

Vets demonstrate for extended education benefits

By MARK GRIFFITH
Collegian Staff Writer

Veterans from Penn State went to Washington, D.C., Monday to demonstrate their support for the extension of veterans' educational benefits and an increase in the Veterans Administration (VA) budget for fiscal 1977.

Twenty-nine members of the Penn State Veterans Organization (PSUVO) went to the capital in a PSUVO sponsored bus to participate in "Impact Day," the opening of a week of events organized by the National Association of Concerned Veterans (NACV).

The first event was a NACV sponsored rally on the steps of the Capitol, where freshman Congressman Toby Moffet (D-Conn.) called for a change in government spending priorities.

Moffet said some of the money sent to foreign countries, such as Argentina, should instead be allocated to the Veterans Administration. "That's your education money they're sending down there," he said.

He also said that national veterans' organizations, such as the Veterans Administration and the American Legion, do not support the increase of educational benefits for the Vietnam era veterans. Chairmen of veterans affairs committees in both Houses in turn cite the stands of these organizations as reason for not increasing veterans' educational benefits.

The major issue at the rally was the extension of the delimiting date — the date on which a veteran's educational benefits expire.

Currently, benefits expire 10 years after the vet was discharged. But according to vets like Jules Nido, who spoke at the rally, the Vietnam-era veteran was inducted into service and in return was to receive benefits after his discharge. However, said Nido, the discharged vet was not informed of his benefits, and there was no organizational structure to aid the vet in using his benefits.

Hank Testa, of the veterans affairs office at Baruch College of New York City, agreed with Nido. Testa said if vets like

himself were given 10 years to use their educational benefits, everything would be fine because now they can get help from various veterans' programs.

Nido said the vets want what they are entitled to, then cited John F. Kennedy's famous quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." "Well, Nido said, "we did it for our country; now our country can do for us."

The veterans received support during the rally from Vince Bruno of Michigan, who was in Washington representing Region 1—a of the United Auto Workers (UAW). Bruno had a petition bearing 15,000 signatures. The petition called for the indefinite extension of the delimiting date.

Bruno, pointing out that UAW has 1.5 million members nationwide and an experienced organizational structure, suggested that the UAW and NACV work together in helping veterans maintain their educational benefits.

Freshman Congressman Robert W. Edgar (D-Pa.), a member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, cited a fund shortage and said vets may have to accept compromises such as a limited loan program or a six-month extension of the delimiting date. "I hope I've been helpful," he said. "I haven't been optimistic, but I've been as honest as I can."

The PSUVO group left the rally late in the morning to meet with the Pennsylvania congressional delegation. However, the meeting did not materialize. Instead, Jimmy Van Zandt, secretary to the delegation, met with the vets, and showed them how to go about establishing appointments with congressmen.

Those who made appointments for later in the day were, for the most part, only able to talk to congressmen's administrative aides, said Dwayne Fagan, second vice president of PSUVO. However, talking to aides is almost as good as talking to congressmen themselves in terms of demonstrating the active concern of the vets, he said.

The PSUVO group had a chance to question Pennsylvania Senator Richard Schweiker in the afternoon. According to Schweiker, the House veterans affairs committee has the money to fund a full extension of the delimiting date, and their denying to do so was "subterfuge."

Schweiker suggested that the committee change its sense of

priorities so that educational benefits would rank higher and would therefore receive a larger share of the total budget.

Schweiker added that both he and Sen. Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), would endorse the extension of the delimiting date, but that they would have to work through the Democratic Senate leaders, since any congressional initiative would have to come from the majority party's members.

Schweiker's legislative assistant, Renee Bergmann, said that it's likely that no action will be taken before May 31, the delimiting date for those vets discharged in 1966, but that any action taken after May 31 would be retroactive to that date. She said a one-year extension of the delimiting date for those already in school may be the course taken by Congress in the next few months.

About 100 members of the PSUVO group also met with local Congressman Albert Johnson in the afternoon. Johnson repeated Schweiker's sentiment that any movement for increases in veterans' educational benefits would have to come from the majority side of Congress, adding that "nothing is too good for the Vietnam-era veteran."

A few of the Penn State vets talked with Congressman Edgar for a few minutes late in the afternoon. Edgar, in response to Schweiker's claim that the money for veterans' education would be available if priorities were changed, said if Schweiker would sit down and study the VA budget, "he would be shocked." Edgar added that it is impossible for any congressman to be fluent in all areas that are studied by Congress.

PSUVO President Frank Quinn said that he was disappointed by the turnout of veterans for Impact Day and by the apparent lack of coordination between NACV and PSUVO. He saw the nearness of final exams and the choice of going to Washington on Monday as major causes of there not being many Penn State vets represented.

Quinn added that Fagan and Bob Daugenbaugh, PSUVO's legislative affairs chairman, "did a hell of a job in organizing this."

Fagan said more congressmen are now aware of the vets' problems because of their efforts Monday. However, he added, he "wasn't so totally impressed with the organizational effort put out by NACV."



Photo by Mark Griffith

A new fight Penn State vets were among those who rallied on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C., last Monday for veterans' rights.

Make-up causes vision loss, infection

RESTON, Va. (UPI) — Contaminated eye make-up has caused at least four cases of lost vision and a variety of eye infections, an Atlanta physician said yesterday.

Dr. Lewis A. Wilson, director of resident training at Emory University School

of Medicine, said women should throw away mascara after three or four months to avoid danger of bacteria contamination.

Another doctor at a seminar on blindness research in Reston, near Washington, D.C., said

research indicates marijuana eyedrops may be useful in treating glaucoma, the nation's third leading cause of blindness.

In a paper presented at the seminar, Wilson said mascaras, which are applied to the lashes and lid margins

in close proximity to the cornea, can harbor and nourish bacteria.

He said research into susceptibility of eye cosmetics to contamination covered 500 mascaras, representing 20 popular brands.

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Truck hits guardrail, 4 die in explosion

HOUSTON (UPI) — A tanker truck loaded with ammonia crashed through a guardrail at the state's busiest highway interchange yesterday and plunged into another lane of traffic 20 feet below, exploding on impact. Four persons died and at least 95 persons were overcome by the toxic fumes.

The truck was reduced to a twisted heap of metal. Great clouds of ammonia fumes billowed over the area, turning spring foliage to a golden brown and chasing stunned motorists from their cars.

Hospital emergency rooms were jammed with persons suffering from burning eyes and lungs. A spokesman for the Greater Hospital Council said at least 95 persons were treated at 14 hospitals. Most were released but several were admitted to intensive care units.

"I saw a big whole tank fly up as high as the 40-story Humble Building," said cab driver Robert Galindo, 32, about 150 yards from the explosion. "The smell was horrible. I couldn't breathe. But I saw people on the inside of that cloud of smoke."

Another witness said several motorists were trapped in their cars.

"I stopped and my car was rocking from the shock waves," the witness said. "I started crossing over to the grassy area. People stopped to stare at the wreckage like they were in a trance. I got off the road and my heart was still in my throat. It was terrible."

The National Transportation Safety Board dispatched a team of investigators from Washington to Houston to investigate the accident. The owners of the truck, Transport Co. of Texas, said the tank normally carried 4,000 to 5,000 gallons of ammonia under great pressure.

The truck crashed through a guardrail on Loop 610 and fell onto U.S. 59. A Texas Highway Department spokesman said 345,000 cars daily use the interchange, the "heaviest traveled in the state."

"Cars and people were scattered everywhere," said Shelby Hodge, a reporter for the Houston Post whose offices are adjacent to the interchange. All that was left of the truck was four tires and a heap of metal. A school child standing with a group in front of the Post building reported seeing the truck collide with the rear of a car on the overpass before crashing through the guardrail.

Pre-nuptial deal nixed; woman loses \$500,000

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (UPI) — A jury yesterday voided a prenuptial contract in which an eccentric elderly oil millionaire had agreed to pay a ship cruise singer \$500,000 to marry him.

An attorney for Joan Manning McFarlin, who was awarded only one-diamond ring by jurors, said she was stunned.

Jurors deliberated for 10 hours before announcing their decision. They refused to give Mrs. McFarlin \$350,000 toward the pre-nuptial contract, a Jaguar automobile or the 130-carat diamond ring she had sought.

The jurors ruled, in effect, the woman never had any intention of keeping her part of the bargain to remain "a dutiful and loving wife for the rest of her life" with John McFarlin, 62.

Arguments continued in state district court on whether Mrs. McFarlin was entitled to any community property from McFarlin's \$9 million estate.

McFarlin, smiling broadly, conducted a news conference near the courtroom.

"It's going to be difficult to make my life pick up again because of my health," he said. "But I'm not giving up thoughts of anything."

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