

New legislation helps former POWs

Former prisoners of war held for a minimum of 30 days may now have certain disabilities accepted as service-incurred without furnishing medical proof, according to the Veterans Administration.

James C. Smith, director of the VA Regional Office in Lincoln, said the 30-day imprisonment period is a change from the original six months.

The new limit is contained in legislation recently enacted by Congress which, he said, also waives the two-year period after service during which certain psychological disorders must appear to be considered service connected.

These and other changes are contained in the "Prisoner of War Health Care Benefits Act of 1981," which was signed into law by President Reagan on Aug. 14.

The new law is designed to meet the needs of an estimated 100,000 former prisoners of war. A joint Veterans Administration-Department of Defense study last year found these veterans have higher incidences of physical and psychological disabilities because of confinement characterized by starvation diets, lack of medical care and inhumane treatment.

Smith said former prisoners of war also may have experienced difficulties in establishing claims for service-connected disabilities because of inadequate repatriation examinations.

He said the legislation also created an advisory committee on former prisoners of war which will make biennial reports to the VA administrator and Congress on problems about compensation, health care and rehabilitation which affect former POWs.

Honor reception slated for ex-state 4-H head

A former associate state 4-H leader with the UNL Cooperative Extension Service will be honored with a reception and dinner Sept. 6 during the Nebraska State Fair.

Elaine Skucius, extension specialist for youth, has been a member of the NU staff since 1952. She has been a 4-H professional at the county, district and state levels. Skucius has been on a medical disability leave this past year.

"Elaine's contributions to our program were both professional and personal to the well-being of our state's youth," said William Caldwell, assistant extension director of 4-H youth development at the NU Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Skucius received her bachelor of science degree in home economics from UNL in 1945, and her masters of science degree in education from George Washington University in 1952.

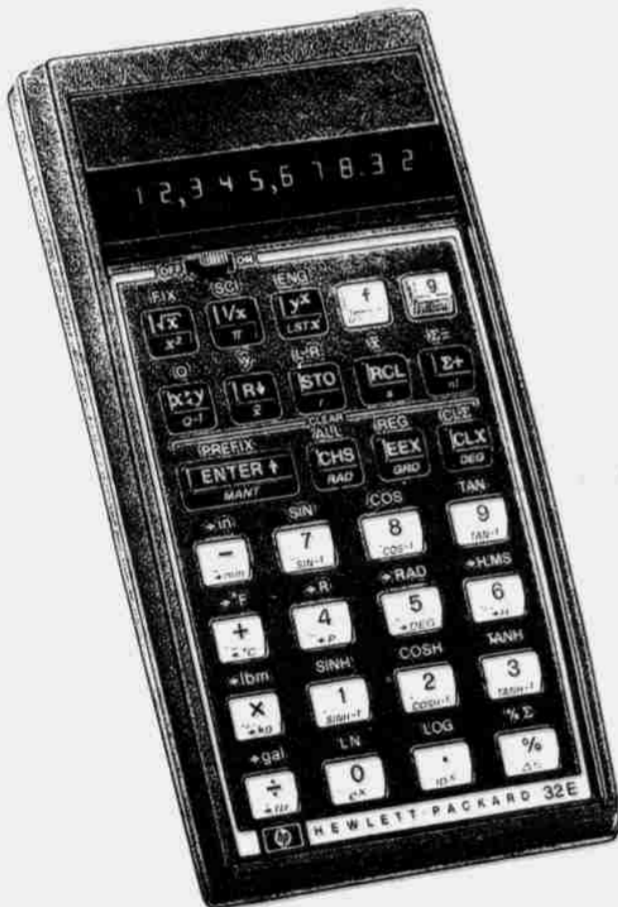


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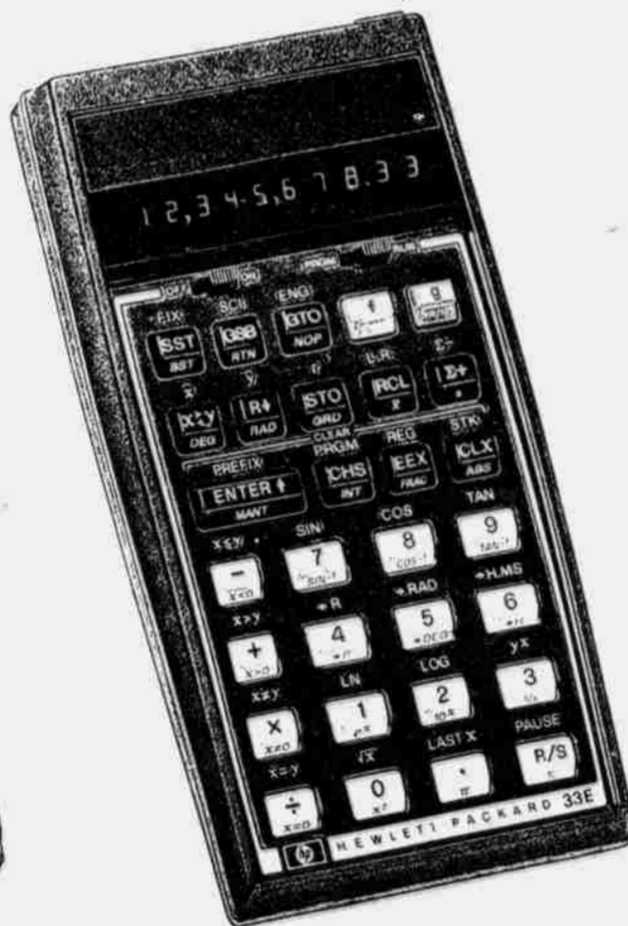
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