

VETERAN VOICE

The Voice of Experience

35 cents

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Friday, November 30, 2012

Veteran made long journey to success

By Shelley Koppel
Staff writer

ST. LUCIE WEST – Harvey Arnold is an American success story.

The Vero Beach native dropped out of high school in the 11th grade. Some 20 years later, after a tour of duty in Vietnam, return to college and service in Okinawa with the Marine Corps, he earned a doctoral degree in economics from Florida State University.

Today, Mr. Arnold is provost of the St. Lucie West Campus of Indian River State College, where he has worked since 1977. His story is one that has resonance for veterans and many of the students who come to his campus.

“I was bored in high school,” he said. “There was a lot going on in the world and high school was not capturing my interest. That created challenges for my teachers. At 17, I walked into an armed forces recruiting station. Twenty-four hours later, I was on a train to Miami. I’d never been on a train.”

Mr. Arnold would later take his first plane fight and sea voyage, the latter when he was sent to Germany.

“I walked around the missile base. It was snowing and I thought, ‘I’m happy with my life.’”

While he was stationed in Germany, a staff sergeant told the young soldier that he was being sent to school.

“I told him I didn’t like school,” Mr. Arnold said. “He said, ‘I think it would do you some good and you’re going to go. It took six weeks to get my GED.’”

In September 1966, Mr. Arnold was sent to Vietnam.

“We were sent as part of the build-up,” he said. “It gave me a sense of urgency in life. Every member of my platoon was a high school dropout. We were acutely aware that because we had not graduated from high school, our lives were not valued as highly as those that had.”

Mr. Arnold returned home in 1967. His father picked him up in Orlando and he said, “Dad, I want to make something of myself.” His father responded that he’d been waiting all his life to hear those words.

Mr. Arnold enrolled in the last class of what was then known as Indian River Junior Col-



Staff photo by Tammy Raits
Dr. Harvey Arnold, in his St. Lucie West office of Indian River State College, has come a long way since his early years as a young soldier in Vietnam.

See PROVOST page 4

Hearing Aid Ads Confusing You?

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It was a hot night in July, 1995 when the world went completely dark for Rachel Guild. A passenger in a vehicle involved in a rollover crash on I-95, Rachel's mom was told her daughter would likely only survive for hours, and Rachel was still in a coma when her best friend (another passenger in the car that fateful evening) was buried. Seventeen years later, Rachel Guild is a testament to persistence, miracles, and caring professionals. Though completely blind as a result of the accident, Rachel lets absolutely nothing stand in her way, and she finds beauty in the way the world can be experienced through her remaining senses. As a matter of fact, that's how Rachel became acquainted with Joe Mutter of Mutter's Hearing in St. Lucie West.

You Too Can Experience the Mutter Difference

One of the lesser injuries Rachel suffered as a result of the crash which claimed her best friend, Sarah, and her eyesight was some hearing loss due to scar tissue in her left ear. When some close friends told her about Joe and Mutter's Hearing, Rachel and her mom set up a free clinical hearing evaluation with Joe, a Florida Licensed Hearing Aid Specialist and retired law enforcement officer with the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office. Joe was ranked Top Cop in the State of Florida by the Florida Fraternal Order of Police and highly honored for his accomplishments and Commitment to the community through volunteerism. Mutter performed several tests on Rachel to determine the level of her hearing loss and then broke the news. "He didn't think I needed hearing aids," Rachel said. "He said I had a mild hearing loss and it may not be great enough to warrant the considerable expense that I would incur with hearing aids. Even though he could have easily made a big profit, that's

not the way he is. I explain to Joe that if I am ever going to regain total independence, I need to be able to hear everything with great clarity." For Rachel, the way that Mutter compassionately listened to her concerns, asked her questions about her needs, lifestyle, and was hesitant to make a sale simply for the sake of making a sale were the deciding factors in doing business with him. "I had consulted with other hearing aid dealers and I was very disappointed that their only concern was how I would be making payment," Rachel says. "Joe was the opposite; he wasn't just trying to make a sale he actually cared about me and my special needs!"

evaluations and he utilizes state-of-the-art technology. He even includes a hearing loss simulator to replicate for family members what their voices sound like to someone with a hearing loss because, of course, a hearing loss is invisible and affects every member of the family. "What I deal with is a very precious commodity – "my clients' trust and their hearing," says Mutter. "I care about my clients, not their pocketbook."

Stop Chasing Deals That Don't Exist

Mutter's Hearing Center is conveniently located at 1420 SW St. Lucie West Boulevard, just west of the Wells Fargo bank, in St. Lucie West. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with evening and weekend appointments available, as well as home visits can be arranged by appointment. Mutter's Hearing Center will guide you through your insurance options and assist you with financing your hearing aids if necessary. The initial consultations and clinical evaluations are absolutely free. Call Mutter's Hearing Center today at (772) 871-1222 to arrange a your free hearing consultation. Mutter's Hearing Center has been voted the Readers Choice #1 Hearing Center in St. Lucie West since 2004 and is the ONLY full time hearing center in St. Lucie West.

Deal With the Owner- He Can Make it Right

Being blind is difficult, but for Rachel Guild, losing her hearing would be so much worse. "I think it would be a very lonely world," she says. "Being deaf makes you feel so isolated; everyone has a conversation going, but when they try to talk to you, you cannot understand them. It's hard for people who haven't been there to realize, but being able to participate in the conversation when your loved ones and friends are talking is a way to keep from being isolated and alone. I am so grateful to Joe and Mutter's Hearing Center for helping me rejoin the conversation and regain my independence".



Joe Mutter, H.A.S. and Client Rachel Guild
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DD-214 discharge papers now online

For Veteran Voice

The National Personnel Records Center has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his/her DD-214 for employment purposes. The National Personnel Records Center is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military years.

The online eVetRecs system creates a customized order form to request information from your, or your relative's, military personnel records. You may use this system if you are:

- A **military veteran**, or
- Next of kin of a **deceased**, former member of the military.

The **next of kin** can be any of the following:

- Surviving spouse that has not remarried
- Father
- Mother
- Son
- Daughter
- Sister
- Brother

Please note: Records are accessioned into the National Archives, and become archival, **62 years after** the service member's separation from the military. This is a rolling date; hence, the current year, 2012, minus 62 years is 1950.

Records with a discharge date of 1950 or prior are archival and are open to the public. Records with a discharge date of 1950 or after are non-archival and are maintained under the Federal Records Center program. Non-ar-

chival records are subject to access restrictions.

If the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) is a **Federal (non-archival) record:**

The military veteran, or the next-of-kin (*un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister*) of the deceased veteran can request copies of the OMPF online.

If the Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) is an **Archival record:**

Any archival OMPF can be ordered online for a copying fee. Archival records are open to the public.

Required information

Your request must contain certain basic information for us to locate your service records. This information includes:

- The veteran's complete name used while in service
- Service number
- Social security number
- Branch of service
- Dates of service
- Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If you suspect your records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, also include:

- Place of discharge
- Last unit of assignment
- Place of entry into the service, if known.

All requests must be **signed** and **dated** by the veteran or next-of-kin.

If you are the next of kin of a deceased veteran, you must provide proof of death of the veteran such as a copy of death certificate, letter from funeral home, or published obituary.

Correction

A photo caption appearing in last week's *Veteran Voice* incorrectly listed the operating hours of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center and Council. The caption should have said: The center is

open seven days a week from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. A veterans service officer is available from 8 a.m until noon Monday through Saturday.

Veteran Voice regrets the error.



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Photo courtesy of Harvey Arnold

Sgt. Harvey Arnold, in dress greens after returning home in the U.S. following his discharge from the Army.



Photo courtesy of Harvey Arnold

Sgt. Harvey Arnold with camp dog in Base Camp, Long Bien Vietnam 1966-1967

ARNOLD from page 1

lege.

I loved college from the first day," Mr. Arnold said. "They had an open-door policy," Mr. Arnold said. "The universities do not accept a GED. Even though I had the GED, I wasn't college-ready. There were college prep courses in math, English and reading to bring me up to college level. The educational foundation I built took me all the way through a Ph.D program."

Mr. Arnold received his associate degree in business administration in 1970 and transferred to the University of West Florida, where he earned a bachelor's and master's degree in economics. He decided he needed a change.

"I had been going to school for six or seven years," he said. "I never played collegiate sports and I wanted to see what I could do physically. I was anticipating a career in the service."

Mr. Arnold applied to Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He was stationed in Okinawa when he learned of an opening in the economics department at Indian

River Community College, as it was then known. He accepted the position of instructor in 1977. He rose through the ranks, becoming department chair in 20002. In 2004, he was named provost of the St. Lucie West campus.

Mr. Arnold highlighted several programs unique to his campus: The new STEM Center and the associate in science programs in Golf Course Operations and Landscape and Horticultural Technologies.

"STEM" is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The goal of the new center, opening in January 2013, is to meet a critical need for students proficient in those areas.

"There is a real shortage in the state of students graduating with the STEM skill set," Mr. Arnold said. "Leaders in education and private industry have a mantra that we need students with the STEM skill set, that we have jobs."

"There is a transition from the Treasure Coast to the Research Coast. We are attracting the life science high-tech firms like Torrey Pines and the Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute. The STEM Cen-

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VETERAN VOICE

The Voice of Experience

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PFC Harvey Arnold with Hawk Missile Air Defense Battery. Photo taken during the summer of 1966 in Schwabach, Germany.

Photo courtesy of Harvey Arnold

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To the Class of '66

Editor's note: Dr. Harvey Arnold sent the following letter to the organizer of his high school class's 40th reunion. Arnold would have graduated with that class had he not dropped out of school at 17 to join the U.S. Army. Following his military service, Arnold returned to school and eventually earned his doctoral degree in economics from Florida State University. He is currently serving as the provost of Indian River State College's St. Lucie West campus.

As I ponder the approaching Aug. 5 reunion for the class of '66, the excitement surrounding the possibility of reuniting with old high school friends and acquaintances is tempered by the knowledge that many of our classmates who paid the human cost of the Vietnam War won't be there. At the age of 60, I fully comprehend the entity of a life and the depth of sacrificing one's life for their country, and that has given me considerable cause for reflection.

For the duration of my unit's

flight to Vietnam, the roar of the engines from the C-130 was so deafening that even the most basic, face-to-face communication was impossible. Consequently, we were left alone with our thoughts for much of the four-day flight. The only alternative to staring at my buddies sitting on the other side of the plane was occupying my mind with recent, high-school memories. Since I was only 18, my high school days and classmates were not that many months removed, so I spent much of the flight time mentally retracing my daily treks

See '66 page 7

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to McNeil's Grocery Store, Langbean's Bakery, and Peat's Meats. I even visualized walking the hallways to locate my classrooms as if I were still a junior at Vero Beach High School.

I also reviewed the sequence of events that had seemingly catapulted me forward in time to my present, ominous predicament. I wondered if my classmates knew about our truant officer, Tom Williams, catching me skipping school and hauling me into the principal's office. There, Principal Kirkland glared at me with total disdain and exasperation, and after an uncomfortable period of silence, he pronounced judgment on my future: "Harvey Arnold, if you don't change your direction in life, you're headed straight for the state penitentiary."

Hearing those words of damnation from the highest authority was tantamount to the unexpected sucker punch that doubles you over. So the next day -- skipping school again -- I fortuitously passed by the Armed Forces Recruiting Office, where Mr. Kirkland's words of condemnation echoed in my mind. Within minutes I was taking the Armed Forces Entrance Exam, and on Jan. 25, 1965, I did an about-face: I heeded my principal's advice and abruptly changed my direction in life forever by quitting high school and joining the Army.

There was much irony in the days and weeks immediately following my life-changing decision. Our class jester, Danny Hazel, showed up at the Tower Restaurant where I was to meet the recruiting sergeant to drive me to Miami for my physical examination. Surely everyone would be surprised to learn that both Danny and I quit school on the same day to join the Army.

However, the most ironic event was Kenney Signore being recycled into my unit during the fourth

week of basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C. Kenny had quit high school and joined the Army several weeks before I did, but he had become ill during basic training and missed too much training to graduate with his original unit. As a consequence, he was recycled into my company. Longing for home and friends, Kenny evidently identified with me as a homeboy, so my worst tormentor in high school became my best buddy throughout the remainder of basic training. Who would have thought?

Mainly, though, my thoughts were of my own fears, ineptitudes, and self-doubts about my ability to meet the challenges and unforeseen events that lay ahead. Basic training was just 18 months removed and the physical demands had been a daunting challenge to the 17-year-old boy who stood all of 5 feet, 6 inches tall and weighed 105 pounds. Indeed, for my first year in the Army I had simply been referred to as "The Kid."

I also reflected on the words my father had written in his only letter to me during basic training. He admonishingly wrote that although he had been opposed to my decision to quit high school and join the Army, it was, nonetheless, my decision. He told me it was time to leave irresponsibility and immaturity behind, and time to become a man. He went on to say that I had stepped into a man's shoes and to make damn sure that I wore them, because there was no more room in his life for me unless I did. Tough love!

Now on the flight, I reflected on the scene at the Greyhound Bus station that had occurred just days before: My father and I had already said our perfunctory goodbyes before I boarded the bus. As I made my way down the aisle toward an empty seat, my progress was suddenly halted by an unexpected

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ARNOLD from page 4

ter is the educational piece to the puzzle.

"In the past, if a student graduated from IRSC, they went to the University of Florida or left the state to get a good-paying job. We will be the only state college, as opposed to a university, to offer a B.S. in molecular biology and organizational biology."

The new center will have three stories and cover 53,000 square feet.

"It will be an incredible building," Mr. Arnold said. "There are so many 'Wow' factors. "It's not just a classroom building. All of our labs for a bachelor's degree will be there. We're creating the jobs of the future, high paying jobs so our students stay here."

The campus also offers a two-

year associate in science degree in Golf Course Operations and Landscape and Horticultural Technology. They are designed to graduate people responsible for golf course operations and maintenance, including the use of herbicides and pesticides for the maintenance of fairways and greens.

For Mr. Arnold, the opportunity for a high school dropout to be a role model for others is as rewarding as the success he's achieved. He is justifiably proud of how far both he and the school he has served for so many years have come.

"This is my home and I love being here," he said.

The St. Lucie campus of Indian River State College is located at 500 N.W. California Blvd., Port St. Lucie. Call (772) 879-4199 or visit the website, www.irsc.edu.

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force that spun me around. There, with tears streaming down his cheek was my father, who had followed me onto the bus. He clutched me to him, kissed me on the forehead, told me that he loved me, and then exited the bus just as quickly as he had entered. I always knew that my father loved me; it's just that he had never told me so face to face before.

Vietnam was hard time; and, just like serving a prison sentence, you couldn't see your future until the day you were released and passed through the gate into the arms of your loved ones. We endured the elements, the separation from our families, the inclement weather, and the lack of amenities. We endured the long nights whether they were spent in the field, on the perimeter, shot-gunning convoys, or in the temporary -- but treasured -- refuge of base

camp. We lost the remaining vestiges of our youth and left any youthful misconceptions about war behind as we witnessed and participated in man's inhumanity towards man. For the majority of our class, the Vietnam War is now in the history books, revisited only when viewed on the History or Military Channel through the intelligent lens of hindsight. For me, however, the Vietnam experience continues to exert a powerful influence on every aspect of my life by serving as a constant reminder of what almost wasn't.

So forgive me if my excitement about the possibility of reconnecting with old classmates at our 40th reunion is tempered by the knowledge that those who paid the human price of the Vietnam won't be there. Danny Hazel, Tim Spurlock and Kenney Signore all went on to serve in Vietnam, where Tim and Kenney were badly wounded. Tragically, Steve Wiggins, Mark

For me, however, the Vietnam experience continues to exert a powerful influence on every aspect of my life by serving as a constant reminder of what almost wasn't.

Jackson, Louis Lauder milk, and Frankie Clovis all made the ultimate sacrifice. I returned home safely on Sept. 7, 1967.

On their behalf, I would like all of you to know that although we did not walk across the stage to graduate with you, you were always foremost in our thoughts and dreams of home; and, the chorus line of our constant prayers was always for a safe return home to family, friends, and the sleepy little town of Vero Beach.

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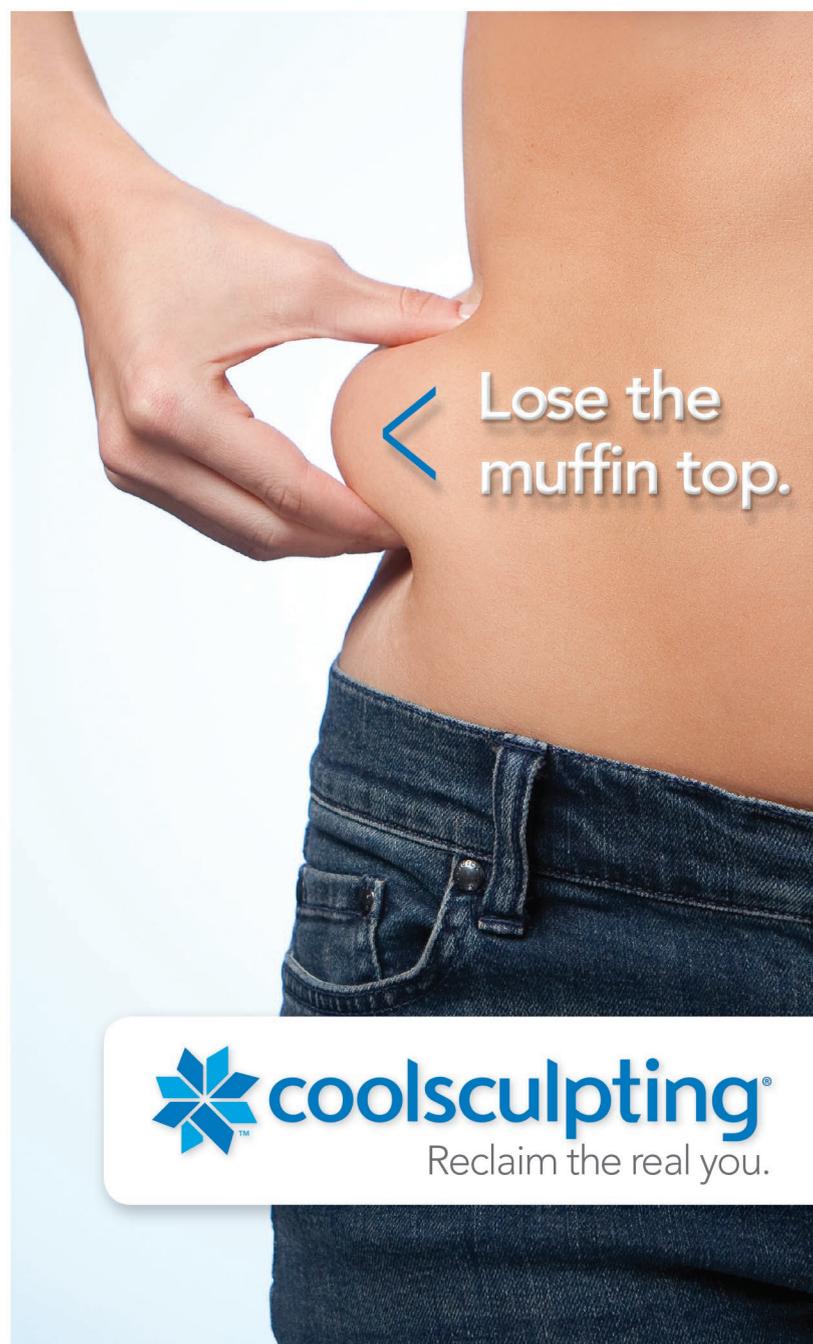




Photo courtesy of Harvey Arnold

Arnold's unit loading for the four-day flight to Vietnam.

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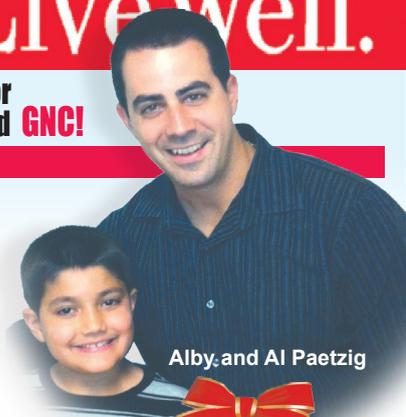
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Friendly Knowledgeable Staff

Old cell phones turn into new phone minutes for soldiers

By Patrick McCallister
For Veteran Voice

Old cell phones are service members' time with family.

"May, June, July, we got enough cell phones to raise about 12,000 minutes on phone cards," said Robert "Bob" Doyle, operations director at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center and Council. "I'd estimate we'll go about 75,000 minutes this (upcoming) year."

The center collects out-of-use mobile phones and sends them to Cell Phones for Soldiers, a national charity that recycles out-of-use phones to raise money for phone cards service members use to call loved ones and friends. Siblings Robbie and Brittany Bergquist, Norwell, Mass., launched Cell Phones for Soldiers.

"We started the program about eight and half years ago, in April 2004," Mr. Bergquist said. "We heard a story of a soldier with an \$8,000 cell phone bill for calling home. We wanted to make sure he

didn't have to pay that cell phone bill."

Oh, yeah, and the two were 12 and 13 at the time. Between them, they had \$21 to send Sgt. Brian Fletcher. They might have been young, but they figured out that wasn't much. The pair started raising money from family members and friends, along with holding car washes to get some from strangers. When they had about \$1,000, they headed to a bank with it. People at the bank was so moved by the youngsters trying to help a soldier, they chipped in another \$500.

Local media picked up the story of those ambitious teens trying to help Sgt. Fletcher, a soldier in Operation Iraqi Freedom they'd never met.

"We ended up going on (CBS Evening News), and that put us over the top," Mr. Bergquist said. "A lot of people sent their old cell phones to our house, so we started recycling them."

See PHONES page 11

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Jensen Beach VFW Post 10066 upcoming events

Christmas parties

On Dec. 8, our MOC and MOCA members host a Christmas party for veterans visiting our post from the VA Hospital in West Palm Beach. We will treat them to lunch and George will entertain them on the saxophone before they return to the hospital with bags of Christmas goodies. We're planning more surprises, too.

Our Post Christmas Party will be Dec. 14, when everyone will be served ham and/or turkey dinner with all the trimmings for a \$6 donation. We'll welcome 2013 with a New Year's Eve Party on Dec. 31 with entertainment by the classic rock Steppin' Up Band.

Men's Auxiliary 2nd Golf Outing

Sign your foursome up now for this popular golf outing at Pine Lake Golf Course in North River Shores on Dec. 8. For \$35 or \$120 a foursome, you can play in this scramble format tournament, win prizes and be served a complimentary hamburger lunch at the VFW Post Tiki Hut after golf.

Lunch will be offered to others for \$5 - so invite VFW members and friends. If you can volunteer to help out, sign up on the bulletin board.

PHONES from page 10

In the meantime, the carrier kindly canceled the sergeant's \$7,624 cell phone bill.

"His bill ended up getting waived, and we had a lot of cash," Mr. Bergquest said.

And a good idea of how to use it — making sure other service members serving overseas could call home without fears of \$8,000 phone bills.

"Since 2004, we've been able to collect about \$10 million," he added.

That translates into phone minutes for ser-

way. With operations Iraqing Freedom, Afghanistan, Cell Phones for Soldiers new program, Help-According to the cellphonesforveter-program, "provides for returning veterans as physical, emotional hardships."

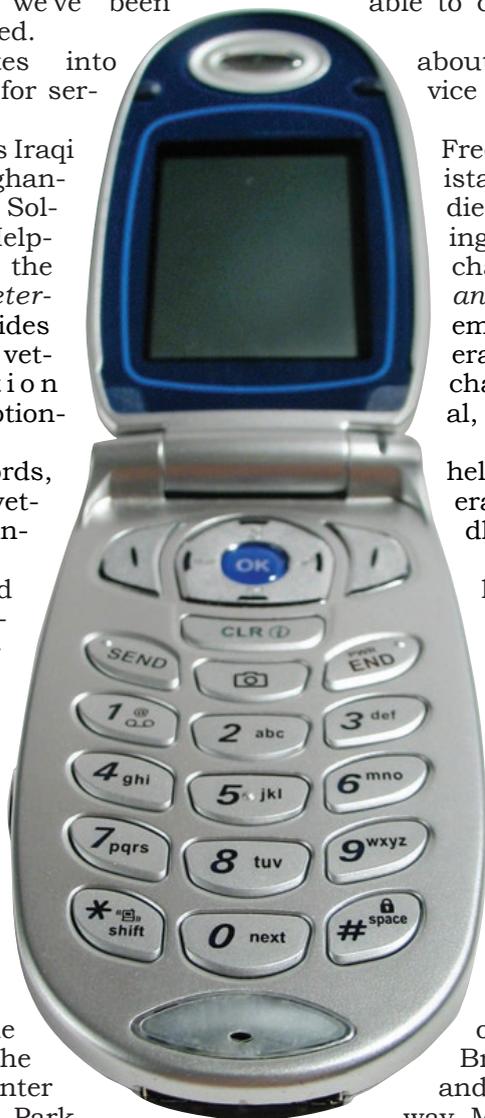
In other words, reservists and veterans from service han-

Mr. Doyle said ing the old moturn into serphone calls Phones for Soland Marine said he knows much those and cost.

"The one time phone call it was eight it was more said. "That was very expensive."

To donate one phones, visit the Memorial Center S. Sykes Creek Park-

center's number is (321) 453-1776. To find out more about the center, visit veteransmemorialcenter.org.



about 163 million vice members, by the

Freedom and Enduristan, winding down, diers is launching a ing Heroes Home. charity's web site, ans.com, the new emergency funding erans to alleviate challenges as well al, and assimilation

helping returning erans discharging dle bills, such as

he enjoys collectible phones to vice members' through Cell diers. The Army Corps veteran first hand how calls mean ...

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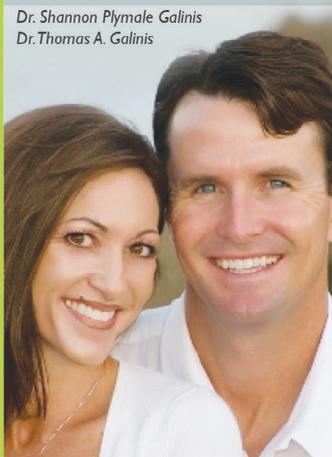


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Are veterans poised to fall off fiscal cliff?

By Patrick McCallister
For Veteran Voice

Some doom and gloom has been filling the headlines: President and Congress head toward fiscal cliff.

Are Florida's veterans in danger of temporarily or permanently losing, or seeing reductions to, their Department of Veterans Affairs' medical, financial and educational benefits if the worse comes to pass and threatened

federal budget discretionary spending sequestration begins? Terry Mack, commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3918, Vero Beach, said some area veterans are concerned by chatter about automatic, across-the-board budget cuts slated to happen on Jan. 1 if the Congress and president don't agree on a package of targeted budget cuts and revenue increases.

See CLIFF page 13

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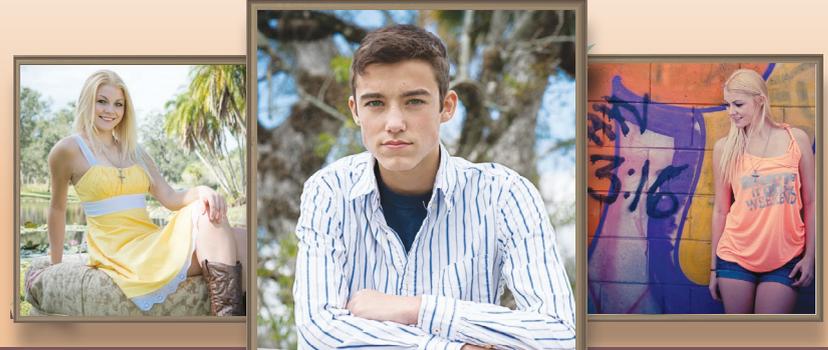
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1068

CLIFF from page 12

“Most of them have a great deal of complaints about the VA, period,” he said. “A lot of it is the waiting times for service. We’re backlogged now. If there’s a (budget) reduction, there’ll be more backlogged.”

Mr. Mack was referring to the fact that in recent years the VA has about 900,000 pending benefit claims at any given time. Additionally, in recent years, about 600,000 claims have been awaiting decisions for 125 or more days.

Carl Blake, national legislative director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, said veterans are not in immediate danger of losing benefits should the nation hit the fiscal cliff and automatic budget sequestration starts.

“It’s more like a fiscal steep downhill,” he said. “It’s a tricky question. In a narrow context (of VA benefits) veterans don’t have to be worried. VA is protected

from those cuts — all VA programs are protected from those cuts.”

That’s the word from the department, too. VA press secretary Joshua Taylor said in an e-mailed answer to interview questions, “(The Office of Management and Budget) has made clear that VA is exempt from sequestration. This includes care, benefits and administrative expenses.”

Last summer, Congress passed and the president signed the Budget Control Act of 2011. The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, often called the super committee, formed to work out a deal for Congress to raise the federal government’s debt ceiling to avoid sovereign default on previously-appropriated spending.

The committee hatched the idea of giving Congress and the president a frightening prospect if they couldn’t agree on budget cuts and revenue increas-

es — sequestration, automatic across-the-board spending cuts over 10 years accompanied by expiring tax reductions. Many believed the prospect of a fiscal cliff that could send the nation into recession would force Congress and the president to work toward more agreeable solutions.

That’s the rub, Mr. Blake noted. A politically divided House of Representatives, Senate and White House will have to work out a so-called grand bargain of revenue increases and spending cuts. In that process nothing’s every really off the table — including the VA. Additionally, he said that if Congress and the President don’t reach an agreement by a Jan. 1 deadline, veterans, like everyone else, will be affected by automatic tax hikes and cuts in several federal programs.

Mr. Mack said local veterans take little assurance that the VA is supposed to be protected from

automatic budget cuts.

“Who knows what’ll happen?” he said. “I’d like to hope that what they’re saying is true. I hold a grain of caution there. I’ve been told a lot of things over the years, and some have been true and some have not been true.”

According to the VA, Florida has about 259,000 veterans receiving disability compensation. Another 23,000 are receiving pensions. Additionally, about 68,000 Florida veterans are receiving education benefits, and another 1,200 vocational-rehabilitation assistance.

The Veterans Health Administration’s Sunshine Healthcare Network, which covers Florida and Puerto Rico, gives medical and psychological services to about 535,000 veterans a year at about 60 medical centers ranging from community clinics to hospitals. It’s the largest of the 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

VA purchases land for two new national cemeteries in Florida

For Veteran Voice

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that it has purchased land for two new national cemeteries in Florida.

"We are pleased to expand burial service to families in the Sunshine State where so many Veterans live," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Acquiring this land is a key step forward in bringing these national shrines to Florida."

VA plans to construct one of the cemeteries in central eastern Florida between the cities of Daytona and Melbourne, and the other in northwestern Florida, in the Tallahassee area. Together, the facilities will serve an estimated population of 247,000 Veterans and family members who are not currently served with an open national, state or tribal Veteran's cemetery within 75 miles of their residence.

VA completed acquisition of the central eastern Florida property on July 31 and paid \$2 million for 318 acres of land. The property, formerly known as Acosta Groves, is located on U. S. Route 1 in north-

VA completed acquisition of the central eastern Florida property on July 31, paying \$2 million for 318 acres. The property, formerly known as Acosta Groves, is located on U. S. 1 in northern Brevard County in Scottsmeer, approximately two miles from Interstate 95.

ern Brevard County in Scottsmeer, approximately two miles from Interstate 95.

VA purchased the Tallahassee property for \$6.8 million on Aug. 14. The 250-acre parcel is in Leon County with frontage along U.S. Highway 27 (Apalachee Parkway). VA purchased the land from the St. Joe Company, one of Florida's largest real estate development firms. The cemetery will also serve Veterans in southwestern Georgia and southeastern Alabama.

VA has opened three new national cemeteries in Florida over the past five years including Jacksonville National Cemetery (2009), Sarasota National Cemetery (2009) and South Florida National Cemetery (2007).

Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell opened in 1988 and is now the second busiest VA national cemetery in the country with 6,728 interments completed in fiscal year 2011. Of VA's 131 cemeteries across the nation, the state

of Florida is home to six national cemeteries that rank among the top 32 busiest by interment workload.

Barrancas National Cemetery in Pensacola, established in 1868, serves Florida's western panhandle and southern Alabama. A recent expansion of the historic cemetery ensures that it will remain open with a full range of burial options for decades to come.

Bay Pines National Cemetery was established in 1933 and has been closed to first interment casketed burials since 1989. The facility still offers cremation burial sites. St. Augustine National Cemetery, established in 1881, has been closed since 1997.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Also eligible are military personnel who die on active duty, their spouses and eligible dependents.

Other burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment.

In the midst of the largest expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3.8 million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 20,000 acres of land.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov, or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000.

To make burial arrangements at any VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

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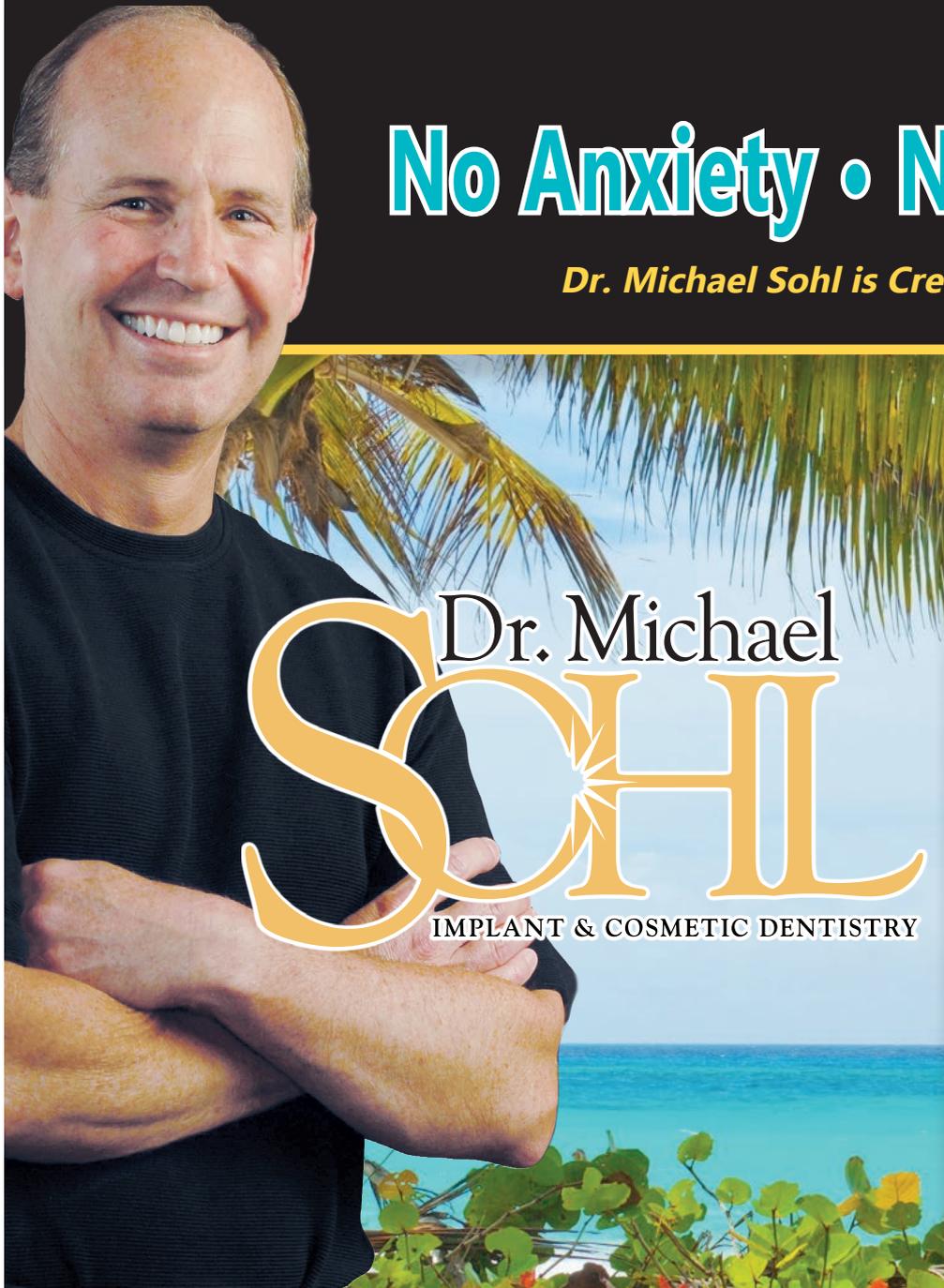
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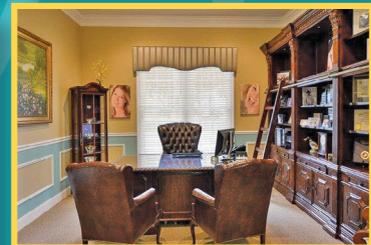
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Your Oral Health Tip Of the Week

SMILE ANALYSIS. When you think of improving your smile, you might think of straightening and whitening your teeth and possibly correcting bite problems. While the more noticeable imperfections come to mind first, a cosmetic dentist can get down to the minutiae of a winning smile. He or she can analyze a smile by looking at the face as a whole, as well as the relationships between facial features, and design a perfectly-proportional, individualized smile. Today, our Stuart cosmetic dentist Dr. Michael Sohl explains how. Call Dr. Michael Sohl today to hear how he can analyze your mouth and facial structure and work to give you a custom smile.

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