

Veterans Careers Column

by Vincent Darcangelo

The U.S. Air Force has admitted it failed to report to the FBI database that former Airman Devin Patrick Kelley had demonstrated a pattern of violent and disturbing behavior. Domestic violence, sexual assault accusations, animal cruelty, escape from a mental health facility. He had choked his wife and put a gun to her head, fractured her baby's skull, he'd made threats to his commanders and judges. Because of the Air Force's failure to enter his name into an FBI database he was legally able to purchase the semi-automatic rifle he used to kill 26 people in the deadliest mass shooting in Texas history.

*-The VA fails to report 90 percent of poor-performing doctors to national and state databases intended to alert other hospitals of misconduct, according to findings released by the Government Accountability Office, (GAO). The GAO also found the VA was slow to investigate complaints against their medical providers at 5 VA hospitals. For 16 doctors, the VA waited multiple months or years to initiate reviews of complaints. During that time, nine doctors were disciplined by the VA for possible professional incompetence or misconduct, or they resigned to avoid disciplinary action.....But the VA didn't report any of them to state licensing boards. In one instance a doctor who resigned from the VA while under investigation was not reported, and later hired to another non-VA hospital, and later was disciplined for the same misconduct that prompted the VA investigation.

*-In my column last month I reported that younger Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are food insecure, they struggle to afford food. I have received additional information. Pennsylvania has the fourth largest veterans population in the country. Unfortunately 12 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 34 live below the poverty line, and nearly 60,000 veterans living in Pennsylvania need help buying food.

*-More than 300 recruits at the Marines' boot camp in the San Diego depot are suffering from a bacterial outbreak. The illness was identified in recruits at both the depot and at Edson Range at Camp Pendleton.

*-Another hazing incident involving a senior Marine Corps drill instructor will result in a court-martial. Amid three separate Marine investigations focused on 3rd Recruit Training Depot Battalion, Parris Island, officials found sufficient evidence to sideline 15 drill instructors on suspicion of hazing and maltreatment of recruits, and FIRE five officers and senior leaders for failures in leadership and supervision. You don't even want to know what the drill instructors were being charged with.

*-The Veterans of Foreign Wars is losing its battle for membership. They currently report that they have one million less members than they had 25 years ago. Less than 1 out of 4 World War II veterans is still alive today.

*-Remember Pearl Harbor! was the battle cry that spurred on many US fighting men during WWII. My dad was a World War II Navy veteran, and a couple months ago I had the opportunity to visit the place where our nation's worst disaster at sea took place. I was able to visit the USS Arizona Memorial where 1,177 men lost their lives, and 1.102 are still entombed as their final resting place. I can't tell you the feelings of emotion as I stood in the Shrine, before the high panel of names, honoring all 1,177 Sailors and Marines that lost their lives that horrible day. Pearl Harbor Day is this Thursday, December 7th.

XX

Vincent Darcangelo is a retired Disabled Veterans Employment Representative. The Veterans Unit of the Pa. CareerLink/Mercer County, can be reached at 724-347-9257.