

STATEMENT OF
C. DOUGLAS STERNER
CURATOR, MILITARY TIMES "HALL OF VALOR"
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, HOMELAND DEFENSE, AND
FOREIGN OPERATIONS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
FEBRUARY 29, 2012
WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of my fellow veterans, past and present, who have answered the call of duty in the service of our great nation.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the great achievement of my wife Pam, who in 2004 authored a policy analysis that became the basis of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005, and then doggedly pushed it through the 109th Congress. *Roll Call* described that effort as "the largest piece of legislation affecting military awards since a 1918 act of Congress gave birth to the "Pyramid of Honor."¹

Last week the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case out of California wherein Xavier Alvarez, while running for public office, falsely portrayed himself as a recipient of the Medal of Honor. His conviction at the District Court level was overturned in 2010 by the Ninth Circuit Court which ruled Alvarez exercised his Constitutionally-protected right of free speech in his false representation.

Cases like that of Alvarez, commonly called "Stolen Valor," are rampant; demeaning not only the awards falsely claimed but frequently resulting in great cost to the government. The cases of 8 men charged in Seattle in 2007's "Operation Stolen Valor" cost the Department of Veterans Affairs \$1.4 million. There have been many more, and there remains much additional such fraud to be uncovered. ("Exhibit A" provides a brief listing of a small fraction of recent cases we have dealt with.)

For more than a decade F.B.I. Special Agent Tom Cottone was the Bureau's lead agent for Stolen Valor Cases. Mr. Cottone had hoped to be here today but his other important work precluded his attendance. I have included (Exhibit B) his letter to me detailing his work on Stolen Valor cases and the important role my own database of award recipients played in his investigations. It contains what he would have testified to today, could he have been present.

In fact, while I hope that the Supreme Court fails to find merit in the Ninth Circuit Court's decision in Alvarez, there is one point raised by the Justices that has considerable merit. They noted in their opinion striking down the Stolen Valor Act: **"Preserving the value of military decorations is unquestionably an appropriate and worthy governmental objective that**

¹ Gottlieb, Tom, "An Act for Valor," *Roll Call*, December 11, 2006

Congress may achieve through, for example, publicizing the names of legitimate recipients.”²

In fact, in the General Orders (“Exhibit C”) issued by General George Washington in 1782 that established our military awards system, in addition to calling for those individuals who falsely claimed military awards to be “severely punished,” the General also noted: **“The name and regiment of the person so certified are to be enrolled in the Book of Merit, which will be kept at the orderly office.”** This was the first call for a database of military award recipients.

Presently there exists no such “Book of Merit” for any award other than the 3,474 men and one woman who have received our highest decoration, the Medal of Honor. Agent Cottone points to the value a more comprehensive awards database would serve in his letter, and post-Stolen Valor Act examples further attest to such a need in addition to and in support of that law.

In 2009 *The Dallas Morning News* reported that as many as 14 of the 67 Texas residents issued Legion of Valor license plates, identifying them as recipients of one of our two highest levels of military awards, were frauds. The newspaper further reported: **“TxDOT officials say it's hard to actually verify an individual's claim, even with documents. There is no central database the federal government keeps of military awards. Instead, they are scattered between sites in St. Louis and Washington, D.C., essentially forcing the honor system to be the backbone of the application process. ‘Without a database, we're hamstrung,’** Mr. Craig (Mike Craig, deputy director of vehicle titles and registration, TxDOT) added. The closest thing there is to one is a list maintained by decorated Vietnam veteran and military historian Doug Sterner, who helped pass the Stolen Valor Act legislation. When TxDOT began its investigation, officials turned to Mr. Sterner's Web site.”³

I could detail such cases of Stolen Valor for hours. On a related issue however, and although the word “stolen” may be a little strong, there is another manner wherein legitimate military heroes are being “robbed” on a regular basis.

Twelve years ago in Indiana, after watching the movie “Saving Private Ryan,” Monty McDaniel decided to research his uncle who was killed in the Normandy invasion. Mr. McDaniel was surprised to learn his uncle **may** have been posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor, but there was no family record of that award. After months of diligent research he found the evidence in an Army General Orders, not only of his uncle’s high award but that of one of his comrades, who also gave his life in that historic battle. In 2001 both dead heroes were finally properly honored, decades late. The parents of both men, two of the most decorated heroes of World War II,

² United States of America vs. XAVIER ALVAREZ, AKA Javier Alvarez, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, No.08-50345, August 17, 2010, Page 27 (11868)

³ Monteverde, Daniel, “TxDOT cracking down on phony war heroes issued military honor license plates,” *The Dallas Morning News*, August 15, 2009

died in the 1990s never knowing of the great heroism or high award earned by their dead sons. (“Exhibit D”)

This example of a legitimate hero denied his military awards by lapses in paperwork is NOT unusual. In February 2007 I received an email from Jan Girando, a woman in Kansas whose deceased father was one of the fewer than 4,000 men to receive the Navy Cross in World War II. Her efforts to have her father memorialized at Arlington National Cemetery had resulted in four fruitless months of back-and-forth between the Navy and officials at Arlington National Cemetery. The Navy, for its part, couldn’t even find a record that her father had served on active duty. Ms. Girando notes (“Exhibit E”) that after contacting me, “Six days later, I was informed that Arlington National Cemetery had ordered my father’s marker.” (Following Ms. Girando’s most recent letter I have included a letter she sent in 2008 to the Chairman of a Congressional Committee at a time when we had legislation before Congress calling for a database of military awards. It includes a detailed time-line of her efforts.)

The closest thing to any database of Army awards that exists to my knowledge is an enumeration published by the Army Human Resources Command.⁴ In that listing Army HRC shows that a total of **848** Distinguished Service Crosses were awarded in the Vietnam War. *The Military Times* “Hall of Valor” which I curate, currently contains the names and citations for **1,068** Vietnam War DSC recipients, all supported by Official orders in our paper files, preserving the accounts of the valor of 220 of that war’s most highly decorated heroes, otherwise lost to history because of poor record keeping.

The problem of heroes “lost to history” has not improved. Seeking the citations for Silver Star awards in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2007, *The Baltimore Sun Reported*, “**The Army denied a March 2006 Freedom of Information Act request for the narratives, first on the grounds that it couldn't find all of them.**”⁵ In fact, I personally submitted FOIA requests for the citations for Silver Stars posthumously awarded to 24 men in these wars, and in 22 cases there was no record of their award in their OMPF (Official Military Personnel File) in St. Louis.

In this *Information Age* of unprecedented technological advance and the Internet, it is unconscionable that the Department of Defense cannot keep track of its heroes and wounded warriors. Further, we have learned recently that even our Nation’s most hallowed grounds, Arlington National Cemetery, has failed to properly use technology to properly preserve the memory of our veterans who have died.

I hope to demonstrate to you today that a database of Military Awards is an achievable goal, and a worthy one, not only to serve as a tool to thwart acts of Stolen Valor and fraud against the government, but as a noble effort to preserve for posterity, the great service, sacrifice, and valor of America’s veterans. We owe them much and, and not the least of what we owe is a diligent effort to properly preserve the record of their deeds and their sacrifice.

⁴ <https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Awards%20and%20Decorations%20Statistics%20by%20Conflict>

⁵ Wood, David, “Army blocks ‘narratives’ of heroism,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 2007

CLAUDE DOUGLAS STERNER

Curator

Military Times “Hall of Valor”

www.militarytimes.com/hallofvalor



Doug Sterner is a veteran of service in the United States Army (1969 – 1972) and served two tours of duty in Vietnam as an Army Combat Engineer. He is a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in 1998 was appointed by Governor Bill Owens to two terms (1999 – 2006) on the Colorado State Board of Veterans Affairs, subsequently being elected to that Board as its Chairman.

Following his honorable discharge from the Army, he worked for three years in the Montana State Department of Corrections, followed by eight years in the ministry. From 1984 to 1998 he worked in the multi-family housing industry before returning to college to obtain a degree in Computer Information Systems from Pueblo (Colorado) Community College. During his final semester in 2000 he simultaneously was employed there as an instructor in Computer Information Systems and continued in that position until 2006.

In 1992 Doug and his wife Pam began a program of free, patriotic, city-wide celebrations in their home town of Pueblo, Colorado, inviting and bringing recipients of the Medal of Honor to meet local citizens. That effort from 1992 – 1997 resulted in Pueblo being named “America’s Home Of Heroes,” based on the fact that at that time the city was the only city in America that was home to as many as four living recipients of our Nation’s highest award. Their efforts culminated in Pueblo hosting the 2000 Medal of Honor National Convention and unveiling a memorial that is one of only four National Medal of Honor Memorials. In 1997 Doug was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s rare and distinctive “Distinguished Citizen Award.”

In 1998 Doug launched a website, Home Of Heroes (www.homeofheroes.com) to document the citations and biographies of our Nation’s Medal of Honor recipients. His website today receives more than 10 million hits each month. In 2001 he expanded his efforts to document recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, and Air Force Cross, each Service’s highest award and the second-highest military award. After achieving over 99% completion of these two top-levels of awards by 2005, he expanded to start tracking and posting the estimated 130,000 Silver Stars awarded in history.

Doug’s database efforts led to the unmasking of hundreds of individuals falsely claiming unearned military awards, and for his teamwork efforts with F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr. to deal with cases of Stolen Valor, he received a certificate of appreciation from

F.B.I. Director Robert Mueller in September 2004. One month later his wife Pam, as part of her studies in Political Science at Colorado State University-Pueblo, authored a policy analysis that became the basis of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 enacted by the 109th Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush.

In 2008 Doug partnered with *Military Times* (a Gannett Company), publishers of *Army Times*, *Navy Times*, *Air Force Times*, *Marine Corps Times*, and other government-related publications. At that time his database was expanded in an ambitious effort to include all awards above the Bronze Star and integrated into a “Hall of Valor” online database administered by *Military Times*. He continues his work today as Curator of that “Hall of Valor”, frequently cited as the largest and most complete unofficial database of U.S. Military award recipients.

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MILITARY TIMES HALL OF VALOR

The *Military Times* “Hall of Valor” currently contains the names and in most cases textual citation for nearly 100,000 of an estimated 400,000 awards above the Bronze Star in history. Entries are fully vetted through FOIA and/or obtaining official citations. While this remains a daunting project and a work in progress, the following illustrates levels of completion achieved to date:

- ❖ The citation is posted for each and every one of the 3,475 Medals of Honor and equivalent 23 Marine Corps Brevet Medals awarded in history.
- ❖ The citation is posted for each and every one of 194 Air Force Crosses (100% Complete) and 6,939 Navy Crosses (estimated at least 99.9% complete) in history. The names of 13,458 Distinguished Service Crosses (estimated 99.9% complete) are posted with citations for nearly 10,000 of these awards.
- ❖ Based on the above, the Military Times Hall of Valor is at least 99.9% complete for the top TWO LEVELS of military awards (24,089 total) in history, with full-text citations for 20,569 of these (85%) and at the least a synopsis for the remaining 3,520 awards.
- ❖ **SILVER STAR:** The “Hall of Valor” currently contains 24,365 awards of an estimated 130,000 Silver Stars (4th highest military award) awarded in history, and in most cases these include the textual citation for those awards. Additionally we have a separate off-line research database containing the names of in excess of 50,000 additional awards yet to be vetted for inclusion.
- ❖ **DISTINGUISHEDSERVICE MEDALS:** The “Hall of Valor” lists nearly 7,000 of an estimated fewer than 8,000 awards of the third highest U.S. Military Award, with textual citations for the majority of these awards.
- ❖ There are tens of thousands of additional awards, below the Silver Star but above the Bronze Star (comprising the top 8 levels of military awards), in our ongoing effort to digitize all such awards.

Thanks in large part to the better record-keeping practice of the Marine Corps, we believe that the Hall of Valor now contains:

- ❖ **The name of 95% of all Marines in history who have received any award above the Bronze Star (26,000+ awards), and in most cases a textual citation**
- ❖ **The name of Marine Corps former Prisoners of War, estimated at 100% complete for the Korean War to present, and 98% complete for World War II.**
- ❖ **The name of at least 97% of all Marines in history to achieve flag rank, with a rate of at least 95% completion for their earned awards**
- ❖ **The name of each and every Marine who achieved aerial ACE status, including at least 95% completion on their earned awards.**

ADDITIONALLY, and with reference to other services, we believe the “Hall of Valor” contains:

- ❖ **The names and textual citations for every member of the Marine Corps and Air Force to receive a Silver Star or higher in the Wars on Terror, what we believe to be all citations for the top two level awards to members of the Army and Navy in these wars, and at the least the name and a synopsis for 60% of the U.S. Army Silver Star recipients in these wars.**
- ❖ **The names of each and every former Prisoner of War (all services) from 1954 to present (100% complete), and 99% complete for the Korean War POWs of all branches, and 99% complete for all U.S. Navy POWs in World War II.**
- ❖ **The names and in nearly every case textual citation for EVERY award presented from the inception of our awards system in the Civil War through the beginning of World War II. (This excludes the WWI Citation Star, estimated at somewhere around 20,000 awards; we have posted nearly 10,000 of these and have citations on hand for an additional 6,000 of these awards, simply awaiting transcription).**
- ❖ **At the least the names and a synopsis for what we estimate to be at least 95% of the awards of the Silver Stars to members of the Army Air Forces in World War II, 75% of these awards to U.S. Air Force Personnel in both Korea and Vietnam.**
- ❖ **The names and in most cases textual citation for at least 85% of all U.S. Navy personnel who have been awarded the Silver Star from the Korean War to present.**
- ❖ **The names and in most cases textual citation for 95% of the Silver Stars or higher to a Navy Medical Officer or Corpsman in history.**
- ❖ **The full-text citation for nearly every graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who has received a Silver Star or higher in history.**

Father, every effort is made in our online entries to identify the home towns of award recipients, track death and burial data, and often to include a photograph of the award recipient. The following is a screen-shot of the “Hall of Valor” entry for Marine Captain Julian Dusenbury, father-in-law of United States Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) who earned both the Navy Cross and Silver Star in World War II and suffered the loss of a leg.



Julian D. Dusenbury

Place of Birth: Bishopville, [South Carolina](#)
Home of record: Claussen, [South Carolina](#)

Julian Dusenbury was awarded both the Navy Cross and Silver Star in World War II. During combat action he was shot by a sniper resulting in his being in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. His daughter married Joe Wilson, who currently serves as a United States Congressman from South Carolina.

AWARDS AND CITATIONS



Navy Cross

[See more recipients of this award](#)

Awarded for actions during the [World War II](#)

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Captain Julian D. Dusenbury (MCSN: 0-10785), United States Marine Corps (Reserve), for extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of Company A, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, FIRST Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, 7 May 1945. During an assault against strongly fortified enemy positions which threatened the advance of the entire front, Captain Dusenbury repeatedly braved intense hostile fire to insure the success of his company's advance. When one of the platoon commanders was seriously wounded during a critical phase of the assault, he reorganized the platoon and, in the face of intensified enemy fire, led it in continuing the attack. Fearlessly moving among his entire company front to coordinate the advance of the troops with supporting tanks, he personally directed the fire of the tanks in destroying several Japanese strong points. Although painfully wounded during the initial stages of the advance, he refused to be evacuated and continued to direct the attack until Japanese resistance was broken and the positions overrun. By his initiative and indomitable fighting spirit, Captain Dusenbury served as an inspiration to his men, and his leadership throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

General Orders: SPOT AWARD: Serial 61534 (SofN Signed april 16, 1947)

Action Date: 7-May-45

Service: [Marine Corps Reserve](#)

Rank: Captain

Company: Company A

Battalion: 1st Battalion

Regiment: 5th Marines

Division: 1st Marine Division



Silver Star

[See more recipients of this award](#)

Awarded for actions during the [World War II](#)

(Citation Needed) - SYNOPSIS: Julian D. Dusenbury (MCSN: 0-10785), United States Marine Corps, was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action at Peleliu, Palau Islands on September 15 & 16, 1944.

Action Date: September 15 & 16, 1944

Service: [Marine Corps](#)

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Witness Disclosure Requirement – “Truth in Testimony”
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name: Claude Douglas Sterner

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

NONE

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

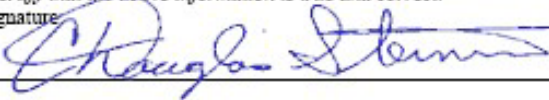
I will be testifying on behalf of *The Military Times* “Hall of Valor”, a Gannett Publications. I am currently employed to administer the “Hall of Valor,” an online database of military awards for *The Military Times*.

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2008, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

NONE

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature



Date:

February 9, 2012

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EXHIBIT A – “Snapshot” of recent Stolen Valor Cases”

On September 27, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 6837, naming a Post Office in Las Vegas for purported war hero Irving Joseph Schwartz. Following passage of that bill, reporters for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* became suspicious when Mr. Schwartz's claimed Silver Star Medal was not found in (unofficial) awards database maintained by myself, a private citizen...the only existing such database. Further investigation found that Mr. Schwartz's claims of heroism were false and that Nevada Representatives Jon Porter and Shelley Berkley had been duped. The November 9, 2008, *Review-Journal* story under the headline "Attention reveals lie about WWII record - Post Office legislation exposes veteran's fabrication" placed these members of Congress in the embarrassing situation of having to pull that bill from Senate consideration.

This was not the first time Members of Congress fell victim to false tales of heroism. In 2008 the entire Pennsylvania legislature was embarrassed when it passed legislation calling on the U.S. Congress to upgrade the Vietnam War Silver Star Medal of Terry Calandra to the Medal of Honor, actions being put forward by Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter. Suspicion was raised when Mr. Calandra's purported Distinguished Service Cross was not found in the same privately maintained database, and further investigation failed to find a legitimate record of the Silver Star as well. Senator Specter has withdrawn his request and requested further investigation by the F.B.I.

The lack of an official database of military awards has resulted in numerous cases of fraud including recent news reports showing:

- \$1.4 Million dollars in VA Fraud in Seattle by eight individuals, all of whom were getting VA Benefits based upon fraudulent documents. None of the eight had served in combat or earned the medals that were used to substantiate their claims, and two of them had never served in the military.
- In Texas an investigation using the same unofficial database found that 14 of 67 individuals driving with "Valor" license plates (indicating receipt of the military's two top awards) had been obtained with fraudulent documents.
- In Rhode Island, Bruce Cotta MAILED in a U.S. Government envelope, paperwork for and a Distinguished Service Cross (purchased on the Internet) purportedly being belatedly awarded him. Congressman Patrick Kennedy presented the award in a public ceremony, touting Cotta as “Rhode Island's most decorated Vietnam veteran.” The U.S. Congress subsequently passed legislation to name a Post Office for the man who was subsequently convicted of mail fraud for his clever scheme to make himself a DSC recipient.
- In Tennessee 14 people were indicted for using fraudulent documents to obtain \$1.9 million in VA Benefits.
- In Virginia a man driving with Silver Star license plates was found to have not received that award. Currently I have another individual in that same state who has obtained Prisoner of War (POW) license plates with a fraudulent DD-214, when in fact he never served in combat. In Colorado I have another case of a man driving a vehicle with Purple Heart license plates, also obtained with a forged DD-214...when in fact he was never wounded in action.

EXHIBIT A – “Snapshot” of recent Stolen Valor Cases”

- On Veterans Day 2008 the City of Fairhope, Alabama, named purported Distinguished Service Cross Recipient Bob Fass "Veteran of the Year" and selected him to lead the annual Veterans Day parade. Subsequent records checks found Fass to NOT be a recipient of that award, second only to the Medal of Honor, and found multiple other lies in his military biography.
- In Indiana Congressman Peter Visclosky helped Ken R. Coleman get his Silver Star Medal, giving credibility to his claim which turned out to be false upon investigation.
- In New York Representative Eliot Engell presented a Distinguished Service Cross to purported WWII Prisoner of War Edward G. Kopf in a public ceremony. No record of his heroism could be found in official records, nor is there any record of him being a prisoner of war.
- Believing him to be the recipient of the Silver Star and four Purple Hearts, former Congressman John Doolittle once introduced Glenn Marshall in a Congressional Hearing as a "**Hero of Khe Sahn.**" At the head of efforts to build a \$1 Billion casino, Marshall's fabrication unraveled when we learned he was still in high school when that famous battle occurred. When charges were filed against another phony hero, this time in his district, Congressman Doolittle issued a press release noting: *"A national searchable database would insure that only those members of our Armed Forces, past and present, who were either wounded in battle or served with distinction receive the special recognition and the rightful honor they deserve. Our decorated military veterans deserve to have integrity maintained in the awarding of military decorations."*
- In 2008 a *Chicago Tribune* investigation "**Found that the fabrication of heroic war records is far more extensive than you might think. Take the online edition of Who's Who, long the nation's premier biographical reference. Of the 333 people whose profiles state they earned one of the nation's most esteemed military medals, fully a third of those claims cannot be supported by military records.**"
- In 2009 Associated Press Reporter Allen Breed reported that the **"There are only 21 surviving POWs from the first Gulf War in 1991, the Department of Defense says. Yet the Department of Veterans Affairs is paying disability benefits to 286 service members it says were taken prisoner during that conflict, according to data released by VA to The Associated Press. A similar discrepancy arises with Vietnam POWs. Only 661 officially recognized prisoners returned from that war alive -- and about 100 of those have since died, according to Defense figures. But 966 purported Vietnam POWs are getting disability payments."** Breed further cited one specific case:" Edward Lee Daily of Clarksville, Tenn., collected more than \$412,000 in disability and medical benefits over 15 years before being exposed. He forged paperwork not only to show he was a POW, but that he'd been wounded by shrapnel and given a battlefield promotion to first lieutenant. Sentenced to 21 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution...the government has recouped just \$7,000.

EXHIBIT B – Letter from (former) F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

February 14, 2012

Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

North Building - Apt. #1406
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Mr. C. Douglas Sterner – Curator
Military Times Hall of Valor
6338 Wingate Street, #203
Alexandria, Virginia 22312

Doug,

Unfortunately, I will not be able to join you on February 29, 2012 and testify before the Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations regarding the extensive problem of individuals who fabricate their military service records and make false claims to military awards, as well as the necessity for a national database that, at the very least, lists the names of those service members who have been awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star with “V” device, Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, and the Medal of Honor.

In 1782, when General George Washington authorized the first military award, The Honorary Badge of Military Merit, that would later become the Purple Heart in 1932, he understood the need to protect that award from those who would falsely claim to have earned it so he included these words in the order, “Should any who are not entitled to the military honors have the insolence to assume the badges of them, they shall be severely punished.” He also noted in that same General Orders, the need to preserve an accurate listing of award recipients stating: ‘The name and regiment of the person with the action so certified are to be enrolled in the Book of Merit, which will be kept at the orderly office.

I believe that the Subcommittee would benefit from a brief summary of our experiences dealing with those individuals who did not heed the words of General Washington, and who have literally stolen the valor of our military service members by wearing and making false claims to their awards that were legitimately earned at a very high price.

When Congress first enacted Title 18, United States Code, Section 704, the law only prohibited the unauthorized wearing or manufacture of military awards and decorations in general. Specific awards were not mentioned and the penalties were a minimal fine a term of imprisonment of up to six months. Because of the low penalties, the law was rarely enforced.

EXHIBIT B – Letter from (former) F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

As you know, Colonel (then Platoon Sergeant) Mitchell Paige was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on Guadalcanal during World War II. After receiving the Medal of Honor, Colonel Paige started what would become a personal 40-year mission to confront and expose hundreds of individuals that falsely represented themselves as being actual Medal of Honor recipients.

In 1994, as a direct result of the efforts of Colonel Paige, Title 18, USC, 704 was amended to increase the penalties for wearing or selling a Medal of Honor to a maximum fine of \$100,000.00, and/or up to one year in prison. At that time however, the revised code did not address the fraudulent use of the other, often rare and highly esteemed so-called “lesser awards” presented to men and women in military service.

In April 1995, in my capacity as a FBI Special Agent, I attended a military memorabilia and gun show in Totowa, New Jersey and encountered an individual by the name of Robert Nemser, who was openly selling numerous military awards and medals, two of which were an Army Medal of Honor and an Air Force Medal of Honor.

After speaking with Mr. Nemser, I successfully purchased both of the Medals of Honor, and subsequently arrested him under the newly amended Title 18, USC, 704.

I did not realize the magnitude and scope of the problem until I had the opportunity to meet Colonel Paige and start attending public events with him and following-up on leads that he provided to me. At every Medal of Honor convention that I attended with Colonel Paige, I would encounter an individual that was either illegally wearing the Medal of Honor or falsely claiming to be a Medal of Honor recipient.

In 1995, I was made aware of the case of Illinois State Judge Michael O’Brien who was claiming that he was awarded the Medal of Honor, not once, but twice, and had two framed Medals of Honor in his chambers. Because he was only making verbal claims to having been awarded the Medal of Honor, he could not be charged under the existing Title 18, USC, 704. The Medals of Honor were confiscated from him and he resigned from the bench in disgrace.

In December 1996, as a result of my ongoing nationwide investigation, H.L.I. Lordship Industries, the only official government contract manufacturer of the Medal of Honor, and the largest manufacturer of all other military medals, pled guilty in United States District Court, Newark, New Jersey to the illegal manufacture and sale of 300 Medals of Honor during the previous three year period.

H.L.I. Lordship Industries was fined the maximum amount under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines and was debarred from receiving any government contracts for at least fifteen years.

Unfortunately, most of the 300 “illegally manufactured” Medals of Honor remained in circulation and the problem of individuals falsely claiming to be Medal of Honor recipients continued.

EXHIBIT B – Letter from (former) F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

Although my investigation initially focused on individuals falsely claiming to be Medal of Honor recipients, I expanded the investigation as I frequently received complaints from Veterans organizations and private citizens regarding individuals who were wearing, or falsely claiming receipt of other awards for valor such as the Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star with “V” device and the Purple Heart.

One of the difficulties I encountered during my investigation was the ability to quickly determine if an individual was in fact a legitimate recipient of the Medal of Honor, or any lesser award such as the Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star or Purple Heart.

Although I had access to military records through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), you, and your database, were always my first point of contact to determine if an individual was a legitimate recipient of a particular award for “valor.”

I have never found your database and information to be inaccurate, and on some occasions, your database was more accurate than the information contained in the records of the NPRC.

Although, I have investigated hundreds of individuals that have either worn or falsely claimed unearned military awards, I feel that it would be useful to briefly mention a few of the more significant cases that illustrate the ongoing problem and the need for a national database that is accurate and readily accessible to the general public, the media, and government agencies.

In October 2002, the Commandant of United States Marine Corps, General James Jones, honored me at an elaborate ceremony at Marine Barracks, 8th & I, Washington, DC where

I was designated as an “Honorary Marine” for my efforts in investigating individuals who wear, or falsely claim unearned military awards. Another individual, Navy Captain Roger Edwards was also being honored at the same ceremony for his 35-year career in the military where he was believed to have served heroically on many occasions.

When I was introduced to Captain Edwards, who was in uniform, I observed that he was wearing numerous awards and decorations for valor to include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with “V” device, Purple Heart (with three Gold Stars indicating receipt of a total of four Purple Hearts), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Navy/Marine Corps Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Navy /Marine Corps Commendation Medal (with three gold Stars), Army Commendation Medal (with “V” device and three Oak Leaf clusters indicating receipt of four awards), the Combat Action ribbon and numerous other significant awards.

Due to my experience investigating individuals who wear and falsely claim military awards, I became suspicious of Captain Edwards and subsequently reviewed his

EXHIBIT B – Letter from (former) F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

military personnel file, which confirmed that Captain Edwards never earned any of the valor awards that he was wearing, and many of the other awards listed in his biography.

Captain Edwards was subsequently court-martialed and pled guilty to wearing approximately twenty-five unearned awards, including all of the awards for valor.

In April 2004, in Long Valley, New Jersey, I attended the funeral Mass of Marine Lieutenant J.T. Wroblewski, who was killed in a firefight in Iraq, along with ten of his fellow Marines.

During the Mass, and the ceremony that followed, I observed an individual wearing the dress blue uniform of a Marine Captain. The individual sat with Lt. Wroblewski's parents in the front pew of the church and he stood at the head of the casket at the ceremony following the Mass.

As the individual was walking toward the reception, he passed in front of me and I noticed that he was wearing the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, Bronze Star with "V" device, three Purple Hearts and numerous other awards for valor and outstanding service.

Again, due to my experience investigating individuals who wear and falsely claim military awards, I became suspicious of the "Marine Captain" and interviewed him in the parking lot of the church. After identifying myself as a FBI Special Agent, and advising him of his rights, I asked him about the awards he was wearing and where he served. Based on his answers, I determined he was lying and then asked him if he ever served in the military to which he replied "No."

I then asked him, when was the last time he wore the uniform and he admitted that he wore it at the New Jersey Governor's Inaugural Ball and at many other public events.

I then examined the contents of his wallet, which contained membership cards to every military fraternal organization, and observed his vehicle, which displayed official New Jersey Marine Corps license plates. Upon returning to his house, I recovered other Marine Corps uniforms and equipment.

He was charged under Title 18, USC, 704 and subsequently entered the Federal Pre-Trial Diversion Program.

As you know, the instances of where individuals would falsely claim, verbally or in writing, to have earned the Medal of Honor, and other "valor" awards, continued to increase in frequency, which necessitated that Title 18, USC, 704 be amended to allow prosecution in those situations.

Due to you, and your wife Pam, "The Stolen Valor Act of 2005" was unanimously passed, and signed into law by then President, George W. Bush in December 2006.

EXHIBIT B – Letter from (former) F.B.I. Agent Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.

Unfortunately, in spite of the “Stolen Valor Act of 2005,” many individuals continue to wear and falsely represent that they were awarded the Medal of Honor, and other awards for valor in combat.

I firmly believe that a readily accessible national database, containing the names of service members that are recipients of our nation’s highest awards for valor in combat, as well as the continued and aggressive enforcement of “The Stolen Valor Act,” would not only honor the true recipients of those awards, but would maintain the integrity of all military awards and decorations.

In conclusion, I offer this quote from President Abraham Lincoln, “Any Nation That Does Not Honor Its Heroes Will Not Long Endure.”

The opinions expressed in this letter are my personal opinions based upon my 35 years experience as a FBI Special Agent and they may not necessarily be those of the FBI as an agency.

Semper Fidelis!

Thomas A. Cottone, Jr.,
FBI Special Agent (Retired) (1972-2007)
“Honorary Marine”

EXHIBIT C – George Washington G.O. Establishing U.S. Military Awards System.

THE HONORARY BADGE OF MILITARY MERIT.



General Washington understood the value of personal decoration for gallantry or meritorious conduct, and on August 7, 1782, issued the following order from his headquarters at Newburg.

“Honorary badges are to be conferred on the veteran non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the army who have served more than three years with bravery, fidelity and good conduct; for this purpose a *narrow piece of white cloth of an angular form* is to be fixed to the left arm on the uniform coats; non-commissioned officers and soldiers who have served with equal reputation more than six years, are to be distinguished by two pieces of cloth set in parallel to each other in a similar form. Should any who are not entitled to these honors have the insolence to assume the badges of them, they shall be severely punished. On the other hand, it is expected that gallant men who are thus designated will, on all occasions, be treated with particular confidence and consideration.

“The General, ever desirous to cherish a virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of military merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings, over his left breast, the figure of a *heart in purple cloth or silk*, edged with narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward.

“Before this favor can be conferred on any man, the particular fact or facts on which it is to be grounded must be set forth to the commander-in-chief, accompanied with certificates from the commanding officers of the regiment and brigade to which the candidate for reward belonged, or other incontestable proofs, and, upon granting it, the name and regiment of the person with the action so certified are to be enrolled in the Book of Merit, which will be kept at the orderly office.

“Men who have merited this last distinction to be suffered to pass all guards and sentinels which officers are permitted to do. *The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus opened to all.*

“This order is also to have retrospect to the earliest days of the war, and to be considered as a permanent one.

* * * * *

“Sunday, August 11, 1782.

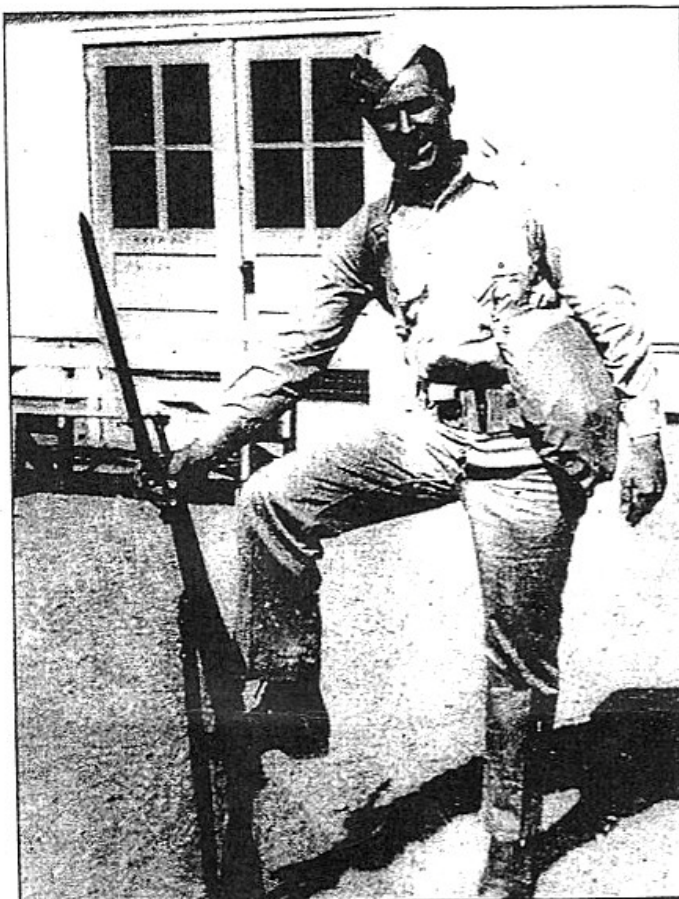
“In order to prevent misapplication of the honorary badges of distinction to be conferred on the non-commissioned officers and soldiers, in consequence of long and faithful service, through any mistake or misapprehension of the orders of the 7th inst., the General thinks proper to inform the Army that they are only attainable by an uninterrupted series of faithful and honorable services.

Local veteran receives long overdue

Staff Sergeant Lawrence W. Gunderson has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism, this country's second highest honor for valor, second only to the Medal of Honor. The award was presented posthumously in a ceremony held Monday, July 22, at Fort Snelling, nearly 58 years to the day after Gunderson was killed in World War II in action near St. Lo, France. The award was accepted by Gunderson's brother, John D. Gunderson of Stillwater, also a veteran.

Lawrence Gunderson was born in Grant Township on Oct. 31, 1920, the oldest of 11 children born to William and Clare Gunderson. He attended school in District 76, Stillwater, and was inducted into the Army on Aug. 7, 1942, and went to Camp Roberts, Calif., for basic training. On March 5, 1943, his unit sailed for Africa. In July 1943, he was deployed to the British Isles in preparation for D-Day. His company landed in France as part of the invasion of Normandy on June 9, 1944.

On July 25, 1944, his company, Co. F, 9th Infantry Division 60th Infantry Regiment, was pinned down by heavy enemy fire from machine guns and an anti-tank gun. According to documentation from Headquarters First United States Army dated 17 October 1944, in the general orders awarding Gunderson the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously, Gunderson, "with complete disregard for his personal safety," armed only with a rifle and several grenades, maneuvered within close range of the machine gun and, exposing himself to observed fire from the gun, "single-handedly wiped out the entire crew with grenades. Fearless and aggressive, he then attacked the crew of the anti-tank gun at point blank range. Though subject to direct small arms fire and receiving wounds in this encounter that proved fatal, his



Lawrence Gunderson was inducted into the Army on Aug. 7, 1942, at the age of 21. He was killed in action on June 9, 1944, following the invasion of Normandy.

July 25
attack was so fierce that all members of the German anti-tank gun crew were killed or wounded. As a result of his action, the company was able to continue its advance." The documentation concludes, "The extraordinary heroism and dauntless courage displayed by Staff Sergeant Gunderson in single-handedly destroying an enemy machine gun nest and an anti-tank gun crew set an inspiring example to this entire company and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces."

Lawrence Gunderson was buried in the United States Military Cemetery Ste. Mere Eglise #2, located 20 miles

southeast of Cherbourg, France. In 1948, his remains, at the request of his parents, were returned to Stillwater for burial in St. Michael's Cemetery, Bayport.

Gunderson's parents received the personal effects -- pictures, two prayer books, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Ribbon, Distinguished Unit Ribbon, wallet, watch, etc. -- their son had with him when he was killed. But they never received or knew that their son had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. His family might never have known had it not been for a man from Indiana, Monty McDaniel. McDaniel was watching the movie "Saving

honor for extraordinary heroism



Shown with Sen. Mark Dayton at the award presentation ceremony are Lawrence Gunderson's siblings, from left, Marge Trent, Sen. Dayton, John Gunderson, Mary Reeves, Rita McMenomy, Len Gunderson, Dave Gunderson and Mark Gunderson. Missing from photo are Bill and Joe Gunderson.

Private Ryan." which includes scenes of a cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach in France, the same cemetery where his uncle, Paul Edwin Alexander, is buried. Paul Alexander, a staff sergeant with the 60th Infantry, was killed in action on June 14, 1944.

McDaniel got to thinking about his uncle's grave and got on the internet. During his internet search, he found that the American Battle Monuments Commission has a web site listing all the soldiers missing in action or buried overseas. When he type in the name of his uncle, he was surprised to learn that Alexander had been honored posthumously with the Distinguished Service Cross. The Cross was awarded on Oct. 17, 1944, in the same order awarding the honor to Lawrence W. Gunderson, but no one ever told the family.

McDaniel wondered if there were other families, like his, who lost someone in World War II knew about the list.

McDaniel didn't just wonder, he contacted the Washington County Veterans Service Officer who in turn contacted the Gunderson family. The Gundersons began contacting government officials to get their brother his deserved recognition in October of

2001. Nine months later, Staff Sergeant Lawrence Gunderson was finally honored for his heroic actions in the service of his country during the ceremony at Fort Snelling. Senator Mark Dayton presented the long overdue Distinguished Service Cross.

EXHIBIT E– Jan Girando Letters

Getting It Right: Validating Awards and Preserving America's Most Elite Heroes

Re: Lt. (j.g.) Victor Laverne Miller, Navy Cross, WWII

There is nothing more heroic than serving our country, and nothing more important than honoring the heroes who serve. Especially when one of them is your father.

My dad, Curtiss Helldiver pilot Lt. (j.g.) Victor Laverne Miller, served aboard the USS Franklin in WWII and won the Navy Cross and two Air Medals. He died in 1985, leaving no military records or documentation.

Subsequently, I learned that because he won the Navy Cross, he could be memorialized in Arlington National Cemetery. I dug up what I could in my meager family records, then called Arlington. I was told all I needed to do to get the process rolling was provide documentation. I sent them what I had, but it was insufficient. Their request had sounded simple. It wasn't.

The Internet was slow going. I did find additional bits of information here and there that helped round out the picture, but there seemed to be no site that could verify his Navy Cross. Inquiries were met with military-speak: "You need to fill out a SF180 to get the DD214 -- try the Navy Yard." I knew this was meant to be helpful, but nothing in the entire sentence made sense to someone with no military background. Even worse, I knew some of the records from his era had been lost to fire in St. Louis. Daunting.

I continued fighting the informational labyrinth rather unsuccessfully for weeks until I came across Doug Sterner's website *Home of Heroes*. With little hope, I forwarded him a brief e-mail offering the facts I had unearthed about my father so far and asked if he could help verify the Navy Cross.

I sent the note at 3:19 p.m. on February 19, 2007. I expected no answer. At 4:56 p.m. I had one. It was that easy. I had been researching for months. This took Doug Sterner minutes.

In his extensive database, Mr. Sterner located a citation synopsis from the Navy Yard verifying that my father was awarded the Navy Cross. He sent a scan of the page to me and to my contact at ANC. He also phoned her personally that afternoon to verify the information. The next day he supported that information further by sending both of us a scan from "*Navy Cross, Officers and Enlisted Men of the United States Navy Awarded the Navy Cross Dec. 7, 1941 -- July 1, 1945*" published by the Navy Department's Office of Public Information in 1945.

Six days later, I was informed that Arlington National Cemetery had ordered my father's marker.

On July 11, 2007, a military funeral with full honors was held for Vic Miller's family at Arlington. Three generations of family members from six states attended. Because of

EXHIBIT E-- Jan Girando Letters

Doug Sterner, we now put a wreath in front of our dad's marker each Veterans Day and rest assured that those yet to come will be as proud of his service and heroism as we are.

Who knows how many American families are in similar circumstances, trying to locate military records that validate the nation's highest service honors bestowed on their loved ones. They may not have their loved one's service number. They may not have the unit in which their loved one served. But they have a name, and that's all it takes to quickly locate and accurately vet the information through Mr. Sterner's database.

Why put people through months of confusion and anxiety when all they're trying to do is validate and take pride in their loved one's heroism? Let's humanize this process. Let's have a place that can cut through the miles of red tape and give people the information they need. The importance of Mr. Sterner's work cannot be overstated. It is accurate and well-researched. And it works.

We can -- and should -- make it easier for Americans to recognize and honor their most elite heroes.

Janice Miller Girando
5001 West 120th Place
Overland Park, KS 66209

2/6/2012

JANICE MILLER GIRANDO

August 14, 2008

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman of the Armed Services Committee
Representative of Congressional District
Number 4 of Missouri
514-B North West Seven Highway
Blue Springs, Missouri 64014-2733

Re: H.R. 3769 (S2610), The Military Valor Roll of Honor Act of 2007

Dear Congressman Skelton:

Thank you so much for your kind reply to my letter of May 28, 2008, asking for your support on *The Military Valor Roll of Honor Act of 2007*, and for the amplification you provided regarding Congressman Duncan Hunter's National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (H.R. 5658).

As you suggested, it is of great interest to me, particularly the language from House Report 110-652 referencing the establishment of a searchable database listing individuals who have been awarded military medals for valor.

I'm certainly glad Congressman Hunter has brought this significant issue to the attention of Congress, however the language in the report appears to have a loophole when it states this will pertain to "... at least a Roll of Honor for the Medal of Honor."

I have spoken to a representative of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. As you know, it is a not-for-profit organization chartered by Congress. Based on that conversation, I believe the list of Medal of Honor recipients already exists!

It is for other award recipients like my father, who won the Navy Cross in WWII, that we need the expanded database searchable by the general public.

Here's an example of why. As I mentioned in my earlier letter, my father died in 1985. Due to family circumstances, most of his records pertaining to his military service and Navy Cross were lost. In an effort to have him memorialized in Arlington National Cemetery, I began searching the Internet for any information regarding my father's military career.

The following timeline illustrates the difficulty a private citizen faces when trying to locate information about his or her loved one's military honors.

EXHIBIT E- Jan Girando Letters

10/15/06 I began informally searching the Internet for information related to Dad's service career. Without a service number and with very little information about his service background, I looked up Ness City, Ness County, USS Benjamin Franklin, and various combinations of wording to locate any relevant information. I did uncover some data upon which to build.

12/13/06 I placed the first call to the Internment Services Branch of Arlington National Cemetery; they said they needed the DD214 to validate his eligibility. I did not know what this was and began researching it.

1/4/07 I sent a letter to the Internment Services Branch of ANC and attached two Change of Duty orders from 1945 that I had located, the Release from Active Duty orders from 1945, a copy of an Army and Navy Legion of Valor letter indicating approval if documents could be supplied, and all other information including what I believed to be his service number, enlistment date, etc.

1/16/07 I located a copy of Dad's Honorable Discharge form dated October 1, 1956, and sent them to ANC.

2/16/07 ANC said they needed a copy of the actual citation or the General Orders.

2/19/07 I came across the website HomeofHeroes.com and sent the Webmaster the information I had to this point.

2/20/07 Through his extensively researched records, Webmaster and Vietnam veteran Doug Sterner was able to verify my father's Navy Cross award. He phoned ANC to verify this personally.

2/21/07 ANC accepted Doug Sterner's verification. It was now 5 months after I began the search.

2/22/07 (est.) I completed the SF 180 and mailed it to St. Louis. I figured out what a SF180 was while researching the DD214.

4/10/07 My father's headstone was installed in ANC.

6/6/07 (est.) I received word from St. Louis that Dad didn't have a DD214 since he never saw active service.

7/11/07 The memorial service with full honors took place at ANC and was attended by 34 family members from 3 generations who gathered from 8 states.

9/15/07 I received the Navy Cross certificate along with a letter from the Navy documenting all of Dad's awards, including two Air Medals. It was now 48 weeks since I began my search.

It had taken nearly a year to locate this information.

EXHIBIT E- Jan Girando Letters

Clearly, we need to do better in honoring those whose sacrifices have resulted in our nation's highest awards for valor.

And we can.

The capability is there, the money for such a significant undertaking will be nominal, and certainly the Secretary of Defense will come to the same conclusion when he reports on or before March 31, 2009.

Because of my intimate experience with this issue, I would be happy to be called for any hearing that is held in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense's report. Please contact me if my testimony can be of value.

Again, thank you so much for your feedback and continued help.

Best regards,



Jan Girando
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913-409-0943
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San Diego Tribune

Scattered records tell long-lost stories of valor

By Steve Liewer

STAFF WRITER

November 17, 2008

ESCONDIDO – Kathy Herbert of Escondido knows that her father shed his blood defending his country and returned from World War II a hero.

What bothers her is how the U.S. government seems to have forgotten.

“I’d like to have acknowledgment from the government of what he did,” said Herbert, whose father died almost a quarter-century ago. “It’s disheartening, with all their technology, they can’t keep track of the men and women who have earned these awards.”

Herbert knew the bare facts from a yellowing newspaper clipping and a few sentences in a regimental history book she found among her father’s personal effects.



Staff Sgt. Robert J. Hutson, who grew up in Julian and was then 22, earned the Distinguished Service Cross – the Army’s second-highest award for combat valor. Hutson received it for actions in Italy on July 5, 1944.

Hutson and another soldier charged a pair of German machine-gun nests from which gunners were firing on wounded troops. They killed 11 German soldiers with their rifles and a grenade.

Herbert hit a brick wall in her sporadic efforts to obtain government records that would verify her father’s bravery in battle. The Department of Defense could barely document that he had ever served.

None of the military branches keeps centralized records of the men and women it rewards for valor. Although the nonprofit Congressional Medal of Honor Society tracks recipients of the highest combat award, the Medal of Honor, no one maintains a complete list of the other medals.

Pentagon officials frequently blame their lack of documentation for pre-1973 awards on a fire that year at a government warehouse in St. Louis. The blaze destroyed millions of personnel records.

EXHIBIT F– Helping Congressman Issa restore an Award History

Each year, hundreds of veterans or their families run into this barrier. Some of them write to their congressional representatives for help. Others give up in frustration.

The lucky ones find Doug Sterner, a Vietnam War veteran from Pueblo, Colo., who has spent thousands of hours retrieving stories of valor from forgotten government files.

Sterner discovered that the National Archives keeps all “general orders” the armed forces issue when they approve medals. Few people in the Pentagon or congressional offices – the places where most requests are directed – know about this back-channel way of obtaining award citations.

Using the Freedom of Information Act, Sterner has compiled a database with records for at least 120,000 of the estimated 750,000 valor awards the Pentagon has issued over the years.

Many of them are posted on his Web site, homeofheroes.com. Sterner has helped to verify the valor of hundreds of veterans and debunk the false claims of others.

Sterner was the driving force behind the Stolen Valor Act of 2006, which criminalizes false claims of valor. Now he is pushing for legislation that would require the Defense Department to create a searchable, public database for valor awards. Although the bill has been introduced in both houses of Congress, it appears unlikely to move out of subcommittees before the end of the current legislative session.

Last month, Herbert found Sterner's site and wrote to him. He confirmed that her father had earned the Distinguished Service Cross and told her how to get the citation. Working through the office of Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, Herbert received a copy of the general order documenting the award just before Veterans Day.

Herbert had known about her father's life after the war. He became a purchasing agent, scuba diver and private pilot. He taught school and later worked for General Atomics before starting R.J. Supply Co., an industrial-supply business in San Diego.

Hutson was friendly and outgoing, but he rarely told his war stories. They died with him when he succumbed to cancer in 1984.

Now Herbert is glad she can reassemble the missing parts of his life for her daughter, Sarah.

Sarah is a college student studying in Italy, not far from the scene of her grandfather's heroics, and is absorbing World War II history.

“We wanted to bring some little pieces of information together,” Herbert said. “It's kind of a legacy we can leave with her.”

EXHIBIT G-- Military Order of the Purple Heart Call for Database



MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART National Headquarters

5413-B Backlick Road, Springfield, VA 22151
703-642-5360 Fax: 703-642-1841

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For information contact:

Nat'l Public Relations Director Ray Funderburk

(662) 772-5811 Mobile (901) 326-5611

Email: mophpr@bellsouth.net

October 5, 2007

Springfield, VA--"It is a National shame that a private citizen in Colorado maintains better records of American heroes than their own Government," said Henry Cook, National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH). "Even the Department of Defense has to go to Doug Sterner in Colorado to verify some awards presented to combat heroes."

Sterner has created a data base with digitized names and citations for some 35,000 of the top three levels of awards (Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Army Distinguished Service medal and Navy Distinguished Service medal). All of this by himself and without outside funding.

He has further compiled the names and General Orders numbers for more than 80,000 of an estimated 120,000 recipients of the Silver Star.

Sterner's data base is widely used by all branches of the military as well as the FBI. If a person appears to be phony in their claim of holding bravery medals, the FBI goes to Sterner for possible verification of the individual's awards.

"Regardless of the cost to the Federal Government, we must begin to organize our records. How many people know that a half-million records of awards to members of the Navy and Marine Corps are maintained on index cards in boxes at the Navy yard in Washington, D.C.

That is pathetic," said Cook.. "With the state of the art electronics we have today, all records should be digitized and available for recall."

"Some families have spent years trying to find out what their loved one did to merit an award. Some parents never received medals for valor even though their loved one was awarded them posthumously. It is a disgusting situation," Cook sighed.

Cook went on to elaborate on the need for instant recall of awards. "We have documented cases where families were denied the right to bury their loved ones in Arlington National Cemetery because the records were lost. Parents have died not knowing their son was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and was a hero. These stories are all too plentiful and it is a National disgrace."

"We have an obligation to those who have gone into combat and been killed or wounded to at least recognize their sacrifices by maintaining their heroic deeds in a data base. The MOPH is in total support of the '*Military Valor Role of Honor Act of 2007*' being introduced by certain Members of Congress."

EXHIBIT H- Information on creating a Purple Heart Database

The Purple Heart, while low in precedence among U.S. military medals, is one of the most revered. Presented to members of our armed forces who are killed or wounded in action, it represents personal sacrifice. Award of the Purple Heart also, justifiably, moves the recipient to the "head of the line" in terms of Veterans assistance and benefits.

Because of this stature, the Purple Heart is one of the most frequently falsely claimed awards. There currently exists no complete database of Purple Heart recipients. Generating such a database is NOT a major problem. Below are details that could result in such a database

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PURPLE HEART AWARDS.

According to the Department of the Navy, casualties for these two services from 1930 to present are:

Branch	Killed in Action	Wounded	Total
U.S. Navy	39,579	50,599	90,178
U.S. Marine Corps	38,377	190,496	228,873

This puts enumeration of Navy/USMC deaths and combat woundings at **319,051**, a reasonably accurate number for awards of the Purple Heart. These cases (KIA/WIA) are tracked by "Casualty Cards" unique to the Department of the Navy. Such casualty cards are similar to the two Marine Corps Casualty Cards shown below:

Casualty card for Raymond Hoffman, recipient of both the Navy Cross and Silver Star in World War II and subsequently KIA:

U.S.M.C. CASUALTY REPORT		DATE	CARD No	CAS. NO.
NAME HOFFMAN, Raymond George		RANK Sgt	CLASS USMC	IDENT. NO. 286789
ORGANIZATION CoH, 3Bn, 26Mars, 5MarDiv, FMF		TYPE OF CASUALTY KIA - //	AREA PAC	DATE OF CASUALTY 2Mar45
DATE APPT/ENLIST 2Jul40	PLACE OF APPT/ENLIST Pittsburgh, Pa	DATE ACTIVE DUTY	PRIOR SER. MISC. STA. No	MARITAL S
DATE OF BIRTH 27May20	PLACE OF BIRTH Jeannette, Pa	LEGAL RESIDENCE Jeannette, Pa 36		AVCAD
NEXT OF KIN Mr. George L. Hoffman		RELATION Fath	ADDRESS OF KIN Jeannette, Pa.	
BENEFICIARY (Name and Address) DGB: Mr. George L. Hoffman, Father, Address above.				
PLACE OF CASUALTY Iwo, Volcano Is	NATURE OF WOUND 8-46-001 *** GSW, Head.		PRESENT STATUS	
REMARKS (Additional Information - Disposition of Remains) Buried Grave#1271, Row#14, Plot#5, 5thMarDiv Cemetery, Iwo, V.I., 10Mar45*				
DATE OF SOURCE OF REPORT 211955 NCH 51008 FM CG FMF PAC TO MARCORPS. 5thMARDIV REP#35. REC'D CAS DIV 24Mar45.				CHECKER RS
NAME HOFFMAN, Raymond George		RANK Sgt 40	CLASS USMC *	IDENT. NO. 286789

EXHIBIT H- Information on creating a Purple Heart Database

Reverse of Hoffman casualty card:

*Burial Bulletin#16 fr Hqs, 5thMarDiv(rein)dtd 10Mar45,
rec'd 21Mar45(1j)
Service Record Book received JUL 4 1945 (mc)
***Cert. of death rec'd fr zone 20Jul45. (fs)
% Father req remains ret to Sherman W. Mason, 201 N. First St.
Jeannette, Penn., for pvt burial in Sacred Heart Cem, Jean-
nette, Penn. Appl dtd 20Oct47. (bec)

Casualty Card for John Slagle, Recipient of the Navy Cross in WWII:

Marianas Islands.	
Co. B, 1st Bn, 25th Mar, 4th Mar Div, FMF, Marshall Islands.	
V 1-5537	R-32-111
Born: 14 Dec 1921	at East Brady, Pa.
Enl: 29 Jul 1940	at Pittsburgh, Pa. 8-11-005
Prior service: No.	
36 RESIDENCE: Kittanning, Pa.	
KIN: Mrs. Dorothy B. Slagle, wife, [REDACTED] Kittanning, Pa.	
1/3 HISTORY: * 31 Jan 44 Wounded in action at Marshall Is. *** RAD#100323 fr CG, 4th Mar Div to MARCORPS SECRET #33972 rec'd 2-14-44.	
* 16 Jun 44 Wounded in action at Saipan, Marianas Islands.	
1/3 Report #11 fr 4th Mar Div, FMF, to MARCORPS rec'd 7-12-44.	
*** Evac.	
SLAGLE, John Wilson	USMC 289704

Reverse of Slagle Casualty Card:

*Date taken fr Secret Ltr fr CO, Hq, 25th Mar, 4th Mar Div, FMF
to GMC dated 2-10-44 rec'd 5-2-44. (adr)
*Date taken fr Secret Ltr fr SMO, USS CALVERT to Chief
of Bum&S, dated 6-28-44, rec'd 8-5-44. (T)

***Evac. destination unknown.

Gunfire wound in heel. Evac. to USS SOLACE. Fr Secret
Ltr fr CO, Hq, 25th Mar, 4th Mar Div, FMF to GMC dated 2-10-44
rec'd 5-2-44. (adr)

***WOUND, gunshot back. Slightly wounded. Condition
favorable. Trans to USS SAMARITAN 6-24-44. Secret Ltr.
fr SMO, USS CALVERT to Chief of Bum&S, dated 6-28-44,
rec'd 8-5-44. (T)

Trans to USNH, PSNY, Bremerton, Wash 18 Aug 44. Daily
PersRep fr USNH, PSNY, Bremerton, Wash dtd 18 Aug 44
rec'd 2 Jan 45; also states psychoneurosis, war neurosis
(emc)

EXHIBIT H– Information on creating a Purple Heart Database

Each of these cards has the following information on the casualty (Purple Heart Recipient) which is critical to history, as well as to research:

- ❖ Full Name
- ❖ Service Number (Except in post-1968 cases where SSNs are used)
- ❖ Rank
- ❖ Unit
- ❖ Date of Birth
- ❖ Place of Birth
- ❖ Home of Record
- ❖ Nature of Casualty (KIA or WIA)
- ❖ Date of Casualty
- ❖ Status of Casualty (Wounded: EVC (Evacuated), RTD (Returned to Duty), etc.
- ❖ Place of Burial in cases of KIA

Based on experimentation I believe it is not unreasonable that a good data entry clerk can enter this information at a rate of 50 records per hour. That would translate to 6,381 man-hours to enter all Navy/Marine Corps casualties into a digital database. For the cost of employing FOUR data entry clerks for 42 weeks, such a complete database of Navy/USMC Purple Heart recipients would be achievable.

ARMY AND AIR FORCE PURPLE HEART AWARDS.

While Army/Air Force Purple Hearts become somewhat more challenging, generally recorded in General Orders or Special Orders, there do exist digital records that can be imported to get immediate results.

NARA maintains a database of nearly all World War II Killed in Action, as well as a Korean War Casualty Database containing records of 109,975 Army casualties. (This database includes casualties who were not killed in a combat action and some woundings not related to combat that would not qualify for Purple Heart awards that need to be parsed out.) The Coffelt Database also maintained by NARA includes all Vietnam War killed (all branches of service) as well as other casualty databases.

Importing these various databases, parsing out duplicates, and identifying non-combat casualties would still result in an extensive ready-made database of casualties from World War II to present at very little initial cost as a great starting point.

By combining existing databases into a single, comprehensive database, and then supplementing it with records from issued General Orders, a rather complete database of Purple Heart recipients is achievable. On the next page is a sample Army General Orders illustrating how these awards are published in official documents from World War II, such General Orders being generally on file at NARA in College Park, Maryland.

EXHIBIT H- Information on creating a Purple Heart Database

HEADQUARTERS 63D INFANTRY DIVISION APO 410 US ARMY					
GENERAL ORDERS)					19 March 1945
NUMBER 49)					
Award of the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart. I					
Award of the Purple Heart. II					
I. <u>AWARD OF THE FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE PURPLE HEART</u> - By direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart is awarded Paul Culbreth, 34679126, Staff Sergeant, Infantry, 253d Infantry Regiment, for wounds received on 1 March 1945, in Germany.					
II. <u>AWARD OF THE PURPLE HEART</u> - By direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, the Purple Heart is awarded to the following from units indicated:					
Rank	Name	ASN	Arm or Service	Location	Date of Wound
<u>253d Inf Regt</u>					
Pvt	Robert R Barber	32285933	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
T Sgt	Archie J Bayer	12199611	INF	Germany	8 Mar 45
Pvt	Stanley L Becker	36912538	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
Pvt	William B Clarke Jr	44036499	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
2d Lt	Edward A Huscher	0558785	INF	Germany	6 Mar 45
Pfc	Joe N Jimenez	38246574	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
Pvt	James F McNerney	36457365	INF	Germany	23 Feb 45
Sgt	John H McVeigh	19097725	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
Pfc	Salvatore T Panico	42071704	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
2d Lt	Arthur F Perrella	01050031	INF	Germany	8 Mar 45
Capt	Angello E Pilla	01290123	INF	Germany	27 Feb 45
Pvt	Frank Rappa	3041044	INF	Germany	5 Mar 45
Sgt	Stanley R Somerville	35174559	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
S Sgt	Edward L Warmoth	34966270	INF	Germany	7 Mar 45
Pfc	Dale A Wright	38593062	INF	Germany	27 Feb 45
<u>254th Inf Regt</u>					
1st Lt	Bernard L Rosen	01080320	INF	Germany	9 Mar 45
<u>255th Inf Regt</u>					
Pvt	Martin Kurtz	42182040	INF	France	7 Mar 45
T Sgt	Thomas E Quinn	35098944	INF	Germany	4 Mar 45
<u>63d Div Arty</u>					
Pfc	Jack Colston	38403801	FA	France	18 Feb 45
<u>861st FA Bn</u>					
Cpl	Vaughn H Mountz	33237518	FA	Germany	25 Feb 45
Pfc	James L Nelson	33645216	FA	Germany	6 Mar 45

As with the Navy's casualty cards, this is information that is quickly and easily transcribed into a digital database (although the information available is not as extensive).

Further, at present in the process of entering award citations (and recommended as part of a comprehensive digitizing of award citations), when text in a citation references wounds received in an action, I note that wounding in my database. This alone can recover indications of a Purple Heart worthy award, often in cases where an award was made under a "lost" special order or in which a lapse in record-keeping failed to even track that combat wounding.

EXHIBIT I- ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor

❖ EDITORIAL - Stopping fakers

ARMY TIMES

March 5, 2012 edition

The case of Xavier Alvarez, convicted for falsely claiming to be a Medal of Honor recipient, made it to the Supreme Court on Feb. 22, effectively putting the federal Stolen Valor Act on trial.

The case boils down to whether lies told by Alvarez, 53, about his service are constitutionally protected free speech. During his run for a seat on a California district water board in 2007, Alvarez falsely claimed he had served in the Marine Corps and had received the Medal of Honor.

Supporters of the law, which makes it a crime to falsely claim military medals, say Alvarez and his ilk are con artists who steal an unearned share of the prestige associated with military valor.

Critics of the law note that theft and fraud already are crimes. They say giving the government responsibility to decide which lies are criminal and which are harmless poses a danger to First Amendment rights to free speech.

Lying about military valor awards is abhorrent. But it's a waste of time and money dealing with such lowlifes through the legal system. What's needed is a comprehensive national database of military medal winners.

Pentagon officials have resisted calls for such a database, saying it's virtually impossible to create a comprehensive list.

Not so. Military Times' own Hall of Valor, compiled over years of research by its curator, Doug Sterner, shows such a list can be built if the interest and will are there. Our database now contains more than 98,000 citations for Silver Stars and higher, including 100 percent of the Medals of Honor, Navy Crosses and Air Force Crosses awarded.

Of course, such an effort would require the services to straighten out their disjointed processes for awarding and recording medals.

But if this problem is serious enough to require a federal law to combat it, surely such a database is an idea worth pursuing.

❖ Office of Secretary of Defense - Defense POW & Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)

I have found the "Hall of Valor" collection to be the most expedient and accurate public resource available to search for appropriate valor awards and honors. In general, submitting research requests through the Human Resource Command and G-1 Administrative branch are time consuming and require long drawn out processes of paperwork. I only wish you had all awards on file and not just the top tier. The Army HRC has a good system for current war awards data, but has lacked the system and structure for past conflicts which is where the majority of fraudulent cases stem from.

More importantly, my specific work with Mr. Sterner and the Hall of Valor organization to provide me timely and historically accurate Prisoner of War Records collection has been exceptional. The Defense POW and Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) is

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

EXHIBIT I– ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor

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

EXHIBIT I– ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor

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

EXHIBIT I– ENDORSEMENTS of Military Times Hall of Valor

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, 24th 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

EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

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 vett 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.

EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

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.

EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

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

EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

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.

EXHIBIT J – Response to 2009 DoD Report on Awards Database

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

¹In 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.

²These 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.

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

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 Schantag insured that I received the following in time to include it in this set of exhibits.

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

elected 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 vigils 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 or 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. Schroder 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 be allowed to be interview 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 101st 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 101st 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 75th 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, 75th 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.

SECTION	
27 REMARKS	
DUTY IN IMMINENT DANGER PAY AREA (GRENADA)	
831024-831029	
DUTY IN IMMINENT DANGER PAY AREA (SOMILIA)	
930510-930515	
COPY OF DOD FLD A-1501 DOWD SEL	
Feldman 940722 (710101)	
POW, CO G, 75TH INF (ABN RGR), VIETNAM, 710004-710121	

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 11th Airborne, the 101st Airborne and the 82nd Airborne. He also claimed to have been awarded the SS, the BSM and the CIB. Additionally, he deceived 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		3a. GRADE RATE OR RANK SGT,	3b. PAY GRADE E5	4. DATE OF BIRTH 16 May 68	
SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA	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 28 Feb 47	
	10a. SE. ACTIVE SERVICE NUMBER unk		10b. SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL BOARD NUMBER CITY COUNTY STATE AND ZIP CODE unk.		11. DATE INDUCTED 27 Sept 66	
TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE DATA	11a. TYPE OF TRANSFER OR DISCHARGE Trfd to USAR		11b. STATION OR INSTALLATION AT WHICH EFFECTED UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT, N			
	12. REASON AND AUTHORITY Expiration of Term of Service AR 635 SPN 201		13. EFFECTIVE DATE 26 SEP 68		14. TYPE OF CERTIFICATE ISSUED None	
SERVICE DATA	15. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND 50th Engr Co DCSPER		16. CHARACTER OF SERVICE HONORABLE		17. REENLISTMENT CODE RE-1	
	18. DISTRICT AREA COMMAND OR CORPS TO WHICH RESERVIST TRANSFERRED Trfd to USAR CON Cp (ANL TNG) USAAC ST Louis Mo.		19. TERMINAL DATE OF RESERVE/UMTS OBLIGATION 26 SEP 72			
VA AND EMP SERVICE DATA	20. PRIOR REGULAR ENLISTMENTS None		21. GRADE RATE OR RANK AT TIME OF EN-P INTO CURRENT ACTIVE SVC Pvt E1		22. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO CURRENT ACTIVE SERVICE (City and State) Ft. Hamilton N.Y.	
	23. 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.		24. STATEMENT OF SERVICE a. CREDITABLE FOR BASIC PAY PURPOSES 111 NET SERVICE THIS PERIOD 2 0 0 121 OTHER SERVICE 0 0 0 131 TOTAL (Line 111 plus Line 121) 2 0 0 b. TOTAL ACTIVE SERVICE 2 00 0 c. FOREIGN AND/OR SEA SERVICE VIETNAM 0 9 0			
REMARKS	25. SPECIALTY NUMBER & TITLE 05B20-Radio Operator		26. RELATED CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND O-O-T NUMBER 193.282-Radio Operator		27. 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.	
	28. EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMPLETED Highest Civilian Education: 13 Item 26B 16 days excess leave Blood Group: B		29. INSTRUCTOR: KOREAN KARATE TAE KWON DO Second Degree BLACK BELT			
AUTHENTICATION	30. NON PAY PERIODS TIME LOST (Preceding 12 mos) None		31. DAYS ACCRUED LEAVE PAID None		32. INSURANCE IN FORCE (MIL or USGLI) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
	33. VA CLAIM NUMBER C		34. SERVICEMEN'S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE		35. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE DISCONTINUED NA	
36. REMARKS Basic Training 8 Weeks						
37. 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			38. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED <i>Harry Bruce Amster</i>			
39. THIRD NAME GRADE AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICER E J Moran, CW2, USA, Personnel Officer			40. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO SIGN <i>E J Moran</i>			

DD FORM 214 JUL 66

PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS FORM ARE OBSOLETE EFFECTIVE 1 JAN 67

AR 600-10-265 714

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 *SV*

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 Haler 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

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-2876
website: www.house.gov/skelton

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2504
December 23, 2008

JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65109-2429
(573) 635-3499
219 NORTH ADAMS STREET
LEBANON, MO 65536-3000
(417) 532-7964
908 THOMPSON BLVD.
SEDALIA, MO 65301-4583
(660) 826-2675

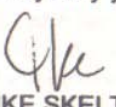
Mrs. Dixie M. Haler
RR1, Box 123
Rich Hill, MO 64779

Dear Mrs. Haler:

I would like to thank you for contacting my office to assist you in finding information about your husband's military records.

Upon receiving your last letter, my office contacted the U.S. Army about the program ADCARS your last letter speaks of. According to the Army, there is no such thing as a program named ADCARS or anything that could be associated with such a program. I was also informed that Mr. Sterner would have no such authority in this matter, and that he would not be able to assist your request. I am sorry if you have wasted any time researching this avenue.

Again thank you for contacting my office, if I may ever be of any help in any matter concerning the federal government, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON
Member of Congress

IS:KS

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.

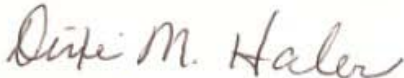
My late husband passed away on 17 Aug 2006. He has nothing to gain by locating his missing records, but he talked often about the incident and blamed it for many of his health problems. He made several attempts during his lifetime to apply for benefits, but was denied because there was nothing in his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

Sincerely,



Dixie M. Haler