The Veteran’s Creed
1. I am an American Veteran
2. I proudly served my country
3. I live the values I learned in the military
4. I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans
5. I maintain my physical and mental discipline
6. I continue to lead and improve
7. I make a difference
8. I honor and remember my fallen comrades

This month’s Listserv includes Vets Best Friend - Service Dogs; Coming Home Colonel Roy Knight Flown Home from Vietnam; A Revolutionary War Story; VA Pathologist Accused; and, Student Loan Debt Forgiveness for Disabled Veterans

Vets Best Friend - Service Dogs
Many veterans and others consider it established fact that loyal dogs can help in PTSD. Yet, with many years of cajoling, the VA still does not offer service dogs as a benefit. Veterans have to buy the dogs themselves and maintain them, sometimes at barely affordable expense. Often the dogs they acquire do not have the proper training. For the VA, it is a question of scientific proof and to approve a treatment, it must pass scientific muster – "evidence-based medicine or evidence-based therapy". Or in other words, does it really work?
What gives this question so much attention is that treatment for PTSD can be less than satisfactory. Treatments include various medicines, but they do not address the problem directly and cognitive (talking) therapies are effective but can be hard to administer. The New York Times recently discussed the issue of service dogs and the VA in detail. In 2011, then Sen. Al Franken, a dog lover himself and often with his large pet camped in his office, secured legislation to do a pilot study on the value of service dogs for PTSD. VA has been working on it ever since. That same year, VA started on a study, but from the beginning, it was fraught with problems. The dogs were not well trained, two of them bit children and one-fourth developed hip dysplasia. In addition, the contractors bullied participants into not reporting problems – a death knell to any study. The trial was suspended, and VA started from scratch. It hired trainers and redesigned the study over the next few years. The new study is scheduled for completion in 2020. Meanwhile, what should veterans with PTSD do? Many veterans feel passionately that dogs have helped them. One study outside the VA showed that the dogs do help, but not with primary treatment. Veteran Service Organizations are frustrated with the long study delays and many feel that, at least in some instances, VA should bypass the evidence requirements. There have been other attempts to get veterans the dogs, such as the bipartisan Puppies Assisting Wounded Veterans (PAWS) Bill, but VA is waiting. Hopefully, the results of the study to be in next year will be definitive.
Coming Home - Colonel Roy Knight Flown Home from Vietnam

With the last leg of the long journey from Vietnam piloted by his son at the helm of a Southwestern Airlines plane, Colonel Roy Knight, a casualty of the war, returned home to Gate 12, Love Field in Dallas on August 9. In 1967, Col. Knight was downed during a mission on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. He was first listed as MIA, declared dead in 1974 and now identified by dental analysis. The homecoming was solemn and stopped airport travelers and workers in their tracks, especially when the loudspeaker announced Col Knight’s return and the fact that his son was the pilot. As the flag-draped coffin emerged from the airplane, the grounds crew stood at attention and travelers were transfixed at the airport’s windows watching the events. At landing, an arc of water sprayed by airport fire trucks was a form of tribute, in addition to the Air Force Honor Guard.

Said Jackson Proskow a reporter who happened to be at the airport and was interviewed “I just sort of assumed they were waiting for a local politician or a newsmaker.” Struggling to get the words out Proscow added, “Today we’re welcoming back Colonel Knight to Dallas.”” He took this really long, emotional pause, put down the microphone and said ‘The pilot of the plane today is his son.”’ The funeral was held in Cool TX, about 100 miles west of Dallas. How different the reception might have been had Col. Knight not been a casualty and came back in uniform in 1968.

Col. Knight’s casket arriving to Dallas Love Field. From NY Times.
A Revolutionary War Story

In 1832, Congress enacted the most extensive pension for Revolutionary war veterans – partial or full pay for every veteran who served at least six months. The occasion was the death of the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carrol. Over 80,000 veterans, who by that time were at least in their 60s, submitted applications with (often dictated) handwritten accounts of their wartime experiences. Below is the statement of Jehu Grant, a former slave in Rhode Island, then over 80 years old, and one of hundreds of enslaved African Americans who fought with the American or British forces. The account is from the Jamestown and American Revolution Website.

“I was then grown to manhood, in full vigor and strength of life, and heard much about the cruel and arbitrary things done by the British. Their ships lay within a few miles of my master’s house, which stood near the shore, and I was confident that my master traded with them, and I suffered much from fear that I should be sent aboard a ship of war. This I disliked. But when I saw liberty poles and the people all engaged for the support of freedom, I could not but like and be pleased with such thing (God forgive me if I sinned in so feeling.) And living on the borders of Rhode Island, where whole companies of colored people enlisted, it added to my fears and dread of being sold to the British. These considerations induced me to enlist into the American army, where I served faithfully about ten months, when my master found and took me home. Had I been taught to read or understand the precepts of the Gospel, “Servants obey your masters,” I might have done otherwise, notwithstanding the songs of liberty that saluted my ear [and] thrilled through my heart. But feeling conscious that I have since compensated my master for the injury he sustained by my enlisting, and that God has forgiven me for so doing, and that I served my country faithfully, and that they having enjoyed the benefits of my service to an equal degree for the length [of] time I served with those generally who are receiving the liberalities of the government, I cannot [but] feel it becoming me to pray Your Honor to review my declaration on file and the papers herewith amended.

A few years after the war, Joshua Swan, Esq., of Stonington purchased me of my master and agreed that after I had served him a length of time named faithfully, I should be
free. I served to his satisfaction and so obtained my freedom. He moved into the town of Milton, where I now reside, about forty-eight years ago. After my time expired with Esq. Swan, I married a wife. We have raised six children. Five are still living. I must be upward of eighty years of age and have been blind for many years, and, notwithstanding the aid I received from the honest industry of my children, we are still very needy and in part are supported from the benevolence of our friends. With these statements and the testimony of my character herewith presented, I humbly set my claim upon the well-known liberality of government. Most respectfully your humble servant his Jehu + Grant Mark”

Like the first attempt, this request was denied.

**VA Pathologist Accused**

In a rare criminal indictment for medical mishandling, on August 20, federal prosecutors charged Robert Morris Leavy, a former VA pathologist with three counts of involuntary manslaughter in the deaths of former patients due to medical reports he mishandled because of substance abuse. There are also numerous charges of fraud and lying to investigators. The investigation was a combined effort of the U.S. Attorney’s office and the VA Inspector General. Dr. Levy was Chief of Pathology and Laboratory Medical Services for the Veterans Healthcare System of the Ozarks from 2005 to 2018 when he was discharged. In 2016, he had shown up in the Radiology Laboratory, drunk and with a blood alcohol level of 0.4, a number usually associated with coma. After another investigation he was put in the three-month treatment program and reinstated by both the VA and state medical licensure officials on the condition that he remain sober. In October 2017, Levy arrived at a meeting drunk and drowsy. VA suspended his clinical privileges but allowed him to do non-clinical work. In March 2018 he was arrested on a DUI and the VA fired him the next month when toxicology reports revealed “2-methyl-2-butanol (M2B)” a drug that produces an alcohol-like buzz but is not part of usual testing.

It is alleged that Dr. Levy cheated on drug tests and falsified records to hide his relapse. He potentially made incorrect and possibly dangerous diagnoses in cancer and other serious illnesses for over 3000 veterans. In at least three cases this mishandling allegedly resulted in death and in two of the cases Levy allegedly altered medical records to make it appear that another pathologist agreed with his work. Civil courts almost always handle cases of medical mistreatments but in this case there is a criminal indictment.

**Student Loan Debt Forgiveness for Disabled Veterans**

On August 21, President Trump directed the education department to more easily forgive federal student loans owned by disabled veterans. The change is that veterans can have their student loans forgiven after automatic identification of eligible veterans by the Department of Education, without filling out onerous paperwork. This move is strongly supported by veterans advocates and bipartisan efforts of state and territory
Attorneys General. This change affects about 25,000 disabled veterans with an average indebtedness of $30,000. There are glitches: these veterans may have to pay state and local taxes though federal payments were eliminated by the tax law of 2017. The Education Department had taken steps to better identify these veterans but up to now still required them to fill out paperwork. It has granted more than $650 million in loan forgivenesses to over 22,000 veterans since April 2018.

The Listserv is available as an archive on the Georgetown University Library website under the title “Veterans Interest Newsletters”.

Joel Kupersmith, M.D.
Director, Georgetown University Veterans Initiatives
Professor of Medicine

Stats Section
Battle Casualties in Revolutionary War and the War of 1812

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War or Conflict</th>
<th>Branch of Service</th>
<th>Number Serving</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
<th>Battle Deaths</th>
<th>Other Deaths</th>
<th>Wounds Not Mortal^a</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary War(b) 1775-1783</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,435</td>
<td>4,435</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,044</td>
<td>4,044</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6,004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War of 1812(c) 1812-1815</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>286,730</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Congressional Research Service. Note: Number serving in the Revolutionary War is not known but estimates range from 184,000 to 250,000; wound number represent incidence of wounds.