



AMERICAN LEGION POST 295 VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL



HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SET

Post 295's High School Oratorical Contest will be held on January 13th at 10 am, location TBD. Please notify us if you have a contestant.

For rules and topic information visit National's site here

Membership Data

The information reflected here is what is in the Post records for your membership. (as of 1.4.2012)

Thank you for your service in the
Custom Text 1 Your membership is paid for **Custom Text 4** with **Custom Text 5** continuous years. (if 2012, your membership is expired).

Membership #*Custom Text 3*
Robert Ouellette
PO Box 690
Germantown MD 20875

americanlegionpost295@gmail.com

Should information be missing or incorrect, please select this "update" link to make corrections.

Membership Renewals made easy?

If your paid year was 2012 then your dues are due? Dues are payable by Dec 31 of the previous

Dear Robert,

Happy New Year!

On behalf of the officers & members of Post 295, may you have a peaceful and prosperous new year.

I challenge every member with recruiting 1 new member. Remember, numbers count as Congress is cutting benefits to slash the deficit. A large American Legion membership is a strong deterrent to indiscriminate veteran benefit reductions.

Even with the calendar flipping to 2013 we are in the middle of the Legion year, which runs from June to May. We are running behind Nationals membership goal of 85% by January 6th, as we are only at 76%.

After a successful luncheon for the wounded warriors, families and staff of Walter Reed on December 23rd, we are starting 2013 with our High School Oratorical Contest. The 2013 High School Oratorical Contest will be held on January 12th, 10 AM, location TBD.

The Legion year is still going strong, there are several events in the near future. They are the Southern Maryland District Oyster Bowl, National Commander's Reception, Department Reception and District Reception to name a few.

Bob Ouellette
Post Commander

Veterans Benefits Administration Transformation

Question: How will Veterans Benefits Administration transformation affect me?

year. Dues are still only \$30, that is .08 cents a day for all of the great benefits.

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Post 295
News at

Answer: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is undergoing the most extensive transformation in recent history in response to the ongoing military drawdown, an increase in National Guard and reserve claims, an increase in the number of contentions per claimant on applications for compensation, and an expected increase in annual claims to more than 1 million new claims per year for the next three years.

In terms of how things work now, correspondence is received in the VA regional office through the mailroom. It is first routed to triage to discern what type of claim it is and where it should go, and then it is routed to the proper section. The claim is assigned to a development team based on the terminal digit of the file number. A veterans claims representative then "develops" the claim in preparation for a rater to apply law in making an adjudicative decision. This development may include scheduling exams, requesting federal records and soliciting pertinent information from the claimant.

Once development is complete, the claims file is forwarded for rating. Once rated, it is sent to authorizations. The overview of this system seems to provide a picture of a very efficient assembly line type operation. However, all of these respective tasks are partitioned and take place in different physical locations, thereby creating a lack of processing continuity. But this will change with the Intake Processing Center (IPC).

The IPC will facilitate much quicker movement of incoming correspondence to the proper team. Cross-functional teams will provide a case-management approach for claims, which will enable establishment, development, processing, rating and authorization by one self-contained entity rather than by several different sections separated by geographical space.

The other facet of the transformation is the implementation of three segmented lanes: special operations, express and core. This model will increase processing speeds by consolidating claims by type.

The special operations lane will handle claims requiring specialized expertise, such as traumatic brain injury or military sexual trauma. These claims should make up about 10 percent of the overall workload. The express lane will handle claims with only a few claimed

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This info is offered as a resource to both Maryland's veterans and private businesses that seek to employ veterans. The American Legion and the MDVA has not investigated the positions being offered or the businesses listed, and does not warrant or guarantee either the availability, or the terms and conditions, of the positions listed. All communication between potential applicants and the listed businesses are between the parties and do not involve the American Legion or the MDVA.

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contentions, or fully developed claims, which include all evidence to be considered at the time of filing. These claims are anticipated to encompass 30 percent of the workload. The remaining multi-issue claims, such as diabetes mellitus and individual unemployability, will represent about 60 percent of the workload and will be managed in the core lanes.

The impact of the claimant, as proposed by VBA, is a 15 to 20 percent increase in productivity and a 4 percent increase in quality. The plan for the transformation of claims processing is coupled with a drive to increase the use of fully developed claims, utilization of internal quality-review teams and electronic processing software to save time in rating.

Visit benefits.va.gov/transformation/ for more information.

Do you have a question about the claims process or veterans benefits? Email it to askso@legion.org.

CBO proposes COLA increases be linked to the C-CPI to save \$200 billion federal dollars from VA

If the chained-Consumer Price Index (C-CPI) is adopted as the federal measure for the cost-of-living allowance (COLA), Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., predicted the outcome would be "an absolute disaster."

The incoming chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee voiced his views on the issue Dec. 19, during a press conference in Washington.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently proposed that COLA increases be linked to the C-CPI as a means of saving more than \$200 billion federal dollars over the next 10 years in reduced benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Social Security Administration. The American Legion opposes



Dean Stoline, deputy director of the Legion's Legislative Division, speaks at Sen. Bernie Sanders' press conference on Dec. 19 in Washington. (Photo by Craig Roberts)

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the plan as a "misguided public policy" that "would have significant deleterious effects on the benefits of millions of veterans"

According to a press release from Sanders' office, the CBO proposal would cut VA disability benefits for a 30-year-old veteran by more than \$13,000 a year by age 45, \$1,800 a year by age 55, and \$2,260 a year by age 65. Senior citizens who retire by age 65 would see their Social Security benefits reduced by about \$650 a year by the time they reach 75, and more than \$1,000 a year when they turn 85.

"I challenge anyone who supports a chained-CPI to go to Walter Reed (National Military Medical Center)," Sanders said. "Visit with the men and women who have lost their legs, lost their arms, lost their eyesight as a result of their service in Afghanistan or Iraq. We made a promise to these veterans. Cutting their COLA's would be renegeing on those promises, and we cannot let that happen."

Dean Stoline, deputy legislative director of The American Legion, also spoke at the press conference. He warned that CBO's plan would have a far greater effect on the economic security of many veterans and their families "because the VA programs for service-connected disability compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and VA pensions also use the same COLA percentage adjustment as Social Security."

Stoline said that if the C-CPI proposal is enacted by law, it "will result in lower lifetime earned benefits for millions of veterans. For example, today, more than 3.2 million veterans receive VA disability compensation benefits and over 310,000 veterans receive VA pension benefits."

American Legion National Commander James E. Koutz sent a letter to leaders in the House of Representatives on Dec. 14, reminding them that the current COLA formula "already understates the true cost-of-living increases faced by seniors and people with disabilities Adopting the chained-CPI would make their situations much worse over time."

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For those who characterize the C-CPI plan as a "minor tweak," Sanders said it is "a significant benefit cut that will make it harder for permanently disabled veterans and the elderly to feed their families, heat their homes, pay for their prescription drugs and make ends meet. This misguided proposal must be vigorously opposed."

Read more about the press conference on Senator Sanders website.

[Read More](#)

Salute to Heroes Inaugural Banquet and Ball

The Salute to Heroes Inaugural Banquet and Ball on Jan. 21

will proudly recognize those who have earned the na

tion's highest military

award - Medal of Honor recipients - on the occasion of the 57th Presidential Inauguration. The American Legion has sponsored the ball since it began in 1953 with the inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and 13 other veterans service organizations are currently co-sponsors.



Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball is a time for the Commander-in-Chief to be in the presence of those who have fought for America's freedom. Of the 3,459 Medals of Honor awarded in history, just 81 recipients are alive today, the majority of whom will be attending the ball held at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Other attendees will include U.S. military personnel who have served, and are serving, in the war on terrorism, celebrities, guest dignitaries and American Legion National Commander James E. Koutz. Traditionally, the ball is also attended by the president and first lady, the vice president, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other top officials.

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Combined banquet and ball tickets are \$250 per person, while ball-only tickets are \$125 per person. To purchase tickets, please contact Wanda Tallakson at (202) 861-2700.

Tour Pointe du Hoc - There is an App for that!



Smartphone users can now experience the history of Pointe du Hoc and tour the World War II D-Day landing site in France with the American Battle Monuments Commission free Pointe du Hoc mobile app.

The GPS-enabled application allows virtual visitors to experience the site where U.S. Army Rangers scaled the 100-foot cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, destroyed a critical German battery and took control of the coastal highway, playing a crucial role in the Allied success of D-Day. The app is perfect for those seeking a guided-tour of Pointe du Hoc or those who simply want to learn more about the battle.

The Pointe du Hoc app is available for both iPhone and Android devices and can be found in the iTunes store or Google Play. With the app, users can:

- Use GPS-enabled mapping to walk Pointe du Hoc and see the German observation bunker, the 155mm gun emplacements, the anti-aircraft gun position and more;
- Learn the story of the U.S. Army Rangers from the 2nd and 5th Battalion that fought this battle;
- Listen to Rangers recount their D-Day stories;
- See historic photos from June 6, 1944; and

- Understand how the battle of Pointe du Hoc served a critical role in the Allied success of D-Day.

The American Battle Monuments Commission, established by Congress in 1923, manages 24 overseas military cemeteries and 25 memorials, monuments and markers. Nearly all specifically honor those who served in World War I and World War II.

American Legion Post 295, Vietnam Veterans Memorial
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