



John A Barnes III (MOH) New England Chapter 9 173rd Airborne Brigade Association



June 2010

Welcome to our Newsletter. It appears that we can finally turn the heat off in our homes.

New members that have joined our ranks: Gary Ross D 2/503, Peter Vergados, FAC 4/503, Kim Rowland C 3/503. Robert Gosselin B & C 2/503 .

Sadly we report that a member of our Chapter has died. George Miller, HQ 1/503 died of cancer on 7 May 2010. Rest in peace Sky Soldier.

Our next membership meeting will be 26 June 12:00 hrs, 6 Court St. Concord, New Hampshire
<http://post1631.net/index.html> All are invited

Our Memorial is complete. http://www.newenglandskysoldier.com/173_Memorial.html

There is a new link on the National website, let them know that we are alive and well in New England. http://www.skysoldiers.com/national_board.php .

A book is out about Battle Company 2/503 in Afghanistan.
<http://www.military.com/entertainment/books/book-reviews/book-review-war-by-sebastian-junger>

The VA has made claims filing easier: <http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1912>

173rd Polo Shirts are on sale at the Airborne Museum, \$15.99 is a good price.
http://www.asomf.org/shop/product_info.php?cPath=51&products_id=1670

Often times there are videos on the internet that are worthwhile sharing; I believe this is one of them. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9_bP219ehQ&feature=player_embedded

.Leap Fest 2010 <http://www.leapfest.com/about>

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President:

Good day all. The 2010 Reunion is now over. Some 800 – 850 Sky Soldiers attended at N Myrtle Beach SC. It was a joy being around so many paratroopers. The Chapter was well represented. There were laughs and tears shared by us all. The Brigade CSM spoke at the General Membership Meeting with a thumbnail overview of how they are doing. All is well with our guys in Afghanistan. Their AO ranges from 9000 – 12000 feet so they are in a cold environment. He

stated that because of the few casualties doesn't mean that they are inactive; rather it is because of good training and great troopers. He thanked us all for the support that we have provided to the Brigade. We wish them a safe and speedy return to their loved ones.

Our annual Vigil was also successful, many members enjoyed the event, the weather was good and everyone had time to enjoy other Sky Soldiers. Our thanks go out to all that helped to make this happen. This was our first shortened vigil, only 12 hours instead of 24.

There are pictures posted to the website http://www.newenglandskysoldier.com/Vigil_2010.html .

Our Chapter is well. National recognized us as one of the leaders in every area. This is because of the Officers and members that spend many hours doing what is important to them, paying their dues, preserving our legacy and helping each other. I encourage each of you to become more involved with our Chapter; we do a lot of things from supporting our troops down range to supporting those of us who are "old timers". We will never forget.

Peter Klausner
President

Secretary:

Hello Everyone,

Here we are into the middle of June and my how the days are flying by. We now have two major events under our belts, (ie. The 16th. year John Barnes II vigil and the National Reunion at Myrtle Beach SC.

For all of you that attended the Barnes vigil, we thank you. We had to shorten the hours from 0700 hours to 1900 hours due to the National Reunion as members were going to that and we knew we would not have as big a turn out as years past. Revenue for the Barnes vigil was a break even situation, but the chapter did very well at the reunion selling our products.

The next big event and the chapters big money maker is the Rhode Island National Guard leapfest which will be held on August the 7th, (Saturday). This event is a huge one and a great day to take the family on the trip. The Leapfest starts at 0730 hours and military teams from all over the world compete in military parachuting from Chinooks and it is a great event that is geared for the whole family. Where else can you sit all day on the LZ and watch men parachute from Chinooks? If you plan on attending, bring a chair as there are none available or you will have to sit on the grass. The Chapter will be selling sodas, water, hotdogs and hamburgers along with Chapter products which consist of hats, tee shirts and other 173rd products. So mark your calendars for August the 7th, and come and enjoy the day and at the same time support your Chapter.

There are still 36 members who have not paid their dues from 2009 for 2010. Please take a moment and send in your \$24.00 dues to the chapter Secretary. The Chapter dues are a major source of revenue to assist the Chapter in snail mailing the newsletters to those who do not have an email address. This is the fastest way to support the Chapter and the blood line of the

Chapter. Dues are \$24.00 for a year (January through December) or \$173.00 for Life, the decision is yours. Please take a few minutes and write that check out to the chapter, we need the revenue and we want to leave no man behind because of no dues paid.

In closing I just wanted to advise the membership that as of this writing the Chapter has recruited twenty new members for this year. The New England Chapter is fast becoming the largest Chapter in the United States.

Until next month, stay well and enjoy the summer
Airborne All The Way
Dennis P. Hill, (Chapter Secretary)

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Service Officer:

What is a C-file, why it's important to your claim for VA Compensation Benefits and how to use it to help you win?

This information is provided courtesy of:

Karl Kazmierczak, Attorney at Law
<http://kazmierczaklaw.com>

This article will be about the importance of your C-file, why you need it, and other evidence you may want to get to put into this file. One of the reasons I am writing this article is because many of the veterans who have come to me for help with their claims do not know what a c-file is or why it is important to their claim. I have had veterans come to me after years of appeals and they never saw their own c-file. I will first explain what your C-file is. I will then discuss what you can expect to find in your C-file. I will also discuss what will probably not be in your C-file that may be important to your case.

All of your evidence that the VA attains or that you got for your claim is kept in your C- file. It is extremely important to get this file by requesting it from your local regional office and to review it thoroughly. The VA will base its decision on the evidence that is in this file. Many veterans assume that the people making the decisions at the VA are making that decision with all of the evidence the veteran assumes they have. Even if you provide the VA with all the necessary information including dates, medical facilities you were treated at, where you were serving, the unit you were in and other information requested by them you cannot safely assume that the VA got all the information necessary for your claim. Most of you are aware of the VA's duty to assist. However, I can tell you it is very rare that all the information that can help your claim will be found in your file. If you leave it up to the VA to get all your evidence to prove your claim you do so at your own risk. By getting a copy of your file you will be able to see exactly what those who are going to decide your case are looking at to make their decision.

So what will you find in your C-file? You will usually find all your correspondence with the VA and the claims that you have made. You will also normally find your DD 214 and military medical records. You will also usually find your entrance and separation exams. You should also find any C&P exams performed on you. There is very little structure to the C-file. They can be extremely large and require a great deal of time to go through every page. Unfortunately, you must go through the entire file and read every page. If you do not think you have the ability or knowledge to do this than find a representative or lawyer who will. I have often found very important pieces of evidence in the middle of many pages that don't seem relevant at all to your claim. On a few occasions, I have seen one page of a report at the beginning of the file and the rest of the pages of the report scattered throughout the rest of the file. When you review your file you should take notes and tab the pages that are important to your case. I do this by scanning the entire file onto the computer and

then I use Adobe to bookmark important pages while I make notes on a separate Word document. This may seem like a lot of work, and it is, but you have to look at it from the view of the person who is deciding your claim. The person at the VA who is deciding your claim has a huge caseload with each file he or she has to look at numbering hundreds of pages each. Chances are if you review your own file and take notes and you are able to present your case as briefly as possible, you can make it easier for them to find in your favor by pointing out exactly in the file the evidence that is favorable to you. The easier you make their job the better chance you have of winning your claim.

If after reviewing your file, you find that there is important information missing you should request the VA obtain the information. You should also try and get the information yourself if you have the means to do so. Often times, you will not find in your file your military personnel records which includes things like how you performed in your duties, what your unit did, and any awards and decorations. You will also probably need to update the medical information in your file. You may also want to seek to get nexus letters or reports from your present treating doctors. You may also want to request a C&P exam if your particular case calls for one or more. Looking through the file and not finding medical records you know should be there or records that you sent in that are not in the file is the easy part. Knowing what evidence you need to get to give yourself the best chance to win can be the more difficult task. This is where professional help can make a difference. Not everyone needs a lawyer or representative to get the benefits they are seeking. If you review your file and become knowledgeable of VA law you will be able to assess whether it is something you can handle or something that you need help with.

I will now talk about some types of evidence that can be helpful for your claim that you may or may not have considered. If you're trying to get unemployability and you are currently on Social Security Disability benefits then your Social Security Disability file can be important to your claim. This is particularly important when you were found disabled by Social Security for the same medical conditions that you are service-connected for. The VA is not bound by this evidence but it is strong evidence in your favor. Also in regards to unemployability claims, you may also want to include documents regarding your job history, much of which can be found in your Social Security records. In claims for unemployability you may also want to consider getting the opinion of a vocational expert. For all type of claims you may want to consider getting statements from family and friends or people you served with. These statements can help in different ways for different claims. They can sometimes help prove an incident or give a better picture of how your condition affects you. A letter or e-mail to someone back home while you were serving can help to verify an incident or help prove you were somewhere that you say you claimed to be but there is no record of (a letter from a base in Vietnam to home to show you were in Vietnam for example). There is no limit to the different types of evidence that could help your claim and often times even with the help of a lawyer or representative only you will know of some piece of evidence that you may have lying around or that you can get that will help you win your claim.

What you should take away from reading this article is your need to request by certified mail from your regional office your C-file and service medical records, review every page, take notes, determine what is missing and what additional evidence you need to get to win your claim. You then need to take all this information and explain as briefly as possible why you are entitled to the benefits you seek and point out the evidence in the file that is favorable to your claim. Remember make the person deciding your claim's job as easy as possible to find in your favor. Lastly, if you find this overwhelming or even if you're unsure seek help with your claim.

Joseph Armstrong
Veterans Service Officer

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Chaplain's Corner:

In all the time I have been involved in the military, I have noticed a few interesting things.

Everyone believes in God but won't elaborate on that statement.
Everyone thinks they are saved by being good and by doing good things.
Everyone goes to heaven or just a hot place called hell, but they are wrong!

The Bible says the only way to God and salvation is through Jesus Christ his Son.
Romans chapter 10: 9,10:

Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shall believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confessions made unto salvation.

Those two verses (9 and 10) take care of my first two observations and the last word of the last verse takes care of observation number three.

The word salvation in the critical Greek text is in the absolute, meaning once and once only. If you make a mistake during the week (sin) you don't have to go to another person to confess your sins, all you have to do is thank God for forgiveness of your broken fellowship, or as we commonly call it, sin. It's just you and God, anywhere, anytime, that you can confess your sin. And He's always there to forgive you because He loves you. (I John 1:9).

Because of all the pain and suffering we have seen, done and been through and inflicted on others, I don't want any of us to go through that again - it would be like living Vietnam all over again. It hurts me to say some of my brothers in the 173rd have fallen asleep (died) and may not have been saved and we won't ever see them again. But I'm trusting in God that they *were* saved and we *will* see them again.

Please read and consider Romans 10:9,10 and what it says. It is very simple and it does what it says it will do, because God does not lie and He loves you so much. It's either heaven or hell, (it's also called the lake of fire where you are tormented for eternity). The lake of fire was made for Satan and his minions and not for you, but you can go there if you're not saved. Remember that eternity is a long, long, long time.

God bless
Rev. Guy Hodgkins

P.S. I'll be away for the month of July. If you need me, call Dennis Hill (781-769-6062) who will then contact me and I will get back to you.

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"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones".

Albert Einstein

As always, we wish you a good door position and safe landing.

