



Community organization award recipient

Commander-in-Chief Glen M. Gardner has awarded Dan J. Teoro of McDonald-Linn VFW Post 177 the Community Organization Award. The Community Organization award is the highest award for service to youth through the Boy Scouts of America. It is presented for extraordinary service to youth and/or leadership in support of the organization's youth outreach program. Teoro has served more than 40 years as a scout leader. He has been to five world jamborees and six national scout jamborees. In 2010 Teoro will attend the 100th anniversary in Scouting in the United States Jamboree. He is a Boy Scout Leader in Troop 618 of Trinity Lutheran Church in Oak Lawn. Teoro has served as the District Arrowhead of Chicago Area Council chairman and runs the Scout Fishing Derby at Tampier Lake for the past 33 years. Teoro serves as the chairman of Post 177's youth program. Pictured are, from left, Illinois State Senior Vice Commander J.D. "Butch" Spindler, Dan Teoro and 3rd District Commander Michael DeRoss.



Roscoe VFW Post 2955 Quartermaster Steve Thomas at the Wall of Honor. (Photo by Ken Seay)

VFW Post 2955 Helps Harlem High School Honor its Military Heroes

Roscoe VFW Post 2955 and its Ladies Auxiliary, collaborated with Harlem High School, in Loves Park, IL and Image Signs to create a "Wall of Honor" for former students serving in the military.

Roscoe VFW was honored to have its name recognized on the wall as a main provider. The dedication and unveiling was on January 26, 2009 at the high school. Several of the military services members displayed in photos on the board were in attendance.

Also in attendance were numerous parents and relatives of military members who are serving, as well as other military members and local veterans. The high school band performed each military branch's anthem. The "Wall of Honor" was designed in part by Harlem senior, Peter Ruef, who was beaming at the response received by all. Peter was glad to be a part of it because of so many friends currently serving in the military and his way to say thank you.

Representing Roscoe VFW Post 2955 and its Ladies Auxiliary at the ceremony was Quartermaster Steve Thomas. Loves Park VFW Post 9759 Quartermaster Ken Seay was also on hand. Both Quartermasters received accolations for the Veterans of Foreign Wars honoring the Harlem students serving, from most parents in attendance.

Mr. Paxton, of Machesney Park, IL was so moved by the honor that he encouraged his daughter, Shauna Paxton, to join the Roscoe VFW on the spot. PFC Paxton, a Harlem student, was on a short leave from Kabul, Afghanistan serving with the Illinois National Guard. Also, Corporal Andrew Crosby, US Army, (served in Iraq and a Harlem student on the "wall") joined on the spot and requested to be a member of the Loves Park VFW Post 9759.

Quartermasters Thomas and Seay were honored to have these two combat soldiers join the ranks of our elite organization.

**VA To Deploy Mobile Counseling Centers
50 Motor Coaches to Bring Services Closer to Veterans**

The first of a fleet of 50 new mobile counseling centers for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vet Center program was put into service recently with the remainder scheduled to be activated over the next three months.

"Our widespread distribution of this fleet from coast to coast marks a new chapter in VA's innovation to reach rural and underserved veterans with high-quality readjustment counseling," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

Each vehicle will be assigned to

one of VA's existing Vet Centers, enabling the center to improve access to counseling by bringing services closer to veterans.

The 38-foot motor coaches, which have spaces for confidential counseling, will carry Vet Center counselors and outreach workers to events and activities to reach veterans in broad geographic areas, supplementing VA's 232 current Vet Centers, which are scheduled to increase to 271 facilities by the end of 2009.

Vet Centers, operated by VA's Readjustment Counseling Ser-

vice, provide non-medical readjustment counseling in easily accessible, consumer-oriented facilities, addressing the social and economic dimensions of post-war needs. This includes psychological counseling for traumatic military-related experiences and family counseling when needed for the veteran's readjustment.

The team leader at each Vet Center will develop an outreach plan for use of the vehicle within that region, not being limited to the traditional catchment area of a particular Vet Center.

These vehicles will be used to provide outreach and direct readjustment counseling at active-duty, reserve and National Guard activities, including post-deployment health reassessments for returning combat service members.

The vehicles will also be used to visit events typically staffed by local Vet Center staff, including homeless "stand downs," veteran community events, county fairs, and unit reunions at sites ranging from Native American reservations to colleges.

While most of their use will be in Vet Centers' delivery of readjustment counseling services, the local manager may arrange with VA hospitals or clinics in the region to provide occasional support for health promotion activities such as health screenings.

Thousands of Veterans could be Missing out on Free Money

By Robb Beltran

If you are a wartime veteran or a widow(er) of one, you can be eligible for almost \$1,950 per month. Tax-free.

The problem is you probably haven't heard about this little known benefit. It's called the Veteran's Improved Pension Benefit, which is a non-service connected benefit and sinfully enough it has been available for Veterans since November 1, 1951.

According to a VA estimate, only one in seven veteran widows who probably could qualify for the pension actually get the monthly checks. What's more, participation in the program is falling, according to a Knight Rider analysis of VA records.

As a Gulf War veteran and former television reporter, I wanted to find out why. I learned about the benefit after watching a special NBC report, but it is obvious many veterans didn't. It disturbed me that these men and women, who served their country, were somehow being neglected of benefits in which they earned simply because they didn't know about it. According to one VA report, "There are simply too many possible candidates for the VA to not only locate, but to qualify."

The problem is many of the veteran's who do know about the benefit are simply under the impression they have to be impoverished or disabled to receive the benefit and don't apply for fear of being declined. It is simply not true.

Although there are requirements they are often misconstrued. Here are the basics: To meet the military qualifications, a Veteran has to have served 90 days active duty, (one of which was during wartime), have a discharge of any kind other than dishonorable, and be either age 65 or disabled. In addition, the Veteran or his widow must also meet other means testing criteria for their income and assets. When properly understood, neither of these is as exclusionary as they first appear.

To qualify financially, an applicant must have less than \$80,000 in assets, excluding their home and vehicles. This is a major deterrent for many, but also the most misunderstood. Actually very few of us know how the Department of Veterans Affairs considers income for this benefit. Income minus UME = IVAP! Indeed they call it IVAP or Income for Veterans Affairs Purposes, which is income minus un-reimbursed medical expenses (UME).

Many do not expect to receive a benefit based in part upon their un-reimbursed medical expenses. But there is for our Veterans and their widows.

Imagine if you as a veteran could receive tax-free money every month for life. This benefit could help you pay anyone including your child for home care. It can also be used to help you pay for professional care in the home, for assisted living, or for nursing home fees and other un-reimbursed medical expenses. It may take up to six months before a veteran is approved and it may be a pain to fill out the forms properly, but imagine getting an extra \$1,950 a month tax-free.

It's simply a win-win situation for veterans to at least try and qualify.

If you think you might be able to take advantage of this benefit, please visit www.VBUSA.org for a more detailed explanation of the benefit, and how it works.

Robb Beltran is a registered financial consultant and veteran benefit analyst in East Dubuque, Ill. He is a member of VFW Post 2665 in Galena, Ill. and a member of the National Ethics Board and "Senior Market Advisor" Advisory Board." He specializes in working with seniors and veterans. He can be reached at 888-664-3399 or at info@VBUSA.org

Winners of life memberships

Two continuous members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have been awarded life memberships as part of the department's membership program for the 2008-09 year.

Harold L. O'Danielle, Jr., a member of the Wood River Post 2859 in District 12; and Daniel E. Reddle, a member of the Markham Memorial Post 9801 in District 16, each had their names drawn Dec. 31 as part of the "Early Bird" membership drawing.



A NOTE OF THANKS FROM
THE SPINDLERS

BUTCH AND I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR ALL OF THE BEAUTIFUL CARDS AND EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY WE RECEIVED WHEN MARY'S MOTHER, MARGIE JOHNSON, PASSED AWAY. A SPECIAL THANK YOU GOES OUT TO OUR STATE COMMANDER MIKE HONG, HIS WIFE, JANICE, AND TO NANCIE COMMANDER BILL WOLFE FOR TRAVELING ALL THE WAY TO ROBINSON TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL. THE SHOW OF SUPPORT AND CONCERN DURING THIS SAD TIME MAKES US FEEL AS THOUGH WE TRULY HAVE ANOTHER FAMILY BY BEING A PART OF THE VFW AND LADIES AUXILIARY.

BUTCH & MARY SPINDLER