

NEWS AND NOTES FOR FLORIDA VETERANS

Veterans Service Center, VA Regional Office
St. Petersburg, FL



May 2010

The "News and Notes for Florida Veterans" is published monthly by the Veterans Service Center, VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Florida, to provide information on VA benefit programs to veterans and dependents in Florida. The material presented does not have the effect of laws or regulations. Please send questions or comments on this newsletter to Veterans Service Center, ATTN: "News and Notes," PO Box 1437, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. We do not have the resources to maintain a mailing list for distribution to individuals; however this newsletter is available on the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office web site at www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete.

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES These are open to the public.

Barrancas National Cemetery (Naval Air Station, 80 Hovey Road, Pensacola). On Saturday, May 29, the Boy Scouts will place American flags on the gravesites. The Memorial Day service is on Monday, May 31, at 9:00 AM (Central Time) in the Main Post Chapel. The Guest Speaker will be Charles Klusmann, Captain U.S. Navy (Retired). For information call 850-453-4108.

Bay Pines National Cemetery (10,000 Bay Pines Boulevard, St Petersburg) The Memorial Day Service is on Monday, May 31, at 10:00 AM. The featured speaker will be Congressman C. W. "Bill" Young. The Master of Ceremonies will be Steve Jerve from WFLA Channel 8. Shuttle service will be provided from the parking lot to the cemetery. For information call the Bay Pines VA Medical Center Voluntary Service at 727-398-9394.

Florida National Cemetery (6502 SW 102nd Avenue Bushnell) The Florida National Cemetery will hold its annual Memorial Day Ceremony, sponsored by the Joint Veterans Committee (JVC) on Monday, May 31, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. The Keynote Speaker will be Nevin M. Weaver, FACHE, Network Director, VISN 8, VA Sunshine Healthcare Network, Bay Pines, FL. Guest Speakers will include Alex Sink, Chief Financial Officer with the State of Florida and Charlene Kee, National President 2008-2009, AMVETS National Ladies Auxiliary. Randy Price of Country Music Station WQYK 99.5 F.M., will be the Master of Ceremonies. Guests are invited to arrive early and enjoy the patriotic and inspirational musical prelude which will begin shortly before the ceremony. Seating is limited; those attending are encouraged to arrive early, wear comfortable clothing and bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit upon.

The Avenue of Flags consisting of approximately 400 plus flags will be on display along the roadways of the cemetery. These flags were donated to the cemetery by the next of kin of deceased veterans and were once draped over the caskets or cremation urns of veterans.

The Joint Veterans Committee and the Florida National Cemetery extend an invitation to all veterans' organizations and the general public to take this opportunity to remember and honor the men and women who served and gave so much to protect our great nation. Organizations with colors are invited to participate in the massing of colors at the beginning of the program. Veterans' organizations should plan to arrive by 8:30 AM.

Jacksonville National Cemetery (4083 Lannie Rd, Jacksonville) The ceremony begins at 2:00 PM on Monday, May 31. Congressman Andrew Crenshaw will be the keynote speaker. For more information call the cemetery at 904-766-5222

Sarasota National Cemetery (9810 State Highway 72, Sarasota) The ceremony will be on Sunday, May 30, at 1:00 PM. For information call the cemetery at 941-922-7200

South Florida National Cemetery (6501 S. State Road 7 Lake Worth) The Memorial Day ceremony begins at 10:00 AM Monday, May 31. Parking will be open from 8:15 AM. For more information call 561-649-6489.

St Augustine National Cemetery (104 Marine St, St. Augustine) The service begins at 10:00 AM on Monday, May 31. The ceremony is sponsored by the Military Officers Association of America, the Florida National Guard, and the St. Johns County Veterans Service Office. Honor guards from veterans service organizations and civic organizations will participate. Music will be provided by the Ancient City Pipes and Drums. The names of veterans from St. Johns County who have passed away since Memorial Day 2009 will be read. For more information call Mr. George McCray of the MOAA at 904-797-7388 or 904-669-3305.

BRADENTON COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT

CLINIC In order to meet the growing needs of veterans in the Manatee County area, Bay Pines VA has consolidated the Ellenton Primary Care Clinic and the Bradenton Mental Health Clinic into one location. The new Bradenton VA

Clinic is located in the Morgan Johnson Office Park at 5520 S.R. 64 Suite 101, Bradenton, FL. The telephone number is 941-721-0649.

The new clinic is significantly larger at a total of 12,455 square feet. It includes expanded primary care services and mental healthcare, laboratory specimen collection, social work services, a pharmacist for medication consultation, and a part time Operation Enduring/Iraqi Freedom Case Manager. The clinic will be designed to provide gender specific care for female veterans, including larger rooms, better layout for privacy, and adjacent restrooms. Later this summer, Eye Care, Dental, and basic Radiology Services (x-ray and ultrasound) will be added to the clinic.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE CHILDREN OF FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS (VA News Release)

WASHINGTON – The children of military personnel who died in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001 can apply for an educational scholarship similar to the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. Benefits are retroactive to Aug. 1, 2009. The scholarship, which is administered by VA, is named after Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, 28, who died in Iraq in 2006 while disarming an explosive.

VA begins accepting applications for the Fry scholarship on May 1, 2010. For more information or assistance applying, call toll-free 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), or visit the VA GI Bill Website at www.gibill.va.gov. VA will begin paying benefits under the Fry scholarships on August 1, 2010. Eligible participants may receive benefits retroactively to August 1, 2009, the same day the Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect.

VA estimates nearly 1,500 children will receive benefits under the Fry scholarship program in 2010. Recipients generally have 15 years to use their benefits, beginning on their 18th birthdays. Eligible children may be married. Recipients are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level.

Eligible children attending institutions of higher learning may receive payments to cover their tuition and fees up to the highest amounts charged to public, in-state students at undergraduate institutions in each state. A monthly housing allowance and stipend for books and supplies are also paid under this program.

When dependents also serve in the military, the reserves or are veterans in their own right, eligible for education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty, the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), then they would relinquish their eligibility under those programs to receive benefits under a Fry scholarship.

VA BOOKLET "FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS, DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS 2010" is available online at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

VA FACILITIES ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

SUICIDE PREVENTION 1-800-273-8255

VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg - PO Box 1437, St. Petersburg, FL 33731 1-800-827-1000

Regional Processing Office, Atlanta, GA (education claims) - PO Box 100022, Decatur, GA 30031-7022 1-888-GIBILL1 (442-4551)

Telephone number for Chapter 30 self-verifications 1-877-823-2378

VA EFT Information Hotline (electronic funds transfer - direct deposit) 1-877-838-2778

Veterans Health Administration Toll-Free Hotline (medical care) - 1-877-222-8387

VA Health Revenue Service (information on amounts owed to VA Medical Centers) 1-866-793-4591

VA Insurance Center, Philadelphia (VA Insurance) - PO Box 42954, Philadelphia, PA 19101 1-800-669-8477

VA Health Administration Center (CHAMPVA and Spina Bifida health care) -

CHAMPVA inquiries: PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206-5023

CHAMPVA claims: PO Box 65024, Denver, CO 80206-5024

Spina Bifida inquiries and claims: PO Box 65025, Denver, CO 80206-5025 1-800-733-8387

National Cemeteries

10,000 Bay Pines Blvd N, Bay Pines FL 727-398-9426

6502 SW 102nd Ave, Bushnell FL 352-793-7740

6501 S State Rd 7, Lake Worth, FL 561-649-6489

4083 Lannie Rd, Jacksonville FL 904-766-5222

Naval Air Station, Pensacola FL 850-453-4108/4846

9810 State Hwy 72, Sarasota FL 877-861-9840

104 Marine St, St Augustine FL 352-793-7740

National Cemetery Administration Office of Memorial Programs (headstones and markers) - 5109 Russell Rd Quantico VA 22134-3903 1-800-697-6947

Loan Guaranty Eligibility Center (certificates of eligibility) PO Box 20729, Winston-Salem, NC 27120 1-888-244-6711

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) Unit - Chicago VA Regional Office 1-800-829-4833

INTERNET SITES OF INTEREST:

VA Web Site: www.va.gov

VA Web Automated Reference Materials System (WARMS) www.warms.vba.va.gov

St. Petersburg VA Regional Office:

www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete

Property Management (sale of VA-repossessed homes): <http://va.reotrans.com/>

Federal employment: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Florida Dept of Veterans Affairs: www.floridavets.org

"Florida Vets First:" www.FloridaVetsFirst.com

Library of Congress (information on pending legislation) thomas.loc.gov