Number of VA Vet Centers:	300
Number of VBA Regional Offices:	56
Number of VA National Cemeteries:	131

	FY13 Appropriations (actual)¹	FY14 Appropriations (enacted)¹	FY15 Appropriations (requested)¹
VA:	\$139B	\$153.9B	\$163.9B
VHA:	\$56B ²	\$57.88B ²	\$59.66B ²
VBA-GOE:	\$2.16B ³	\$2.47B ³	\$2.49B ³
NCA:	\$260M	\$249M	\$257M
OIT:	\$3.52B	\$3.70B	\$3.90B

Source: Veteran Population as of 09/30/14; VA Employ Pay Status Count 09/30/14; Veterans Affairs Site Tracking (VAST) 03/31/14; NCA as of 09/30/14; Office of Budget; Health Services Training Report FY13; ¹ Includes MCCF; ² Medical Care w/ MCCF and medical research; ³ Discretionary Spending Only.

Above Chart Guide:

V.A. Benefits & Health Care Utilization

GOE stands for General Operating Expense

VBA Veterans Benefit Administration

VHA Veterans Health Administration

NCA National Cemetery Administration

OI&T Office of Information and Technology

Sources for the V.A. article and graphics: Current V.A. documents.

<http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>

Free Tax Return Preparation for Qualifying Taxpayers

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

What to Bring to Your Local VITA or TCE Site

- Proof of identification (photo ID)
- Social Security cards for you, your spouse and dependents
- An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assignment letter may be substituted for you, your spouse and your dependents if you do not have a Social Security number
- Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statements (Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc) from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- All Forms 1095, Health Insurance Statements
- Health Insurance Exemption Certificate, if received
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Proof of bank account routing and account numbers for direct deposit such as a blank check
- Total paid for daycare provider and the daycare provider's tax identifying number such as their Social Security number or business Employer Identification Number
- Forms 1095-A, B or C, Affordable Health Care Statements
- Copies of income transcripts from IRS and state, if applicable

To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms

Real Marines Don't Practice Diplomacy

Dec, 1986, *New York Times*.

By JAMES P. STERBA

First, a confession: My initial encounter with real U.S. Marines had nothing to do with President Reagan's beloved jarheads: North, McFarlane, Regan, Walters and Shultz. It happened in early July 1969, at Vandegrift Combat Base in I Corps, 12 miles south of the DMZ and 11 miles east of the remains of Khesanh.

I was a young pencil-jockey for a well-known local Manhattan newspaper. And after hanging around with the grunts and their pet rats, soaking up war stories and trying to get "orientated," as they said at the briefings, I wrote a story in which a Marine was quoted as saying: "Worrying about dying is how guys get killed out here."

That quote has bothered me ever since. So I'm coming clean. I hereby admit that that Marine didn't say that. My editors put those words in his mouth and censored what he really said. Which was: "Look, I can abso-(bleeping)-lutely guarantee you that every sorry (bleeper) who starts worrying out here about gettin' greased sure as (bleep) is going to get his (bleeping bleep) blown away."

See, this newspaper does it too. It's a media conspiracy. It probably started during the celluloid World War II that John Wayne, Ronald Reagan and William Bendix fought when the Pacific, like much else, was black and white. Ever since, the movies, TV, radio, magazines and newspapers have been cleaning up Marinespeak like so many Don Regans with shovels scurrying behind the elephants.

The problem is that this has gone on so long that some Americans, even in high places, actually seem to believe that Marines say "darn" and "heck" and "gosh" and "stuff," as in, "then, the stuff hit the fan."

This wouldn't matter much except that the Marine Corps itself has come to embrace censored Marinespeak as its official language to the point where it prissily revoked its endorsement of Clint Eastwood's new movie, "Heartbreak Ridge," on the ground that our hero, Gunnery Sgt. Tom Highway, is a garbage mouth.

Gimme a break! We aren't talking here about a few good men (who don't say bleep). Those are the poster ladies.

The Marines I used to know were about as ruthlessly bullheaded and foulmouthed a collection of juvenile delinquents and intellectual malcontents as could be assembled without cages, whips and chairs. And they were proud of it. They took perverse pride in eating terrible food and getting along with terrible, broken-down equipment (the helicopters that broke down during the 1980 Iranian hostage-rescue debacle belonged to the Marines).

These Marines, of course, were the ones to be with when you found yourself in "deep serious." Trouble was they stumbled into it constantly, whether they wanted to or not. And if you wondered aloud why they didn't build bunkers or dig foxholes or otherwise afford themselves of elementary forms of self-protection, they'd tell you fervently, "Marines never, ever dig in." (They didn't at Khesanh and they didn't in Beirut.) Digging in was evidence that they might stay somewhere for a while, which, according to creed, Marines never do. They move forward, especially when somebody is shooting at them. It was the candy-(bleeped) Army, they'd tell you, that stopped to think, to call in artillery or wait for air support, not Marines. Marines charged—no doubts, no qualms, no questions asked.

Times have changed. Somebody has obviously forgotten what Marines are for. They've gone dainty on us. They've managed to convince people in high places that they talk nice and behave properly enough to alter their job descriptions. They've been getting jobs as striped-pants diplomats and even emissaries in the

whispery world of covert networking. They're passing themselves off as silver-tongued smoothies.

They've convinced people they're subtle.

Among the Marines I knew, an act of subtlety was a Marine F-4 Phantom pilot flying 300 feet above the deck in a mountain-fringed valley and dropping his entire load of napalm right down the throat of a Viet Cong gunner and waving to the cheering grunts on the ground as he passed. Whoosh. That's Marine subtle.

But these new-fangled Marines, who have managed to smooth-talk their way into becoming all the president's men, supposedly do dainty things like deliver cakes to ayatollahs to show sincerity and sensitivity. The Marines I knew didn't deliver baked goods, unless of course the frosting hid an enormous slab of an exploding putty called C-4.

Real Marines can be wonderfully charming and engaging. A few of them are nice guys. But you certainly don't want them in your basement practicing their “candos” or involved in delicate military missions, let alone diplomatic ones.

What real Marines do best is perform a basic wartime task. They assault enemy beaches and die for their country in whatever numbers are required to accomplish this unfortunately necessary task. It's time once again to let Marines be Marines.

One shivers to imagine the reaction of Lt. Gen. Lewis Burwell “Chesty” Puller, the Marine's Marine, to the doings of Oliver North, Bud McFarlane, Don Regan, George Shultz and Vernon Walters. Imagine his ghost confronting these guys.

“Foreign policy?” he'd ask. “You sorry sons-a-(bleeps) never learn. The Marines have only one foreign policy—find the bastards, then pile on.”

Mr. Sterba is a senior special writer for the Journal in New York.

Birdies for the Brave great program for veterans interested in PGA Golf events

Birdies for the brave is a program started by PGA Tour player Phil Mickelson and his wife, Amy, to support combat-injured troops. There are different activities at these events

Within this program veterans can receive free ticket to different PGA events. There are requirements that have to be met to qualify for the tickets.

The procedures are very easy to get it done

1. Go to the website: www.Birdiesforthebrave.com and follow the instructions.
2. You will be required to pay a \$1.00 service fee for verification of your military history.
3. You will receive a confirmation letter with the web address to receive tour ticket voucher.
4. With the voucher you will get the actual credential/ticket at different will call locations.

As a very important reminder follow the instructions at the different websites that you are directed to so that you will not be billed for the tickets. www.birdiesforthebrave.sheerid.com will be the website that will verify your military history so that you will get the free tickets. Some events give free or discounted tickets.