

Entire Senate passes “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” Bill



A resolution introduced by U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, encouraging communities

across the nation to establish “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” was passed unanimously by the Senate.

The resolution designates March 30, 2010, as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day,” to honor the return home of our armed servicemembers after serving in Vietnam.

“There’s no question that our troops served our country bravely and faithfully during the Vietnam War, and these veterans deserve our recognition and gratitude,” Burr said. “Unfortunately, when these service members returned home, they were caught in the crossfire of public debate about our nation’s involvement in the Vietnam war. As a result, these brave men and women never received the welcome reception and recognition they deserved.”

Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) said at the introduction of the resolution, “Our veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces completely deserve the greatest honor and respect...honor and respect they were denied when they arrived home. I am proud to join my colleagues in support of this resolution to establish a day in honor of the return of all troops from the Vietnam

War.” Both Burr and Inouye serve on the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.



More than 58,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces lost their lives and more than 300,000 were wounded in Vietnam. That doesn’t account for the veterans who contracted diseases from Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam nor the numerous suicides committed by veterans.

Medicare reimbursement cut delayed

The House passed legislation (H.R.4851) to delay until May 1 the 21% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors now scheduled for April 1 and forwarded the bill to the Senate. The intent was to allow more time for Congress (which went on a two-week recess 26 Mar) to work out a longer-term fix. But a Senate effort to approve the bill quickly by a “unanimous consent” procedure hit a snag when Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) refused to consent. Under Senate rules, any senator can object to bringing a bill to the floor for action. Coburn objected on the grounds that the cost of the bill is not offset by other spending reductions. Senate leaders could not work out an agreement on March 26, the last day before their scheduled two week Easter recess. Thus, the 21% cut will take effect prior to their return on April 12. Ironically, the Senate already passed a six month fix two weeks ago (H.R.4213), but the House didn’t agree with the

funding for the bill and in turn passed only a one-month fix.

Failure to reach an agreement on an extension on the eve of the congressional two-week Easter recess could prove detrimental to TRICARE and Medicare beneficiaries even if Congress applies a retroactive solution when they return in mid-April. Doctors have become weary of the increasing number of short-term patches applied by Congress rather than a long-term solution. Some are already limiting the number of patients who use these programs. For military retirees the end result could be decreased access, reduced quality, or higher costs to them and their families for the benefits earned in career service. Congress has to find a way to end these monthly crises under which tens of millions of Medicare and TRICARE beneficiaries are held hostage to the prospect of devastating payment cuts that will cause their doctors to stop seeing them..”

Run for the Wall, *from page 4*

The group will have two routes to the East Coast, the Southern Route and the Central Route. Those who register for the trip choose which route they want to take from Rancho Cucamonga. The Central Route will take the motorcyclist through Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. The Southern Route will take them through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia. Both routes meet up in Washington, D.C. just 10 days after leaving Rancho Cucamonga.

More information can be obtained at their web site (www.rftw.org). Registration to go from Rancho Cucamonga is \$10 and anyone can register up to May 18. As the two groups travel East, they will be adding more riders and those riders can register any time up to the time the group arrives.

COLA 2011 is going to be 0.01%

The 2010 cost-of-living adjustment for retirees could test the idea of whether something really is better than nothing. After getting no COLA in military and federal civilian retired pay, veterans’ disability compensation and Social Security last December because of the weak national economy, congressional economists are estimating the 1 DEC 2010 pay adjustment is going to be just 0.1%. That COLA forecast was issued 12 MAR by the Congressional Budget

Office in relation to a bill that would increase veterans’ disability and survivor benefits. While Social Security and military and civilian retired pay are automatically adjusted each 1 DEC based on the change in the Consumer Price Index measure of the cost of goods and services, increases in veterans’ benefits require a change in law. Pending legislation would give veterans the same increase that goes to Social Security recipients