

## **EXHIBIT I– ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor**

responsible for accounting for all military service-members from all conflicts. Our office maintains various lists of POWs, that we use to uncover leads on cases of still unaccounted for personnel. We do not have a decent database which is as functional and searchable as Mr. Sterner's system. He even provided us with photos of all POWs and justification complete with military documentation for the awarding of the POW Medal for all past conflicts back to World War I. His assistance in helping us create a database, using much of his own collection helped our office save enormous amounts of time in research and avoided the many layers of bureaucracy that would have prevented the timely creation of a functioning and searchable database of POWs.

Such a database is vitally important to our nation for historical reasons, but equally important is the need for these trusted databases to be shared across government agencies in hopes of limiting fraud, waste and abuse of the military medical and disability claims processes. Fraud and abuse is rampant in the Veterans Affairs (VA) community because we do not have a single authoritative system to check veteran claims against. They use fictitious awards and write ups to create the basis of their fraudulent claims. This is not just a simple case of stolen valor or taking credit for something they did not deserve. Stolen Valor is often the first step in the manipulation of a government bureaucracy and system that is unable to create its own checks and balances, yet owns and hosts all of the information necessary to validate such claims. What the Hall of Valor has done is an excellent start to a more complete system that is necessary to ensure the US Government can control its costs and honor our nation's commitment to those veterans who deserve the pay and benefits they are entitled.

I strongly support the Hall of Valor project and encourage various government agencies to work to assist the project and continue to build upon Mr. Doug Sterner's remarkable work. A joint public-private partnership between the various government agencies and military branches could greatly improve the overall system and together serve our nation and veterans best interests.

LTC Kate Van Auken  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Defense POW & Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)

### **❖ Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED)**

I think the Awards Database would be an invaluable resource for the public at large. As of now there is no complete listing of combat awards. Even at present, we frequently are asked about the number of combat awards given to a particular staff corps for a the Global Contingency Operations. Currently there is not a dependable source for this data. Statistics are usually estimated based on news feeds from constituent commands and even Google searches.

André B. Sobocinski  
Research Historian and Publications Mgr.  
Office of Medical History  
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED)

## **EXHIBIT I– ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor**

### **❖ U.S. Naval Academy Alumni**

Doug Sterner has been operating against a requirement at the Naval Academy to publish, through award citations, the accomplishments of Alumni relative to Valor and Leadership. The information that was held by the Alumni Association had been accumulated through personal voluntary data updating and the data base only supported about 50 % of the awards that have been granted to the Alumni. About 3 years ago, I brought this information to Doug for his comment and a partnership was formed to evaluate the Alumni Association data base for accuracy. Working through FOIA and the contacts that Doug has within the services, the Naval Academy now feels comfortable with its data base from Silver Star and senior and the additions and correction continue to accumulate because of the diligence of Doug Sterner. What we found was not only were there some awards listed in our data bank that were not earned but that there were some alumni that had awards that were unknown to them. The Citations for these awards will be posted on line and in a data base presentation in conjunction with recognition that is presently given to alumni that have been killed in operations to include the ultimate sacrifice , Killed in Action. Using the same procedure that was begun for the awards verification, the Academy was able to verify some of the death information but at the same time uncovered information that involved posthumous promotions and awards unknown to some of the NOK. Doug has done a superb job for our Alumni and by generating the correct information , we have been able to generate a data base that is greater than 95% accurate which has already been used to solve discrepancies. We have yet to find an individual who has attempted to falsify his record but we have been given the power to mitigate conflicts through our data because our data base grows more current each day. We have had several Alumni call to determine if an award is correct or if the award had been downgraded. The impact on the Brigade of Midshipmen is immeasurable. The Academy recognizes its heroes on a continuous basis and with the help of Doug, now does that with accuracy. This is not a onetime project and will require constant vigilance to maintain accuracy . However, having an accurate listing of Valor and Awards will continue to be high priority here at the Naval Academy for both the training of our future leaders and our Alumni.

**Capt Robert F. Hofford USN (Ret)**  
**Director of Special Projects**  
**U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association**

### **❖ Center for Seabees and Facilities Engineering**

Many records have been lost, forgotten or stored away, thanks to the Military Times Hall of Valor and the effort of Doug Sterner we have been able to identify a good deal of the many Seabees and CEC Officers that have earned medals and have acquire copies of the citations since the beginning of the Seabees in 1942, We have been able to take this information and place it on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) for our Seabees to see and reflect on the sacrifices and heroism of fellow Seabees that have gone before them

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A good deal of the information we acquired prior to finding Doug Sterner and the Military Times Hall of Valor were out of books with just names and the medals the person was awarded, this was expanded because of the Military Times Hall of Valor

The only way that we have come so far with the data we have collected has been because of the dedicated effort that Doug Sterner has provided in his research, and Military Times Hall of Valor that no other site has come close to, nor has been validated

**Christopher Bissonnette CUCM (ret)**  
**Center for Seabees and Facilities Engineering (CSFE)**  
**Knowledge Management/NKO admin**

### **❖ Legion of Valor of the United States of America**

The medal recipient data bases developed by Doug Sterner in "Home of Heroes" and "Hall of Valor" have proved to be invaluable resources to the Legion of Valor. As Past National Commander (2009-10) and current San Antonio, Texas Chapter Commander, I have relied heavily on Doug's websites to verify the legitimacy of numerous individuals claiming to be recipients of the Medal of Honor or one of the Service Crosses. Working with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, we used Doug's data bases to uncover numerous cases of fraudulent medal claims which had been used to obtain specialty no-cost license plates and other benefits under Texas legal statutes. We could not have done this important project without his highly reliable data. This effort earned special recognition from the state, and resulted in DMV's adoption of Doug's data bases as a standard resource for future medal and benefits verification.

I strongly support the creation of an official government data base of medal recipients as a necessary tool to reduce the fraud that has both social and monetary consequences, and to create a valuable historical resource. I also strongly recommend that Doug Sterner and his team be selected to develop this official government database.

**Donald E. Mason NC**  
**Past National Commander 2009-10**  
**San Antonio Chapter Commander**  
**Legion of Valor of the United States of America, Inc**

The Legion of Valor of the United States of America, Inc was founded in 1890 by veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions during the Civil and Indian Wars. I, the Legion of Valor National Adjutant since 2000, have relied on Doug Sterner, the author of the websites 'Home of Heroes' and the 'Hall of Valor,' to provide me correct information on recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and the Air Force Cross since there is no official data base in the United States government.

I state Doug Sterner's importance can not be over emphasized since he and his associates have uncovered many fake medal holders. We need to establish an official data base and I highly recommend the government contract with Mr. Sterner to create such a base. I

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believe this information would save the government money since officials could use it before paying out any requested claims.

**Philip J. Conran, AFC, Col USAF (Ret)**

### ❖ **Arlington Cemetery (Unofficial Website)**

I am proud to highly recommend the databases (The Hall Of Valor) that you have created following decades of very intensive and dedicated research into the backgrounds of our American heroes. As one who operates the unofficial Arlington National Cemetery Website (<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net>), which consists of more than 31,000 pages of biographies of many of these heroes who are at rest in Arlington, I have very frequently used your fine databases to verify the awarding of our Nation's highest military awards to these heroes. I have used the verbiage contained in the awards that you have captured to document those awards on the website so that present-day Americans can understand the actions that these heroes took in order to protect and defend our great Republic in all of the wars in which we have been engaged. Without the work that you have done, many of the awards, and the details of their bravery, would certainly be lost to history. I must also add that your databases have helped me, and countless others, uncover those who would falsely claim the awarding of our Nation's highest military awards. Without such a database, these "imposters" would be able to continue to claim that they had received these awards.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, and more, I believe that it is extremely important that the databases be continued until 100% complete, officially sanctioned by the United States Government and placed on-line under the auspices of the Department of Defense (and kept current as new awards are made) so that all Americans may have access to them.

I am very proud of the work that you have done over the many years that you have researched this subject and the on-line databases that you have built. Should anyone wish to contact me regarding this matter, they may certainly feel free to do so at any time.

**Michael R. Patterson, Webmaster**  
**Arlington National Cemetery Website**  
**[Http://WWW.ArlingtonCemetery.Net](http://WWW.ArlingtonCemetery.Net)**  
**The Unofficial Website Of Arlington National Cemetery**

### ❖ **A War on Terror Distinguished Service Cross Recipient**

As an American and as a soldier who has served my country faithfully, I feel that it is vitally important that an accurate and complete as possible database of military awards be established, maintained and perpetuated.

Such a source as this database would serve to honor to the contributions of thousands, indeed millions of Americans who left hearth and home and stood in harm's way. Some returned maimed and mangled, others remain where they died, but most returned to their hometowns and started a life separate from their military experience. As the population of Americans who volunteer to serve becomes smaller and smaller, the need for a database

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to reference the valor and fidelity of those who served before is paramount. The stories become touchstones of honorable service and examples of the efforts of ordinary citizens performing feats of gallantry in extraordinary circumstances. Grandsons, Great Granddaughters, nephews, friends and wives should be able to access their loved one's stories and peek into the past to see what Grandma, or Uncle William, dad or the neighbor down the street did during their selfless service.

Sincerely,  
Brendan O'Connor  
Master Sergeant, US Army

### **❖ A Military Historian and Author**

I am a researcher who has dedicated the past several years creating a history of the Korean War based on the heroic deeds of men from the upper central prairie states. This 700-page book will be a tribute to thousands of men who sacrificed their lives and souls in Korea. To put it bluntly, this historiography would simply not exist if Doug Sterner had not recognized the need to create a database of award citations -- for not only veterans and their families, but for researchers and historians such as myself. The details of heroic deeds by men under fire would simply still be gathering dust in a warehouse at the National Archives. Anybody who says they “support our troops” will recognize the need to finish what Doug Sterner so selflessly started.

**Merry Helm**  
**Historian, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association**

As a retired Army lieutenant colonel and as an Army civilian military historian, whenever I needed the accurate and full truth about military awards at the Silver Star level and above, I call Doug Sterner. For years he and I have collaborated and assisted each other in searching and securing official documents. His knowledge and collection are the best I have ever seen. Whereas the military services, especially at the Medal of Honor level, are missing documents, nomination packets, endorsements and so much. The citation and orders for an award is one thing, but the process of nominating, endorsing and approving the high level awards tell an entirely different story. It is frightful to think how poorly the U.S. military services has managed and continues to slothfully administer this most sacred trust. Without the vision and diligence of Doug Sterner, we would have even more serious problems.

**Sherman L. Fleek**  
**Lt. Col. US Army (Ret)**

## EXHIBIT J– Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

### Response to the: Report to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees On a Searchable Military Valor Decorations Database

*The House Committee on Armed Services report, which accompanied H.R. 5658, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, requested that the Secretary of Defense provide the Senate and House Armed Services Committees with a report addressing the feasibility of establishing a publicly searchable database listing individual valor award recipients in order to reduce fraudulent claims to valor awards.*

*Said report was submitted to the respective committees on April 2, 2009 noting:*

**"The Department determined that although the intent of this endeavor is laudable, such a database would have little utility for reducing the number of fraudulent claims."**

That report listed the following as caveats to the feasibility of such a database, which is called for in H.R. 666, *The Military Valor Roll of Honor Act*, currently before the House Armed Services Committee:

1. The current existence of a database of all Medal of Honor recipients would make such a database redundant.
2. For purposes such as Veterans Benefits, obtaining distinctive vehicle license plates, membership in veterans organizations, etc., awards can be vetted by simply requiring individuals to produce their DD-214.
3. Privacy issues would "preclude inclusion of the personal information (in such a database) necessary to allow members of the public to specifically identify bona fide valor award recipients."
4. Although this historical information is important, it is already available to those members of the general public through the NPRC or through the National Archives and Records Administration.
5. A 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which destroyed 18 million records, means that such a database would be vastly incomplete.
6. Such a database would be functional only if relatively complete.

I have spent the last two decades developing a database such as is called for in H.R. 666 to include the top five levels of military awards. That process has given me insights into both the problem and the solution. My current database is considered 99.% complete for the top three levels of awards (Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, and the Distinguished Service Medals), and my index of Silver Stars is estimated at 75% complete for all wars and all branches of service. That personal database is used by the F.B.I., Congressional Research Services, the Texas Department of Transportation, Army Human Resources Command, and many others, including multiple media outlets, in much the same fashion as would be the expanded database called for in H.R. 666. My experience in compiling this has given me insights to the processes and the problems, and towards that end I offer the following response to this DoD report.

C. Douglas Sterner

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***1. The Congressional Medal of Honor Society of the United States already maintains a publicly accessible database of Medal of Honor recipients. The Department is not aware of any compelling reason to create a duplicate database of Medal of Honor recipients.***

It is true that a database currently exists for recipients of the Medal of Honor. Of the nearly 10 million military decorations earned by and awarded to members of the Military Services in our Nation's history, however, awards of the Medal of Honor number only 3,467--meaning for every Medal of Honor listed there are nearly 3,000 other soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who did their jobs well enough to be decorated, have been "lost to history" for lack of a database. The existence of the Medal of Honor database serves the specific function of providing 3,467 fewer records needed to be digitized for a comprehensive database.

The Roll of Honor for recipients of the Medal of Honor was mandated by Congress in 1917 and has existed since that time. The existence however of this compendium alone did little to deter false claims. In the early 1990s the Congressional Medal of Honor Society reported that PHONY Medal of Honor recipients out-numbered two-fold the 300 valid recipients living at that time. In that same decade the FBI, myself, and other historians received reports of PHONY Medal of Honor recipients at a rate of three or four each month.

The advent of the Internet changed all that, making this Medal of Honor database readily available to the public. Currently I encounter a false claim to the Medal of Honor only a few times each year, and reports to the F.B.I. have also dropped dramatically, we believe because it is very easy to quickly verify a Medal of Honor claim with a quick Internet search.

At the same time, we have seen a dramatic increase in false claims to the so-called "lesser medals," largely because there exists no database for recipients of the other awards. During the period from May 19, 2009 through the end of the month I personally found NINE false claims to the "Navy Cross," which ranks second only to the Medal of Honor, in news reports. Among these was the speaker for Memorial Day events in Pennsylvania who appeared in Marine Corps uniform wearing Captain rank, the Navy Cross, TWO Silver Stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, and FIVE Purple Hearts. The individual did serve as a Marine, as a Corporal, and received one Purple Heart. All other awards comprised what we call "stolen valor."

The existence of a publicly accessible Medal of Honor database is a striking example of the fact that a database such as that called for in HR 666 can and WILL decrease fraudulent claims.

***2. All Service members who separate from the military are given a Defense Department Form 214 (DD Form 214)...that lists all military decorations that the member was awarded during the period he/she served in the military. Whenever a state organization or federal organization believes that an individual is not a bona fide valor award recipient, they merely have to ask to see a copy of the individual's DD Form 214. State organizations should require***

## **EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database**

***military members or veterans attempting to obtain valor award license plates to present a copy of their DD 214.***

Without a doubt, the DD 214 is the most commonly forged/altered military document presented in American society today. When confronted with a case involving one person with a fraudulently obtained "Legion of Valor" license plate in Texas, the Texas DoT began investigating all 67 individuals in the state with such plates. To do this they turned to my own database of DSC, Navy Cross, and Air Force Cross recipients. All plates require individuals to produce documentation to vete their claim to the distinctive plates, but FOURTEEN of the 67 individuals in Texas with "Legion of Valor" plates were found to have obtained them fraudulently.

On June 19, 2009, the Florida U.S. Attorney filed charges against Gary Bruce Amster for fraudulently portraying himself as a Medal of Honor recipient. Mr. Amster drove a Vehicle with Florida State-issued Medal of Honor plate F02. I have in my files the CERTIFIED (by Brevard County) DD-214 that shows Mr. Amster was awarded the Medal of Honor...a clever forgery.

In a case two years ago in Seattle, 8 individuals were charged with defrauding the Veterans Administration. All eight men were in the VA system as combat veterans with high awards including Navy Crosses, Silver Stars, and Purple Hearts awarded for combat wounds...all verified by documents provided to the VA. In fact, none of the eight men had ever served in combat, and two of them had never even served in the military. Cost to the VA was \$1.4 million dollars...money stolen from legitimate wounded warriors.

In a large number of cases resolved over the last several years, the fraud has been exposed not for the lack of a DD-214--in all too many cases there have been DD-214s and other fraudulent documents to bolster the phony--but for a lack of listing in my own database. It is for this very reason that organizations like the Legion of Valor, law enforcement agencies, and media outlets, use that needed, but unofficial database. I have even had inquiries from Army Human Relations Branch and CENTCOM to verify Silver Star and DSC awards.

***3) The inability (due to privacy laws) to provide the general public with access to a valor award recipients SSN and DOB severely limits the utility of the database as a means for members of the general public to distinguish bona fide award recipients from those who fraudulently claim such medals...it would be very difficult for a member of the general public to distinguish the John R. Smith who was awarded a Silver Star from the multitude of other John R. Smiths in the general population...This centralized repository of information could actually increase the likelihood of fraudulent claims by providing individuals who share common names with bona fide recipients with the information necessary to initiate a fraudulent claim to a valor award.***

Privacy laws do preclude including the SSN and DOB for any living recipient (such information does become releasable under FOIA when the individual is deceased). Using my own database containing the names of 120,000 recipients of the Silver Star or higher in history (all wars/all branches), the name cited in the DoD report "John R.

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Smith" appears only twice...both of them for the same man who in World War II earned two Silver Stars.

Furthermore, such information as Home Of Record (at the time of service) IS releasable under FOIA, and is often published in the General Orders and/or citations for awards. This information alone vastly reduces the argument that common names can be used for what is essentially "identity theft."

There is however, an even more compelling fact that refutes the assertion in the DoD report that such a database would lack needed "identifiers". Prior to 1968 the military services assigned a "Service Number" to military personnel, a number unique to the individual, separate from their Social Security Number, and that Service Number IS releasable under FOIA, and publishable with citations. This means that all awards presented for actions prior to 1968 can include the veteran's service number. Further, the Social Security Number of a veteran either Killed in Action or who is subsequently deceased, is publishable. With this in mind I offer the following:

- A total of 24,048 of the top two levels of awards (MOH/DSC/NX/AFC) have been awarded in history.
- Of these, only 1,248 were for actions after January 1, 1968, meaning that for all other citations in the database, a Service Number can be published.
- Of the 1,248 awards earned after 1968, a total of 488 were posthumous awards, meaning there are only 760 veterans who received one of the top two levels of awards for which a unique ID can not be published.
- Of those 760 award recipients who survived their post 1968 actions, 440 either have Service Numbers (having entered service prior to 1968) or have died since.

Based upon these numbers, in the process of making available the citations for the 24,048 recipients of our Nation's most-highly decorated heroes, only 320 could fall into the category of not having unique identifiers. I further believe these numbers can be extrapolated out to the other awards, meaning 99% of all award recipients in the database will have a publishable Service Number or Social Security Number.

Finally, the assertion that such a database might actually **increase** fraudulent claims is a stretch that falls flat on its own merit...or lack thereof...really requiring no further rebuttal.

***4) Although this historical information is important, it is already available to those members of the general public through the NPRC or through the National Archives and Records Administration.***

First and foremost, this argument on its face, contradicts much of what DoD attempted to do in its own report in trying to cite privacy issues as problematic to such a database. It is true that this information is **sporadically** available through FOIA requests to NARA or NPRC. Such requests however are hampered by many roadblocks which are encountered regularly whenever a family member attempts to get the records, not to prove someone a phony, but to recall and preserve the legitimate valor and sacrifice of a loved one.

1. The FOIA process is a foreign process to many American, and quite probably the vast majority of Americans seeking to find information on a family member who served their country, don't even know where to begin.

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2. NPRC's records fall under the 62-Year Archive rule, meaning that in 2009, if you request records for a veteran who was discharged before 1947 (the vast majority of World War II veterans), the family member is advised they will have to pay fees ranging from \$15 to \$60, with no promise that any records other than pay records will be returned.
3. A 1973 fire in St. Louis (to be discussed further), destroyed 18 million records at NPRC. There were no duplicates and no indexes for those records and if you are requesting records on a veteran who served in the Army, Army Air Forces, or U.S. Air Force in WWII, Korea, or Vietnam, the chances are very good a records request will be returned with the notice, "We don't have those records...they may have burned in the fire."

As an appendix to this report I am including a letter from Jan Girando to the Chairman of HASC and the Chairwoman of the Personnel Sub-Committee. Mrs. Girando believed her father was awarded the Navy Cross in World War II and, as such, he was entitled burial at Arlington National Cemetery. As a Naval Officer he was entitled to the maximum of military honors.

Her letter details her efforts to get records on her father, one of the fewer than 7,000 veterans in history to receive the Navy Cross. But for my own database, this American hero would have been denied his memorial at Arlington, and Mrs. Girando's letter speaks eloquently to the problems she encountered. In her case she was persistent and eventually successful...I believe in too many cases families just give up in despair.

***5) There was a major fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in 1973 that destroyed approximately 16 to 18 million official military personnel records of personnel discharged during World War II, the Korean War, and the early years of the Vietnam conflict. According to the NPRC, no duplicate copies of the records that were destroyed in the fire were maintained, nor was a microfilm copy of the records ever produced...therefore, a complete listing of the records that were lost is available.***

The devastating 1973 fire that destroyed all or part of the records of 80% of the Army personnel discharged between 1912 and January 1960, and 75% of the Air Force personnel with surnames after Hubbard discharged between 1947 and 1964 provides the single BEST reason for the database called for in HR 666. While DoD portrays this fire as evidence that a complete database cannot be done, the database called for in HR 666 has absolutely nothing to do with NPRC--except perhaps, to provide them with significant data on hundreds of thousands of those veterans whose records were lost in the St. Louis fire.

As every veteran knows, the military is redundant in paperwork...if nothing else. All Army and Air Force awards are issued under General Orders, each of which usually contains multiple awards to many different veterans. These General Orders are housed at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, where they were not affected by the St. Louis Fire. The caveat is that there is no index for these hundreds of thousands of awards.

It is those very General Orders that HR 666 calls for being digitized into a national database. I receive ten to fifteen emails each week from individuals looking for

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award citations for a family member, often back to World War II, and quite often after they have already received the NPRC letter that the record for their loved-one burned in the fire. To date, without exception, I have not failed to provide those individuals with the citation from a General Orders at NARA within a few weeks if the award is for a Silver Star or higher (the limit of my own index).

DoD has previously gone on record to note that some of these General Orders have been lost over time. While this is true, the "lost General Orders" are rare and, when we know what we are looking for, are often found later. Brendan Wiegand, a private researcher, has combed General Orders to index awards and I provide the following as a case example as to the completeness of these General Orders.

In his own private research Mr. Wiegand attempted to index all General Orders for the 1st Infantry Division in WWII. He published his index in a 533-page compendium listing the names of individuals of the 1st Infantry Division who received more than 28,000 awards in World War II. Of the hundreds of General Orders published by the 1st Infantry Division in the period 1942 to 1947, he found only SIX General Orders missing.

The General Orders for these awards typically include the following information:

- Name
- Rank
- Specialty (Infantry, Artillery, etc.)
- Service Number
- Unit
- Theater of Action
- Date of Action
- Home Town
- (Some citations for valor awards also specifically indicate combat wounds, which can be a substantiation to a claim to a Purple Heart)

By digitizing this information, which is exactly what HR 666 calls for, we will recover a significant amount of information on hundreds of thousands of veterans whose records were lost in the fire. In the DoD report where the fire is addressed, it is noted that sometimes these lost records can be recovered from "alternate sources." In fact, that "alternate source" is usually pay records that includes ONLY Name, Rank, Service Number, and whether or not there is combat pay.

***6) The utility of the database as a means for the public to identify bona fide valor award recipients is directly related to the completeness of the database. If the database does not contain a sufficiently complete listing of valor award recipients...then it is of limited value... While determination of 'sufficiently complete' is rather subjective, it is the Department's opinion that if such a database were approximately 95 percent complete, it would be sufficiently accurate.***

While I would concur that a "Roll of Valor" is only worthwhile if it is reasonably complete, DoD prepared their report under the assumption that it would not be possible to achieve a 'sufficiently complete' database except for Silver Stars and higher awarded after 2001. I have, on my own and with only limited funding, spent the last decade proving otherwise.

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My current database includes the names and nearly all of the full-text citations for:

- 3647 Medals of Honor (100% Complete)
- 23 Marine Corps Brevet Medals (100% Complete)
- 13,452 Distinguished Service Crosses (Estimated 99.9% Complete)
- 6,931 Navy Crosses (Estimated 99.9% Complete)
- 6,674 Distinguished Service Medals (Estimated 70% Complete)
- 97,000 Silver Stars (Estimated at least 75% Complete)
- Various other awards (Soldier's Medals, Airman's Medals, etc.)

I would challenge DoD to find 135 legitimate DSC recipients not in my database, or 70 legitimate Navy Cross recipients not in my database. If they can find those 200 "missed" heroes, my database is only 99% complete for the nearly 25,000 awards of our Nation's two highest levels of military awards. The Silver Stars are a work in progress, and I am confident can be quickly brought to the same high levels.

### EXAMPLE:

The Army Awards Branch shows that a total of **846** Distinguished Service Crosses (Second ONLY to the Medal of Honor, were awarded in the Vietnam War. My database contains the names, General Orders, and citations for **1,060** DSC recipients--indicating more than 200 of the most decorated heroes of that war have been "lost to history" by the DoD but fortunately, recovered for history by private research.

Since the end of World War I when Harry Stringer published the citations for ALL awards in that war (Heroes All and The Navy Book of Distinguished Service) to Marine Corps Historian Jane Blakeney (Heroes, U.S. Marine Corps 1861 - 1955), to the late Colonel Albert Gleim who spent decades combing the National Archives to index award recipients, it has fallen to private researchers to insure that the men and women who receive awards from our military branches are never lost to history.

Conspicuous by its absence from the DoD report is the other side of the database issue...REAL heroes forgotten by the nation they served. I can personally recount numerous cases of highly decorated heroes slighted, nearly denied proper burial or recognitions on their headstones, because there is no comprehensive database of the men and women who have received military awards. This issue is NOT about exposing PHONY heroes, but about properly remembering REAL heroes.

## EXHIBIT K – ADA 1994 Army Memo on Problem for Lack of Database

NOTE: In 1994 Army Major General James Craven directed the placement of a display near Soldier Hall listing all ADA (Air Defense Artillery) recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, and Silver Star. His ADA historian found this noble effort to preserve the history of that arm impossible to achieve, and her response in the official Army memorandum is an obvious self-entitlement by the Army itself for its lack of record keeping on awards.

ATZC-CSH

29 November 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR MAL WASSON

SUBJECT: ADA Recipients of Medal of Honor (MOH), Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), and Silver Star (SS)

1. COL Tate's message to you (reference above subject) asked for numbers and for feasibility of getting names, citations, and photos.

2. This is a much tougher assignment than it might appear to be. MS Terrie Cornell and SFC Ronald Sieminski of the ADA Museum staff have already put in many hours doing research on this subject, and I've added many more hours. Together, we have compiled a list of about 170 names (enclosed). We found the information in a variety of places--the AAA and CAC Journals, unit histories, West Point Register of Graduates, and the like.

3. The obstacles to compiling a complete list, and to getting copies of citations and photographs, are as follows:

a. The Army does not keep a list of awards it has issued, nor does it keep a copy of citations; moreover, there is not even a record of the number of awards issued. It's hard to believe that the Army issues these awards and keeps no accounting of them, but we've been assured that this is the case. Even for an event as recent as Desert Storm, there is no central point of contact with a list of the recipients. Therefore, there is no way to know what final number we are aiming for. We don't know if the 170 names we have are equivalent to 99.9 percent of the total, or to .01 percent--or, as is more likely, somewhere in between those figures. We think there's only one MOH winner, but there are probably many thousands of SS recipients. (Above information per phone conversations with DA Awards Branch, DA Adjutant General's Office, Center of Military History, Military History Institute, and Fort Benjamin Harrison Awards Section).

b. Each recipient's individual personnel record contains documentation pertaining to awards. This can be simply a notation that the award was issued, and may or may not include a copy of the citation and a picture. These records are maintained by the National Archives at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. However, there is no way to access them, as they are catalogued only by name and service number. If we had a list of names/service numbers, NPRC could pull the corresponding records, but they cannot reverse this process.

## EXHIBIT K – ADA 1994 Army Memo on Problem for Lack of Database

c. Even if NPRC could access the records, we would encounter a further problem: the 1973 fire at NPRC, which destroyed nearly 20 million Army and Air Force records from the years 1912-1961. (Information about records at NPRC per phone conversation with chief archivist there, plus my own six years employment as an archivist there.)

3. Compiling a complete list of awardees, with citations and photos, for the purpose of creating a display in Building 2, is unfortunately not feasible. However, Ms. Cornell and I suggest an alternate course of action, which is within the realm of possibility:

a. MS Cornell and I will look for names of awardees on a continuing basis, updating the data base frequently.

b. Place notices in publications read by veterans--VFW magazine, American Legion magazine, The Retired Officer, etc., asking for CAC, AAA, and ADA veterans who have won any of these awards to send us a copy of their citations.

c. Create an exhibit for Building 2 which will display a list with names, ranks, and types of award, but without citations and photos. Display the list in such a way that it can somehow be updated periodically as new names come to light. When visitors to the building see the exhibit, we will probably get more and more names. For an exhibit more interesting than just a list, some of the people (we do have copies of some of the citations) could be highlighted by a display of the citation, and perhaps a picture if we can find one.

4. We can never say that we have a list of all awardees, but we can create a fluid list, subject to revision. With a little publicity and a lot of time and effort, our project undoubtedly would snowball into a much longer list.

Encl

*Patricia M. Rhodes*  
PATRICIA M. RHODES  
Research Historian

**FIVE YEARS** after issuing the above Memorandum, Patricia Rhodes reported on the project noting that she had identified some 200 names, but did not know if it represented “99% of the total or 1% of the total,” in the memorandum that follows. In fact, today the *Military Times* Hall of Valor contains 629 ADA recipients of the Soldier’s Medal or Silver Stars and higher, TRIPLE what ADA had ten years ago and estimated to be close to 80% complete.

## EXHIBIT K – ADA 1994 Army Memo on Problem for Lack of Database

### INFORMATION PAPER ADA RECIPIENTS OF MOH/DSC/SS

In 1994 MG James Cravens directed the placement of a display near Soldier Hall listing all ADA recipients of the Medal of Honor (MOH), the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), and the Silver Star (SS). The staffs of the Historian's Office and the ADA Museum spent hundreds of hours doing the necessary research, and finally compiled a list of approximately 200 names. The names came from a variety of sources, including the *Coast Artillery Journal* and the *ADA Journal*, the *Monitor*, unit histories, and West Point publications. We realized that this was an incomplete list; what we do not know is the extent of its completeness.

There are numerous obstacles to getting a complete list. They are:

- . Other than the MOH, the Army does not keep a list of recipients of awards, nor even any information about the numbers of medals which have been awarded. Thus we know that we have one MOH winner, SGT Mitchell Stout. However, for DSCs and SSs, we have no way of knowing if our list of 200 names represents 99% of the total or 1% of the total.

- . Individual personnel records are supposed to contain documentation pertaining to awards (although this information is sometimes mistakenly omitted). These records are maintained at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. However, we have no way to access the data, as the records are catalogued only by name and service number. If we could provide a list of names and service numbers, NPRC could pull the records for us, but they cannot reverse the process and give us a list.

- . Even if NPRC were able to identify the records for us, there would be an additional problem: the 1973 fire there destroyed nearly 20 million individual Army and Air Force records from the years 1912-1961; in other words, the records most affected are from World Wars I and II and the Korean War, three of the four time periods most likely to have produced awards (Vietnam War records were not affected.)

(Above information is based on our research and conversations with the DA Awards Branch, the DA Adjutant General's Office, the US Army Center of Military History, the Military History Institute, the Fort Benjamin Harrison Awards Section (Finances), and the National Personnel Records Center.)

In the years since we compiled the list of names, we have added a few more as we have happened across them. A copy of the list as it now stands is attached.

PATRICIA M. RHODES  
ADA Historian

*Summer 1999*

## EXHIBIT L – Awards in the Global Wars on Terrorism

In their 2009 Report to HASC and SASC on the feasibility of an awards database, while maintaining a historical record could not be satisfactorily achieved, DoD acknowledged: **“The Department determined that it is feasible, although the utility of the database would be limited, to establish a database of valor award recipients of the Silver Star and above from September 11, 2001, forward. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) estimates the cost of establishing a publicly accessible database of valor award recipients to be \$250,000.”**

Based upon multiple, official sources, the following is an enumeration of the valor awards of the Silver Star and higher for actions in Iraq and Afghanistan:

	Awards Reported by Services				Total	Awards in Military Times HoV			
	Army	Navy	USMC	USAF		Names	Complete	Citations	Complete
<b>MOH</b>	6	2	2	0	<b>10</b>	10	100%	10	100%
<b>DSC</b>	24 <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	<b>24</b>	22	92%	22	92%
<b>NX</b>	0	6	29	0	<b>35</b>	35	100%	34	97%
<b>AFC</b>	0	0	0	4	<b>4</b>	4	100%	4	100%
<b>SS</b>	646 <sup>2</sup>	120 <sup>3</sup>	102	45	<b>913</b>	615	67%	487	53%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>56%</b>

<sup>1</sup>In preparation for this report I was surprised to see that Army HRC now shows two DSC recipients in addition to those documented in the HOV. Because we track these very closely I believe they are probably awards that have been processed but have not yet been publicly announced or presented.

<sup>2</sup>These include at least 1 Marine and 2 USAF personnel who were awarded the Army Silver Star, making them double entries and otherwise accounted for in their respective branches of service.

<sup>3</sup>We have only identified 25 Navy Silver Star recipients out of a reported 120+ awards, which in this instance is reasonable as we believe the vast majority of the un-recorded awards were made to Navy Special Warfare Operators, largely SEALs, whose actions and identities need to remain protected at the present. This may apply to a SMALL Number of the missing U.S. Army awards, however the vast majority of those still needed for the Army would not fall into this “protected” category.

At NO COST to DoD, *Military Times* has made available this database, nearly 70% complete for identities and 53% complete for full-text citations. Furthermore, with nearly 100,000 additional awards, for what DoD estimated it would cost for ONLY the fewer than 1,000 valor award recipients in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have provided a database more than 100-times larger than that limited option.

**EXHIBIT M – U.S. Army Awards – Historical Analysis**

	WWI	WWII	Korea	Vietnam	El Sal	Grenada	Panama	Gulf War	Somalia	Bosnia	GWOT	TOTALS
<b>MOH</b>	95	324	80	160		-	-	-	2	-	6	<b>667</b>
<b>DSC</b>	6,340	4,434	724	848	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	<b>12,370</b>
<b>DSM</b>		1,439		-		2		2				<b>1,443</b>
<b>SS</b>		73,654	10,061	21,634	1	1	6	75	41	-	649	<b>106,122</b>
<b>LM</b>	N/A	20,273		21,697	1	4		158		-	205	<b>42,338</b>
<b>DFC</b>		126,318		21,697	1	3	16	108	17		306	<b>148,466</b>
<b>SM</b>	N/A	12,485	581	5,402		4		43				<b>18,515</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>												
<b>BSM/V</b>	N/A	*****	*****	170,626	24	59	65	891	103	-	4,046	<b>175,814</b>
<b>BSM(A/S)</b>	N/A	395,380	30,359	549,342	1	753	149	27,076	200		142,592	<b>1,145,852</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>												
<b>AM/V</b>	N/A	*****	*****	31,665	1	53	15	694	92	-	1,751	<b>34,271</b>
<b>AM(A/S)</b>	N/A	1,166,471	*****	1,007,459		271	208	5,705	111	-	28,690	<b>2,208,915</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>												
<b>ARCOM/V</b>	N/A	*****	*****	76,083	6	99	83	976	56	-	7,878	<b>85,181</b>
<b>ARCOM (A/S)</b>	N/A	*****	*****	760,954	*****	4,975	852	81,003	81		450,178	<b>1,298,043</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>												
	<b>6,435</b>	<b>1,800,778</b>	<b>41,805</b>	<b>2,667,567</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6,224</b>	<b>1,394</b>	<b>116,731</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>636,325</b>	<b>5,277,997</b>

**Variances on the DSC between Army HRC and the Hall of Valor**

	Army	HOV	Variance
WWI	6,340	6,504	164
WWII	4,434	5,055	621
Korea	724	812	88
Vietnam	848	1,068	220
GWOT	24	22	(2)

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

**NOTE: The POW Network is a private, unofficial organization initially launched to track the history and sacrifice of Vietnam War Prisoners of War. Operated by Chuck and Mary Schantag of Skidmore, Missouri, they have been instrumental in dealing with thousands of Stolen Valor Cases as well.**

**It is with great sorry that I report that Chuck Schantag, a Vietnam War Marine Corps Veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart, passed away on February 23, 2012. Even in her grief, Mary Schantage insured that I received the following in time to include it in this set of exhibits.**

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### **HEROES OR ZEROES: WHO, WHAT AND WHY CARE?**

#### **MARY SCHANTAG, POWNETWORK**

**“Tom was a Green Beret in the Vietnam War and was captured in Laos. Kept up to his chin in water in a submerged bamboo cage for three years as well as being repeatedly tortured and fed rats and grubs, he finally chewed through the bamboo bars and escaped by killing five guards using hand-to-hand combat that he was taught in Special Forces school and trekked 200 miles through dense jungle to be finally rescued by an American unit. He survived all that to become our distinguished Mayor and is here with us today. . . “**

**The problem was that the good Mayor was actually a US Army Private First Class Cook at Fort Dix, New Jersey during the Vietnam War, but the outrageous story got him elected and re-elected many times. The inherent Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) also became his constant excuse for his never-ending inadequacies as a husband as well. If he had not been a “hero in Vietnam,” his poor, victimized wife would have divorced him three decades earlier.**

**The emails, letters and phone calls come in daily from the wives, husbands, lovers, sons, daughters, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, the pregnant “fiancée”, employers, employees, and friends.**

**The media sees a sob story and immediately runs with it. Photos of the Hero are plastered all over the front page of a newspaper as well as on book or magazine covers. The story becomes the top topic of discussion on Television networks. The tears and the story are showstoppers at first glance. Then our phones start ringing and the complaints begin, “This story ran.” “Will you check him out?” “Get his records.” “Something’s not right.”**

**When the Prisoner of War (P.O.W.). NETWORK was formed as a Non-Profit Organization in 1989, our initial intent was to educate the public by compiling and sharing information on living and deceased United States (US) Military and Civilian Vietnam POWs and Missing in Action (MIA) personnel because of the increasing deaths of our World War (WW) I and WWII POWs returnees. Throughout the years, more obituaries are being published not only on WWII POWs, but also on our Korean and Vietnam War POWs returnees. Even though these POWs are now deceased, their stories of courage and survival did not die with them just as the stories of our POWs who are still living as demonstrated in a recent Best Seller UNBROKEN: A World War II Survival, Resilience and Redemption.**

**We created the website POWNETWORK.com in honor and remembrance of these brave individuals who sacrificed their lives for our country. Additionally, we voluntary at no cost provide information to family members and friends of the POWs and MIAs as well as journalists, students,**

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

electd officials and researchers whose quests have been seeking and verifying information on these personnel.

Our research staff is comprised of volunteers who are US Military Veterans, family members of our POWs and MIAs as well as individuals who are interested in Military history. We have established an excellent working relationship with the Defense Prisoner of War/ Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) that was created in 1993 to oversee and manage POW/MIA issues. Since their organization maintains an Official Database of personnel who have been listed as either being a POW or MIA during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam War and now Iraq and other Conflicts, they have provided us with valuable information that we have been able to use to assist individuals who seek information to verify if a person or family member was a POW or MIA.

Additionally, we have successfully obtained information released through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from the National Personal Records Center (NPRC) in St Louis, Missouri as well as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for individuals seeking records for former US Military Veterans. Because of the costs of obtaining this information, i.e. mailing material and postage fees, research fees to the NPRC for Archival Records that were destroyed in the 1973 fire, fees for Internet services to research NARA's Database, subscription fees for archival newspapers and magazines, faxing Standard Forms 180 requests to the NPRC, paying for long distance calls to research centers as well as calling individuals who are requesting information, we have requested donations to cover these expenses.

We have also volunteered our time and expended our personal finances in attending and hosting various POW/MIA Candlelight vigillances and services as well as speaking at events and engagements on our POWs and MIAs at no cost to any person or organization. Since 2001, through voluntary contributions, the POWNETWORK has hosted the Annual Military GALA and Banquet at Branson, Missouri in honor of our POWs and MIAs as well as our US Military Veterans.

Additionally, we have maintained an excellent rapport and working relationship with Mr. Doug Sterner, a former US Army Vietnam Veteran who served two (2) tours in Vietnam as well as being the recipient of two (2) Bronze Star Medals (BSM). We also maintain a close working relationship with his wife, Pamela, who authored the paper on the subject of STOLEN VALOR that became the blueprint for the STOLEN VALOR ACT which was signed into law in 2006. The STOLEN VALOR ACT essentially makes it a crime to falsely make a verbal, written or physical claim to a military award or decoration. Doug and Pam Sterner also voluntarily maintain the website Home of Heroes that lists the names of the majority of US Military Veterans who earned the Medal of Honor (MOH), the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) and the Silver Star (SS). Since 1998, through research and compilation of General Orders for US Military Awards as well as historical documents that have been verified with records obtained through NARA and NPRC, Mr. Sterner has donated his personal time compiling a database containing the list of names of personnel receiving those awards. In conjunction with the Home of Heroes, Mr. Sterner is also the Curator of the Hall of Valor, a searchable database of valor award citations that was collected by him and the Military Times Staff. The Hall of Valor is currently an ongoing project and is a monumental effort to identify the half-million men and women who received the highest US Military Awards such as the above mentioned to include the Purple Heart (PH) and the POW Medal. The database will also include names of other veterans who received other awards.

Because of the Internet, news articles and obituaries published about US Veterans have become more obtainable than they were twenty years ago. Unfortunately, some of the articles and the obituaries have become questionable, especially those that publicized an individual being a POW or receiving a MOH or DSC or claiming status as being a NAVY SEAL, a US ARMY RANGER, a SPECIAL FORCES (SF) Soldier or even SERVING in the US Military.

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

Additionally, the introduction of Social Networking such as FACEBOOK, MYSPACE and LINKEDIN have provided individuals the ability to publicly claim that either they or their family members or friends served in the US Military as well as claiming to have received prestigious US Military Awards, being in Special Elite units or serving in the military as a NAVY SEAL, a US ARMY RANGER or a SF member. Social Networking has also been used as a means of those seeking sympathy for a loved one who has been publicized as being killed in combat or receiving a prestigious US military award, when in reality, the person perished from an automobile accident while in the US or received a Certificate of Achievement versus a BSM of SS. Social Networking has also been used by individual who falsely claim or embellish their US Military service for monetary and political gains.

Even though our focus has been providing information on our POWs and MIAs, we have been receiving numerous inquiries about a person's Military Service Record when the above claims have been published.

Unfortunately, friends, colleagues, families, neighbors, co-workers, elementary, middle and high school students, college students, the News Media as well as elected officials have been exposed to stories of those who did not serve as well as those who DID serve, but chose instead to embellish their military career, such as depicting themselves as being a NAVY SEAL, being held captive as POW, being a General Officer, when actual military records as well as historical documents revealed that the person was an Administrative Clerk or a Cook and was stationed in the US instead of overseas during Wartime. Others have told family members or local newspapers that they were highly decorated for saving their comrade's lives, for being badly wounded, when in actuality, they received a Letter of Appreciation for being a Supply Clerk. A few have even ventured to others that they were promoted to General Officers, were part of Top Secret missions or worse, never served in the military.

Sadly, the majority of those who believed these stories have been emotionally, financially and professionally humiliated and drained when discovering that the stories they heard were not true.

Some of these individuals who embellished their stories were recently exposed in the news media. One was the case of Terry Calandra, a US Army Veteran who DID serve in Vietnam. For nearly forty years, Mr. Calandra fabricated a version of his service in Vietnam that inflated his valor during the war. He enlisted the help of friends, a US Senator, a Congressman, a State Representative as well as the News Media to upgrade his SS, which he never earned, to a MOH. He even dishonorably represented himself to others to include elementary school children as well as the Picatinny New Jersey Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association of his awards and actions as being a recipient of the DSC and two PHs and told stories of campaign battles that he never participated. Because of the discrepancies of his stories as well as the irregularities in his Official Military Records and an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), he finally admitted that he lied by falsifying documents and that he never received those awards as well as participated in the battles he vividly depicted to not only his friends, but to the news media and to elected officials.

Another recent event that proved to be an embarrassment to an elected official was the publication of a story of an elderly Air Force Reserve Captain who served during WWII and the Korean War. The story was published not only in his home state, but also circulated through the Associated Press. The published 2011 news article described in detail how the individual earned and received his awards 60 years after the Korean War and showed pictures of the individual receiving the DSC, the SS and the PH from the elected official in an award ceremony honoring the Air Force Veteran. The picture also depicted the individual not only wearing the Rank of a Colonel, but also wearing decorations that were not affiliated with the US Air Force. The story caught the attention of several veterans and questions were addressed to the Elected Official on the verification of the person's story as well as his rank and his claim of receiving the DSC, the SS and the PH in the mail from the Air Force. Coincidentally, the Veteran in question had written a book about his service

## EXHIBIT N – The POW Network

during the Korean War and had been sharing with others for years that he was a recipient of the DSC, the SS and the PH and had even admitted that he had for years pursued the Air Force to give him those awards. Through research and coordination with the US Air Force and the Department of Defense, it was determined that the Veteran's claims were not true. The Elected Official is now planning a hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee he leads to explore creating a government-run awards database.

The family of SFC David L. Stump of Illinois was in shock and disbelief when they were informed that SFC Stump's obituary that stated he was awarded the PH three (3) times as well as being the recipient of the BSM and being a US ARMY RANGER who made 140 Airborne Jumps to include 50 behind enemy lines during Vietnam was fabricated. Again, even though the story was written in his Home State, because of the Internet, his obituary soon caught the eye of several veterans, especially those who were Airborne Qualified as well as served in Vietnam. His Official Military Records were requested and released under the FOIA and there was no evidence that he received the BSM as well as the two PHs. Because his family have been unable to provide proof that he received those two decorations, his headstone that was engraved with the misleading information will be replaced with the correct one by the Department of Veterans Affairs not only at the US Taxpayers expense, but also by his family emotional expense.



The Houston Police Department in Texas as well as US Military Veterans who were counseled by Paul Schroeder, who worked for the Non-Profit Organization Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Foundation of America were further affected when they discovered that Mr. Schroeder's claim of being a SF Soldier who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and was awarded a SS, a BSM, a PH and a Combat Infantry Badge (CIB) as well as suffering from PTSD himself were all fabricated. Researchers in coordination with the United States Army discovered that he served ten (10) years as a Military Policeman and was stationed in New York, Panama and San Antonio Texas. Mr. Schroeder left the Army BEFORE 11 September 2001.

In 2003, several young students at West Deptford Middle School in New Jersey (NJ) were given an assignment to interview a WWII Normandy survivor. Based on a story they had heard about an individual who lived in Edgewater Park, NJ who was told others that he served in the US Army during WWII and was part of the historical D-Day Invasion, the students with one of the student's father conducted an interview with the gentleman. The father was not only intrigued by the story but because he also was inspired to be a writer, he requested the gentleman that he be allowed to be interviewed in order for the father to write a book/biography on the gentleman's life based on the story that the gentleman told the students and the father. The gentleman had related that he had risen in the Army from a Private with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division during WWII to retiring from the Army as a Brigadier General (BG) after being rescued by the Marines while he was held captive as a POW during Vietnam. The gentleman's story was exposed as bogus in 2005 and 2008 when he was asked to speak at a POW/MIA Tree Lighting Ceremony at Ashbury Park, NJ. During the ceremony, he portrayed himself as a BG Officer who spent three years at the Hanoi Hilton. Despite knowledge that the individual had falsely depicted himself to the public on his rank, his military awards and his status as a Vietnam POW, the student's father still conducted the interview with the gentleman and wrote the book. The book, which is now in circulation, stated that not only did the individual serve with the 101<sup>st</sup> during WWII, but that he liberated prisoners of the Nazi concentration camps, that he was a Nuremberg witness and that he earned the Pathfinder Badge, numerous PHs, the Legion of Merit and the BSM. The book entailed that the gentleman was standing guard in Dallas when President Kennedy was shot and later became a POW during the Vietnam War. Despite that the publisher as well as the writer are now aware that the gentleman's

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

story is not true, the book is still available on the market for sale and it is unknown if any financial gains were given to the individual who told the story or if the phony Soldier claimed disability and received those benefits through the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Fermijon Marrero must be the twin of the Phony Brigadier General who was a Vietnam POW, because he was the Guest of Honor at the New Rochelle, New York Veterans Day Service in November 2011. He claimed he was held prisoner from 15 December 1966 to May 1968. He not only fooled the news reporter but also was designated the Honorary Grand Marshall of the 2011 New Rochelle Memorial Day Parade. He had not only identified himself as a Vietnam Combat Veteran and a POW, but also as a member of the SF as well as being awarded the CIB, the Army Aviator Badge, the Jumpmaster Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Special Operations Divers Badge and a combat affiliation with the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment (Airborne). Based on volunteers submitting a request to NARA through the FOIA, the POWNETWORK was able to obtain Mr. Marrero's actual Military records, which indicated that he served less than a year, i.e. from December 1975 to November 1976 and was discharged as a Private (E-1). His records did not reflect any overseas or combat duty, nor do the records indicate the award of any badges, tabs, medals or decorations. Additionally, his time in the service precludes any service in Vietnam, as the last American troops left between 1973 and in April 1975 after the fall of Saigon.

Elected Officers themselves have not only been humiliated when presenting bogus awards to individuals, but have also portrayed themselves as Combat Veterans or embellished their military career.

Xavier Alvarez, an elected official from California, verbally claimed he was a retired Marine and was a MOH recipient. Connecticut's Attorney General Richard Blumenthal words came back to haunt him when he made the statement "We have learned something important since the days I served in Vietnam" considering he never served in Vietnam, but served instead during the Vietnam Era as a Marine Corps Reservist. Senator Tom Harkin was forced to admit he embellished his military service when he finally admitted he never was in Vietnam, but served in Japan and the Philippines.

One of the saddest cases that financially affected US Military Veterans as well as their families as well as Elected Officials is the case of "Bobby Thompson" and the now defunct US Navy Veteran's Association. The organization not only listed itself on a Website that it was a Non-Profit charity organization, but claimed that its mission was to support the US Navy and to assist Veterans and members of the US Armed Forces and their families. "Bobby Thompson" and some of his members scammed over \$100 million dollars and in some Navy Veteran's obituaries, some of the deceased Vets had donated their entire estate to the organization in their wills. "Bobby Thompson" had characterized himself as a Navy Commander who enlisted in the Military at the age of 16 and had even deceived the Department of Veteran Affairs as well as elected officials in Virginia and attorneys in Washington DC and Ohio.

US Military Veterans and civilians, the Department of Defense, a US Army Reserve Unit and the news media were deceived by a Absconder/Fugitive from Florida when numerous complaints were being elevated to the Better Business Bureau and to the Military Times in reference to a On-Line Uniform Store that was selling military uniforms and equipment. The fugitive had depicted himself as a Military Police and was wearing unauthorized US Army Medals and Ribbons as well as depicting himself on the Internet as a being involve in Covert Operations. Additionally, he portrayed himself as a US Army Major (O4) and has been photograph wearing the Army Camouflage Uniform and the Army Dress Blues. His female companion, who has been described in various news articles as his wife for over 10 years, has attended military functions with him wearing Dress Blues with awards and ribbons and eventually, his female companions' US Army Reserve Unit was notified of her companions deceit in portraying himself as a US Army Officer. FOIA records were requested to NARA for the fugitives' Military Records which NARA replied that the fugitive never served in the Military.

Despite achieving high standards in the US Military, even those who held leadership position, whether they were Senior Noncommissioned Officers or General Officers, still had problems of

**EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

embellishing their Military Careers. In 1996, the Chief of US Naval Operations, Admiral Jeremy Boorda, decided to add small Bronze “V” devices to his Navy Commendation Medal and his Navy Achievement Medal. The “V” devices implied that he earned Valor while serving in Combat. Because of the publicity of what he did as well as the humiliation that he brought upon himself and his family, he committed suicide. In 1998, one of his sons requested a review of his service records. The Board for Correction of Naval Records determined that Admiral Boorda was not entitled to wear the “V” devices on his Medals since he was awarded those awards for Meritorious service and not for Valor while serving in Vietnam.

A well-known Retired Command Sergeant Major (CSM) of the US Army had claimed for years that he was a Vietnam POW and falsified in his Official Military Personnel File before his retirement about his POW status which he claimed occurred while he was with Company G, 75<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Airborne Rangers) Vietnam from 1 -21 January 1971. He was eventually charged and entered a pre-trial diversion. As of April 2009, his Military Records as requested by the FOIA still shows a POW status, more than two (2) years after his agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General Office in Texas to change his records to not reflect POW status.

<b>SECTION</b>
<b>27 REMARKS</b>
DUTY IN IMMINENT DANGER PAY AREA (GRENADA) 831024-831029
DUTY IN IMMINENT DANGER PAY AREA (SOMILIA) 930510-930515
COPY OF DDP FLD AS P.S. 1: DDP SEL P.S. 1: 940722 (710101)
POW, CO G, 75TH INF (ABN RGR), VIETNAM, <del>710101</del> -710121

17. MEMBER WAS PROVIDED COMPLETE DENTAL EXAMINATION AND ALL APPROPRIATE DENTAL SERVICES AND TREATMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO SEPARATION	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
18. REMARKS IMMEDIATE REENLISTMENT THIS PERIOD: 710505-771110; 771111-790702; 790703-820401; 820402-831220; 831221-841218; 841219-890801; 890802-951031// SUBJECT TO ACTIVE DUTY RECALL BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY//EXTENSION OF SERVICE WAS AT THE REQUEST AND FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT//DATA HEREIN SUBJECT TO COMPUTER MATCHING WITHIN THE DOD OR WITH OTHER AGENCIES FOR VERIFICATION PURPOSES AND DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY OR COMPLIANCE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS//“PRISONER OF WAR, CO G, 75TH INF (ABN RGR), VIETNAM, 710101-710121.”//SERVICE IN GRENADA 831024 TO 831029//SERVICE IN SWA 901222 TO 910501//SERVICE IN SOMALIA 930510 TO 930515//ITEM 13 (CONT) ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL//JOINT SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL//ARMY GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL-8// ARMY OF OCCUPATION MEDAL//NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)			
19.a. MAILING ADDRESS AFTER SEPARATION (Include Zip Code)	19.b. NEAREST RELATIVE (Name and address - include Zip Code)		

US taxpayers are being robbed everyday by those Veterans who DID serve, but lied when it came to disability issues. In February 2012, a Navy Veteran pleaded guilty to scamming nearly \$900,000 in military benefits by falsely claiming to have been injured while serving in Saudi Arabia and was confined to a wheelchair. He received benefits from 1994 to 2010 after being declared 100 percent disabled. However, the Department of Veteran Affairs eventually learned that the Veteran worked as a Security Guard, a Social Worker and a Transportation Officer in a Sheriff’s Department. Obviously, for almost 20 years, no one checked on his status and he almost got away with his deceit.

## EXHIBIT N – The POW Network

For years, Lafayette Keaton of Oregon, told stories to elementary, middle and high school students that he was a US Army Ranger that served in WWII, Korea and the Vietnam War. He portrayed himself as participating in the Los Banos prison camp raid during WWII and the Son Tay Camp Raid in Vietnam. He informed historians that he held the rank of a CSM and was a member of the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. He also claimed to have been awarded the SS, the BSM and the CIB. Additionally, he received the US ARMY RANGER ASSOCIATION and was awarded the Airborne Man of the Year Award in 2009. His continuous stories of participating in combat operations in WWII, Korea and Vietnam was not convincing to some Veterans, especially those who served in WWII, since Keaton was born in 1929. After several years of investigation, he was found guilty of Social Security Fraud not only using his deceased brother's identity, but that of his deceased son, who was an Army Veteran. Additionally, it was discovered that during the years that he was supposedly serving in Vietnam, he was charged with kidnapping of his daughter and served time in prison. Because he not challenged on his military career as other claims, he ended up costing the Oregon Taxpayer money as well as the Federal Government for his deceit.

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in some States are not verifying Military Services of those individuals claiming MOH, the Air Force Cross, the Navy Cross, the PH, the BSM, POW status for personalized license plates. The majority of the time, the DMV requests DD 214s as Proof of Service. Unfortunately, DD214s have been falsified in the past, that is, a clerk or a contractor will type anything a Veteran states that he or she was entitled to, such as an award, duty location, and schooling, instead of verifying the Veteran actually received the award or status as demonstrated in the CSM case of claiming to be a Vietnam POW. Additionally, there have been noted cases where a Veteran or even a NON VETERAN have either erased or recreated their DD 214 to reflect awards they did not earn, as in the case of Terry Calandra.

For two years, Vietnam War Veteran Gary Amster drove around Florida with a license plate that said he had been awarded the MOH. However, he never was awarded the nation's highest Military award. He had fraudulently altered his DD214 with the Brevard County Clerk of Court and then used a copy with the State of Florida Seal.



**EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

CFN 2007230931, OR BK 5815 Page 2152, Recorded 09/28/2007 at 11:11 AM, Scott Ellis, Clerk of Courts, Brevard County

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RECORD SAFEGUARD IT

PERSONAL DATA	1. LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE NAME Amster, Gary Bruce		2. SERVICE NUMBER US 51623111		3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		
	2. DEPARTMENT COMPONENT AND BRANCH OR CLASS ARMY-AUS-SIG		3. GRADE RATE OR RANK SGT.	4. PAY GRADE E5	5. DATE OF BIRTH DAY MONTH YEAR 16 May 68	6. DATE OF BIRTH DAY MONTH YEAR 28 Feb 47	
	7. U.S. CITIZEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		8. PLACE OF BIRTH (City and State or Country) Queens, N.Y.		9. DATE OF BIRTH DAY MONTH YEAR 27 Sept 66		
SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA	10A. SELECTIVE SERVICE NUMBER unk		10B. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL BOARD CITY COUNTY STATE AND ZIP CODE unk.		11. DATE INDUCTED DAY MONTH YEAR 26 SEP 68		
	11. TYPE OF TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE Trfd to USAR		12. STATION OF INSTALLATION AT WHICH EFFECTED UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT, N				
TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE DATA	13. REASON AND AUTHORITY Expiration of Term of Service AR 635 SPN 201		14. EFFECTIVE DATE 26 SEP 68		15. TYPE OF CERTIFICATE ISSUED None		
	17. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND 50th Engr Co DCSPER		18. CHARACTER OF SERVICE HONORABLE		19. REENLISTMENT CODE RE-1		
	14. DISTRICT AREA COMMAND OR CORPS TO WHICH REENLISTED Trfd to USAR CON Cp (ANL TNG) USAAC ST Louis Mo.		15. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO CURRENT ACTIVE SERVICE (City and State) Pt. Hamilton N.Y.		16. DATE OF ENTRY DAY MONTH YEAR 26 SEP 72		
	17. ORIGINAL DATE OF RESERVE/UNTS OBLIGATION DAY MONTH YEAR 26 SEP 72		18. SOURCE OF ENTRY <input type="checkbox"/> ENLISTED (First Enlistment) <input type="checkbox"/> ENLISTED (Prior Service) <input type="checkbox"/> REENLISTED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER NA		19. DATE OF ENTRY DAY MONTH YEAR NA NA		
SERVICE DATA	16. PRIOR REGULAR ENLISTMENTS None		17. GRADE RATE OR RANK AT TIME OF EN-72 INTO CURRENT ACTIVE SER Pvt E1		20. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO CURRENT ACTIVE SERVICE (City and State) Pt. Hamilton N.Y.		
	21. HOME OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE (Street, RFD, City County State and ZIP Code) 2418 Deerfield Rd., Far Rockaway, Queens, N.Y.		22. STATEMENT OF SERVICE		23. YEARS MONTHS DAY		
	23A. SPECIALTY NUMBER & TITLE 05B20-Radio Operator		23B. RELATED CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND D O S NUMBER 193.282-Radio Operator		24. CREDITABLE FOR BASIC PAY PURPOSES		
					25. TOTAL ACTIVE SERVICE 2 00 0		
					26. FOREIGN AND/OR SEA SERVICE VIETNAM 0 9 0		
24. DECORATIONS MEDALS BADGES COMMENDATIONS CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED Congressional Medal Of Honor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and National Defense Medal.							
25. EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMPLETED Highest Civilian Education: 13 Instructor : KOREAN KARATE Item 26B 16 days excess leave TAE KWON DO Blood Group : B Second Degree BLACK BELT							
VA AND EMP SERVICE DATA	28A. NON PAY PERIODS TIME LOST (Days) (No. Loss) None		28B. DATE RECEIVED LEAVE PAID None		29. INCAPABLE IN FORCE (21) (or USG41) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		30. MONTHS ALLOTMENT DISCONTINUED NA
	31. VA CLAIM NUMBER C		32. SERVICEMEN'S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE				
REMARKS	30. REMARKS Basic Training 8 Weeks						
	31. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES AFTER TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE (Street RFD City County State and ZIP Code) 2418 Deerfield RD. Far Rockaway, Queens NY, 11691				32. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED <i>Handwritten Signature</i>		
AUTHENTICATION	33. TITLE NAME GRADE AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICER E J Moran, CW2, USA, Personnel Officer				34. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO SIGN <i>Handwritten Signature</i>		

DD FORM 1 JUL 68 214 PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS FORM ARE OBSOLETE EFFECTIVE 1 JAN 67 GPO: 1967 O-265 714 ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES REPORT OF TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE

**STATE OF FLORIDA, COUNTY OF BREVARD**  
 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above and foregoing is a true copy of the original filed in this office  
 SCOTT ELLIS, Clerk Circuit and County Court  
 DATED 9/28/07 BY *Scott Ellis*

## EXHIBIT N – The POW Network

For years, George Gsell of Hampton, Virginia, had identified himself as a recipient of the Air Force Cross, which is the Air Force's second highest decoration that is equivalent to the Navy Cross and the Army's Distinguished Service Cross. He also claimed to have earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. According to the Virginia DMV, in order for Mr. Gsell to obtain his Air Force Cross License Plates, he had to have submitted the following:

Requirements: must provide copy of certificate of award (or) copy of official records or letter showing medal was awarded (or) copy of DD214

His Military Records that were obtained from NARA through the FOIA indicated that Mr. Gsell DID serve in Vietnam, but was a Refrigeration/Air Condition Technician and was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal during his tour in Vietnam.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL  
TO  
GEORGE G. GSELL.

Staff Sergeant George G. Gsell distinguished himself by meritorious service as a Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician, 620th Tactical Control Squadron, Monkey Mountain, Republic of Vietnam from 6 July 1968 to 4 July 1969. During this period Sergeant Gsell's outstanding professional skill and initiative aided immeasurably in identifying and solving numerous problems encountered in the accomplishment of his duties. The energetic application of his knowledge has played a significant role in contributing to the success of the United States Air Force mission in Southeast Asia. The distinctive accomplishments of Sergeant Gsell reflect credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

These are just a few examples of imposters who not only steal our tax dollars and VA benefits, but also our POW families emotional pain and suffering as well as insulting our award system and our military. Those that allow the lies to continue are co-dependent, enabling, and blind. It is not our position to comfort, coddle and sweet talk those that lie. The damaged souls they leave in their wake are our real concern.

STOLEN VALOR is a crime. Many of the victims are our Nations' finest, our heroes, which are our Veterans and some have lost their lives in foreign soil, all for Freedom. We hear from wives, husbands, friends, children, relatives, employees, co-workers, employers, Service Members, Veterans, law enforcement, elected officials- – all asking for help in verifying a story or tale of heroics

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

– as they have been victimized. None of them can figure out how to neither verify the story nor authenticate the documents they are dealing with.

Investigations are tedious and time consuming. Which war, what claims, full name, date of birth, where to file what paperwork or who to call for answers are just a few of the questions a victim have inquired.

When we investigate and must inform the victim of the fraud perpetrated upon them, the excuses flow from unsuspecting co-conspirators who hate admitting being taken in. “But he is our best volunteer.” “She does so much.” “But he says he goes to the VA.” “But he gave us his DD214.”

We have found that the most important form that all military personnel are given when they are discharged or retired, the DD214, is now the most falsified military document in the veteran’s community. Even though the Military is now electronically submitting a DD 214 into a Service Member’s records, they continuously still recommend that the Members copy of his or hers DD214 be registered at a veterans hometown county clerk’s office, because of its importance. The DD-214 entails many important details about the person’s military career to include their occupational title, the schooling the service member attended, the medals and ribbons they were awarded, the days, months and years spent either in the Continental United States or Overseas as well as when, where and why the Service member was separated or released from Active Duty. Currently, the only way to verify a DD214 or other military documents for legitimacy is to request NARA for the Service members actual military records and compare the two.

A decade ago, it took months to receive an answer from an FOIA request for military records. Under FOIA, 1 , a portion of any military record is releasable, when the rules for requesting the file documents are followed. Now a request for a Service Members records takes an average of 4-6 weeks for a response. There are still occurrences where a record or document is not received for years – and then only after repeated requests are filed for the information. A new, frightening problem has also surfaced. Records for many of our younger service members are incomplete after discharge! Medals presentation seen in the media, cannot be confirmed through the records. The orders and citations are not in the file at NPRC.

Even more astonishing are records received from NPRC that more and more often are coming back with historically inaccurate information contained within – and therefore entered on the DD214! We found that individuals, who served since Vietnam, with reserve, or extended service time, have had opportunities for “hands-on” records checks. That has resulted in “I cleaned it up for the clerk” remarks – and full page substitutions of actual records claiming unearned medals.

Thanks to modern technology, it has become easier to manufacture a phony war hero persona. A few years back, we were informed of a CD sold by an ex-police officer from Iowa on E-Bay. It literally let you build your own military file, complete with DD214 and military ID card. There was no more need for white out, mixed fonts, and no more “catch me if you can.” The documents on the CD were pristine, official, blank forms - more than 600 of them - and included multiple versions of the DD214 that had been issued since Korea.

Military officials said the sale was not a crime. The FBI said the same. Add the “we’ll replace it for you” lost valor award certificate sites, and a new hero’s file can now be created without having to risk his or her life in combat.

Official wording for a Silver Star citation is available on the web. Numerous documents are now “print on demand” and fill in the blanks. Flight logs, injury reports – you can find it all. We have seen examples of each of these make it through the system at the VA, for application of license plates, or in court cases!

In some instances, the vet who could not be satisfied with what he or she actually earned, simply asks for a formal “medals review” to replace their decorations. They get a sparsely-noted awards page,

## **EXHIBIT N – The POW Network**

then add a few more awards, buy the medals, copy the page, and send it to their Congressman (as if official) for presentation! It has worked – numerous times.

The best possible remedy for a quick fix solution starts with the effort to establish a National Database of Valor Awards. This would allow state DMVs access to immediate verification of any person's authorization to a Legion of Valor, Silver Star, Purple Heart, POW, or other distinctive plate immediately... not from a DD-214, which could be bogus. Veterans' organizations would have immediate verification on the status of all applicants that make claims of heroism or awards of valor for membership, and the Veterans Administration would immediately be able to verify combat status and combat awards, including combat wounds, from a National Database.

The impersonation of a veteran, impersonating an officer, wearing a uniform or unauthorized medal, IS a Crime. It is a violation of U.S. Code, Title 18 and the Stolen Valor Act. It was our hope that perpetrators would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law once they were reported to law enforcement, the FBI or the VA IG. To be honest, that is rarely the case. Pre-trial diversions and community service are much more the norm. That has led to repeat offenders - and more charges and more court time and more lies. Rarely do records actually get corrected after the fraud is uncovered.

Stolen Valor deserves much more publicity than we can give it. This is an epidemic. Unless you read the emails we receive, you cannot fathom the depth of the lies, and the all day, every day effort these phonies put forth to keep their stories intact. We receive hundreds and hundreds of reports each year. How can anyone deal with these numbers of frauds? Congress gave us laws – but gave us no way in this day and age to enforce them.

If we don't stand up for the truth, for accurate history, for honors, and recognition of our heroes – we will have no true heroes left.

Someone has to take a stand. We all need to.

1 The Public has access to certain military service information without the veteran's authorization (or that of the next-of-kin of deceased veterans). Examples of information which may be available from Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) without an unwarranted invasion of privacy include: Name, service number, Dates of Service, Branch, Rank/date of Rank, Assignments and Geographical Locations, Source of Commission, Military Education, Awards and Decorations, duty Status, Photo, Transcript of Court-Martial Trial, Place of entrance and separation. NPRC

## **EXHIBIT O – ADCARS – The Army’s Best Effort at a Database**

ADCARS (Awards and Decorations Computer Assisted Retrieval System) was the Army’s best effort at a database of Vietnam War Recipients. It was described as below in my initial inquiry to the Army:

**Classification: UNCLASSIFIED**

**Caveats: NONE**

**Mr. Davis asked me to respond to your latest, since you're asking some technical questions.**

**ADCARS is an index of digitized records of the -available- General Orders from Vietnam. NARA microfiched WWII and Korean-era GOs, and ADCARS was an attempt at a step-up in technology. The digitized records were optically scanned (text recognition), and the meta-data saved inside the digital file. The results of the OCR were not spectacular. I say "available" GO files, since the I and II Field Force, and XXIV Corp GO files were not available to the National Archives when ADCARS was developed. (Seems that they were found at Clark Air Base in the Philippines when the volcano blew in 1991.) Some of the Divisional files are incomplete, and not all are completely readable.**

**Adding records to the ADCARDS data index requires re-indexing. (Remember - this is a 1st generation digital image storage solution.) No money has been designated to update the system, which is now very obsolete technology. Mr. Rimas actually has done a terrific job of porting the system to a server - originally it was run from 16 CD-Rom Readers on a single workstation.**

**The records included were only the General Orders; no permanent orders (i.e., assignments) or special orders (i.e, CIBs). Most Purple Hearts were issued by hospital commands; ADCARS only has GOs from field commands.**

**I do not know how the number of DSCs was determined (but perhaps from Glimes research prior to the completion of the 1994 addendum). I haven't had a chance to check where the number came from, but it's been the number the Army's used from a long time. I don't believe it's been updated as 1130 cases have been approved upgrading DSCs to MOHs. The tally is not based on any data from ADCARS, as it is not a database. It is a data storage system that is indexed to allow for retrieval of digital images.**

**Hope this helps answer a few questions for you. I'll pass along the question about the number of DSCs. Not sure when we can expect an answer.**

**Jerry Kuczero**

## **EXHIBIT O – ADCARS – The Army’s Best Effort at a Database**

In 1997 Stephen Sherman, historian for the Special Forces Veterans of the Vietnam War, attempted to obtain ADCARS for his historical research and preservation. In the suit denying his FOIA request, the following was reported that further defines what ADCARS contains:

The Army recently hired a contractor to compile award orders issued during the Vietnam era in a computerized database: the Awards and Decorations Computer Assisted Retrieval System (ADCARS). Paper versions of most award orders, including those issued between 1965 and 1973, are still available to the public through the Army or the National Archives. Yet, the Army now relies on the ADCARS to investigate Vietnam era award inquiries and fulfill related information requests. In 1997, Stephen Sherman requested computer-tape copies of the ADCARS database containing the roughly 611,000 general orders issued between 1965 and 1973. The Army eventually responded to Sherman’s request by offering computer copies of the orders issued from 1964 to 1967 at the cost of reproduction, estimated at \$5000. With respect to orders issued from 1968 to 1973, the Army found it necessary to redact all SSNs, pursuant to exemption 6 of the FOIA and the corresponding Army regulation, to avoid a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy interests of Army personnel. The Army offered Sherman a redacted version of the database records provided he pay the cost of the redaction, estimated at \$350,000 to \$1,000,000.

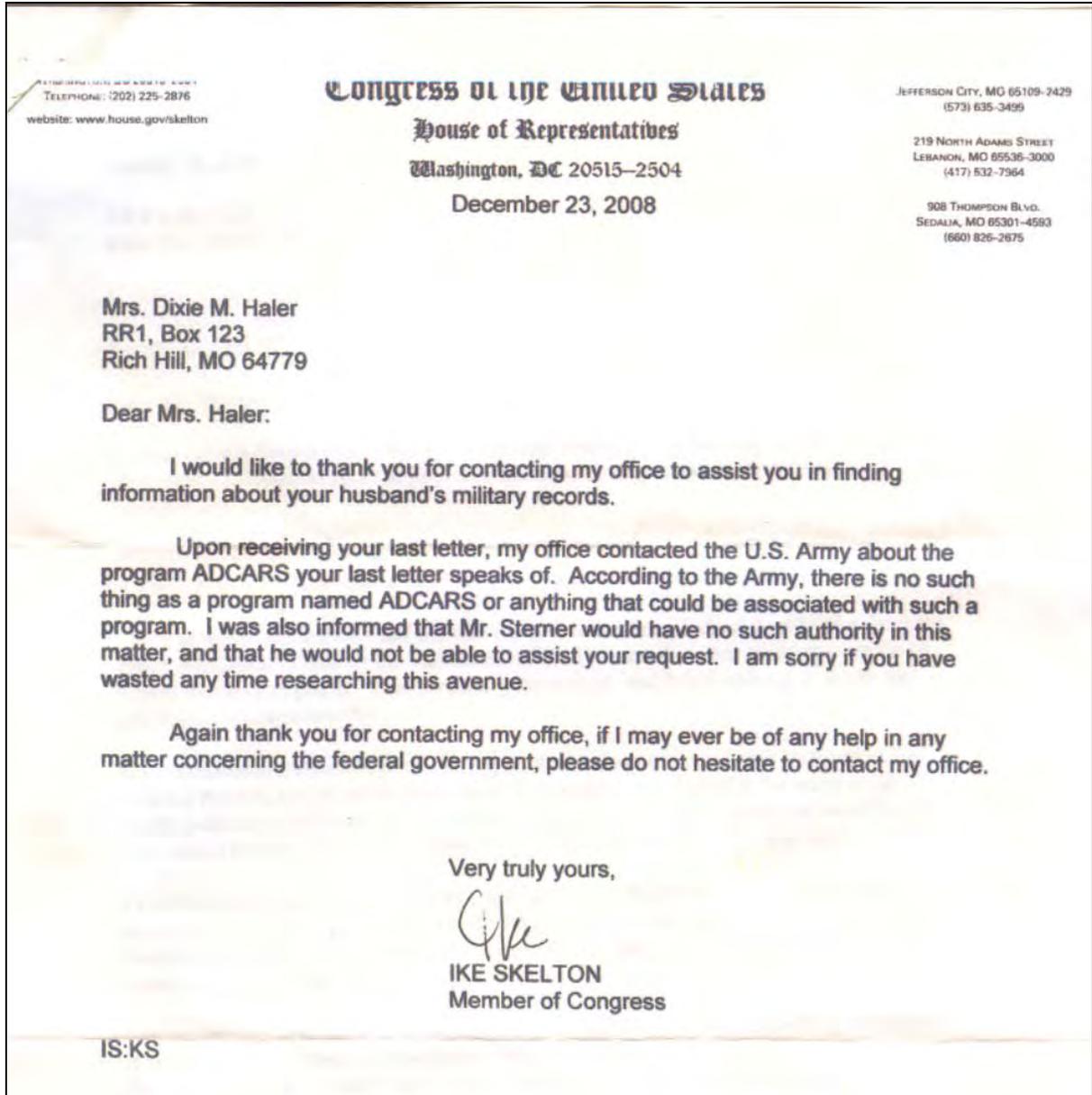
Footnotes further state:

**The ADCARS database has two aspects. First, each order in the system has been scanned into the database, creating a virtual image of the original document. Additionally the database includes a text file of each order that facilitates key word searches for information.**

Today ADCARS is used extensively by the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) when considering award requests. Despite its limitations, outlined in the email I received from Colonel Kuczero. Beyond ABCMR, however, the wealth of historical award information in ADCARS remains not only beyond the reach of historians, researchers, and others, few Veterans are even aware that is database, which includes the General Orders containing the records of tens of thousands of individuals whose records burned in the 1973 fire in St. Louis, exists.

In 2008, after reading a news story regarding how I had helped Jan Girando in her quest to vet her father’s Navy Cross so he could be buried in Arlington, I was contacted by Dixie Halder or Rich Hill, Missouri. She wanted help getting information to verify her late husband’s award of the Purple Heart. I referred her to her Congressman, who at that time was Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and suggested ADCARS as one possible resource in finally getting the documentation she needed. What follows is the response she received, indicating that the Army denied the very existence of an ADCARS database, as well as her sad response to me at her fruitless quest.

**EXHIBIT O – ADCARS – The Army’s Best Effort at a Database**



**EXHIBIT O – ADCARS – The Army’s Best Effort at a Database**

January 15, 2009

RR # 1 Box 123  
Rich Hill, MO 64779

C. Douglas Sterner  
3111 Thatcher Ave.  
Pueblo, CO 81005

Dear Mr. Sterner:

I contacted you by e-mail a few months ago regarding my late husbands military records. You were so kind as to take the time to respond with suggestions on how to get his records corrected.

I contacted my Congressman and was shocked at his response. He has been my Representative for years and always been most helpful when called upon.

I have searched the Internet and am convinced that the Army indeed does have a database called ADCARS. I also do not understand his insinuation that your assistance would be unauthorized or improper. I have visited your website and found nothing to imply that you might be untrustworthy.

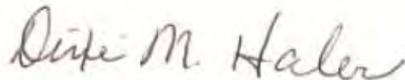
My late husband passed away on 17 Aug 2006. He has nothing to gain by locating his missing records, but he talked often about the incident and blamed it for many of his health problems. He made several attempts during his lifetime to apply for benefits, but was denied because there was nothing in his records pertaining to such an injury.

I also have nothing to gain, but he did earn the Purple Heart on 7 Aug 1969, has the medal, and it is listed on his DD214. It is my understanding that in order to receive the Purple Heart he would have had to be injured and proper paperwork submitted. Those details are a part of his military history and I feel should be a part of his military records.

I am wondering how difficult it would be for me to pursue this on my own. I understand it takes money to obtain anything these days and would be willing to pay. I feel however, I will need some type of assistance in getting these records corrected. Could you advise me on another avenue I might explore?

You can e-mail me at [pol@ckt.net](mailto:pol@ckt.net). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dixie M. Haler