



**ADJUTANT'S  
NEWSLETTER**  
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**THE DEPARTMENT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
THE AMERICAN LEGION**

**TO MY LEGION FAMILY:**



**A MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL COMMANDER DALE  
BARNETT**



To my fellow Legionnaires and Legion Family members in NEW HAMPSHIRE,

My theme this year is "DUTY HONOR COUNTRY." These are three principles that epitomize The American Legion Family.

While The American Legion has a respected national reach, it is what you do in communities throughout your department that people see every day. You do this to show your gratitude and appreciation for what veterans and their families have sacrificed. Veterans have given to this nation, but American Legion Family members also believe it's their DUTY to serve their communities.

There is an HONOR in wearing our military uniforms that cannot be found in the private sector. It says that we have been entrusted by our nation to protect the national interests of our fellow citizens. We shall not fail them. American Legion Family members believe it's an HONOR to support our men and women who continue to serve in uniform.

We understand that COUNTRY means far more than a geographical region. It represents our way of life and who we are as a people. Whether it's teaching about flag etiquette in a local school or reciting our Pledge of

Allegiance, Legionnaires in all 55 departments know that they are blessed to serve the greatest country on earth.

Our American Legion Walks for Veterans are underway and I cannot tell you enough how much I appreciate the support that I have been receiving from departments regarding this initiative. Not only do these events support our National Emergency Fund, they are a great way to bring attention to the thousands of veterans who struggle with traumatic brain injuries, Post Traumatic Stress and other signature wounds of war. Whether it's during a National Commanders' visit or not, the Legion is proud to walk for those who marched for us.

I thank you for your service as military veterans, as Legionnaires and as members of the Legion Family. Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable conference.

For God and Country,



Dale Barnett  
National Commander

### **2015 Fall Conference**

I would like to thank all of those that took the time out of your weekend to come to our Fall Conference that was on October 31<sup>st</sup>. I know the stress of dodging zombies, ghouls and ghosts may have come into play that day but all in the entire turnout was decent.

We were at a disadvantage this year where we did not have any break out rooms to conduct training. As a result we had to come up with some subjects that would be beneficial to all. Thanks to Commander John Graham and NEC Bill Roy we were able to get some information out to those that attended that may have been heard before but also needed to be reiterated.

I also talked about some of the publications that were handed out to me at the Adjutants Conference this year that pertained to IRS requirements and filing of 990's. This is especially important since we have several Posts in this state that have lost their exempt status because they have failed to submit a 990 into the IRS. This eventually will cost the Post money as one of our Posts found out not to long ago.

Losing your exempt status affects your accounts, donations, and other fund raising events and costs the member money and the Post money it should not have to pay down the road.

I hope to have some of those publications posted on the website and a listing of what you can get off mylegion.org for a small price.





## LEAD CANDIDATE VISITS

The Lead Candidate for 2016 National Commander, Charlie Schmidt from the Department of Oregon, will be visiting our state from Thursday November 19 thru Monday November 23, 2015.

Comrade Schmidt will be attending the Post 79 Thanksgiving Day for veterans at the Tilton Veterans' Home and the VA Medical Center on Sunday, November 22, 2015 at 11:00. AM. All Legion family is welcomed to attend this event to honor our veterans domiciled at these facilities. Not only will there be great food, there will also be entertainment to follow with the AOH Pipe Band and the Amoskeag Strummers!

Any Post who would like the above dignitaries to attend their Posts please contact:

Bill Roy  
23 Cambridge Court  
Manchester NH 03103  
603-315-5829  
wmroy@comcast.net

For the National Commander's Walk:

Ken Maynard ANEC  
6 Epping Woods Rd  
Epping, NH 03042  
603-817-0515  
[kenmay1@comcast.net](mailto:kenmay1@comcast.net)

# **DATES TO REMEMBER**

## **November**

3<sup>rd</sup>, 1967- Battle of DakTo begins

4<sup>th</sup>, 1791- St. Clair's Defeat

1952- NSA established

7<sup>th</sup>, 1811- Battle of Tippecanoe

8<sup>th</sup>, 1942- Allied Forces land in North Africa (Operation Torch)

9<sup>th</sup>, 1989- Fall of the Berlin Wall began when East German authorities opened crossing points

10<sup>th</sup>, 1775- U.S. Marine Corps Birthday

11<sup>th</sup>- **VETERANS' DAY** 1813- Battle of Chrysler's Farm 1918- Meuse-Argonne Campaign ends

1918- **WORLD WAR I ends (Armistice signed)**

14<sup>th</sup>, 1965- Battle of Ia Drang Valley begins

15<sup>th</sup>, 1864- Sherman's "March to the Sea" begins

17<sup>th</sup>, 1775- Field Artillery and Air Defense Birthday

1942- Tunisia Campaign begins

18<sup>th</sup>, 1965- Battle of Ia Drang Valley ends

20<sup>th</sup>, 1965- Operation Silver Bayonet ends

1970- Attempt to rescue POWs from Son Tay, North Vietnam

21<sup>st</sup>, 1983- Operation Urgent Fury (Grenada) ends

22<sup>nd</sup>, 1967- Battle of Dak To ends

23<sup>rd</sup>, 1863- Battle of Chattanooga begins

25<sup>th</sup>, 1986- Ronald Pelton, former NSA analyst, arrested for spying for Soviets

26<sup>th</sup>, **THANKSGIVING**

28<sup>th</sup>, 1863- Battle of Chattanooga ends

1951- Second Korean Winter Campaign begins

29<sup>th</sup>, 1864- Shenandoah Campaign ends

30<sup>th</sup>, 1864- Battle of Franklin

1999- Charles Chibitty of the Comanche Nation received Knowlton Award for code-talking

contributions during World War II

\*\*\*\*\* On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 The last of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers of World War II has died. Chester Nez, died this morning of kidney failure at the age of 93.

# Nashua Veterans' Parade Committee



## ***Nashua Veterans Day Parade – November 11, 2015***

**Bob Courtemanche** having been appointed Grand Marshall for the annual Veterans Day Parade, Wednesday November 11, 2015, the following General Orders are published for the information and guidance of all concerned. All officers, enlisted men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States are cordially invited to participate in the Veterans Day Parade. In the event of inclement weather, a Veterans Memorial Service will be held at the Elm Street Middle School, in Nashua, NH.

### **General Order No. 1:**

The parade will form at Holman Stadium at **10:30am.** **Mayor Lozeau** will speak at **10:50am** followed by the VFW Firing squad. The Parade formation will move promptly at **11:11am.** The line of March will proceed east on Amherst Street to Main Street to Lake Street and disband at Elm Street Middle School, where the units will be dismissed. In the event of inclement weather, a Veterans Memorial Service will be held at the Elm Street Middle School, in Nashua, NH  
603-889-9833. Speaker of the day will be: **Ed Lecius.**

The parade Roster will include:

### **General Order No. 2:**

#### **VANGUARD:**

Nashua Police Department Motorcycles  
Band – Bishop Guertin High School  
Nashua Police Department Color Guard  
Nashua Fire Rescue Color Guard  
Grand Marshall – ***Bob Courtemanche***  
President of the Day – ***M.J. Dube***  
Gold Star Mothers  
Mayor - ***Donnalee Lozeau***  
Board of Alderman  
Nashua School Board  
City Officials

USAF Junior ROTC – ***Col. Kevin Grady***  
***Chief Bruce Kimball***  
***Jr. ROTC Cadets***

**1<sup>st</sup> Division:**

American Legion Post 3 Members  
Post 3 American Legion – Band  
American Legion Post 3 Colors  
American Legion Post 3 Acting Commander – **John York**  
American Legion Post 3 Ladies Aux. President – **Catherine Partridge**  
Sons of the American Sq. 3 Commander – **Ken York**  
American Legion Post 124 Commander – **Cynthia Geddes**  
American Legion Post 124 Members  
Car with Members  
America Legion Rider's

**2<sup>nd</sup> Division:**

Disabled American Veterans Chapter 7, Nashua  
Nashua High School North – Band  
DAV Chapter 7 Colors – Carried by the Civil Air Patrol  
DAV Chapter 7 Commander – **Doug Cotreau**  
DAVA Unit #7 Auxiliary Commander – **Jeanne Gideon**  
DAV Chapter 7 Members & Auxiliary  
DAV Van and Auxiliary  
Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 804  
Civil Air Patrol – LT **Col. Kevin Harbison**  
Civil Air Patrol Cadets  
Civil Air Patrol Cadets Van

**3<sup>rd</sup> Division:**

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 483, Nashua  
Nashua High School South – Band  
VFW Post 483 Color Guard  
Commander Post 483 – **James Brown**  
VFW to Post 483 Auxiliary President – **Sylvia Lopez**  
VFW to Post 483 Men's Auxiliary President - **Larry Villandry**  
VFW Post 483 Post Members  
VFW Post 483 Auxiliary Members  
VFW Post 483 Men's Auxiliary  
Commanders Car  
Cars with members

**4<sup>th</sup> Division:**

Fraternal Organization – Elks Lodge 720  
Elm Street Middle School - Band  
Elks Lodge 720 Colors  
Elks 720 – Members  
Nashua Emblem Club 170  
Knights of Columbus Assembly #1506 – Faithful Navigator – **Jason**

**Bliss**

Knights of Columbus Float  
Rising Sun Lodge 39 Masons  
Odd Fellows Lodge

**5<sup>th</sup> Division:**

**General Organization:**

Pennicuck Middle School - Band  
1<sup>st</sup> NH Regiment – **Steve Rogers**  
Salvation Army  
Salvation Army Canteen  
Nashua Humane Society

**6<sup>th</sup> Division: Girl Scouts / Brownies:**

**7<sup>th</sup> Division: Explorers / Boy Scouts/ Cub Scouts:**

**8<sup>th</sup> Division: City of Nashua Patrons:**

Fairgrounds Middle School - Band  
American Cancer Society Relay for Life  
Nashua Library Peacocks  
Prince of Peace Assembly  
Nashua Dog Owners Group  
Boys and Girls Club of Nashua and Van  
P.A.L Van and Members  
AARP #622 Van  
Rockingham Ambulance  
Nashua Police Department Flatfoot Van  
Nashua Transit Authority  
Red Cross Vehicles  
Fire Trucks  
Nashua Police Cruiser

**Memorial Services at Local Cemeteries:**

**Meet at: DAV Chapter 7 @ 7:00 AM  
31 Cross Street  
Nashua, NH 03060**

**Following the Parade:**

Refreshments for all Parade participants will be served at the Elm Street Middle School in Nashua.

**Elm Street Middle School  
117 Elm Street  
Nashua, NH 03060**

There are many Veteran Day ceremonies going on out there this year. This parade in Nashua is important because it is something I do not see very often where so many veteran organizations are coming together to remember those who have served. Great job to those who planned this and all involved.

# LIBERTY HOUSE

## WISH LIST UPDATED 10/20/15

Donations can be dropped off at 75 W. Baker St,  
Manchester NH during daylight hours.

| CLOTHING ▼                                 | FOOD ▼                      | HOUSEHOLD ITEMS ▼         |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ★ Men's jeans in small waist sizes (30-34) | ★ Canned meat               | ★ Antibiotic ointment     |
| ★ Hooded sweatshirts                       | ★ Canned soup               | ★ Dishwashing soap        |
| ★ Winter coats                             | ★ Canned ravioli            | 35 Gallon Trashbags       |
| ★ Winter boots                             | Canned fruit                | Toilet paper              |
| Workboots, all sizes                       | Canned vegetables and beans | Warm blankets             |
| Heavy gloves                               | Coffee                      | HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ▼     |
| Heavy socks                                | MISC ▼                      | ★ Tents                   |
| Men's thermals or longjohns                | ★ Shaving razors            | ★ Sleeping bags           |
|  | ★ Shaving cream             | ★ Can openers             |
|  | ★ Deodorant                 | Flashlights and batteries |
|  | ★ Shampoo-full size         |                           |

Visit <http://libertyhousenh.org/ways-to-help-to-learn-more-about-how-you-can-support-the-veterans-at-liberty-house>.

Questions? Contact Bill Zarakotas or Lindsay Elitharp at (603) 669-0761 or by e-mail at [lindsay@libertyhousenh.org](mailto:lindsay@libertyhousenh.org)

**Liberty House in Manchester** Thank you to all who visited T-BONES Bedford during their Donate For A Spin fundraiser. You raised over \$6000 to aid the veterans at Liberty House! We also received a large donation of much needed camping supplies and other essentials from Ecosmith Recyclers this month to help our homeless community. If you have any sleeping bags or tents you don't use anymore, bring them to liberty House!

# Operation: Thank You!

Ocean State Job Lot salutes  
service members and their families\*

## Get 25% Off

Click for  
Details  
▼

*\*Includes Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve and Retired personnel,  
Veterans and their families. ID required.*



## Veterans Day - Free Meals and Discounts

### 2015 Veterans Day Free Meals and Discounts

Source (visit for daily updates): <http://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-day-free-meals-and-discounts/>

**Thank you for your service!** Veterans Day is almost here, and many restaurants and other businesses want to thank you for your service. We have included a list of national offers. We will continue to update this list until Veterans Day.

### **EXCLUSIVE VETERANS DAY GIVEAWAY!**

We have teamed with Armed Forces Vacation Club to offer a Resort Vacation Certificate to two lucky US military members or veterans. Each certificate is good for a 7 night vacation stay, valued at \$399\*USD. You can enter on our website until Nov. 12, at 7pm CST. Current and former US Military only. Details and rules on our site.

**Enter Here:**

<http://themilitarywallet.com/giveaways/afvc-giveaway/>

## Veterans Day Offers

### The Following Are Generally True:

Offers are for Active Duty, Retirees, and Veterans, unless otherwise stated.  
Military ID or other proof of service are required.  
Call ahead to verify the offer – some offers are only at participating locations.  
May only be valid for dine-in meals, beverage may not be included.  
Please tip your wait-staff on the full meal price. It's the right thing to do!

## Free Meals for Veterans Day

### Starting Nov. 9, 2015:

- Carraba's, Nov. 9 – 15. Free appetizer of your choice. Locations.
- Claim Jumper, Nov. 9. Free entrée from select menu, with official proof of service. Dine-in only
- O'Charley's, Nov. 9. Free entree from the \$9.99'er menu. Locations.
- Red Lobster, Nov. 9 – 12, 2015. Free Appetizer from a select list of appetizers. Locations.
- Spaghetti Warehouse, Nov. 9 - 11. Buy one entrée, get one free. Coupon Required (available on their website and FaceBook page on Nov. 3). Choose any of 11 Original Recipe Spaghetti entrées and receive a second entrée free. Friends and relatives are encouraged to treat a veteran to a meal.

### Starting Nov. 10, 2015:

- Country Cookin, Nov. 10, 2015. Free meal for current and former military. Locations.
- Bar Louie, Nov. 10 - 11, 2015. Free entrée from select menu. Dine-in only. Locations.

### Nov. 11, 2015:

- Applebee's. Free meal from special menu. Beverage and gratuity not included. More info.
- BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse. Free entree, up to \$12.95. Locations.
- Bob Evans. All you can eat hotcakes. Locations.
- Bonanza Steakhouse. Free Veterans Day buffet at participating locations. More info. Locations.
- Brann's Steakhouse and Grille. Free 6 oz Sirloin and two sides. Locations.
- Buehler's Grocery. Free breakfast menu meal from 7:00 am until 11:00 am at participating locations. Locations.
- Buffalo's Cafe. Free meal at participating locations. Locations.
- Calhoun's Restaurant. Free meal from select menu. Locations.
- California Pizza Kitchen. Choose a pizza, full size salad, or pasta from the special Veterans Day Menu. Locations.
- Cattlemens Steakhouse. Free 8 oz Sirloin Steak Dinner and. Locations.
- CentraArchy Restaurants. Free meal at participating restaurants, including Burrito Loco, California Dreaming, Carolina Roadhouse, ChopHouse New Orleans, ChopHouse '47, Gulfstream Café, Joey D's Oak Room, and New York Prime. Locations.
- Cheeseburger in Paradise. Free All-American Burger with fries with purchase of beverage. Dine-in only. Locations.
- Chili's. Free lunch combo during lunch hour, or free meal from special menu during dinner hour. Participating locations only – call ahead. Locations.
- City Barbeque. Free sandwich platter at participating locations. Proof of service required. Locations.
- Cotton Patch Café. Free meal. Proof of service required. Locations.
- Denny's. Free Build Your Own Grand Slam, from 5 a.m. to Noon. Participating locations only. Please call ahead. Locations.
- Fatz Eat & Drinkz. Free meal. Proof of service required. Locations.
- Fox & the Hound. Free Sandwich or Entree (up to \$10). Dine-in and participating locations only. Locations.
- Friendly's. Free breakfast, lunch, dinner. Participating locations. Locations.
- Golden Corral (5pm – 9pm): The 15th annual Golden Corral Military Appreciation Monday dinner is available to any person who has ever served in the United States Military. Visit <http://www.goldencorral.com/military/>.

- Green Mill. Free menu item for lunch or dinner. More Info. Locations. • Hooters. Free meal, from select menu, with any drink purchase.
- Hooters. Free meal, from select menu, with any drink purchase. Participating locations only. Locations.
- Hoss's Family Steak & Sea House. Free meal from the American Values Menu, 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Locations.
- Hurricane Grill & Wings. Free meal from special menu at participating locations. Locations.
- IHOP. Free Red, White and Blue pancakes or Red, White and Blue pancakes combo plate including eggs, bacon and hashed browns. 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. At participating locations only. Please call ahead to verify offer. Locations.
- Little Caesars® Pizza. Free pizza or \$5 HOT-N-READY Lunch Combo between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Call ahead to verify participation. Locations.
- LongHorn Steakhouse. Complimentary Texas Tonion and non-alcoholic beverage. Locations.
- Max & Erma's. Free Best Cheeseburger in America Combo. Locations.
- Menchie's. Free 6 oz. frozen yogurt. Locations.
- Misison BBQ. Free sandwiches to active duty military members and veterans at participating locations. Locations.
- MOD Pizza. Free pizza or salad. Dine-in & participating locations. Locations.
- The Olive Garden. Free entrée with proof of service. Locations.
- On the Border. Free Choose 2 or Choose 3 Combo. Locations.
- Orange Leaf. Free frozen yogurt (up to 11 Oz.). Locations.
- Outback Steakhouse. Free Bloomin' Onion and a non-alcoholic beverage. Also receive 15% off your purchase from Nov. 12-Dec 31, 2015. Locations.
- PDQ Tenders. PDQ Free 3 piece Tenders or Sandwich. PDQ also offers 50% off the entire order for all active/retired military personnel on the first Monday every month. Locations.
- Perkin's Restaurant & Bakeries. Free Magnificent Seven meal at participating. Beverage not included. Call ahead to verify participation. Locations.
- Pinnacle Entertainment (Casino Chain). Select locations are offering a free buffet meal. More info and locations.
- Primanti Bros. Free Sandwich from 4pm to close at participating locations. More info. Locations. • Red Robin. Free Tavern Double™ burger with Bottomless Steak Fries®. Participating locations only. Locations.
- Rock & Brews. Free pulled pork sandwich with a side. More Info. Locations.
- Sammy's Woodfired Pizza & Grill. Free garlic cheese bread or hummus with grilled herb flatbread. Dine-in participating locations only. Locations.
- Sheetz. Free lunch at participating locations. Free car wash also available at participating locations. Locations.
- Shoney's. Free All-American Burger. Locations.
- Sizzler Restaurants. Free lunch served until 4pm. Choice of 3 entrees, and a free coffee, tea, or fountain drink. Locations.
- Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill. Free meal from special Veterans Day menu at participating locations only.
- StarBucks. Free tall brewed coffee for active duty, veterans, and their spouses. Participating stores only. Please call ahead.
- Tap House Grill. Free meal for servicemembers and veterans with proof of service. Locations.
- Texas Roadhouse. Free lunch from special menu. Dine-in only. Locations.
- TGI Friday's. Free lunch, 11am-2pm, participating location only. Please call ahead to verify offer. Locations.
- Tony Roma's. Free half rack Baby Back Ribs at select Florida locations. Valid at select locations only. Please call ahead to verify participation. Locations.
- Travel Centers of America. Free meal for CDL holders who are also veterans. Participating locations only; proof of service required. More info.
- Tubby's Sub Shops. Free small Grilled Steak N' Cheese or Tubby's Famous Sub at participating Tubby's locations. Take out only. Locations.
- Twin Peaks Restaurants. Free meal at participating locations (please call ahead). Locations.
- Village Inn. Free breakfast any time of day (choice of three menu items). Veterans will also receive a "Thank You for Your Service Card" valid for 20% off their total bill on their next visit when they dine at Village Inn on Veterans Day. Participating locations only. Please call ahead. Locations.
- Wienerschnitzel. Free hot dog & small soft drink at participating locations. Locations.
- 54th Street Grill. Free meal, up to \$12 value. Locations.

## Freebies for Veterans Day

**Nov. 11, 2015:**

- Free Car Wash: Visit [GraceforVets.org](http://GraceforVets.org) for a list of participating car washes.
- Free Hair Cut: Great Clips is offering a free hair cut for military and veterans. Non-veterans can get a coupon to give to a veteran. Locations.
- Free Hair Cut: Sport Clips, free hair cut at participating locations.
- Free Night at a B&B: Get a free night's stay at a Bed & Breakfast on Veterans Day. See list of participating B&B's (these fill up fast!). Visit B&Bs for Vets.
- Free Kindle Book: Operation Money: A Financial Guide for Military Service Members and Families, by best-selling author, Jean Chatzky

# Vietnam Veteran to VA:

## “I’m not dead, restore my benefits.”

As many of you know I have been critical of the VA in recent months for practices which in my opinion affect the very lives of the veterans who need the service, but it is just not right. Well to continue on with how the VA needs to continue to make sure that it continues to improve quality control where veteran’s lives are not affected. The following story I came across in some of the daily emails I get about veterans issues from across the country. Although this story is sad to the point it becomes funny, I cannot believe that the VA is so disconnected they do not realize when they have made a mistake and it takes the veteran having to do his own leg work to get the attention of a U.S. Representative to push some buttons before something is done.

Mike Rieker survived the Vietnam War, where he was a Navy seaman serving aboard river boats. It was dangerous work that claimed the lives of 11 of his closest friends.

But Rieker could not survive the Department of Veterans Affairs claims processing system.

When his monthly VA disability check failed to show up in his bank account this week, the 69-year-old Dunedin man called to find out why.

A short while later, a woman from the VA’s Philadelphia office called him back.

“Your benefits were suspended because you are deceased,” she told him.

“Well, wait a minute,” Rieker replied. “I’m talking to you.”

Realizing there was a problem, the woman told him to hold the phone. She came back to let him know that over the summer, a veteran named Michael G. Rieker died in Arizona.

“I’m Michael C. Rieker,” he said.

The woman then told him that in September, his wife filed for burial benefits.

“But I don’t have a wife,” he replied.

The woman filed an inquiry, Rieker said, but it hasn’t helped yet.

Rieker has suffered heart problems, diabetes and other health issues because of his exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, where he served from 1965 to 1969. He is on a fixed income and lives check to check. He said he relies heavily on the \$2,906.83 a month he receives from the VA as an 80-percent service-disabled veteran.

“I’m not sure how long I can hold out,” he said. “I’m scared to death. I’ve got credit cards, so I could probably hold out for about two months if I am very careful.”

On Monday, Rieker contacted U.S. Rep. David Jolly, the Indian Shores Republican, who responded this morning with a letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald. “I know he has been very good working for veterans,” Rieker said.

Even before the letter to McDonald went out, the VA was working on the problem, Rieker said.

After hearing from Rieker on Monday, Jolly’s office fired off a letter that day to VA officials in Washington asking that they investigate Rieker’s case.

This morning, he was contacted by the VA’s St. Petersburg Regional Office.

“I got a call ... telling me the issue has been resolved and that ‘My check is in the mail,’” so to speak, and should be deposited by the 17th,” Reiker said in an email to The Tampa Tribune. “Apparently he got a call from Washington yesterday and he investigated it and it got corrected.”

Still, Jolly said, Rieker’s story is just the latest of at least six cases where local veterans or their survivors have reported a similar problem.

The VA “works diligently to deliver timely and accurate benefits to veterans and their families,” said Bruce Clisby, a spokesman for the St. Petersburg Regional Office, which handles benefits claims. “However, a small number human coding errors do occur in the millions of transactions successfully completed each year. Additionally, we’ve improved verification of the veteran’s identity when processing ‘notice of death’ transactions.”

Clisby added, “We regret the inconvenience to veterans and reassure them we work quickly to restore their benefits as soon as we are alerted to an issue.”

In Rieker’s case, the problem arose from an error in the processing of a burial application at a Pension Management Center for a veteran with a similar name.

The problem was addressed immediately once the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office was provided notification, Clisby said.

“To my knowledge, records are not maintained to track errors of this nature,” he said.

Veterans who experience a problem like this should call the VA at (800) 827-1000, Clisby said, or their local VA regional office.

Jolly complained to McDonald at the VA that even one case like this is too many.

“One case is outrageous, but six is unacceptable,” Jolly wrote to McDonald. “If these problems are being caused by human error there is clearly an inadequate system of checks and balances. If not human error, the current system is flawed.”

In a statement, Jolly said “this type of error can create financial hardships and it is extremely disconcerting.”

Since his election in 2014, Jolly’s office has handed four other similar cases. Last fall, U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, the Palm Harbor Republican, helped a 92-year-old Wesley Chapel woman deal with the same issue, according to Jolly’s letter.

This is the case this year investigated by Jolly’s office in which VA benefits were cut off by mistake as a result of a glitch in death records.

In August 2014, the VA stopped Mary Ann Clough’s spousal benefits, according to Preston Rudie, Jolly’s spokesman.

Clough’s VA spousal benefits at the time totaled a little more than \$1,200 a month.

“The VA sent her estate a notice saying Mary Ann had passed away, when she was clearly still alive,” Rudie said.

Clough wrote Jolly a Christmas card mentioning the problem. Jolly opened it in January.

“After reading it, staff immediately reached out to Mary Ann and within three weeks the problem was solved and Many

Ann’s back benefits were restored,” Rudie said. “She received more than \$6,000 in back benefits.”

In February, Jolly wrote McDonald a letter seeking answers about Clough’s case. He also raised the issue when McDonald testified before the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations subcommittee in March.

Meantime, Riker, the Dunedin veteran, has learned more about Michael George Rieker, who died June 13, according to an obituary posted online by the Silver Creek Mortuary in Arizona.

An Army veteran who was honorably discharged in 1972, Michael George Rieker was a swap meet enthusiast who was killed in an automobile wreck while leaving a swap meet in the town of Snowflake.

*(Altman, Howard, November 4, 2015, Tampa Tribune)*

## A SALUTE TO ALL OUR VETERANS HAPPY THANKSGIVING