



The Denton County Veteran

Happy Birthday America July 4th 2003

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DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

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County Judge Mary Horn, Commissioner Cynthia White, Precinct 1; Commissioner Sandy Jacobs, Precinct 2;

Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, Precinct 3; Commissioner Jim Carter, Precinct 4

Independence Day 2003 will commemorate the 227th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.



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Celebrating the Fourth of July
By Marian I. Doyle

There once was a time in America when the year was marked by two eagerly awaited high festivals -- Christmas and Independence Day. Asked to pick which was best, even children might have chosen the Fourth. From country to city it was a day of fluttering flags, passionate emotions, and bombastic pleasures commemorating a freedom so recently won it was not yet taken for granted.

A first description of how this anniversary of our nation's birth was to be honored came in a July 4, 1777, notice from Thomas Wharton of the Philadelphia Committee of Safety to the city Justices. The true friends of Liberty, he told them, had expressed a desire to hold public rejoicings and illuminations. A fireworks, therefore, had been ordered for the town common and the aid of two hundred soldiers was being requested to restrain the ardor of those who imbibed a bit too patriotically.

After the war, the average American found the cost of imported European fireworks much too high. Not until after 1816 and the start of a home industry would fireworks once more become a common feature of the celebration. But towering bonfires were lit the night before and bells, guns, and cannons broke the morning. Liberty poles were raised and capped. Children hung Benedict Arnold in effigy until the memory of his treachery faded. Graying veterans reminisced while overseeing heroic reenactments of their town's great battles, and, as it was said, made the eagle scream.

The 1820s became a time of huge Independence Day banquets accompanied by orations and a multitude of toasts. Thirty-two were proposed at the 1828 gathering of the Armstrong Guards in Kittanning, Pennsylvania: The day we celebrate. Sacred to liberty and the rights of man. Four cheers! ... The surviving officers and soldiers of the Army of the Revolution. Three cheers! ... The President... The Governor... The Fair Sex... The Pennsylvania canal! One German immigrant was moved by the fervor of the movement to call out his own toast -- Freudeit und JS! our genuge! a mix of German and English that translated as "Liberty and plenty of flour!" It was roundly applauded. Also drawing applause was a final toast to the Jacksonites on the other side of the river! Partisan politics had found its way into the country's great anniversary, and the divisions of an election year had sent the "Jacksonites" of Kittanning to hold their celebration on the opposite side of the Allegheny River from the "Adamites."

Large-scale public spectacle was added to city festivities in the 1830s. A typical Fourth of July in New York City began with the roar of cannons and the unfurling of flags, pennants, and streamers from the masts of hundreds of ships around the harbor. Banners waved as far as the eye could see in streets thronged with people. Children in plumed hats flourished tin swords and pranced happily

to marching music punctuated by blasts of artillery fire from the military exhibition park. With darkness came the glimmer of a thousand lamps along avenues of booths selling gimcracks, ginger beer, and nearly every digestion-threatening delicacy known to man. Clusters of small explosions from strings of fire-crackers heightened anticipation that turned to cheers when an illuminated balloon rose gleaming gold in the sky and a rocket exploded in silver above it. Fiery serpents followed, twisting through the air, fountains of fire showered down; and streams of light eclipsed the stars until, with a shuddering bombardment of sound, the show ended for another year.

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Celebrating the 4th of July	2
Blind Rehabilitation Service	3&2
Combat-Related Special Compensation	4
This Day in Time—Korean War	4 & 5
Korean War Tidbits	6
For Local Help	6

Celebrating the 4th of July (continued from page 2)

Though their celebration would be far less spectacular, country folk of the time looked forward just as fervently to Independence Day as their sophisticated city cousins. Spring and summer had been spent plowing, planting, and hoeing, and soon there would be haying.

But for one glorious festival day there was the Fourth, when families from all the neighboring farms gathered at a favorite picnic grove to enjoy a holiday from wearying responsibility. Children had their popcorn and firecrackers. Grownups had their catching-up to do after long weeks or months of isolation. Speeches made up in patriotic zeal for what they lacked in polish. There were food and whiskey and games and dancing to the tunes of a fiddle. After dark there would be a bonfire and maybe a skyrocket or two before the drowsy ride home.

Those who lived in a village or town in the 1830s could expect a day of dizzying activity that from a child's point of view was nearly magic. Every boy with gunpowder in his veins got up before dawn to hear the chorus of ordnance, bells, and voices that greeted the sun. He fretted his way through a breakfast he was too excited to eat, then drilled his younger brothers and sisters in military maneuvers until it was time to leave.

The entire town soon emptied into the streets that had been watered the night before to keep down the dust. Women set out a feast on tables under massive tents. Men busily checked arrangements, donned uniforms, and tuned musical instruments. The children ran wildly back and forth until shooed off to watch the militia form up on the green. There they stood in open-mouthed awe or wheeled noisily in disjointed regiments of their own until the bugle sounded, the drums rattled their irresistible rhythm, and the procession to the church began. Once inside they settled down. Militia and honored guests took up the front rows. Young folks claimed the balcony where they could look down on the sea of white muslin dresses and waving fans and miss nothing. The pastor rose first to commend the country, the company, and their fate to God while boys stared in envy at former playmates grown old enough to stand at proud attention in new Guard uniforms. Suddenly the silence was shattered by the martial clash of the band. "Hail Columbia" sent everyone into a foot-stamping ecstasy that even trumpet and bass drum couldn't drown out. Hearts thrilled, eyes turned to the flag, expectation soared as the orator stepped forward.

He might be the son of a man who had known the strife of battle, seen Lexington and Concord, heard the exaltation of freedom's first hymn in the peals of Philadelphia's great bell. He might be a townsman who had distinguished himself in law or politics, flushed with the enthusiasm of a generation born to the rights of citizenship in a young nation. But whoever he was, he would speak in ringing tones of sacrifice, courage, the nobly won past, and the shining future until the crowd believed and shared his vision of an America yet unrealized. When the long speech ended in an explosion of applause and tears there would be heartfelt songs, a final benediction, and an exodus back out to the sunshine of a day of picnics, excursions, races, games, and laughter. The night would end in a child's fantasy of fireworks put together by the men -- Roman candles, torpedoes, and wheels and stars of flashing fancy.

It was a magnificent way to spend a birthday, and closer to the manner in which John Adams once predicted the Fourth of July would always be celebrated than we would ever see again. In another twenty years the meaning of the day had diminished, "flown away in villainous saltpeter, exploded in firecrackers, and whizzed to the empyrean in skyrockets," the editor of Harper's Monthly complained. The patriotic orator now competed with a sideshow of peddlers, circus acts, and crackling disruptions. Young men no longer scrambled to top a pole with a liberty cap, and no one remembered the old, old songs once sung throughout thirteen colonies longing for self-determination.

"In Freedom we're born, and, like Sons of the brave, Will never surrender, But swear to defend her, And scorn to survive if unable to save." Now adults dreaded the noise and confusion of the day. Yet even in the midst of the chaos, philosophers found hope in the very exuberance that made it all so trying. "Not all the money of all national treasuries could buy the youth, the health, the hope, the carelessness, that makes our festival so fair," Harper's editor wrote. After all, something must be pardoned to the spirit of Liberty. And somewhere in the distant reaches of a clear sky, far beyond the smoke and furor, he believed he could still hear an eagle scream.

Correction

In the June issue the web site for the Texas Veterans Online was not given in the article. I apologize for any inconvenience.

The web site is:

www.veterans.texasonline.com

Blind Rehabilitation Service

(continued from page 3)

(e.g., referrals to BRC's and/or BROS) in order to enhance a blinded veteran's functioning level. Other duties include identifying new cases of blindness, providing professional counseling, resolving problems, arranging annual healthcare reviews and conducting education programs relating to blindness.

VISOR Program

Blind Rehab Service has an outpatient intermediate 9-day rehabilitation program called Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Program (VISOR) located in the Lebanon VA Medical Center in Pennsylvania. It provides comfortable, safe, overnight accommodations (HOPTTEL setting) for beneficiaries who are visually impaired and requiring temporary lodging in order to access services provided through the program. The program offers skills training, orientation and mobility, and low vision therapy. It is staffed with Blind Rehabilitation Specialist (BROS) and Visual Impairment Service Team Coordinators (VIST) which could be either Social Workers or certified low vision therapist. Veterans must be able to perform activities of daily living independently including the ability to self-medicate in order to access these accommodations.

(continued in August issue)

Blind Rehabilitation Service

Department of Veterans Affairs

(continued from June issue)

Blind Rehabilitation Centers

The Blind Rehabilitation Center Program

A residential inpatient program that provides comprehensive adjustment to blindness training and serves as a resource to a catchment area usually comprised of multiple states. BRC's offer a variety of skill courses designed to help blinded veterans achieve a realistic level of independence. These skill areas include orientation and mobility, communication skills, activities of daily living, manual skills, visual skills, computer access training and social/recreational activities. The veteran is also assisted in making an emotional and behavioral adjustment to blindness through individual counseling sessions and group therapy meetings.



The Blind Rehabilitation Center in Waco provides comprehensive blind rehabilitation services to legally blind veterans. The majority of veterans attending the Center are enrolled in the regular blind rehab program. This program offers Vision Rehabilitation, Orientation/Mobility, Living Skills and Manual Skills. Programs are tailored to each veteran's specific needs. We also offer computer Access train-

ing. In this program we teach blinded veterans the basics of using adaptive computers so that they can keep in touch with family and friends with e-mail, gain access to news and other information on the internet, and gain satisfaction from using an adaptive computer for everyday personal business and enjoyment.

Training areas in Blind Rehabilitation Service:

Visual Skills deals with vision rehabilitation. Activities cover assessment, issuance and training with magnification devices such as hand-held magnifiers or closed-circuit television. Training also covers appropriate use of lighting and environmental contrast. Also, there is visual efficiency training, such as eccentric viewing.

Orientation/Mobility focuses on developing the veteran's capacity to maintain spatial orientation and to move safely and efficiently through the environment. Veterans are trained in the efficient use of remaining senses and in the utilization of protective techniques and devices, such as the long cane, in a variety of settings. **Living Skills** consists of communication skills, where veterans learn to use aids such as tape recorders, Braille devices, typing, handwriting, and financial record keeping. Living Skills also assists veterans in achieving confidence in per-

sonal management and daily living skills necessary for independence in homemaking, shopping, cooking, dietary management, and maintenance of the living environment. The **Manual Skills** program develops organizational skills, environmental awareness, safe work habits, tactile ability, self-confidence, home mechanics skills, and leisure skills. Staff also design special adaptive devices to meet specific needs of veterans.

Computer Access Training provides specialized services to eligible blinded veterans

through comprehensive adaptive computer needs assessment, prescription of equipment, training on prescribed equipment, issuance of equipment upon successful completion of training and follow-up technical support as required.

Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST)

VIST Coordinator

The VIST Coordinator is a case manager who has major responsibility for the coordination of all services for legally blind veterans and their families. Duties include providing and/or arranging for the provision of appropriate treatment modalities

(continued on page 2)

"A Blind Center is where faith is strongest that blind people deserve hope, respect and freedom. These are accorded first, followed by the means of achieving them. Our civilization permits wholesome living when blind and here one learns how."

Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) for Certain Combat-Disabled Uniformed Services Retirees

Page 4

The Department of Defense, working together with the Department of Veteran Affairs, announces the start of a new compensation program for many disabled military retirees, Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC). The new special compensation became effective May 31, 2003, for qualified combat-related disabled retirees. Payments for qualified retirees will accrue beginning June 1, 2003, with the first payments possible on July 1st. Information is available at:
<http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/crsc.html>.

Eligible Members—are those retirees who have 20 years of service for retired pay computation and who either have disabilities because of combat injuries for which they have been awarded the Purple Heart and are rated at least 10% disabled or who are rated at least 60% disabled because of armed conflict, hazardous duty, and training exercises, or mishaps involving military equipment.

Payments—will equal the amount of the VA disability compensation (veteran alone rates) for combated related disabilities, but will be reduced for those retirees who retired pay exceeds what they would have received for length of service. Payments are limited to the amount of the retired pay reduction resulting from receipt of VA disability compensation for qualified disabilities. The payments are considered to be tax exempt pending a review by the Armed Forces Tax Council.

Member must apply—to their own branch of service using DD Form 2860 available at:
<http://www.dior.whs.mil/forms/DD2860.pdf>.

Each Uniformed Service—will review the applications of their own

retirees, with the Department of the Navy reviewing applications for both the Navy and Marine Corps. Payments will be retroactive to June 1, 2003, for all approved applications, no matter when received, to the extent otherwise allowed in law, providing the applicant is otherwise qualified. Services may be contacted at the following toll-free numbers:

Army—1-866-281-3254

Navy/USMC—1-877-366-2772

USAF—1-866-229-7074

Service reviews—will determine which disabilities, if any, are combat related or are the result of an injury for which the member was awarded the Purple Heart. Combat-Related includes those disabilities that are the direct result of armed conflict or from conditions that simulate combat, or that result from the performance of uniquely hazardous military duties, or caused by an instrumentality of war. Services will presume that disabilities awarded VA disability compensation based on service-connected exposure to hazards, which are clearly combat-related, are combat-related for the purpose of CRSC. These include Agent Orange, Gulf War illnesses, Radiation Exposure, Mustard Gas and Lewisite. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder will require combat-related documentation.

Retirees will be informed—of denied applications and the reason for denial. They may reapply later if they are able to show they meet the program criteria or appeal the decision if they believe their disabilities were combat-related, but were denied compensation by their Service.

<http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/crsc.html>

This Day In Time

Korean War

July 4, 1951

Sergeant Leroy A. Mendonca, B Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, earned the 76th Korean War Medal of Honor. After his platoon had captured Hill 586 in a hard fight, a numerically superior enemy launched a night counterattack. Outflanked and under great pressure, the platoon was ordered to withdraw. Mendonca voluntarily remained and covered the platoon's withdrawal. Under murderous fire, he fired his weapon and threw grenades at the attackers until his ammunition supply was exhausted. He fought on using his bayonet and clubbed rifle until he was mortally wounded. After the action it was estimated that Sergeant Mendonca had accounted for 30 enemy casualties. His action stalled the enemy's assault and enabled his unit to repel the attack and retain the vital hilltop position.

July 6, 1950

Acting on the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense, President Truman approved raising the authorized strength of the Army from 630,000 to 680,000.

July 13, 1953

The final communist offensive of the war began.

July 20, 1950

Sergeant George D. Libby, C Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 24th Infantry Division, earned the first Medal of Honor for action in the Korean War. While breaking through the enemy encirclement around Taejon, the vehicle he was riding encountered devastating fire from an enemy roadblock that killed or wounded all the passengers except Libby.

(continued on page 5)

This Day In Time

Korean War

July 20, 1950

Engaging the enemy from a roadside ditch, he twice crossed the road under fire to administer aid to his buddies, then hailed a passing artillery tractor to place wounded on board. As the enemy directed their fire on the tractor's driver, Libby shielded him with his own body, receiving several wounds in the arms and body. Proceeding through the burning town, he helped more wounded board the vehicle, refused first aid, continued to shield the driver, and returned the fire of another roadblock. He received additional wounds, but held his hazardous position until he lost consciousness and died.

July 21, 1950

Major General William F. Dean was reported missing in action as his 24th Infantry Division fought its way out of Taejon. During that action, he set the example by single-handedly attacking a T-34 tank with a grenade and directing the fire of others from an exposed position. As his division withdrew, he remained with the rearguard, rounding up stragglers and aiding the wounded. It was learned later that he had been captured about 35 miles south of Taejon on Aug. 25. Since the communists kept his capture a secret, he was presumed dead. In early 1951, President Truman presented the Medal of Honor to his wife in a White House ceremony. He was the only general officer and, at 51, the oldest man to receive the Medal of Honor during the Korean War.

July 22, 1953

Major John H. Glenn, future astronaut and U.S. senator, claimed his third MiG kill in the last aerial victory of the Korean War by a Marine pilot.

July 23, 1950

The carrier USS Boxer made history with a record-breaking Pacific crossing of eight days and 16 hours while transporting 145 F-51 Mustangs, 1,000 US Air Force personnel, and several hundred tons of cargo.

July 24, 1950

Units from the 2d Marine Division prepared to move from Camp Lejeune, N.C., to Camp Pendleton, Calif., to join the 1st Marine Division.

July 25, 1950

Thailand, the first Pacific nation to do so, offered to send 4,000 ground troops to Korea.

July 26, 1951

Communist and U.N. negotiators agreed to an agenda for armistice talks.

July 27, 1950

The 3rd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 19th Infantry Regiment, U.S. 24th Infantry Division, was ambushed at Hadong. One half of the battalion was reported killed or missing in action.

July 27, 1950

Australia, New Zealand and Turkey all offered ground troops for Korea.

July 27, 1953

Air Force Captain Ralph S. Parr, 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing, achieved the last air victory of the Korean War when he destroyed an Il-12 transport plane. In addition, the victory qualified him as the 11th and last double ace of the war, with a total of 10 kills.

July 27, 1953

After three years, one month and two days, combat ended in Korea as the armistice was signed at Panmunjom. Signed at 1000, it became effective at 2200 on the same day. Korea remains in an armistice status without a formal peace treaty to this day. Sergeant Harold R. Cross, K Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Regimental Combat Team, was killed by a mortar blast at 2040, the last American soldier killed in action in the Korean War.

July 29, 1950

As the U.N. forces formed the 100-mile by 50-mile Pusan Perimeter, Lieutenant General Walton Walker issued his controversial "stand or die" order to Eighth Army, declaring, "there will be no Dunkirk, there will be no Bataan."

July 31, 1950

The 5th Regimental Combat Team from Hawaii arrived in Korea.

For Local Help

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KOREAN WAR TIDBITS

*If you ♥ freedom
Thank a veteran*

(T) Taejon—Taejon was the scene of the worst American defeat of the Korean War. Following the North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, the U.S. 24th Infantry Division was rushed from Japan to Korea in a desperate effort to delay the North Korean advance south from Seoul. Hastily brought up to wartime strength, ill-trained, mentally and physically unprepared for combat and lacking adequate firepower, the division's three infantry regiments were shattered by the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions in several engagements between Seoul and Taejon, a city of 130,000 people and an important road center in southwestern Korea, approximately 100 miles south of Seoul. (page 326) (KW)

(U) UNPIK (United Nations Partisan Infantry) - Reaching peak strength of 22,000 in 1953, this force was largely composed of North Koreans who conducted raids behind Chinese and North Korean lines under the direction of the U.S. Army. Based on off shore islands, mainly along the west coast of North Korea, the partisans claimed some 69,000 enemy casualties from January 1951 until the conclusion of the armistice agreement in the summer of 1953 (page 341) (KW)

(V) Veterans of the Korean War—Like all veterans of foreign wars, those returning home to the United States from Korea faced the unusual problems of post war readjustments; finding a job, getting reacquainted with family and friends, and making the difficult transition from soldier to civilian. However, the 6.8 million Korean-era veterans also confronted new challengers that differentiated them from those who had been demobilized to near-unanimous acclaim after World War I and II. Concluding not with decisive victory but with inconclusive armistice that U.S. servicemen, particularly those who had been held as prisoners of war (POWs), had somehow failed to uphold the highest standards of moral and military resolve. As a result, the attitude of the American public was often skeptical, and even occasionally antagonistic, casting the returning Korean veterans as the war's unfortunate scapegoat. (page 347) (KW)

(W) Women's Army Corps—When the North Koreans invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) had just integrated eligible members of the corps into the regular Army. Also, during the previous two years, many former WAC enlisted women with p/prior service and former WAC officers had entered the Organized Reserved Corps (later called the Army Reserve). The WAC's had proved their value to the Army during World War II but it had taken almost three years for Congress to pass the law in 1948 that gave them a permanent place in the Army by granting them regular Army and reserve status (page 358) (KW)

(X) X Corps—X Corps was an unusual, one of a kind organization. All corps are, of course, uniquely configured for their missions and tend to break many organizational rules, but X Corps was unusual even by normal corps standards. It was hurriedly organized to plan for and conduct an amphibious assault at Inchon, which would dramatically reverse the tide of the war in Korea in September 1950. It was then shifted to the opposite coast of Korea and operated in the northeast of the peninsula as a virtually independent striking force of MacArthur's in a plan to liberate all of Korea by Christmas. Then, under massive and unexpected Chinese assaults, X Corps managed to regroup, retreat, and then withdraw from the coast in one of the greatest amphibious evacuations in history. Despite that ordeal, corps units entered the fray in South Korea alongside the rest of the Eight Army within weeks. (page 361) (KW)

