

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

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Veteran's News that needs to be Read

WINTER 2023



In Memorial—May They Rest In Peace



VVA #20

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VVA #268

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VVA #459

Thomas D. White

VVA #333

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Martin M. Sullivan

VVA #377

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THE OFFICERS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS
OF
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA—NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

WISHING

TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS
PEACE AND JOY DURING THESE HOLIDAY SEASONS OF
HANUKKAH,, CHRISTMAS, AND KWANZA.

MAY YOU BE GUIDED BY GOD'S WISDOM THROUGHOUT LIFE'S
CHALLENGES

DURING THE NEW YEAR 2024



VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2024
 January 5, 6, 7
 April 5, 6, 7
 June 14, 15, 16
 September 27, 28, 29

On-Line INTERCHANGE is the Bimonthly publication of the VVA-NYSC. Comments and contributions are encouraged and can be sent to: **VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM**
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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of this organization. Individuals with different viewpoints and opinions are invited to submit them to the VVA-NYSC by the **deadline**. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

Well, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere I go. Yes, tis the season. This edition will be past Thanksgiving, so I hope you all enjoyed yourselves. Thanksgiving is my most favored holiday. Over the years I have developed a great fondness for food. On Turkey Day I do eat my share and sometimes some of my wife's share or anyone who does not pay attention, theirs. A lot like Ted with his famous saying, "are you going to eat all that?" as he tries to put his fork into your food.

But now it is Christmas time and wish you all a very happy and wonderful CHRISTMAS!

Now to VVA business. Our September meeting went well with a very good attendance. We discussed convention and new amendments, resolutions. The Officers and our District Directors, will meet again in December in Saratoga to discuss upcoming year. Always looking for suggestions from all of you about what you want or need the State Council to do.

I attended the National BOD and Conference of State Council Presidents (CSCP) meeting in October. Not much to report. The Committee chairs and members were voted in. Some discussion on amendments. The only committee that I am involved with is the Veterans Benefits. We have our Service Officer Program with Dee Garcia at the helm and doing a tremendous work. Sometimes too much! She does receive some clerical help from Jennifer, and we would be lost without her help, but we are aging out and we still have several hundred claims that Dee works on with appeals and such. So, I need to be on this committee to stay on top of our program as we deal with the new Veterans Voices of America who will hopefully take over our claims eventually. It is slow progress, but the VA has certified this foundation and is moving forward.

I do not receive much news or information from the National Office, as I am no longer on the BOD but then again when I was, I never received much. That was one of my biggest complaints about lack of communication in that it does not trickle down to the State Council and Chapters. Also, I do not hear much from the Chapter leadership or membership. As I understand it there is still very little to no info coming from National. What I will tell you is what I have received because it will not take up much space here.

Since the convention, I received notice that the State Council has been suspended for failing to file our Finance Report. No prior word was sent on this, and we did file 6/7/2023, way before deadline and I do have proof of that. I still had to resend as National has the habit of these reports not being recorded and an excuse will be we never received. I'm saying that because with SC suspension, Chapter 126 was also

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New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation



We provide grants to Vietnam Veterans of America-New York State Council, (VVA-NYSC) a veteran's service organization that advocates for legislation at the State and Federal level of government to provide housing, education, health and mental care services to veterans and their families.

We provide funding for VVA-NYSC Veteran's Service Officer program that assist veterans with their military disability compensation and pension claims from the Veterans Administration.

We advocate for better Federal and State veteran's benefits and veteran preferences in government employment. VVA Chapters within New York State, assist widows, widowers, and orphans of our veterans. The organization organizes programs that enrich the lives of Vietnam veterans, as well as veterans from past, current wars, and their families.

We have an active Agent Orange committee that helps Vietnam veterans receive up to date information on prostate cancer, diabetes, and other chemically-related diseases.

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

- Listings of Veteran Job Fairs offered by county or veteran service organizations;
- Counseling for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
- Outreach programs that support returning veterans' reentry into civilian life;

For disabled veterans, this can be even more difficult than a tour of duty.

We do this all year long, but without your gift and the gifts of other supporters, nothing can be done to help those that are so deserving of it. However, we have much more to accomplish.

We, the New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, have a mission to keep advocating for and helping these veterans. We ask you to join us in our mission to provide assistance, guidance, training, and education to all veterans of past, present, and future military conflicts.

So let us continue to work together to ensure our national heroes receive everything that they are entitled to receive for their sacrifice and service to our nation.

President	Francisco Muñiz III	Vice President	Ned D. Foote	Treasurer	Grant T. Coates
Secretary	Nick Valenti	Directors	Sam Hall		Stan May

You can send your tax deductible donation, to the extent allowed by law, directly to the Foundation at NY Vietnam Veterans Foundation, 48 March Lane, Westbury, NY 11590-6302.

NOTE: The Foundation has lost its fundraising contract and is in need of funds to support our Service Officer's Program. Please send donation to the above address.

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suspended. Now this chapter filed election report back in April as they should. I have a copy and as I asked numerous times for National to send confirmation they never did. As I bitched about this along with SC, they found 126 election report and apologized. They also had Chapter 20 suspended but no indication as to why and again I have copies. They made another mistake and should not have suspended them and apologized. I have yet to hear an apology for State Council. The good news is our new Managing Director Phil Waite is making progress in trying to straighten out Membership Department so errors such as these no longer occur. I wish him luck as I have dealt with these issues with National for 40 years.

So that is one communication I have had. The next one is a Press Release on Korean Vets which I sent to all of you. The last info is my monthly request from National for donations. So, this brings you up to date on National and State news.

I will leave now as I'm starting to get worked up and this is not the season to do that. So Happy Holidays to those who do not like to say Merry Christmas. Until we meet again.

Secretary Report

Francisco Muñiz III

I would like to thank all those who sent in their District Report as well to those Chapter Leadership who sent in their report in a timely manner. Again another THANKS for the VVA Member Profiles sent in this month. We got **THREE** outstanding members and I am sure there are others out there.

This is the last issue for this 2023 year. We discussed the VVA-NYSC newspaper, INTERCHANGE, at our annual State Council meeting with the Officers and District Directors. Discussion was on whether we should continue to publish this newspaper. We don't know if anyone is reading the newspaper and what they think of the content or lack of content. We know on a monthly basis the negative reports but nothing else.

Question of the end of the Year is: Do you want these four issues to be published next year? As you can see there is only 4 to 6 individuals who sent in reports on their Chapters and maybe 2 or 3 Committee Reports.

I would like for the Chapter Leadership and members to review the Florida's edition, The Recon at www.vvafsc.org/ and look at their website as well the link for their State Council web site. They publish twice a year and have won National's E-Newspaper award the last 4 years straight. We have also won 4 awards for E-Newspaper from the National Office.

Do you like their format of viewing the newspaper or our format 4 times a year!

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Please send in your input to the VVA-NYSC president Ned Foote at nedvva@roadrunner.com

I know that it means a salary cut for me form **\$0.00 to \$0 dollars an issue!**

PS When sending Chapter Reports please place on the Subject line what District you belong to, such as E, W, C, S districts. That way it is easier for me to place your articles within your District Report.

PPS Feliz Navidad, Y Un Próspero Año Nuevo and for those who don't celebrate this day, I wish you a Happy Holiday, A Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Kwanzaa.

Eastern District Report

Sam Hall

VVA Chapters #8, #49, #79, #140, #333, #541, #869

VVA Chapter #49 Report

Dan Griffin—Executive Officer

Chapter 49 now has 383 members.

This year we sent five kitchen and bathroom kits to formally homeless veterans.

Next month we will participate in Wreaths across America and we will conduct our annual Candlelight Vigil.

VVA Chapter #333 Report

Roy Tschudy Past president 2020-2022 ldtrt16@aol.com

Congratulations on celebrating your 35th Anniversary servicing the veterans in your community.

For your information and in addition for your column THE INTERCHANGE, a few updates on Chapter 333. Over this Spring, Summer and now fall we have endeavored to perform fund raisers as we usually do to not only raise money but to further educate those whom we encounter interacting with the public at large.

Chapter members were present at two street fairs in the Spring, another one this Summer, two more in the Fall and as both November and December approach us, we will perform four more in total.

While doing so, chapter 333 has engaged veterans without any previous knowledge of what is rightfully theirs benefit wise. Assisting these veterans, directing them to a VSO, even having more than a few now become members themselves to our chapter has proven too gratifying.

Two chapter members at the invitation of a local H.S. recently spent the day with students in discussion

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of the Vietnam war and post era, answering questions from students and staff alike and presenting our questions in return was an enlightening experience for all.

In the next few months this education process will be expanded to another local H.S. as well as a middle school for a few weeks at a time .This particular program has been in effect for twenty years now with well over 100,000 students and faculty involved.

For the second consecutive year chapter 333 has provided funds for members grandchildren via our 529 program in accordance with IRS law, chapter members must meet a certain criteria set forth by the committee selected to oversee said program. This is a small part of our chapter legacy in doing so.

In addition, we provided numerous scholarships for students in select schools who have submitted written reports on veterans, Art work and other talents as well.

Our annual financial support for a local community college inclusive of veterans attending or family thereof helps them with the rising costs of tuition and books.

A special financial award in the name of a chapter member who passed, GENE SULLIVAN, is also awarded to a student who has demonstrated his/her devotion to veterans is provided yearly._

Chapter 333 recently had a member showcased on 60 Minutes with his account while in Vietnam finding a diary of an enemy soldier after a firefight, keeping in his possession these many years.

After becoming a member of our chapter and discussing this story with the membership, "Peter" set off to return the diary to the family of the fallen North Vietnamese soldier.

After a long and arduous journey, red tape and obstacles, Peter was able to do and had the entire episode documented from beginning to finish. This was wonderful account of a war veteran putting personal demons behind him.

In truth, VVA Chapter 333 remains a wonderful benevolent group of men dedicated to helping one another as well as those in need, always volunteering for needs at hand, a true representation of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Vietnam Veterans of America 21st National Convention Orlando, Florida August 8-12, 2023

Delegate Summary Report/Notes (Marcus V. Arroyo)

Opening Comments

VVA Chapter 333 Delegates, Ed Frank, Howard Goldin, Marcus Arroyo, and Frank Mahoney, represented VVA 333.

The Convention opened with the Invocation Prayer, followed by the Colors an American Flag March on and Posting. Next was a Bag Pipe Service (Amazing Grace), followed by the National Anthem - Stars Spangle Banner, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a Flag march on of all services, including Space Force. Very moving and engaging opening.

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Introduction of Officers and VVA National President Jack McManus made brief opening statement, then turned it over to VP Tom Burks, brief comments.

VVA Florida State Council President welcomed all and acknowledged AVVA Ladies for their support and hard work on issues and organizing the convention.

AVVA President Sharon Hobbs was introduced for opening remarks, this is AVVA's 12th National Convention. Hobbs spoke to AVVA's program accomplishments: 1) PTSD awareness 2) "Heartbreak to Hope" for widows, educating them on survivors benefits. 3) Friendship Program, for children linked to Agent Orange, with birth defects. Hobbs went on to say that AVVA is geared to continue the Legacy of VVA. She spoke of President Harry Truman's commitment to Veterans for their valor and heroism. Hobbs went on to say that "Hero's don't wear #s on the back of their jersey's, true hero's wear the American Flag on their sleeves." And she thanked Vietnam Veterans for all their work and accomplishments, closing with the remark that "America without its soldiers, is like God without his Angels. God Bless all Veterans."

Next speaker was Veterans Affairs, Under Secretary Josh Jacobs. Jacobs praised Vietnam Veterans (VV's) for their Advocacy and what VV's have accomplished for all Veterans. How our work has improved the life of Veterans and their families; how our creed "that never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another generation." He told the story of an Iraq Marine Veteran who returned home to be welcomed on the tarmac by over 100 Vietnam Veterans; and how Vietnam Veterans returned home and received disdain. How VV's have fought for Vet Clinic Centers, Vet Courts, Agent Orange Claims, the PACT Act, etc. It was VVA who cause the PACT Act (PA), equating the burn pits to Agent Orange. Since the PA passed last year, over 2 million claims have been filed, and the VA has awarded over \$1.6 billion for toxic exposure. A Vietnam ERA veteran (Wendell), stationed in Thailand in 1970, was denied his claims for years, however under the PA, Wendell was rated 100%. Jacob advised all Veterans to file an "Intent to File." Jabobs Spoke to Hypertension 0% disability ratings, and how it is important for future claims.

Jacobs opened for questions: 1) Massachusetts' Vet questioned Heath in PR; 2) NY Vet VSO questioned required travel for Vets to Contract Doc's for CNP's. 3) Texas Vet questioned VA salary payment for VA doctors which causes a doctor revolving door. Jacobs acknowledged the pay disparity, stating that it impacts Nurse's too. 4) another complaint was on wound scares.

Most open mike questions were critical of VA health services. After consulting with Goldin and Frank, I took to the Mike to praise health care, from Doctors, Nurses and technical staff at the New City Clinic, Montrose and Castle Point, unfortunately question time expired, however I was able to privately speak with Jacobs in the back of the auditorium, and convey our positive sentiments, on Rockland County health services.

KEY NOTE: Speaker Homer Hickam, Vietnam Veteran, was introduced and spoke to the legacy of Vietnam Veteran and he particularly praised the Coast Guard, who patrolled the east coast during WWII, to sink German submarines. Hickam is a writer and book author of over 20 books, "Torpedo Junction." Hickam was a Scuba Diver and found a German submarine off the coast of Cape Hatteras, which must have been sunk by the Coast Guard.

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Hickam wrote "Rocket Boy," later made into a movie, "October SKY", etc. He trained Astronauts at Huntsville Alabama. He spoke to his latest book, a memoir "DON'T BLOW YOURSELF UP." Hickam spoke about how at the dinner table, every night, his mother would ask him and his brother about what they did today and what they plan to do tomorrow? So when Hickam told his mother that he was planning to build a Rocket, she said to him "don't blow yourself up." He did build his rocket with cherry bombs, and blew up his mothers rose garden fence, the moral of the story is to not be afraid, Vietnam Veterans are not afraid, go after your goals, we were not afraid. All Veterans after 911 were not afraid, we trusted in God. Hickam closed with the fine memories of his buddies in Vietnam, and how we should tell our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren the story of your life, to include our Military Service; your children and grandchildren, will not know who they are because they don't know who you are. Keep your legacy going, always be proud of who you are, never be afraid of what you did, trust yourself, rely on yourself don't be afraid, as he closed his presentation. President McManus then made an award presentation to Hickam.

5 Minute break to clear the room of guest (non voters)

Convention General Meeting Resumption:

President, Jack McManus spoke to the dissolution of VVA National on February 29, 2028. The Board of Directors (BOD) will continue to study and assess options, it is a work in process, and 2028 is just a target date.

Chair, Richard Linebeck, spoke to Credentials Committee.

Chair, Joe Jennings, spoke to the Rules Committee.

National Secretary, Bill Meeks, spoke to Adoption of Agenda.

Chair, Leslie DeLong, spoke Constitution Committee Rules. DeLong, although not the Chair, also spoke to the Resolution Committee Rules. Painfully, Convention Committee Rules (Rules for "knuckle heads" and "dummies") for Amendments and Resolutions were explained.

Chair, Scott DeArman, Election Committee, admonished all Delegates, about spreading rumors and illegal campaign acts.

Pres. McManus, announced that Wes Guidry, was hired as the Director of Meetings.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Afternoon – 1pm – 5:30pm Committee Hearing on Resolutions, each VVA Chapter 333 delegate covered three (3) break out committee hearing.

The following three committee hearings and reports are for those attended and prepared by Marcus:

Veterans Benefits Committee, two proposals, A) and B) - 1pm-2:30pm:

PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION IN APPEALS (TAB #5 page 76) – **Issue:** Ensure that Veterans and their family members are accorded the full right to representation in all stages of an appeal for VA benefits. **Background:** in April 2019, **(Cont. pg. 10)**

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the Chairman of the Board of Veterans” Appeal (BVA) announced that BVA will be implementing 120 days time limits for VSO Written Briefs.....

Resolution: 1) Work with BVA, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress to abolish policy initiatives that inhibit an appellants’ right to representation in all stages of an appeal. 2) Work with BVA, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Congress to promote policies that further protect an appellants right to representation in all stages of an appeal and to ensure that representatives always have tools to effectively provide representation.

Committee Decision on this resolution: we stand with our conscience, and are in agreement with the acceptance of the proposed Resolution, as delineated in 1) and 2) above.

Not Adopted by Committee: VA will only provide a Grave Marker or Medallion for Reservist or National Guard under limited Circumstances: (Tab 6, page19 of 29) – **ISSUE:** VA will only provide a grave marker or medallion for Reservist or National Guard under limited circumstances. **BACKGROUND:** VA will provide a burial flag and funeral honors for any reservist or National Guard who served honorably even if their only service was Active Duty for Training...the issue for a grave marker or medallion was raised because of how the active serviceman was called up. Did the call up come from the President of the US, and if the activation was for 90 days or more, often times the service is curtailed at 89 days.

The proposed resolution, will not be reported out (NOT ACCEPTED), it needs to be rewritten. The propose resolution will be send back to the floor for a re-write.

These were the only two resolutions for the **Veterans BENEFITS Committee.**

Veterans Health Care Committee, 2:30pm-4pm: Resolution Offered for Retirement - HC-9 Hours of Operation of VA Medical Facilities (TAB 6 – Page 25 of 29) – **Reason for retirement:** HC-9-Hours of Operations at VA Medical Centers, is being retired by directive 123(3) D2019-10-18pdf the VA currently provides evening and weekend appointments throughout the 23 VISN beyond the 8am – 4:30 time for VA medical centers and community based outpatient clinics appointments.

Background History: Back in 1993, the VA implemented medical appointment hours outside of the normal 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday appointments, at approximately 23 facilities nationwide, because Vietnam Veterans were working and could not make their medical appointments. So in 1993 the VA implemented evening (after 5pm) and Saturday medical appointment hours.

However, now as circumstances have changed, since Vietnam Vets are all retired and can make normal business appointment hours, plus the technological facts that Tele-Health (Doc talks to you on the phone or computer); and Tele-Medicine (Doc conducts medical examinations remotely), as cost saving measures the VA wants to eliminate after normal hours appointments.

Additionally, the MISSION Act allows, with approval, for a Veterans to seek medical treatment from a private doctor, if the VA does not have a Specialist Doctor available or if the VA cannot schedule the Veteran for an appointment within a reasonable time period, usually 30 days. (Personally this worked for

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for me, when neither Montrose or Castle Point had a Urologist, I was allowed to see a private urologist, paid for by the VA.)

Overall, given the changed circumstances this Committee Group had no major objections, providing the following:

VVA encourages all VA hospitals and clinics to provide weekend and evening appointments for Veterans through use of flexible employee scheduling; and
VVA encourages hospitals and clinics to diligently evaluate and improve scheduling to decrease waiting time.

Two (2) Personal Comments from this delegate (me):

- to the best of my knowledge none of our medical service facilities, New City Clinic, Montrose, Castle Point, Kingsbridge, etc., have ever offered evening or Saturday medical appointments.
- Although this retirement proposal will not be impacting to Vietnam Vets, it could be impacting for Iraq and Afghanistan Vets. Remember the Vietnam Vets creed **“that never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another generation.”** Iraq and Afghanistan Vets need to start championing for their own causes

The Committee ACCEPTED the Resolution Retirement.

Veterans Minority Affairs Committee, 4pm-5:30pm:

Resolution Offered for Amendment – MA-16

Support for South Korean American War Veterans

BACKGROUND: The Republic of Korea (ROK) (South Korea) was the US’ largest troop supporting ally during the Vietnam War. From 1964 to 1973, ROK deployed over 330,000 troops to South Vietnam, ROK troops sustained over 10,962 casualties and over 5099 ROK KIAs.

ISSUE: There are currently approximately 4100 ROK Vets, living in the US, as now US citizens. These ROK Vets were exposed to Agent Orange as were US Troops, and they are currently dealing with same Agent Orange illnesses and PTSD, as are US Vietnam Vets. However these ROK Vet who live in the US, as US Citizens, do not have access to medical treatment at VA medical facilities’.

Through bilateral agreements, between the US and the ROK, it has been agreed that ROK Vets can be treated at VA Medical facilities, and the VA will be reimbursed for the cost of medical treatment by the ROK.

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Barbara St. Martin CHO, Esq (married to a ROK Vet) briefed on pending legislation:

- Several ROK Vets were present at the Convention, as guest.
- Bill #366 passed in the House of Representative, 5/22/2023.
- The Senate Bill S.2648 is expected to pass in September 2023.

The Minority Committee ACCEPTED the Resolution, in the same spirit **“that never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another generation.”**

Thursday, August 10, 2023;

Delegates Act on Constitution Amendments (Leslie Delong)

Reading and Action on Resolutions (Leslie Delong)

The following is an abbreviated synopsis of the outcomes of resolutions, base on Delegates’ PRO and CON discussions on the floor during the General Session. If any Chapter 333 member wants to read a copy of the full resolution proposal, just let one of the Chapter 333 Delegates know and the full resolution(s) will be made available.

AO-18 Tab#6 page 4 - Resolution Offered for Retirement - “Association of HYPERTENSION to Agent Orange. **Reason for Retirement:** “...hypertension is now a service connected condition with enactment ...of the PACT Act of 2022....” - **RETIRED**

GA-XX Tab#6 page 5 - Resolution Adopted by the Committee – **Issue:** Naming the West Palm Beach Veterans Admin Medical Center of former VVA National **President Thomas H Corey.** - **ADOPTED**

GA-17 Tab#6 page 7 - Resolution Offered for Amendment – Proper Use of Real Estate at West Los Angeles DVA Medical Center – **Issue:** “.....388 acres donated to the VA government, must be use only for Veterans.....” **ADOPTED**

MA-16 Tab#6 page14 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - Support for South Korean American War Veterans. - The Republic of Korea (ROK) (South Korea) was the US’ largest troop supporting (over 330,000) ally during the Vietnam War, from 1964 to 1973. - **ISSUE:** There are currently approximately 4100 ROK Vets, living in the US, as now US citizens. These ROK Vets were exposed to Agent Orange as were US Troops, and they are currently dealing with same Agent Orange illnesses and PTSD, as are US Vietnam Vets. However these ROK Vet who are now US Citizens, do not have access to medical treatment at VA medical facilities’.

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(Continue from pg. 12)

Through bilateral agreements, between the US and the ROK, it has been agreed that ROK Vets can be treated at VA Medical facilities, and the VA will be reimbursed for the cost of medical treatment by the ROK.

ADOPTED

VB-31 (TAB #5 page 76) - PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION IN APPEALS–Background:

in April 2019, the Chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeal (BVA) announced that BVA will be implementing 120 days time limits for VSO Written Briefs..... **Issue:** Ensure that Veterans and their family members are accorded the full right to representation in all stages of an appeal for VA benefits.

The Minority Committee Decision on this resolution: the Minority Committee is in agreement and supports, we stand with our conscience, and are in agreement with the acceptance of the proposed Resolution.

VB-31 (TAB #6 page 19) - PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION IN APPEALS; This proposal was NOT brought up during the General Session, there was no Delegates’ PRO and CON discussions on the floor during the General Session. It stands as is until the next Convention. **NOT REPORTED**

Not Adopted by Committee: VA will only provide a Grave Marker or Medallion for Reservist or National Guard under limited Circumstances: (Tab 6, page19 of 29) – **NOT reported OUT** - Needs to be re-

written.

*******WV-5**

Tab#6 page21 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - Women Veterans Research **ISSUE:** Specific issues pertinent to women veterans must be adequately researched.

ADOPTED w/o Objection

WV-8 Tab#6 page22 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - Military SEXUAL Trauma (MST) **ISSUE:** The Instances of sexual assault in the Military has been a long standing problem, that in the past few years, has increased..... **RESOLVED:** That VVA pursue legislation that reassigns complaints of military sexual trauma and harassment by service members and all perpetrators outside of their immediate chain of command.

ADOPTED w/o Objection

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HC-9 Tab#6 page25 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - Hours of Operation of VA Medical Facilities. **ISSUE:** Accessibility and timeliness of health care at Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) Facilities. Discussed above in Committee Report.

RETIRED w/o Objection

RC-XX – Resolution #4 - Tab#6 page26 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - **ISSUE:** The Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. (the Corporation) has a limited Lifespan that will end in dissolution. Action is to required by the National Board of Directors to identify and preserve the legacy and assets of the Corporation.

The original proposal called for dissolution by February 29, 2028, RC-XX proposal amendment calls a date change to February 28, 2033.

Adopted

RC-XX – Resolution #5 - Tab#6 page26 - Resolution Offered for Amendment - **ISSUE:** The Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. (the Corporation) has a limited Lifespan that will end in dissolution. Action is to required by the National Board of Directors to identify and preserve the legacy and assets of the Corporation.

The original proposal Resolution called for dissolution by February 29, 2028, RC-XX proposal amendment, Resolution #4, calls for a date change to February 28, 2033.

This proposal Resolution RC-XX #5 calls for dissolution date wording as follows: **“at a date to be determined”** thereby eliminating of any date specific (not February 29, 2028 or February 28, 2023).

The VVA dissolution issue continues to be a very contentious issue amongst National Officers, State Councils, Delegate Members, and local Chapter Members.

One profound floor **“CON”** statement made was,

“Who wants membership in an organization that is going out of business?”

“Who wants to volunteer or work for an organization that is going out of business?”

“Who wants donate or fund raise for an organization that is going out of business?”

“What political clouts can an organization have with Politicians if that organization has disclosed that they are going out of business?”

The VVA dissolution date will be addressed again at the next VVA National Convention in 2025.

Adopted

END of this Delegate REPORT; this report never be afraid, never be afraid, to be combined with other Chapter 333 Delegate (Frank, Goldin, Mahoney) Reports (Continue on pg. 15)

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2023 – VVA National Convention Orlando Florida – August 8 – 12, 2023
Summary of Convention – 21st VVA National Convention/Election
by Howard Goldin – Delegate - Past President
42 years as an organization

Convention Delegates: Howard Goldin, Edward Frank, Marcus Arroyo

National Headquarters of VVA, known as The Corporation shall be located in the D.C. offices within or without of New York State. VVA shall maintain in NYS a registered office and agent as required by the Not For Profit Corporation Law of New York State.

National Board:

Except as otherwise provided by law or in the Constitution Control & Management of the Corporation and its Funds shall be vested in the National Board.

Number of Directors shall be 24> 4 elected officers, 10 at large directors, 9 regional directors and the chair of the conference of the State Council.

National Convention: The corporation shall hold a national biennial convention in odd number years at such times, dates and places may be designated by the National Board.

Each chapter shall be entitled to 1 vote for its first 25 members. Chapters that have 50 members entitled to a second vote at the convention for each full block of 50 members thereafter, entitled to 1 extra vote.

Speaker – Joshua Jacobs, VA Under Secretary for Benefits>

Some People Dream The American Dream

Some People Live the American Dream

We are the American Dream

America without her soldiers is like God without his Angels

VA Under Secretary stated that they recognize us for advocacy of all Veterans. VVA wrote the playbook for the next generation of Veterans.

The Pact Act was passed because of the VVA filed 2 million claims this past year. 1.6 Billion dollars was paid out. The Pact Act is the biggest legislation passed (20,000 claims submitted yesterday 8-8-23. The VA is aware that they are giving a 0 percent rating hypertension but it opens the door for other medical issues.

Q&A Chair of Minority Affairs stated Puerto Rico clinics open 2 years ago and still waiting for movement.

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90 % C&Ps are done by vendors now. VA has increased hiring by 30% this past year and yes, they expect claims to be streamlined shortly.

Keynote Speaker – Homer Hickam Author of several books and most notably recognized for his movie Rocket Boy, October Sky talked about his childhood and how Sputnik and his teacher inspired him about space and science. Hickman came from a coal mining town in West Virginia (Coalwood) and after graduating went on to go to VTI, a military academy in Virginia. After graduating as a Second Lieutenant, he went on to Vietnam working in the 4th Infantry Division during the TET Offensive. After the military he went onto learning Scuba Diving and became a master instructor, which led him to work for NASA as an engineer.

Impressive speaker who showed we did not come back as drug addicts and crazed vets as portrayed in many movies.

Strategy for the future of VVA – Jack McManus, President – President McManus spoke of the strategy of the future of the VVA organization, state councils and chapters. Ultimate goal is dissolution over a period of years at the Bi Annual conventions. Motion 8 to dissolve is a regulatory requirement. Lawyers will lay out our requirements under the laws of New York. We are in fiscal year 2024. We are to adopt a Definite program which requires adoption at the August 2025 convention. VVA will give a plan to the state and local councils. VVA will shift programs to other organizations. Dissolution February 29, 2028, but not approved, just suggested Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the 1st day of March and end on the last day of February in each year.

Region 2 came to the Convention with 82 delegates and there was a total of 703 delegates nationwide as of 08/11/23

Delegate Assignment:

As your delegate, I was assigned to the POW Committee which was moderated by Grant Coat, who heads this Committee. Grant has been back to Vietnam as a National Board Chair, bringing back information of the possible whereabouts of remains and has established a clear rapport with his Vietnamese counterpart. It costs about one million dollars per dig.

We also had former POW (7 ½ yrs.) Bill Robinson with us, who informed us that there are only 404 Vietnam POWs still alive.

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§ To date, there are 1,578 still missing from our conflict Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, South China Sea. The DPAA League, POW/MIA is going for dissolution and will not be called the National Families Missing In Action. Captain Ralph Shipman was recovered this week (August 2023). There have been 305 items taken back to Vietnam from the Veteran's Initiative and we need to keep this going so they can recover their MIA's and we can continue to find ours.

§ My next assignment was the Membership Affairs Committee — Salon 3-4.

We currently have 90,261 members in the VVA. Age breakdown as follows:

§ Age 60 – 64 10 Vets § Age 65 – 69 3,177 Vets § Age 70 – 74 21,299 Vets

§ Age 75 – 79 46,837 Vets § Age 80 – 84 11,703 § Age 85 – 90 2,371 § Age 90 + 923

Agent Orange handout: The rainbow of herbicides of the Vietnam War ERA:

Agent Green 2,4,5T used 1962 365 drums, 20,056 gallons.

Agent Pink 2,4,5T used 1961-63 1,315 drums, 72,256 gallons.

Agent Purple 2,4-D, 2,4,5T used 1962 – 1965 12,475 drums, 685,474 gallons

Agent Blue Cacodylic Acid used 1066-1972 29,330 drums, 1,611,619 gallons.

Agent White 2,4D Picloram used 1966-1972 104,800 drums, 5,758,528 Gallons

Agent Orange 2,4D 2,4,5T used 1965 – 1960 208,330 drums, 11,447,272 gallons

A total of 356,615 drums, 19,595,205 gallons **DIXON** sprayed. And you wonder why we and our children suffer from side effects?

7:00 – 10:00 pm Regional Caucuses, All candidates came in and gave a briefing on who and what they are, along with why we should vote for them. with Q&A

§ Announcement of VVA awards Needless to say, we did not take home an award. The Florida chapter took home the Best Newsletter award once again.

§ Recognitions & Introductions VVA award , certificate of appreciation presented to the Panel who worked on the Dissolution committee.

§ Elections Committee – Scott DeArman, Chair

§ President, John (Jack) McManus § V/President, Tom Burke § Secretary: Bill Meeks

§ Treasurer: Wayne Reynolds § Region 2 Ted Wilkinson NY

§ New Board of Directors:

§ Dottie Barickman § Charlie Hobbs § Gumersindo Gomez § Charlie Montgomery

§ Sandie Wilson § Dan Stenvold § Dennis Howland § Richard Linebeck

§ Steve Williams § Ken Holybee § Ned Foote was knocked out by 9 votes as Fredrick Gasior NY ran against him

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OBSERVATION: in our last convention it was hammered that we will be a light's out organization. This convention is was decided that the date will be TBD as no one was comfortable with 2028 For me, there is nothing better than getting together at a National Convention with an exchange of ideas and the fraternization that comes with that. We need to continue to have a voice in our future and apparently our future is possibly going to be in the hands of the AVVA.

The AVVA is our spouses and children, who will eventually take over our organization. We are leaving a legacy of problems by gifting our children and grandchildren with the effects of Agent Orange and they need to be able to defend themselves with our out-reach.

This report is respectfully submitted by Past President & delegate Howard Goldin August 31, 2023

Summary of VVA National Convention Committee Report

PTSD & Substance Abuse

Francis Mahoney Chapter #333 Past President

No change - Congress & the VA is giving us what they want to give us not what we need. Keep the Vet Centers open (there are 87). thf: projects that they administer works. They work on group dynamics(all are veterans. many of the Vet Centers also assist family members. 90% of the Centers support substance abuse treatment in house.

ACCESS TO VA MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE -- the VA has a new streamlined procedure. It allows a counselor (in most cases no military background). to diagnose your mental health problem. This process is usually done after 15 minutes counseling session. The end result is the veteran is placed on more drugs. Just what the veteran needs more drugs.

The vet ctrs do a better job. They are staffed by veterans and the various groups are veterans, who have been there and know how to help other veterans who are in need of help. Getting away from drugs and alcohol and know ways to help with PTSD.

The VA is now funding a program for rural veterans. The name of this program is "Get together for vets." Its primary goal is veteran's suicide prevention. Which in itself is a good thing? It brings in local community organizations (churches, veterans groups, civic groups etc.) to help. They are necessary for this mission how long the VA will continue to fund this program is unknown. The VA has a history of pulling the plug. So after funding is pulled the local groups can continue this mission.

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Homeless Veterans Committee

Chaired by Sandy MILLER

"Make sure congress does not forget their veterans"

The VA needs to put more\$ in place for homeless veterans housing. This is area where local community organizations can assist.

The VA has stated that they have eradicated veterans homeless in some cities (ex: the city of Philadelphia)

The VA will treat the homeless veteran in house for 6 months. They are then release to where? many of the vets wind up back on street. This is an area where local community based groups can help with housing. Many states and local governments are running veteran shelters and housing.

The homeless veterans committee strongly feels the following standing resolutions are most important:

HVC -1 Homeless veterans as a 'special needs population" (amended 2021)

****Our Country's homeless problem is a national disgrace that refuses to fade.**

HCV-13 support for the missing in America project. (amended 2013)

**** Has a mission of locating, identifying and interring the unclaimed cremains of American veterans. to provide honor and respect to those who have served. securing a final resting place for those individuals.**

**** HVC-15 VA homeless grants & per diem funding (adopted 2021)**

there needs to be a fair share dollar spending. ex. the community based organizations spend \$100 but they receive \$50.

also the require documentation has created a significant burden on non-profits serving the homeless veterans.

Editor's Note: I was not able to place these two reports, in the last edition, due to lack of space.

There is one other reports from Chapter 333 that I was not able to format into MS Word or MS Publisher. Sorry about that. That's why I keep on requesting that you send your reports in MS Word format.

Agent Orange Committee Report

Bill Patton—Chair

Starting this year, I am on the National Agent Orange Committee. With that is my hope that I may bring to you more pertinent and up to date information.

Mak McCabe read a letter from the VA, pertaining to children with Spina Bifida, between the years 1996 to present day there were no claims filed. What makes this interesting is I worked for a company called Complete Home Care, Inc. Back in the days when I was still a Wheelchair Tech, myself and Doug Ambrusko, worked with Sunrise Medical, The University of Buffalo. And would you believe The Veterans Hospital Research Department in Buffalo New York. At the time this team develop one of the first Spina Bifida Wheelchairs to be approved by the VA in March of 2003. We went on to have three more approved into 2004 until they started to deny them. I know for a fact that Sunrise and Companies like Invacare, Inc. continued their own research and greatly improved on the original product. Mark was going to take that information back with him along with others that he had gathered.

There was also a discussion about Operation Ranch Hand. This was specific to the Airforce for studies of those who handled and sprayed Agent Orange and those who did not during a specific time frame of 1962 to 1971 when Agent Orange was still actively being sprayed. There are currently specimens , taken from airman being stored in 80 industrial special freezers at Wright-Patterson AFB. I will talk more about this next time.

Western District Report

Bill Paton

VVA Chapters #20, #77, #193, #268, #459, #865, #978

In October my wife and I attended our first National Meeting in Washington with the purpose of joining particular committees. It was interesting to say the least. What came up after the meetings was that our State Council had been suspended for not submitting our financial report. This report went to National on 6/7/23. Chapter 20 was again suspended. All their reports had been submitted. One of our members at Chapter 77 who last Veterans Day we had to prove he had not passed away, was once again on his way to the promised land!!

Ned Foote our Marine President made sure that everything was corrected, but my question is why wasn't this brought to his attention when he was there for the State Council Presidents meetings? He was present at the Board Meetings. I saw him sitting outside the room when the membership meeting was being held. No, he was informed by a letter when he returned home!

AS far as our District goes, all seems well. I spoke with Scott Dieter Chapter 193 in Warsaw. A little problem getting around with his VA installed Artificial Knee. Looking forward to seeing him in January.

Danny McGill and Chater 429 in Dunkirk are going over their Bylaws to ensure they are correct and up to date. I'm looking forward to 2024 as going to the Chapter Elections and swearing in the new Officers!

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VVA Chapter #77 Report

Tom Thompson - President

Fall is in progress, leaves are falling and winter is coming. Our outdoor fundraisers have ended.

We set a record number of vehicle entrants on September 3rd at the joint Classics on the Niagara car show. Chapter 77 joins each year with Legion Post 264 for this event. The September 9th golf outing run by Paul Pietrowski and assisted by Tom Thompson, Bill Paton and Dale Zdrojewski was also a great success.

The weather was cool for the city of Tonawanda trunk or treat on October 21st. Chapter 77 set up a VVA tent in front of the chapter decorated in a Halloween motif by Paul Pietrowski's daughters, while several members passed out over 3000 pieces of candy, as a good will gesture. On December 1st we will participate in the same type of event distributing candy canes and small toys to children.

Veterans Day began with a Ceremony on the Renaissance Bridge over the Erie Canal at 11:00 a.m. The Tonawanda's United Veterans Council sponsors the event each year in honor of all veterans and veterans organizations in the Tonawandas. Paul Shultz a longtime 77 chapter member was the honored speaker. Chapter 77 provided all coffee and pastries after the ceremony at our museum.

We had a good turnout 3:00 p.m. at our Vietnam Monument in Veterans Park, Tonawanda, New York. Tom Konopka our 2nd VP and emcee started the ceremony by introducing the trumpeter Mackenzie Sargis, our member Bob Sargis's granddaughter who played the National Anthem and later Taps. The honor guard consisting of Paul Pietrowski, Ed Bodine, Rick Topolski, Jim Burns and Jay Wopperer presented the wreath and colors. Bob Sargis read both the invocation and benediction. President Tom Thompson spoke about the changing views of veterans from our Revolution until present day.

On November 4th, 18 members passed out poppies and informational brochures at our last Agent Orange Awareness event led by Joe Pasek. Joe organizes four to five of these events each year at different locations. The public has been amazing with their donations to and appreciation for Vietnam Veterans.

The chapter food pantry has been doling thousands of dollars' worth of food and gift cards each month. Along with Pete DiVergilo's monthly card recording/dispensing to eligible veteran recipients, the 77 AV-VA packages and hands out the food next door. The food pantry is resupplied by chapter 77 fund raisers and donations of food and cash from VALOR of Buffalo run by Paul Rudnicki a 77 member, the Tonawanda Police and Fire Departments, VFW post 7275 from Lancaster New York, several churches, boy scout troops, and individuals all make fantastic donations to keep the food pantry afloat. In November we have given 58 turkeys to veteran families. We will also give turkeys, hams, cards and food for Christmas.

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Chapter 77 AVVA had a successful fund raiser in October. They use their funds to provide gifts for children of needy veterans acquired from our pantry records. They also give blankets and gift packages to veterans in the Willow Lodge long term care unit at the Buffalo VA. The 80 plus veterans at the NY'S Veteran Nursing Home in Batavia receive gift packages and the 25 veterans in the PTSD unit at Batavia VA all receive blankets and gift packages. Thank you Lori Paton, AVVA 77 President and all the AVVA members for your great work.

I want to thank all our chapter's members for their help with our events. We are having our Christmas party on December 14th. Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

VVA CHAPTER #77 MEMBER PROFILE

This column will highlight Joseph Pasek, one of our Board of Directors. Joe enlisted in the Army in 1967 at the old age of 19. Basic at Ft. Dix, then on to medic training at Ft. Sam Houston. In April of 68 just as Tet was winding down, he was deployed to Vietnam as a Combat Medic with the 101st Airborne Division.

Awarded the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Medic Badge. Also, the Vietnam Service and Campaign Service Medals. Stateside, Joe finished his 2 years at Ireland Army Hospital, Ft. Knox. Working in the Emergency Room. Witnessing the atrocity of war, working in an emergency room for 2 years, Joe applied his talent at the Buffalo VA ER, BUT they decided there was no opportunity there for him. Subsequently this led to a 40-year career with the U.S. Postal Service. Buffalos VA's loss!

Being affected by Agent Orange, one of the fund raisers that Joe helps coordinates each year with several members, is Poppy Sales at various locations. In the beginning the funds raised might have seemed small to some, they now continue with Joes team to grow each year!

Joe was the Chairman of the Committee that brought "The Wall That Heals" to the City of Tonawanda. While not being a fund raiser, it was one of the most successful events put on by the Chapter. There were crowds there on a daily basis.

Joe and his wife Chris have lived in the City of Tonawanda for 46 years. They have been married for 52 years. Some would say that Chris deserves a medal for being married to a Vietnam Vet for that length of time. They have two Daughters, 2 Grandsons, and 3 Great grandsons. Thankfully, Joe made it home from the Nam!

Tom Harris

Hey guys, think about you often and I'm grateful for all the work you do for veterans (VVA and all future vets). I really need to start next quarters report tomorrow.

Luckily my delete button works 'cause I was going off on Congress and how they can get paid but not active duty warriors.

I've been in contact with my friends from my Coronado days (two sailors and one was the director of my campus' VA program.) There's no common thread between them except health issues affecting them and their family. Makes me wish there was more I could do from here.

My local GP wants me to get vaccinated for everything -I thought about bringing my boot camp shot card, then realized she was a USN doctor.

Anyhow, you guys are my heroes. Thanks. See attachment. (I'll do better next time)

PTSD/Health Committee Joint Report

Tom Harris-Chairman

Yesterday something caught my eye. I noticed how the maple tree in my yard was already turning to its Fall colors. For whatever reason it made me think of my own life and that as we age we go through changes....anyhow it seemed important at the time!

Now that we're all probably in our 70's and 80's I wonder how aging effects PTSD. We've had this discussion before, several years ago I think. In my own life I can look back and see how I dealt with everyday stressors. Usually head-on, full steam ahead. Prepare for the worse and hope for the best. Coping skills were on auto-pilot.

Now, I find my old fall back problem solving skills are just not as sharp. Instead of coming up with solutions to problems, I worry about stuff, ya know, stick my head in the sand and hope things will just go away. As you all know worrying (mental) leads to physical problems. When I was working 40 hrs a week helping folks solve their life changing issues I rarely spent time thinking about my own stuff. Now, I spend way too much time 'thinking'. I feel this is true for PTSD and other service related issues. Some vets had been able to stifle PTSD symptoms with work, family support, medications, exercise, friendships, VA support groups. Now those old faithful tools aren't working as well. I think we agree PTSD just doesn't go away. I think it just changes how it affects us. Given that, we need to keep changing our tools to keep symptoms in check (depression, anxiety, loneliness, hopelessness).

I've been out of the loop regarding any new treatment modalities but I think the first generation of treatments are still valid, such as 'talk therapy' and medications. Staying close to your VVA family is still important. I think, for those in need, the Vet Center concept is still an extremely valuable tool. If the VA won't support the Vets Center approach then VVA can help, right?

And now we seeing on every news channel Congress again talking about shutting down the Federal government. I sincerely hope the stress this causes in our veteran families doesn't make matters worse for those suffering mental, physical or economic conditions. Suicide rates for older vets (Vietnam era) is still way too high compared to other cohorts.

Please, take care of yourself, your families and your buddies. Stay in touch with folks you care about.
Thanks

Southern District Report**John Rowan****VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421****VVA Chapter #11 Report**

Clarence Simpson – Delegate

These are the newsletter information from VVA 11 as requested.

- PFC Garfield M. Langhorn Scholarship Fund has been started by our chapter starting January 2024.
- VVA 11 has co-sponsored the 19th Annual PFC Garfield M. Langhorn Pulaski Street Elementary School, 6th Grade Essay Contest. Over 300 essays submitted with 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place winners.
- VVA 11 participated in the East Islip St. Patrick's Day Parade 2023.
- VVA 11 co-sponsored “ The Wall That Heals” at Tanner Park in Copiague, NY



-Suffolk County Court with VVA 11 Veterans Justice Outreach Team has graduated 14 veterans in it's 14 years of active mentorship for our veterans to successfully re-enter into society.

-The Chapter also participated in handing out 800 turkeys and fixing to veterans and their families for Thanksgiving Day dinners. This was in alliance with Heroes for Heroes and the Northport VAMC.

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-VVA 11 participated in the Veterans Day Ceremonies 2023 at Calverton National Cemetery and Long Island National Cemetery.

- VVA 11 has an Annual Veterans Mass on Veterans Day at St. Patrick's Cathedral. This event is openly welcome to all veterans regardless of personal faith or religion.



VVA Chapter #32 Report 2023 Event

Linda Robins

Note: Chapter 32 is now located at 61-57 Maspeth Ave, Flushing, NY 11378.

During 2023 Chapter 32 has participated in the following events:

Jan 24th – Recognition Luncheon – for all the members and politicians that helped the Chapter in 2022. We awarded the National VVA Eagle scout citation award to "Jonahan Aponte" and a \$500 check for his accomplishments.

April 4th – Len Williams, President, testified before the NYS Veterans Service Committee at City Hall.

May 12th - Chapter 32 sponsored a pinning ceremony given by the " Daughters of the American revolution", celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of combat operations in Vietnam.

May 22 – Maspeth Bank Candlelight memorial service hosted by Maspeth Federal Bank

May 24th – Memorial Day Observance at Queens Borough Hall

Len Williams, President spoke on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans on May 24th at City Hall at a meeting

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hosted by the Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman, Bob Holden and again on June 6th via Zoom with the Division of Veterans Services

May 25th – Memorial Day Observance hosted by Queens DA Melinda Katz

May 28th – Maspeth Memorial Day Parade – Paul Feddern was this year's Grand Marshall

June 9 – 12th – Washington, DC trip sponsored by Chapter 32

June 14th – Flag Day – Greater Ridgewood Youth Council held a Flag Day ceremony with John Rowan, past VVA Present as the speaker.

June 19th –The chapter took part in the Fillmore's Tavern annual Vietnam Veteran Tom Baker Memorial Golf outing and fund raiser at Kissena Park.

On June 28th, members attended two seminars at Maspeth Town Hall hosted by Congresswoman Grace Meng.

July 11th - chapter 32 participated in a preliminary meeting in Councilman Robert Holden's [Chairman NY city Veteran's Committee] office with DVS Cassandra Alveraz, DVS Chief of Staff, Ryan Hegg, DVS event organizer and others on the upcoming, "The Wall that Heals" event coming to Flushing Meadows Park in Queens, NY from Sept 28th to Oct 1st 2023. Chapter 32 was asked and accepted to be the main hosts of the event.

Aug 8 - Chapter President Len Williams and Treasurer Al Ranni attended the VVA National convention Orlando Fla.

9/9 Maspeth Federal 911 ceremony/Joe Addabbo BBQ

9/15 POW/MIA ceremony

September 23 – Juniper Park Anniversary Dinner – Trinity Lutheran Church.

The Wall That Heals

Sept 26th – Chapter 32 was at Flushing Meadow Park to accept The Wall when it arrived.

Sept 27th – Host Meetings – for The Wall that Heals.

Sept 28 – 5 PM Opening Ceremony

Sept 28 – Oct 1 – The Wall at Flushing Meadow

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VVA Chapter # 82 Report

Rich Guevara

On September 29, 2023, ten members of Chapter 82 went on the Long Island Honor Flight to Washington, DC. The members who attended this event visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Marine Corps War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

On September 30, 2023, we provided the color guard to the Women's Military Service Medal Ceremony at St. Joseph University which was sponsored by the Air Force Association. We also thanked these veterans for their service.

On October 28, 2023, we teamed up with the Air Force Association Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal Ceremony by providing the color guard and welcoming our Vietnam veteran's home.

On November 1, 2023, our color guard participated in the Holiday Trinity High School annual flag laying ceremony.

On November 3, 2023, four members of our chapter participated with students at the Great Neck elementary school discussing our military experiences.

On November 5, 2023, we provided the color guard for the United Veterans Organization of Nassau County Veterans Day Service at Eisenhower Park. One of our members was the master of ceremony.



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On November 5, 2023, we again provided the color guard at the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Long Island National Cemetery. Again, one of our members was the master of ceremony.

On November 8, 2023, we spoke to the students at the Uniondale Elementary school on our experiences in the military with an emphasis on Vietnam.

On November 11, 2023, several of our members marched in the Veterans Day Parade in New York City.

On November 14, 2023, we again went to one of our local schools. This time it was the Social Studies students at Hicksville High School. Again, we spoke about our experiences in the military.

On November 17, 2023, Chapter 82 held our 40th Anniversary celebration and awards ceremony at a local caterer. All members of the chapter were invited to attend this event.

On November 20, 2023, members of our chapter visited the Hicksville elementary school and again met with the students at the school regarding our experiences in the military.

On November 28, 2023, our color guard will open the Town of Oyster Bay Holiday Concert at the Tilles Center.

On December 7, 2023, our color guard and members of our chapter will participate in the Annual Pearl Harbor dropping of the rose's ceremony at the American Airpower Museum. These roses will be loaded on a plane and dropped off the waters of the Statute of Liberty in remembrance of Pearl Harbor.



Thomas P. Coughlin Memorial Chapter 72 Report

Danny Friedman – President

VVA Chapter 72, Brooklyn had a float in the 154th Kings County Memorial Day Parade, the longest continuous running Memorial Day Parade in our Country. We placed wreaths at our own memorial at the Brooklyn VAMC, and at a memorial in Cannonball Park, just outside Fort Hamilton.

In June we participated in the 5th Avenue Street Festival (that's 5th Avenue in Brooklyn) where we had an information and fund raising table, where we interact and educate our community on the needs of our hospitalized and homeless veterans, as well as support for our active duty brothers and sisters.

In July, although we suspend meetings for the summer, we had a 4th of July pizza party for the veterans in 15 West, a locked rehab ward of the Brooklyn VAMC. This has been our Chapter's adopted ward almost since our inception, as we have all had issues over the years and can relate what these veterans are going through.

In August we volunteered at Heroes on the Hudson, an annual event providing water activities for disabled veterans. These are mostly our next generation of warriors, so we are practicing what we preach in terms of VVA's motto.

In September we participated in 9/11 memorials at Fort Hamilton and at Maimonides Field, home of the Brooklyn Cyclones and the FDNY 9/11 Memorial. Also in September, we held a fund raiser at the Greenwood Park Beer Garden, and we helped with the setup of "The Wall That Heals" in Queens, and participated in the opening ceremony. Finally, we had an information and fund raising table at Brooklyn's 3rd Avenue Street Festival.

In October we purchased \$1500.00 in new clothing for homeless and needy vets at the Brooklyn VAMC. In November we presented a wreath at the Brooklyn VAMC's program for Veterans Day. We also had a float in NYC's Veterans Day Parade, the largest in our Country, and televised nationally. Finally, we had a Veterans Day Pizza Party for the veterans in 15 West.

VAVS/CDCE Report

Danny Friedman—Chair

No new reports from any other VAVS Reps. As noted previously, VAVS has been renamed and rebranded as CDCE which is Center for Development and Community Engagement. NY Harbor's chief has still not been replaced.

We have requested and received an appointment to meet one on one with NY Harbor Healthcare System's new Director, Tim Graham. There are many unresolved issues that we and other VSO's are concerned with. Our VAVS/CDCE Reps continue to meet quarterly via video and telephone.

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VVA Chapter #72 Member Profile

Paul Friedman (no relation) is our equivalent to the Energizer Bunny.

He shows up and volunteers at almost every veterans-related activity. He is our homeless veteran coordinator, VAVS/CDCE Alternate Rep, and Chapter Board Member.

He worked on “the pile” as a volunteer for months after 9/11, and as a member of Team Rubicon, he has been deployed for many of our Country’s disasters (both big and small) since Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

At 76 years young there ain't no quit in our Paulie.



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VVA Chapter #126 Report

Frederick C Gasior

Chapter 126 members attended the NY City Council Committees on Mental Health, Disabilities & Addiction, and Veterans Meeting. This was chaired by CM Robert Holden & Linda Lee, on Friday, Sep. 16. Excellent testimonies were given by CVS James Hendon, Chapter #126 members Mike Moreno, Ed Schloeman on RTM & TM to help reduce veteran suicide and PTSD. The entire proceedings are on You-tube.

The Traveling, a replica ¾ size of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington DC, arrived in Queens NY on September 28th. Our Chapter President Fred Gasior did a MIA/POW presentation and was part of the opening ceremonies. New York City Mayor Adams and past VVA president John Rowan added heartwarming remarks. All four VVA New York City chapters were in attendance.

October 28th chapter 126 attended an event hosted by "Operation Warrior Shield" labeled "Healing for Heroes" We supported this event which was emceed by Rita Cosby. Honored guest included NYC Mayor Adams and TV personality Monte Williams.

Where did 40 years go? Chapter 126 celebrated its 40th Anniversary Party at the Metropolitan Republican Club.

Founded 1983 Resurrected, funded and reorganized the "United War Veterans Council of New York"

Helped to reorganize the annual New York Veterans Day parade to now the largest in the nation.

Fund Raisers - Annual Poppy Drive

Parades - Veterans Day, Vietnam Veterans Day, and others

Conduct annually NYC Agent Orange Day in Vietnam Veterans Plaza

Support of VA Medical Center East 23rd Street - Lobbied to keep it open twice in last 10 years.

Support and distribute (November and December)Lap robes (Blankets for Wheel-Chair Veterans and scarfs to homeless veterans.

Clothing donations to vets at Borden Ave, L.I.C. homeless veterans center

Support of Soldiers', Sailors', Marines', Coast Guard and Airmen's Club

Support of Gold Star Mothers

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Recognition of Korean American Vietnam Veterans

A: Enlisted to Chapter 126, made our Korean allies welcomed and a part of our AVVA

B: Successfully lobbied for VVA national granting of Honorary VVA membership to our Korean American Vietnam Veterans

C: Successfully lobbied for VVA nationals support of Korean American Vietnam allies

D: Successfully lobbied congressionally, backed, and supported Congressional bill granting VA benefits.

This is the First time since 1946 that congress has changed title 38 rules. It is amended and now law granting VA medical benefits for our Korean Allies.

Award Winning Best VVA: Chapter website

Support of "VVA126NYCFoundation" programs to reduce veteran suicide and PTSD. Our foundation is dedicated to preventing/alleviating veteran's suicide. Current program. "22- 2- 0 Veterans Suicides"

Chapter supported "Friends of Vietnam Veterans Plaza" Fund Raiser on Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023.

The honorees were Gary Sinese and John Catsimatidis. Over 18 members attended the luncheon.

The Veterans Day Parade, Saturday 11/11/23 was a little earlier (9:30AM to noon) this year and was televised on WABC Channel 7. We marched in beautiful weather with over 20,000 marchers.

We presented a JROTC Scholarship to a Truman HS graduate who wrote a winning paper. "What it is to be a veteran". Her paper appears in our website.

VVA Chapter 126, Manhattan, NY 516-769-6847 Chapter126nyc@gmail.com

VVA126NYCFoundation, Manhattan, NY

Happy Holidays to all and WELCOME HOME.



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VVA Chapter #421 Report

Gene DiGicomomo – President

35 years.

Hi Everybody

I know it's been a long time and that's on me. So please forgive me, promise to do a lot better.

I would like to start by saying Happy Anniversary to us. Amazingly, we have reached the 35-year mark. I couldn't think of a better way to communicate to you where we were in the beginning and where we are now. So, let's start:

May of 1988 - Our memorial on Manor Rd and Martling Ave was dedicated to the memory of our 85 fallen brothers. General Westmorland was the guest speaker. Then just a few months after that on a memorable night in September the Vietnam Veterans of America, Thomas J. Tori Chapter 421 held its first meeting at the Armory.

1990 - with the POW/MIA issue was at its height the members of this chapter became active in the Free the Eagle movement. "Free the Eagle" was a rallying cry to bring attention to the fate of our POW-MIA's. Vietnam Veterans across the country sent hundreds of thousands of signed proclamations to Congress insisting that they answer the call. With that movement and the pressure from the League of Families, Congress had no choice but to agree to move on it.

1993 – Saw the formation of the Chapter's Honor Guard. Its purpose was to honor our 85 brothers every year on the second Sunday in June. That annual event became known as the Day of Remembrance. To this day we have over 200 families and friends attending this annual event at the Memorial grounds. Additionally, the Chapter's Honor Guard, at the family's request, pays a final salute with a solemn ceremony at the veteran's wake.

1995 – We established a program called "The Vietnam Experience". A few of us, by invitation only, go into schools and educate students on what Vietnam was like and what we experienced during our tour in Vietnam. This program has been very successful over the years and is still going strong.

1998 – The chapter started the "Vets Helping Vets" program. This program was put in place to let the veteran and local officials know that we are here to help those veterans.

2012 – The lack of maintenance of the Memorial grounds by the State showed that there was a need to get control of the Memorial grounds.

With the help of State Representative Michael Cusick, we were able to secure a renewable 5-year lease for the grounds, giving us the ability to maintain the grounds. It was then renamed "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park".

2013 – To make sure our POWs and MIAs were not forgotten, we brought the POW/MIA Recognition Day to Memorial Park. It is a full service, and hundreds attend the annual event.

2014 – We started a construction project for the beautification of Memorial Park.

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2020 – A scholarship program was initiated to help students with the cost of supplies and books

2023 – The addition of the Agent Orange, History of Vietnam, and the POW/MIA monuments brought to a completion the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park Beautification Project.

2023 – This past October, at the Staaten on Forest Ave., the Chapter celebrated our 35th anniversary with a dinner dance. It was a great night.

2023 – Our membership has grown to over 250.

I know this was a lot for a message, but I think it important that we all know how far this Chapter has come and what we accomplished.

Before I close, I would like to bring something to your attention. It is just a reminder or wake up call.

Vietnam left us all with scars, things that happened both in country and at home. Through all that we stuck together; we formed a brotherhood unlike any other and we promised ourselves that we will never forget.

But above all, we would not let those that were not there ever forget the sacrifices that our brothers made.

That being said, why is it that so many of you are missing at the Day of Remembrance and the POW/MIA ceremonies.

For the brothers that do attend, I commend you on your promise to keep their memory and their sacrifice alive.

For the ones that choose to sit home on those days I ask you to commit yourself and remember these words once again.

“NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER” & “WE WILL NEVER FORGET”

Brothers Forever

On September 17th, the Chapter held it annual POW/MIA Ceremony at the Chapter’s Memorial Park.

Opening ceremonies began with Chapter color guard and Mary Matthews singing our National them.

A Video can be found on You Tube [\(166\) VVA Chapter 421 - POW-MIA Ceremony 2023 - YouTube](#)



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VVA Chapter #421 Member Profile

I lead my report with Chapter member profile: Frank Russo who was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame by Senator Andrew J. Lanza.

Frank Russo served in the United States Army and achieved the rank of Specialist 4. Mr. Russo, a native of Italy, grew up in Brooklyn and now resides on Staten Island. His life was shaped by his time in the military and his service to our Nation, which has been the catalyst for a lifelong path of paying it forward.

A Vietnam veteran, Mr. Russo landed at Bien Hoa Air Base in South Vietnam on his twentieth birthday. He escorted convoys and protected the perimeter of multiple firebases. By the grace of God and all the souls lost there, he survived many close calls and returned home.

For his valor, bravery and service to our Nation, Mr. Russo was awarded numerous medals and commendations, including the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal (3 stars), Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Service Medal, New York Medal of Merit, and New York Conspicuous Service Medal.

An active member of multiple veterans' organizations, Mr. Russo is the Communication Officer at VFW Post 7172. He is Chairman of the Service Committee, First Vice Commander and Communication Officer, and Webmaster of AMVETS Post 917.



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He has coordinated over 60 visits to Walter Reed Medical Center, visiting and distributing comfort items to injured veterans.

In 2019, Mr. Russo was awarded the National AMVET of the Year Silver Helmet Award. He is a staunch advocate of veterans and coordinates the annual Staten Island Welcomes Our Heroes event, where selected injured veterans from Walter Reed Medical Center are escorted by police and bikers from the Center all the way to Staten Island.

Mr. Russo has been a member of VVA Chapter 421 since 2010. He is a member of the Honor Guard, Color Guard and current Secretary and Webmaster.

Mr. Russo has a degree in computer science, and in 1979, he married his soulmate, Maria.

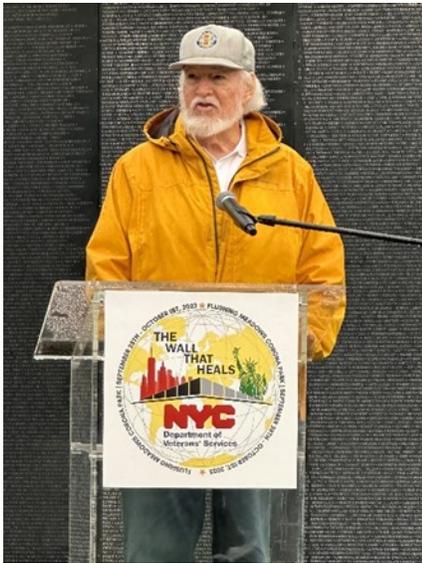
To honor those lost in Vietnam, Mr. Russo vowed to find a way to pay his survival debt, devoting himself to thanking, helping, and keeping veterans close to his heart. He honors the more than 58,000 lost souls that paved his safe return home.

Staten Island is forever grateful for his life of service.

FRANK RUSSO WAS SELECTED AS A 2023 VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BY SENATOR ANDREW J. LANZA.

On September 28 the Chapter Color Guard presented a wreath





Southern District Director J & Past VVA National President John Rowan

Color Guard of VVA Chapter #421

On October 14, we celebrated our Chapter's 35th anniversary - Where Frank Russo was honored.

A link to these and all our videos can be found on the Chapter's web site or on YouTube – vva421.org/youtube_library.html



Central District Report

Nick Valenti

VVA Chapters #85, #103, #377, #480, #704, #708, #803, #827, #896, #944

Since our AUGUST 2023 Central District Report, veterans' associated activities have increased in our District. The momentum is picking up at a neck breaking pace. The governing bodies from the Chapters in Central District find themselves impacting their local communities by following our simple but meaningful motto, "NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER."

"Elmira Vietnam Veteran Honored in Congress!" What a great headline. The president of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 803 in Elmira, Larry Sherman, was honored in the House of Representatives, in a speech on the House floor. Sherman enlisted in the U.S. Navy, served in Vietnam as a member of the Navy Mobile Construction Battalion, "Seabees." He also heads the Chemung County Honor Guard, providing ceremonial military services at funerals and events throughout Chemung County.

Congressman Nick Langworthy (R-NY23) recognized Sherman in a speech delivered on the House floor the first week in November 2023. Want to learn more? Try WENY News <https://www.weny.com/story/49985992/elmira-vietnam-veteran-honored-in-congress> .

Rome Vietnam Veterans Chapter 944 has been so active I can only capture a microcosm of their community service. Just look at this list of veteran activity:

- Sponsored a Survivor Benefits seminar at the New Hartford American Legion Post #1376.
- Provided a Color Guard at the Marine Corps League in Ilion to honor the Marines killed in Beirut, Lebanon.
- Attended the Oneida Indian Nation Veterans Recognition breakfast at Turning Stone Casino.
- Placed a new Vietnam Veterans black granite bench at the Utica Vietnam War Monument.
- Participated in the Feed Our Vets Ceremony to honor their banner program.
- Presented a Salute Certificate to the Veterans at MVHS nursing home utilizing the Chapter #944 Color Guard.
- Participated at the "50 Forward Pakway Center veteran's luncheon.
- Chapter Color Guard presented Salute Certificates and personalized Veteran caps to the veterans at The Pines nursing home.
- Chapter participated at the seven (7) Veteran monuments ceremonies in Utica on Veterans Day.
- Color Guard participated at the Veterans Day ceremony at the Vietnam Monument at Griffiss Park in Rome, New York.

Vietnam Veterans Chapter #377 continues to lead the way in promoting veteran interests in Central

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New York. Their newsletter comes out on a regular basis with a pictorial presentation of almost a daily awakening of activities supported by photography and a motivated membership. From the annual Tribute Ride, to working to bring "The Wall That Heals" to Cayuga County to pushing veteran related issues they stand tall for us all. Gary Napieracz has energized his community and brother and sister veterans. Way to go Gary.

Not to be out done Central District Chapter 704 was well represented at the 2nd annual Veterans Cup Youth Hockey Tournament. District Director Nick Valenti gave a short speech about Veterans Day and its meaning.

Following that, he promoted the "Blue Star / Gold Star" Memorial in the Town of Brutus, County of Cayuga. While making that announcement he also announced a first for Auburn, New York - That being the New York State American Gold Star Mothers, Inc annual Convention being held at the Holiday Inn, 75 North Street, Auburn, New York 13021 on Friday April 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM sharp.

Trusting everyone had a plentiful and Happy Thanksgiving.
Merry Christmas and A Happy & Healthy New Year



SUPPORT VETERANS



Bill Meeks, Jr. VVA National Secretary

Below are the appointments by President McManus and these appointments were approved by e-vote of the Board of Directors.

Committee or Taskforce or Advisors	Appointment
Agent Orange	Sandie Wilson
Credentials	Richard Lindbeck
Government Affairs	Pete Peterson
National Disciplinary	Chuck Odom
Veterans Benefits	John Riling
Constitution	Leslie DeLong
Economic Opportunities	Steve Williams
Homeless Veterans	Sandy Miller
POW/MIA	Grant Coates
Veterans Health Care	Chuck Byers
Convention Rule	Joe Jennings
Election	Scott DeArman
Membership	Dick Southern
PTSD	Dr. Tom Hall
Veterans In Justice System	Dominick Yezzo
Public Affairs	Dennis Howland
Conv/Conf Planning	Dan Stenvold
Finance	Dottie Barickman
Minority Affairs	Gumersindo Gomez
Resolutions	John Margowski
Women Veterans	Kaye O'Hare-Palmer
Veterans Against Drugs	Dave Simmons
Legacy Taskforce	Jack Devine
Strategic Advisor	Marsha Four
Special Advisor	Marc McCabe
Advisor Special Programs	Dr. Linda Schwartz
Sergeant-at-Arms	Grant Coates
National Chaplain	Fr. Philip Salois

Homeless Veterans Committee Report

Jay Book

First I need to correct a previous report that I presented. I stated that the hotline number was the only way to get a homeless veteran help. They can also be helped by any VA hospital or clinic.

Message From Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office

Housing is not simply a place for a Veteran to call home. It isn't just a safe structure that provides peace of mind and a place to rest comfortably at night. It serves as a foundation for which Veterans can build their lives – much like the foundation of the building itself.

When Veterans have access to permanent housing, it allows them to focus on rebuilding their own personal foundations, helping them stand on their own.

Veterans who struggle to maintain permanent housing often find it challenging to make progress in their lives, but it's often just a lack of access to the right resources and help from their communities that stand in their way. Stable housing is often an early milestone toward a Veteran securing steady employment, gaining access to health care, and building a life they are proud of.

With that in mind, we are eager to share the progress we have made toward our goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Last month, [VA announced that we are on pace to exceed our goal of housing more than 38,000 homeless Veterans in 2023](#), having housed 26,470 Veterans as of July 2023.

Additionally, VA also announced more than \$1 billion in grants to help homeless and at-risk Veterans through the [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) and [Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem](#) programs, for which VA is awarding more than 700 grants to community organizations that help house Veterans.

These efforts are all informed by the evidence-based [Housing First approach](#), one that prioritizes getting Veterans into housing and providing the additional support they need to remain housed. This includes legal and educational assistance, health care, job training, and additional resources.

When we share these successes, I like to remind everyone that the Veterans we serve are much more than metrics and statistics.

They are people with compelling stories of overcoming hardship and getting their life on the right path.

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They are inspirations to all Veterans who have found themselves in a dark or difficult place, unsure of where to turn next.

They are individuals who bravely served their nation as heroes, and I am proud to play a role in serving them in return.

And while it is wonderful to spotlight all the positive initiatives we're working on, it's also important to acknowledge some of the heavier issues that VA encounters.

September is [Suicide Prevention Month](#) – and while this can be a difficult topic to discuss, it's crucial for us to call attention to the risk factors Veterans face so we can do a better job of preventing suicide. Veterans unfortunately [have high rates of mental health diagnoses](#), including substance use disorders, PTSD, and serious mental illness, all of which can put them at a higher risk for suicide. Psychosocial stressors such as housing instability, unemployment, financial instability, and involvement in criminal justice all play a role as well.

To support our Veterans, no matter their needs, VA has developed [VA.gov/REACH](https://www.va.gov/REACH), which has a self-assessment to help Veterans find support that is designed specifically for them. The assessment allows users to ask for help with specific topics, such as health, career, finance, or emotional, or to simply browse the resources by category.

Veterans have been trained to endure challenging situations, but the stigma can make it difficult to reach out for help. We are here to remind all Veterans that resources are available, and there is hope. [Learn how you can help spread the word](#) to Veterans in your network.

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, dial 988 then press 1, chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net, or text 838255.

As we continue our efforts to end Veteran homelessness and prevent suicide, I remain proud of our team's efforts every day, and look forward to continuing our important work together.



VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM REPORT

Nicholas C. Valenti - chair

Auburn Correctional has a new liaison for the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA). Transitioning is always a slow and painful process especially if we are dealing with new personalities. After surviving a- get to know new contacts- timeframe at Auburn another transition was developing. The evolution of establishing a steady, constant relationship with someone who has been in the Correctional System and who also has a working relationship with the incarcerated veterans.

Well, I believe it finally happened. Just prior to Veterans Day 2023 I received a telephone call from a number that wasn't familiar to me. Low and behold it was from someone that I had a working relationship from my teaching days in the years 2000 - 2008. An Air Force officer that also worked as an Imam at Auburn. We enjoyed a very interesting conversation that concluded with an exchange of contact information and a commitment to working together in the near future with the VGoA on such Veteran inspired events as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Christmas giveaway to name just a few.

After spending additional time updating my volunteer file at Auburn Correctional Facilities (ACF), I will be able to continue to deliver the needed yarn to the crochet squad developed and formed by the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA). This group of incarcerated veterans as has been reported in earlier reports is a hybrid of two veteran groups. One known as Vietnam Veterans Chapter #205 and the second known as America Veterans Chapter #24.

The most confusing guideline in supplying yarn is to know what colors can be brought into the facility and used by the "squad" to make hats, gloves, scarves intended for adults and children and various crocheted play items intended for children. Due to so many personnel changes and shifting job responsibilities in the facility we have had to bide our time to get to know the personnel who are in charge of the activities we wish to be a part of.

In the process my volunteer papers have been updated and I have again reacquainted myself with the facility personnel manual and updated myself on the rules and regulations governing my status. The last step, bringing my medical information up to date that entails getting my annual TB test and providing proof of my COVID inoculation. All has been finalized.

The process of bringing yarn into the facility has not changed but the sources of the yarn has. We have a steady commitment from a group of civilian crocheters who have promised they would donate yarn to the incarcerated crocheters as long as VGoA remains a viable community source. To that end I received a call from them and am in the process with the help of my wife to first inventory the yarn by color; second, to package the yarn by color; third, contact the new Staff Advisor for the VGoA and finally fourth, to request a gate pass that would allow me to bring the yarn to the facility. Once there, the yarn is sent to the package room for inspection. The package room sergeant will look for the ban colors. Those colors, if allowed into the facility, could be fashioned into items identifying gang membership within the facility. **The ban colors are BLUE, BLACK, GREY, ORANGE and MULTICOLORED yarn.**

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Now that things are settling down within the correctional facility once again, I am renewing my call for donations of yarn. It should be much easier to donate since the ban colors give us less ambiguity about what we cannot donate.

Remember, the goal of the yarn donations is to turn this yarn into useful items that will help those in need – homeless veterans, and needy children and adults.

I can be reached at 315-252-4535 or by email nickvalenti46@yahoo.com. Remember, if no one answers the phone leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

VVA Chapter #333 Report

Dear Chapter 377,

Participating in the VVA's annual POW/MIA Watchfire over the last three years has meant so much to me. As a sophomore just coming out of a year of COVID cancellations, the opportunity to come out and bear witness to the Watchfire was incredibly special. It was my first exposure to the remarkable organization that is the Vietnam Veterans of America and their unyielding remembrance of all those who never made it home. As years passed, and I attended more Watchfire's as a junior and most recently, as a senior, the event took on a new meaning for me.

It became a symbol of the deep ties of love and camaraderie that exists with your community. Year after year, for decades—you all have gathered and lit a fire and remembered your brothers and sisters who are forever lost. It's no easy feat to remember those that so many have forgotten. Carrying the torch of remembrance is a heavy burden—especially when it feels like the public at large doesn't fully appreciate the sacrifices that so many have made. I will never be able to fully understand what you all have been through.

From your time in Vietnam, to the transition back to regular life amidst a sea of political angst—you all have endured things that few can empathize with. I am so impressed with the grace and strength present within your community. You are an incredibly kind and welcoming group of people that I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know over the past few months. It means so much to me, and the Brigade as a whole, to be included in the VVA POW/MIA Watchfire. We cherish the opportunity to pay tribute to the service members who have come before us and recognize those that never made it home.

Every midshipman and cadet, from the newest freshman to the oldest senior, is made better by getting to experience the Watchfire. It provides perspective on what service really means and demonstrates the immense value of service members supporting their brothers and sisters in arms. I am deeply grateful to you all and feel very fortunate to be included in the Watchfire.

Very respectfully, MIDN Carly Powers

The drive up the river from Barton Hall to go to the annual watch fire is an annual tradition that I have always cherished. As a cadet, we get to experience this community event with cadre, veterans, friends and families. Coming together to honor those who served in sacrifice for our country as a reminder that they will never be forgotten is meaningful to me as a young cadet.

From hearing the stories of local veterans to recounting stories of my own, I truly feel like a part of the military community. Knowing that the community cares about those POW/MIA from long ago solidifies the impact that service members have on our communities today. We get to come together as a community and create stronger bonds. As part of the excelsior battalion, the opportunity to be a part of the Watchfire to honor those who served and to build community amongst each other is always a pleasure. Standing alongside my battle buddies, I get to reflect on what service truly means. It feels good to be a part of something bigger than myself. The people amongst us who have served our country are there by our side the entire ceremony.

While at the Watchfire, I always get to see the strong community of the VVA. From watching the impressive color guard to walking through the long line of VVA members and their families, I see the spirit and togetherness of a group of individuals united by service and their love of country. As a cadet about to enter the military, I hope to foster an environment with that same camaraderie within my unit. Every year we throw wood into the fire that the VVA lights to help it burn brighter, and I hope to do the same when I serve—we stand on the shoulders of giants like those in the VVA and local veterans.

I hope to continue on their legacy of service and continue to pray for those brothers and sisters that are missing or prisoners of war or those who have passed while in service. I would like to continue to attend this Watchfire with my fellow cadets in honor of POW/MIA. We are welcomed by the community and veterans and continue to meet new people like Gary and other veterans, helping us to gain more knowledge and have people to support and feel supported by.

I am grateful for the opportunity and camaraderie the Watchfire brings.

CDT Ali Marriott MSIII,
Army ROTC
SUNY Cortland



VETERANS' NEWS

More technical problems found with VA's disability claims system

Veterans Affairs officials on Wednesday acknowledged additional technical problems with the department's online [disability claims](#) filing process that affected tens of thousands more veterans than previously reported, raising new concerns about the reliability of the system.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2023/09/06/more-technical-problems-found-with-vas-disability-claims-system/>

Senators, Supporters Seek MOH Hwy. Designation Along I2-State Route

Massachusetts has supplied the last link in the creation of a coast-to-coast route saluting recipients of the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor in combat.

https://mail.aol.com/d/list/referrer=newMail&folders=1&accountIds=1&listFilter=NEWMAIL/messages/AL18mw8VWLFZPueLw1xaEFS4_o#ONE

Army Airborne, Ranger, Marksmanship, Aviator, Aircrew, Combat Infantry & Medical Badges in Vietnam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aOzD5pVY88>

Every U.S. Marine Corps Infantry Job Explained in 16 Minutes or Less

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6qi1F3uNo4>

Sergeant Gary Beikirch

GREECE, N.Y. — New state legislation, named in honor of Rochester area Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Gary Beikirch, expands who can apply for license plates commemorating service.

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed the legislation that allows the spouses of Medal of Honor recipients to apply for commemorative license plates. The state says the Sergeant Gary Beikirch Memorial Act will help to preserve the legacy of military heroes including by allowing Beikirch's wife to honor her late husband. Beikirch, an army medic who served in Vietnam War, [died of pancreatic cancer](#) in December 2021 at the age of 74. The Greece native ran through gunfire and got hit by shrapnel while rescuing wounded soldiers during an attack on Dak Seang Camp in 1970. As Beikirch was carrying a wounded soldier for medical help, he heard an incoming rocket and threw himself on top of the soldier to save him.

News10NBC spoke with Beikirch's friends and family at his [memorial service](#). Lt. Colonel Doug Herrmann, also a Greece native, spoke about Beikirch's impact after returning home from the war. "He was devoted to reaching out to his generation of Vietnam Veterans as well as the current generation of veterans who share the struggle to heal from the physical and emotional wounds

of war. He was a master at connecting with people," Herrmann said.

Note: Nick DeLeo: On July 4th a former Kodak colleague and Marine Vietnam veteran, Pete Tuttle sent me this article about Gary Beikirch.

It's incorrect he jumped on top of a wounded soldier to save them. it was a 15 year old Montagnard who shielded Gary from an RPG and lost his life saving him. This was told to me by Gary over 40 years ago.

What to know about the New Covid shots and who is eligible

[Updated COVID-19 shots](#) — one by Pfizer and one by Moderna — are now approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These updated vaccines will better target the COVID variants currently circulating in the U.S. and worldwide.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/new-covid-vaccine-booster-fall_l_64ff60fce4b0a6dafa440123

Dog tag memorial honors fallen Global War on Terror troops

Veterans and Athletes United (VAU), [a veteran-run nonprofit](#) that supports disabled veterans through adaptive sports and recreation, completed the memorial in 2018 and it has traveled nationwide ever since.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2021/08/19/dog-tag-memorial-honors-fallen-global-war-on-terror-troops/>

Marine Corps Leaders Struggle with How to Train Female Infantry Officers Amid Worries About Standards

In 2018, a Marine general who heads the service's training command wrote about his concern that the "pursuit of ensuring fair and equitable opportunity" had allowed a female Marine candidate demonstrating "dangerously poor performance" to continue a key course.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/09/28/marine-corps-leaders-struggle-how-train-female-infantry-officers-amid-worries-about-standards.html?>

[ESRC=eb_230929.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb&utm_campaign=20230929](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/09/28/marine-corps-leaders-struggle-how-train-female-infantry-officers-amid-worries-about-standards.html?ESRC=eb_230929.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb&utm_campaign=20230929)

Korean American VALOR ACT

VVA Celebrates the Enactment of the Korean American VALOR Act (Washington, D.C) — "The enactment of the Korean American VALOR Act is a significant step toward rectifying the inequity in care for those who fought alongside us in Vietnam," said Jack McManus, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America. The VALOR Act expands eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits like medical and dental care to over 4,000 veterans of the South Korean armed forces who served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975. "Our government offered healthcare to generations of allied forces prior to the Vietnam War; our Korean brothers

in arms — now American citizens — have until now been unjustly denied access to care that they earned through service,” said McManus. President McManus emphasized VVA’s commitment to collaborating with members of the Korean Vietnam Veterans community and the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the VALOR Act is implemented in a way that maximizes access to healthcare for Republic of Korea Vietnam Veterans. Under the VALOR Act, the VA will be able to furnish healthcare upon receiving a request from the government of South Korea and after forming a reciprocity agreement providing reimbursement from the South Korean government for care expenses.

President Foote:

Two measures -- Chapter 618/23 and Chapter 620/23, see attached -- were signed into law today by the governor, in honor of Veterans Day.

STATE OF NEW YORK

454—A Cal. No. 393 2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 4, 2023

Introduced by Sens. GIANARIS, ADDABBO, FELDER, HELMING, LANZA, WEIK -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the general municipal law and the veterans' services law, in relation to directing counties and the city of New York to request a congressionally chartered veterans' organization to arrange for the funeral and burial of a deceased veteran who has no next of kin or other person to make such arrangements

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1- 1 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1-a of section 148 of the

1- 2 general municipal law, as amended by chapter 29 of the laws of 2016, is

1- 3 amended to read as follows:

1- 4 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, in the case
 1- 5 of a veteran, as defined in section [forty-two hundred three of the
 1- 6 public health law] one of the veterans' services law, or who has a qual-
 1- 7 ifying condition as defined in section one of the veterans' services law
 1- 8 and has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable, or
 1- 9 is a discharged LGBT veteran as defined in section one of the veterans'
 1-10 services law and has received a discharge other than bad conduct or
 1-11 dishonorable, who died in a county or the city of New York leaving no
 1-12 funds or insurance sufficient to pay funeral and burial expenses of such
 1-13 veteran and such veteran has no next of kin or person of record previ-
 1-14 ously designated to control his or her final disposition pursuant to
 1-15 section four thousand two hundred one of the public health law, such
 EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
 [] is old law to be omitted.

LBD02695-04-3

S. 454--A 2

2- 1 county or the city of New York [may] shall request a congressionally
 2- 2 chartered veterans' organization within the county or the city of New
 2- 3 York where the decedent resided at the time of death, to engage the
 2- 4 services of a funeral firm to conduct the funeral and burial services.
 2- 5 § 2. Section 4 of the veterans' services law is amended by adding a
 2- 6 new subdivision 38 to read as follows:
 2- 7 38. To develop an application process for congressionally chartered
 2- 8 veterans' organizations to receive reimbursement of costs associated
 2- 9 with funeral and burial services for indigent veterans pursuant to
 2-10 subdivision one-a of section one hundred forty-eight of the general
 2-11 municipal law. The application shall contain information about the
 2-12 funeral firm whose services were engaged pursuant to section one hundred
 2-13 forty-eight of the general municipal law and any other information that
 2-14 the department may require. The application must be signed and dated by
 2-15 the supervising funeral director.
 2-16 § 3. This act shall take effect on the first of January next succeed-
 2-17 ing the date on which it shall have become a law.

[T.E.A.M.](#)

Together Everyone Accomplishes More

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