

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 30 Issue 01

Veteran's News that needs to be Read SPRING 2020



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ELECTION COMMITTEE

The New York State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America will hold elections for all officer and director positions on April 4 at its quarterly meeting. The meeting is held at the Tioga-Downs Casino.

Any current member of the VVA who is interested in being nominated must meet all the minimum qualifications of the position applying for set forth in the NY SC By Laws (as amended) and be prepared to make a significant time commitment.

Letters of Intent or questions can be sent to the Election Committee Chairperson before April meeting: **Tom Harris, email bkrdad@aol.com.**

Nominations will be accepted from the floor during the election.

IN MEMORIAM

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA #8

O'Brian, Alfred US Army
Wilcox, Austin US Army

VVA #11

Antin, Bruce

VVA #20

Conley, Jerry
Reilly, Raymond
Skinner, Ray
Spriggs, Richard

VVA #704

Brewster, Leonard
Howland, Kent
McDuffie, Robert

VVA #377

Dexter, Gary USMC
Evangelista, Anthony US ARMY
O'Shea, Valor US Army

VVA #72

Neftleberg, Steven





VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2020

January 24, 25, 26 2020

April 3,4, 5 2020

June, NO MEETING

September 25, 26, 27 2020

On-Line INTERCHANGE is the Bi-monthly publication of the VVA-NYSC. Comments and contributions are encouraged and can be sent to:

VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM

8 Queen Diana Ln
Queensbury, NY 12804

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 Chapter by the **deadline** of the **Third Friday of each month**. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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Francisco Muñiz III



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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

Another productive VVA-NYSC meeting last January. We have been seeing new faces along with our old timers. Great to see that and all seem to enjoy the hotel and casino. Our lunch that we provide all is a big hit also.

One major change in our Service Officer Program. As you all know we had to close our NY City Office 4 years ago with Ben Weisbroth getting ill and later passing. Since then our Buffalo office has expanded and we have been receiving many claims from 9 County SO's. So many now we can hardly keep the pace. As we keep accepting the new claims, we still have over 700 claims that are in appeals. When claims go into this appeal status it can take anywhere from 5 to 10 years. Not knowing where we might be in those years, meaning VVA as an organization and us with our age.

We have to make a decision as now we are starting a funding issue also. As I have reported we lost our \$50,000 grants from our State last year was the beginning. We did manage to receive \$25,000 from Assembly Women Di Di Barrett. The funds we have received always came from the Senate side, so we really appreciate her for finding much needed funds. We have been promised to get our funds back this year, but I do not have a check in my hand so I'm not spending it. Next bit of funding news is the bulk of our funding for this program has been coming from our NY Vietnam Veterans Foundation. Those funds have now dried up as our Telemarketing company closed shop. We are good for a few years as we have always tried to save for a downfall as this program is too valuable. We will continue to try to find funding it does get harder as we are no longer the new guys.

I need to thank Rochester and Jamestown Chapters for providing us with much needed donations to this program. So, with all said the decision that we had to make is we will no longer accept new claims. We have advised the county SO's of this and have given them ample time to hook up to another organization to handle their claims. No Veteran is hurt by this as many organizations provide the same as we have. We will still represent all Veterans that we have claims for prior to January 15th, 2020. We are responsible for these claims and appeals so we are still in business just focusing on getting appeals processed and adjudicated which can be a number of years.

Our April meeting on the 4th we will be having elections. All positions are open. Please send a letter of intent to our chairman Tom Harris. bkrdad@aol.com. We will not be having a June meeting, so we had to change elections.

Our Leadership Conference will be July 14th in Dayton Ohio. You may want to attend. One last thing which is just my beginning to again tell you as of February 28 is end of our fiscal year. You now can do your 990n. Please take a half hour out of your busy schedule to complete. There is no penalty if you send before July 15th. Also, Election reports can come in after your April elections. Most of you did great last year with 990n so I expect this year to be even better. If you still have trouble on 990n your grandkids can be a big help.

So, as we will welcome spring, we still have so much to accomplish, - VVA is still very active both on National level and State.

Hope to see even more at our meetings.



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: Our fundraiser has cancelled our contract. We do not have any income coming into the Foundation. We need your financial support.

Vice President Report

Grant T. Coats

URGENT

Tioga Downs Hotel reservation can ONLY be done directly with the Hotel Reservation system – NOT through third party web site hotel listing: Call 607-699-3900; \$125 per night, inform them that you are registering with VVA-NYSC meeting dates; it is easier to register ASAP.

Cut-off date for reservation is 21 Days prior to date of meeting; Meeting dates are: April 3, 4, 2020; **JUNE CANCELLED**; September 25, 26, 2020; BRING in your Chapter’s TAX EXEMPT form every time!

Region II Director DE, NJ, NY PA

Membership Affairs Committee

Ted Wilkinson = National Member

Membership Totals by Classification

<i>VVA</i>	<i>AVVA</i>	<i>New members in December</i>
<i>IND 123</i>	<i>AIND 2,125</i>	<i>VVA 288 AVVA 67</i>
<i>LMP 83, 122</i>	<i>ALP 7,228</i>	<i>December Deceased Members</i>
<i>IVI 2,301</i>	<i>ALT 45</i>	<i>VVA 77 AVVA 3</i>
<i>VPHV 545</i>	<i>AIVI 8 93</i>	
	<i>APHV 30</i>	
Total 86,091	10,321	Women Veterans 1,364

IND Individual Members AIND Associate Individuals LMP Life Members ALP Associate Life IVI Incarcerated Vets ALT Associate Life payment VPHV Hospitalized Vets AIVI Associate Incarcerated HPHV Associate Hospitalized members

Membership by Region: Region II is second— VVA 14,496 AVVA 1,866

Top VVA Chapters in Membership

#05 NY VVA #77 671 #07 NY VVA #20 617 #12 NY VVA #11 501
 #19 NY VVA #11 352 # 21 NY VVA #82 319

Membership by State: #1 NY VVA 6,144 -3 AVVA 679 -2

VVA-NYSC Membership Committee Report

Ted Wilkinson—Chair

I appreciate and thank the membership committee for all the help and hours of work. and especially Charlie for his unending dedication.

All chapter election reports must be sent to **National AND State Council** (same with finance reports)

Twenty-three (23) of the thirty-one (31) VVA chapters attended at least one (1) out of the four (4) New York State Council meetings during 2019.

Nineteen chapters attended every council meeting: Thank You

11 Suffolk County, 20 Rochester, 32 Queens, 49 Westchester, 72 Brooklyn, 77 Buffalo, 79 Glens Falls, 85 Oneonta, 103 Syracuse, 126 Manhattan, 140 Orange County, (Cont. pg. 6)

(Continue from pg. 5)

268 Niagara County, 333 Rockland, 377 Finger Lakes, 480 Owego, 704 Auburn, 865 Jamestown, 978 Frewsburg.
 Eight (8) chapter did not attend any 2019 State Council meetings.

Each chapter shall elect delegates to the state council, and these delegates shall represent the chapter on all matters to come before the state council. Chapters shall be responsible for ensuring the attendance of at least one delegate per chapter at not less than one half of all of the meetings of the state council during the preceding twelve months, and the unexcused absence of at least one delegate from such meetings of the state council during the preceding twelve months may be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action against the chapter, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the National Disciplinary Policy, adopted by the Corporation.

Constitution of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Amended 07/18/2019 article II section3 subsection A-2

Veteran Incarcerated and In the Justice System Report

Nick Valenti

The Auburn Correctional Facility, in Auburn, New York held its 30th Christmas Giveaway this past December 2019. The program first began in 1991 by the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #205. Three decades later it is still running. The following local not for profit organizations were recipients of the hundreds of crocheted items produced by the inmates:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Tom Bulger	Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church
Jill McClellan	Quakers for Lakota
Sue Acker	Hannibal Resource Center
Suzanne Norton	St. Alphonsus Food Pantry
Winfield A. Ihlow	First Universalist of Central Square
Donna Bernardini-Carr	St. Lucy's

Items donated included hats, scarves, mittens, blankets and stuffed animals.

So good to see the work of Chapter #205 continue in their absence.

At the September 2019 New York State Council meeting in Nichols, New York I was handed over booklets that addressed the Incarcerated Veteran and their need for information to guide them upon release. The Sergeant at Arms for State Council Bob Joyce shared this information with me. I was able to obtain the contact information of those Correctional Facilities who had attended the 2019 Veterans Symposium. I then took the information Bob gave me and forwarded it to Gouverneur Correctional and to Groveland Correctional. Earlier in 2019 I had already shared this information with Auburn Correctional and Mid-State Correctional.

The information in the booklets provides instructions on: Seeking Federal Benefits; Replacing Personal Records; Reintegration of Ex-Offenders – Adult Program; Contact emails for Department of Veterans Affairs Incarcerated Veteran Re-Entry Specialists; Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program contacts; and Housing, Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Financial Help, as well as Legal Help resources.

Kathleen Rice - 4th House Representative

Caring for our Veterans

Many veterans on Long Island and across the country rely on care from family members. That’s why I joined Representative Richard Hudson (NC-08) to introduce [a bipartisan bill to make key improvements to the VA Caregiver Program](#). This bill would extend the stipend payments received by caregivers from 90 to 180 days after the death of a veteran, eliminate annual re-application requirements for benefits for veterans who require the most significant levels of care, and standardize the review process for determining program eligibility. These improvements will help give caregivers the assistance they need to keep providing for their loved ones.

(Continue from pg. 6)

Central District Report

Nick Valenti

VVA Chapters #85, #103, #205, #377, #480, #803, #827, #896, #944

We have just concluded our January 24, 2020 New York State Council meeting at Tioga Downs, Nichols, New York. A quick reminder to everyone that if you intend to go to our next State Council meeting remember it is scheduled for April 4, 2020. We start at 9:00 am sharp. Hotel reservations can be made by calling 1-607-699-3900. Remember to bring your tax-exempt form, any reservation and or cancelation are the responsibility of each individual. Looking forward to seeing everyone in April.

Joe Ingino, Southern District Director asked me to share this Legislative Alert. NYS Assembly Bill 8935 and its Senate counterpart Senate Bill 7224 need your support. Per Joe – “Help us to restore Bedhold for Veterans and their Spouses and Widows and Gold Star Parents on the Medicaid Program, who reside at the five (5) New York State Veterans Homes. Ask your State Legislator to support these bills.” As always carefully read the bills to ensure you fully understand what is involved with all the nuances of any New York State Assembly or New York State Senate proposed Bill.

There is also a message from our Interchange guru Francisco Muniz III. The cut off for all reports for the next edition of the VVA Interchange is February 7, 2020. Please send your report to vvainterchange@aol.com.

A report given by New York State Council Vice President Grant Coates stated that the MIA count sits at 1,587 unaccounted. The work goes on as we do what we can to bring all of our brothers and sisters home. Thank you Grant, for all that you do.

On a local front my District has kept me very busy. On December 14, 2019, I had the pleasure of working the 10th annual Wreaths Across America Program in Auburn, New York. Held at the Saints Peter and John Episcopal Church, Auburn we had the coordinated efforts of VVA Chapter #704, Carnicelli-Indelicato American Legion Post #1776, Swietoniowski-Kopecek American Legion Post #1324, Italian American War Veterans Post #9, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1975 and the New York State 102nd Military Police Company, Army National Guard. The guest speaker was Sharon McNeil, East Coast Director of the Sean M. Walsh Memorial Foundation. The Foundation was founded in December 2011 shortly after it was learned that Specialist Sean Walsh was killed in action in the Afghanistan Province of Khost. The mission of the 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization is to provide grants to law enforcement agencies nationwide that are in need of financial support to establish or maintain their K-9 teams. They have been serving communities since 2012. The Foundation was inspired by Sean's love for animals and his dream of becoming a Law Enforcement Officer with a K-9 partner.

In all a total of 44 wreaths presenters participated. There were eight (8) Gold Star families and two Blue Star families in attendance as well as all the branches of service represented.

The announced date of the 2020 Wreaths Across America program is December 19, 2020.

Currently I am helping to plan the dedication of the Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The uniqueness of the Memorial lies in the inclusion of the “In Memory” program. The sacrifices of our returning brothers and sisters and the sacrifices of their families will be forever remembered. Their names will be next to a forty-year history engraved on the Memorial starting in 1942 and ending in 1982 with the Washington, D.C. Vietnam Memorial.

The anticipated date of the dedication is September 19, 2020 at Centerport Aqueduct Park, Weedsport, New York on State Route 31, just 3 miles from Thruway Exit 40.

Also, in the works is an anticipated Vietnam Veterans Day ceremony in March of this year.

A new veterans' clinic has opened in Auburn, New York. This CBOC replaces the clinic formerly associated with Auburn Community Hospital. It has been relocated at 47 East Genesee Street in the former Rite Aid store.

I have now attended my 2nd Cayuga County Citizens Advisory Board meeting. Emphasis is on outreach to all veterans to make them more knowledgeable about their earned benefits and to especially reach out to our female veterans who number approximately 600 in Cayuga County.

(Continue on pg. 9)

(Continue from pg. 8)

More News from President Foote

Just a few reminders and such, April 4th is next meeting. Please get hotel reservations in soon. As you know the hotel fills and you will not get a room 20 days before. Also you need to have your Chapters Tax Exempt form.

Jim McDonough, Director of NY Veteran Services will be guest speaker.

We will have elections also as we will not have normal June meeting. Email Tom Harris at bkrdad@aol.com with a letter of intent if you wish to run for election

February 29th is fast approaching. That means it is end of our Fiscal year and you will be able to file finance statement. Remember, it is a 990n for most of you. You will need to go to the IRS website for this. Also you need to go to VVA.Org for VVA's finance statement. Now there is no reporting of any finance figures on either form. Just answer questions. You also do not need signatures.

So that means anyone can do. You do not need to wait until your treasurer returns from Hawaii. It should not take more than half hour and your grandkid even shorter time.

Now April will be coming and that means Elections. Also you find that on VVA.Org under Chapter forms. Will not need signatures so no need to wait for your Secretary to return from overseas. The sooner you get these reports in the headache for me goes away and will not need to keep sending emails out bitching for you to do. Saving my fingers and eyesight has become more important as I'm not getting younger.

With any questions or need of my help just ask!

President Rowan sent Urgent Message

From: Jorge Pedroza [pedrozajorge68@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 9:12 AM
To: John Rowan
Subject: Earthquake in PR

John, I visited our chapter in Yauco and things there are not well in the southern part of PR, hundreds of homes destroy and hundreds of People living in tents including Vietnam Veterans, it's a sad situation when you speak with them their PTSD just comes out, some lost it all, thanks for the Donation which National and some State Councils have sent it has all been distributed to some of our members in the area, but we still have many more which we have not reach, Any donation from National or State councils will be highly regarded for the Veterans which we have not reached yet, Donations can be sent to, VVA PRSC One Veteran Plaza PO Box 33177 San Juan PR, OO933-3177. Jorge Pedroza Pres 787-638-3062.

From: John Rowan <jrowan@vva.org>

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Below is the latest report from Jorge Pedroza on the conditions in Puerto Rico after the recent earthquakes and the previous flooding. Any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated. While I hope that the State Councils can help, I am sure that Jorge would appreciate even small personal donations.

Meanwhile, please contact your Senators and Representatives and remind them of the struggling people of Puerto Rico, many of whom are Vietnam Veterans, as they were susceptible to the Draft and sent to Vietnam speaking only Spanish. The federal government seems to be back-peddling in the efforts to assist Puerto Rico. Please keep Rick informed of your efforts on PR's behalf.

I thanks in advance for your assistance. Thanks, John

(Continue on pg. 9)

(Cont. from pg. 7)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Harvey Baker—Tribute Ride Organizer

Finger Lakes VVA Chapter 377

12th Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Tribute Ride

The 12th Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Tribute Ride, sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 377, 480 and Chapter 704, also by Blue Knights Chapter 17, is on Saturday, July 11, 2020. The Ride forms up at the Owego Free Academy on Sheldon Guile Blvd., in Owego, NY, and departs from there at 11 am, riding North on State Route 38 for the 100-mile ride. The first stop for the ride is at the American Legion in Groton, NY, for food and gas before departing at 1 pm, riding again North on Route 38, known as, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor. The ride ends at the American Legion in Hannibal, NY. Where there will be food and entertainment. The Ride is free and open to the public.

For more Info: Call Harvey @ (607) 898-3507 or Dan @ (607) 229-8153

**Join us for
12th Annual
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor*
“Tribute Ride”**



Saturday, July 11, 2020



The 100-mile ride is free and open to the public - motorcycles, cars, trucks, planes and helicopters welcome

- **Ride will Begin @: 11:00 am ...**
- **@ Owego Free Academy, Sheldon Guile Blvd. Owego, NY**
(Register to ride between 8:00 & 10:00 AM on day of ride) (Police Escorted Ride)
- **Ride Ends: @ American Legion**
Village of Hannibal, NY

Itinerary:

- **Ride Route 38 to the American Legion Post 800, Groton, NY**
(stop for gas and food), and then on to the American Legion in Hannibal

**Groton, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:
2LT TERRENCE GRAVES, USMC**



**Throop, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:
SP4 ROBERT F. STRYKER, US ARMY**

**SPONSORED BY:**

**Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 377, 480 & 704
and, Blue Knights Chapter 17**

For more information contact:

Harvey Baker, Chapter #377 Vietnam Veterans of America (607)898-3507
Dan Baker – Chapter #17, the Blue Knights (607) 229-8153
And see us on (www.Cyberspokes.com) as well.



Western District Report

Mike Walker

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

Will be visiting my District Chapter soon; VA will not do Prostate Specific Antigen testing if over 70 y/o

"Tompkins County Veterans"

Tompkins County Veterans News & Events -2.14.20 edition

Please follow the link below to the latest news of upcoming happenings for, or news about, Veterans issues and events. These include events next week:

Feb. 20 – The next Veterans’ Coffeehouse

– Cortland area Resource Fair sponsored by Congressman Anthony Brindisi

There’s also news from the VA about its \$243B budget request for FY 2021 plus a Save-the-Date item for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Tribute Ride on July 11.

In case you’ve not seen it yet, there’s also news from Gov. Cuomo’s State of the State Address that includes aid for Veterans issues.

Find this and more at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/veteransservices/news>

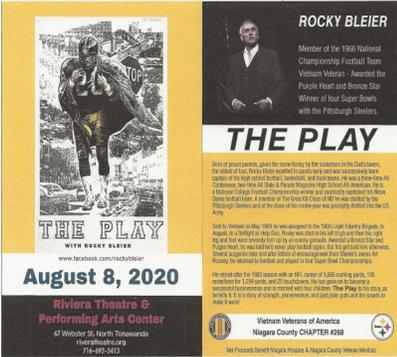
If you’ve news of events for – or about -- Veterans happening around Tompkins County, feel free to let me know.

VVA Chapter #268 Report

PLEASE DO NOT SEND REPORTS AS PHOTOS OR JPEG UNLESS IT IS A PHOTO!; SEND ALL REPORTS AS DOCUMENTS

Chapter #268 Spring Edition Date 2/2/20
 Gordie Bellinger
 Chapter Membership:
 2014 December 2019 December
 IND 14 IND 0
 J.M.P. 28 J.M.P. 117
 Total 42 Total 117
 AVVA Membership:
 2014 December 2020 January
 AIND 1 AIND 4

Two of our newest AVVA members are GOLD STAR WIVES we are very proud to have them as Chapter #268 members.
 The Chapter is very proud to announce that Rocky Bleier will in Niagara County on August 8, 2020. See flyer below.



ROCKY BLEIER
 Member of the 1956 National Championship Football Team
 Vietnam Veteran - Awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star
 Winner of four Super Bowls with the Pittsburgh Steelers

THE PLAY
 Born of proud parents, gave the name Rocky to the children in his Dutch town, the oldest of four. One of three children to survive the holocaust. He is a member of the High School Football, Basketball, and track team. He was a member of the University of Pittsburgh. He was a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

August 8, 2020
 Riviera Theatre & Performing Arts Center
 67 Webster St. North Tonawanda
 14120-1024
 716-492-2813

Vietnam Veterans of America
 Niagara County CHAPTER #268

Eastern District Report

Sam Hall

VVA Chapters #8, #49, #60, #79, #140, #333, #537, #541, #869

Eastern District Director Sam Hall taking Out of Office as Supervisor in Washington County. Congratulations—We're Moving Up!

Will be making Chapter visits soon; Elections coming up; Send Elections and Financial Reports State & National



to

VVA Chapter #8 Report

John A. Reitano, Secretary

This past summer and fall have been busy for Chapter #8. On Memorial Day Chapter 8 participated in Veterans of Lansingburgh Parade. Secretary of Chapter #8 was awarded Veteran of the year by Veterans of Lansingburgh. Mike Fiffe, Associate VVA member received Sons of Veterans of Lansingburgh Member of the Year.

The dedication of The Spec. 4 Peter M. Guenette Housing for Veterans last year, has brought chapter members closer to helping needy Veterans. The housing for needy vets is named for Medal of Honor Recipient Peter M. Guenette, a Troy resident, KIA 18 May 1968 Quan Tan Province. Spec. 4 Guenette sacrificed his life smothering a grenade to protect those around him.

Through a generous donation each month by Chapter #8 life member Thomas McCabe, & his company Capital Digitronics, we provide Price Chopper gift cards each month to supplement residents' meager earnings. The residents are WWII, Korea, & Vietnam Veterans. Chapter 8 also provided a cookout on the housing grounds, being that they are not allowed gas grills. A lunch of hot dogs, cheeseburgers, salads, soda, cookies, and watermelon were well appreciated. This past week Mike Guenette, brother of Peter delivered turkey's for Thanksgiving.

President of Chapter #8 & Patriot Guard member, Ray Sestak Honored Gold Star Families in a ceremony at the Gold Star Families Monument in Lafayette Park in Albany in September.

A fundraising effort to raise money for Wreaths Across America at Sam's Club, collected, & a donation made from Chapter #8, enough to provide 200 plus wreaths to be placed on graves at G.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, Saturday 14 Dec. 2019.

John Reitano, Chapter #8 secretary will be representing VVA Chapter #8 at quarterly meeting of "Rensselaer County Honor a Deceased Veteran" program as member of board of directors. Honor a Deceased Veterans Programs are held in Rensselaer, Albany, Schenectady, & Saratoga Counties each month. Please contact me if you would like info on setting up this in your own county.

The next couple months will be quiet for chapter 8 until April with State Council Elections & for chapter elections coming up. May brings Memorial Day Parades and graveside ceremonies that chapter members participate in.

(Cont. on pg. 12)

(Cont. from pg. 11)**VVA Chapter #333 – Rockland County**

Roy Tschudy – Vice President

Howard Goldin – Past President/Board Member

A quick review of VVA Chapter #333 located in Rockland County of past, present, and future endeavors.

Currently, this is our 20th year educating students throughout the county in Middle Schools as well as High Schools on the Vietnam Memories of the Wall.

To date, we have educated over 80,000 students and faculty on the Vietnam Experience inclusive of our lives after returning home from Vietnam.

Chapter #333 enacted an education financial award on “Patriotism” to three students who submit an essay regarding their personal thoughts on this subject matter.

In addition, Chapter #333 has also enacted an Annual Patriotism Scholarship Award of \$500 to a student for their volunteerism on behalf of local veterans.

We have Bob Hope Division where Chapter members visit the VA Montrose Nursing Home monthly bringing gifts and providing entertainment for the residents.

In 2013 our Chapter created a program to assist veterans who have been disabled in service to our country. The Hand cycle Program to date has provided 12 of these items to men and women with leg amputations and/or spinal cord injuries.

We have also purchased one kayak for a veteran in need as his preference for rehabilitation/recreation. We have purchased one outrigger canoe for another veteran again, as his preference.

We have purchased and donated a special made to order mountain bike for a young veteran who suffers from a TBI while in service in Afghanistan.

We are at this very moment purchasing a hand cycle for a female veteran with injuries sustained in Afghanistan for her rehabilitation/recreation.

As a Chapter we continue on with a clear message to all of our brothers, as long as we are able to provide assistance to any in need, we will do so.

As a Chapter, we keep the steadfast thought,

YOU MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT YOU GET – YOU MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT YOU GIVE!

(Continue on pg. 14)

Legislative Report

Bing Markee

As you know, in light of the fact that our state funding was substantially reduced last year -- as compared to what we had achieved in recent prior years -- we wrote letters (dated and mailed on December 12, 2019) to Senator Brooks and Assemblymember Barrett, the chairs of the veterans' affairs committees in their respective chambers, requesting greater funding the 2020-21 state budget for our VSO program. We decided to get ahead of the curve and formally request the funding before the scheduled legislative session commenced on January 8th this year.

Once the session commenced, I met with the chairs and staffs to ensure that they received the letters and to reiterate the crucial nature of the funding as it relates to our important program. Both chairpersons pledged support to VVA-NYSC in the upcoming budget negotiations, and I continue to stress that each time I encounter them.

Everyone should be cognizant of the fact that there is a projected \$6.1 billion budget deficit. However, I hinted at the notion that there may be programs (without specifics, or in any way denigrating them) that receive state funding to ostensibly to help veterans, but which programs may not necessarily be as critical or effective as VVA-NYSC's. They understand this issue, and I will continue to reiterate it.

As you know, in light of the fact that our state funding was substantially reduced last year -- as compared to what we had achieved in recent prior years -- we wrote letters (dated and mailed on December 12, 2019) to Senator Brooks and Assemblymember Barrett, the chairs of the veterans' affairs committees in their respective chambers, requesting greater funding the 2020-21 state budget for our VSO program. We decided to get ahead of the curve and formally request the funding before the scheduled legislative session commenced on January 8th this year.

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Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz III

All Officers, Chapter Reports, Committee Reports, District Directors Reports for the INTERCHANGE is: VVAINTECHANGE@AOL.COM; **DEADLINE** for VVA-NYSC Interchange is February 7, 2020; anything after that date will be posted in the next edition! **IMPORTANT:** Do not send reports or questions to the E-Mail address: SECRETARY@NYVIETNAMVETS.ORG until we fix our Web site-this address will be closed; ALL communications dealing with VVA-NYSC send to Ned Foote at NEDVVA@ROADRUNNERCOM; If you need to contact Secretary use: FMVVA@AOL.COM

I need your help for the next edition of the On-Line Interchange in that when you send in your Chapter Reports please add on the Subject line the Chapter Number as well as the District you belong too, such as Eastern, Central, Southern or Western areas. (example, Chapter 83, Southern District). When sending death notice of Chapter member include branch of service. I would appreciate your help on this matter. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND REPORTS AS PHOTOS OR JPEG UNLESS IT IS A PHOTO!; SEND ALL REPORTS AS DOCUMENTS: NEXT DEADLINE –April 27**

Agent Orange Report

Bill Patton—Chair

VA officials said they will not make a decision on new Agent Orange conditions until the results of two VA studies are finalized. (Jon C Lackey/The Salisbury Post via AP) are finalized.

[Under pressure from Congress to determine whether to add four diseases](#) to the list of Agent Orange-related conditions, Department of Veterans Affairs officials have disputed a scientific panel's findings and said they will wait for additional research to conclude before making what could be a \$15.2 billion decision.

In a report sent to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees on Monday, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said VA experts "noted significant concerns and limitations" with several National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, or NASEM, reports concluding that there is suggestive or . **(Cont. on pg. 19)**

Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421

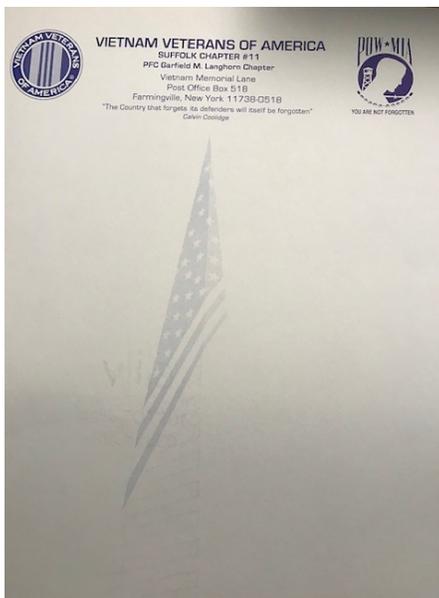
January 14, 2020 I went to a VSO meeting at Northport VA Hospital, which presented by Dr. Antonio Sanchez MD Executive Director. He discussed the contaminated water supply at Camp Lejeune and the environmental impact on veterans and their families, stationed at the Marine camp and encouraged veterans to know as much about the associated medical conditions and the expanded access to VA care and services. Some Veterans at the meeting expressed concerns that the small research study regarding liver flukes parasitic worms found in the fresh waters of Southeast Asia and bile duct cancer conducted at Northport. VAMC three years ago has not led to additional larger VA studies. Veterans looking to learn about VA's approach to liver flukes are encouraged to visit VA's website. One VSO noted there are more information and awareness about the risk firefighting foam poses to US service members is warranted. The medical Center Director, provided an update on the Medical Center's efforts to restore the residence for homeless veterans in building #11.

I went to a VAVS.s Executive Board Meeting, will initially be involved January 27, 2020, at the meeting they talked about the demolition of buildings 1 & 2 to begin within 2 years. The Army Corps Engineers will be initially be involved but ultimately it will be contracted out. I attended a Board Meeting at the New York State Veterans Home there are now over 100 Viet Nam Veterans living at the State Veterans Home. The number will continue to rise as Viet Nam Veterans increase in age. I would to thank VVA Chapter 11, Suffolk County for enrolling a lot of these Veterans into their chapter. February 2, 2020 I was at Northport VA Hospital, for the Four Chaplains Award Ceremony

VVA Chapter #11 Report

Clarence Simpson

PFC Garfield M. Langhorn Vietnam MOH recipient name added to Chapter 11.



Tuskegee Airman William Johnson meets with VVA 11 members at Patchogue - Medford High School

(Cont. on pg. 15)

(Continue from pg. 14)

Holiday Party at LI Nursing Home Hosted by VVA #11



Joe Sledge, VVA 11 Associate Member and esteemed senior staff member of the Northport VAMC received the honor of being inducted into the Legion Of The Four Chaplains.

VVA11 member Walter Stobe receives honor of being inducted into The Legion of the Four Chaplains

↓ ↓
(Cont. on pg. 17)

Joe Butera, Vietnam Vet, USMC, receives the honor of being inducted into the Legion Of The Four



Normandy Beach - The Fallen 9,000

Roy Tschudy

A large percentage of our country doesn't know of or care about Normandy.

This year, British artist Jamie, accompanied by numerous volunteers took to the beaches of Normandy with rakes and stencils in hand to etch 9,000 silhouettes representing fallen people into the sand.

Titled **The Fallen 9000**, the piece is meant as a stark visual reminder of those who died during the D-Day beach landings at Arromanches on June 6th, 1944 during WWII.

The original team consisted of 60 volunteers but as word spread nearly 500 additional local residents arrived to help with the temporary installation that lasted only a few hours before being washed away by the tide.

9,000 Fallen Soldiers Etched into the Sand on Normandy Beach to Commemorate Peace Day.

What is surprising is that nothing about this was seen here in the US.

Someone from overseas had a friend that sent it with a note of gratitude for what the US started there.

Please share with others who understand "freedom is not free-- nor has it ever been.



What an incredible job they did. That was a massive undertaking. Now, if it had only been publicized here as it should have been. Most of the young people of today needed to see this. They have no clue of the extreme sacrifices made that give them the freedom to make such idiots of themselves.

AVVA Report

Kathaleen Penfield—President

At the April New York Conference, AVVA-NY will be holding Elections. The following people are running, Pres Kathy Penfield, Vice President—Barb Blood, Treasurer r/Secretary Cherie Steers.

When a VVA Chapter holds an election—AVVA members must hold elections for Officers. The results of election has to be sent to Pres Kathy Penfield with in 30 days of elections.

This could be sent to one of three E-mails below:

Treasurer/Secretary Cherie Steers at csvva@optonline.net, VP Barb Blood at barbaraBlood@stny.rr.com or Pres KATHY at Kathysitka@hotmail.com.

(Continue from pg. 16)

VVA Chapter #72 Report - Brooklyn

Danny Friedman

Chapter 72 regrets to report the death of long-time member and Officer Stephen Neftleberg (02/09/1951-01/17/2020). Steve served several terms as Secretary-Treasurer and Secretary, and Service Officer. He was a beloved by all. Stephen is survived by his wife, Arlene, his daughter, Traci, and his son, Mathew.

I attended the VVA-NYSC meeting this past January at Tioga Downs Resort. VVA National President Rowan spoke on the future of VVA. VVA members are split on how best to live to our motto of "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another." Do we go forward as "last man/women" organization or do we pass the torch to a new generation of veterans?

VVA Chapter #82 Report – Nassau County

Rich Guevara – Vice President

The Wall That Heals - On August 27 to September 1, 2019 Chapter 82 played an integral role in bringing the Wall to Eisenhower Park. This was a somber event for all involved. On August 27 we provided the Color Guard that brought the Wall to Eisenhower Park. On August 28 after the Wall was installed, our Color Guard participated in the Military Order



of Purple Hearts Ceremony placing of the Purple Heart medal at the apex of the Wall, giving the Wall a heart. We also hosted the laying of the wreaths at the opening ceremony (August 29) and provided the Color Guard and firing detail at the closing ceremony (September 1). In addition, members played an integral part during the 5 day event. Members helped to install the Wall prior to the opening and took down the Wall after the closing event. We also provided security for the event both day and night. In addition, members of the chapter, including AVVA members, served as guides to those who attended the event.

September 11 Memorial Ceremony – Chapter 82 provided Color Guard for the 9/11 Memorial at Eisenhower Park. Nassau County Salute to Veterans Barbeque – On September 19th Chapter 82 Color Guard opened the celebration at Eisenhower Park. Members of the Chapter participated in the event.

POW/MIA Candlelight Vigil – On September 20th Chapter 82 Color Guard and members of the Chapter remembered and honored our POW/MIA's at a candlelight vigil in Eisenhower Park.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony – On October 19th at the Levittown Hall we again teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association to recognize the services of Vietnam Veterans. We again provided the Color Guard for this event and the members of the Chapter awarded the guests with a gift in an appreciation for their service.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony – On September 21 we teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association to recognize the services of Vietnam Veterans. This is part of a commitment that VVA Chapter 82 made to the Department of Defense to honor Vietnam veterans. The event took place at the Cradle of Aviation. We provided the color guard and presented the honored guests with an album showing our appreciation. Members of our Chapter were recognized at this event and several others formed a welcome line for our veterans at the end of the event.

Salute to Disabled Veterans – On October 15th we provided the Color Guard at the Northport Veterans Hospital honoring our disabled veterans. At this ceremony a plaque was unveiled containing the Pledge of Allegiance written in Braille.

Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum – On November 1st and November 2nd we provided the Color Guard for a major event at the Coliseum.

Holy Trinity High School – On November 5th we provided the Color Guard for an event at the school honoring our veterans.

(Continue on pg. 18)

(Continue from pg. 17) VVA #82

Holy Trinity High School – On November 21th we provided the Color Guard for an event at the school honoring our veterans. We retrieved the flags that were set up for Veterans Day.

Nassau County Homeless Winter Stand Down – On November 26 members of Chapter 82 participated in the semi-Annual Nassau County Stand Down. We provided security and welcomed our veterans at this event. We gave each veteran a gift to show our appreciation. 321 veterans were assisted at this event.

Town of Oyster Bay Holiday Concert – On December 2, 2019 we provided the Color Guard to open the event.

Pearl Harbor Ceremony – On December 7 we provided the Color Guard for the dropping of the rose's ceremony at the American Air Power Museum. At this event 25 World War II veterans were recognized for their service. Members of the Chapter also attended this event.

Ice Station Zebra – On December 8 we provided the Color Guard for Ice Station Zebra, a local charitable football game.

Nassau County Salute to Veterans Barbeque – On September 19th Chapter 82 color guard opened the celebration at Eisenhower Park. Members of the Chapter participated in the event.

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Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum – On November 1st and November 2nd we provided the color guard for a major event at the Coliseum.

Salute to Veterans - On November 10th our color guard and members of the Chapter met in Eisenhower Park to honor our veterans as part of the Nassau County salute to veterans.

Long Island National Cemetery – On November 10 Chapter 82 color guard participated in the Veterans Day ceremony at the national cemetery. Members of the chapter also participated in the event.

Veterans Day Parade – On November 11 members of Chapter 82 participated in the Veterans Day Parade in New York City.



(Continue on pg. 22)

(Continue from pg. 13) Agent Orange

sufficient evidence [linking development of bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson's-like tremors](#) and [hypertension to exposure to herbicides for defoliation in the Vietnam War](#)

According to Wilkie, NASEM did not identify any “definitive causal links” between Agent Orange and the diseases, and at least two — hypertension and bladder cancer — have other risk factors besides herbicide exposure, such as age, diet and tobacco use, that can contribute to their development,

[White House responsible for delayed decision on new Agent Orange diseases, documents show](#) Internal documents reveal the disagreements within the Trump administration over adding new Agent Orange-connected diseases.

Patricia Kime

Also, Wilkie said, members of the NASEM panel, in drawing their conclusions, relied heavily on studies of Army Chemical Corps members “with known high occupational exposure” that don’t necessarily reflect the experience of most U.S. troops in Vietnam.

Given the concerns and the cost, which according to VA could run between \$11.2 billion and \$15.2 billion, depending on interpretations of a court ruling, VA is waiting for the results of its own studies, expected later this year, to announce any decision, the report says.

The soonest the secretary would be able to consider adding any new presumptive conditions is in late 2020,” the report states.

The VA reports in question, the Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study, or VE-HEROES, and the Vietnam Era Mortality Study, are complete but the conclusions must be analyzed and peer-reviewed as part of the decision-making process, according to the report.

10 things every Veteran should know about Agent Orange

Learn the basics of VA's Agent Orange benefits and care

1. Agent Orange was a herbicide and defoliant used in Vietnam

Agent Orange was a blend of tactical herbicides the U.S. military sprayed from 1962 to 1971 during the Vietnam War to remove the leaves of trees and other dense tropical foliage that provided enemy cover. The U.S. Department of Defense developed tactical herbicides specifically to be used in “combat operations.” They were not commercial grade herbicides purchased from chemical companies and sent to Vietnam.

More than 19 million gallons of various “rainbow” herbicide combinations were sprayed, but Agent Orange was the combination the U.S. military used most often. The name “Agent Orange” came from the orange identifying stripe used on the 55-gallon drums in which it was stored.

Heavily sprayed areas included forests near the demarcation zone, forests at the junction of the borders of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam, and mangroves on the southernmost peninsula of Vietnam and along shipping channels south-east of Saigon.

2. Any Veteran who served anywhere in Vietnam during the war is presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. For the purposes of VA compensation benefits, Veterans who served anywhere in Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides, as specified in the [Agent Orange Act of 1991](#).

These Veterans do not need to show that they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides in order to get disability compensation for [diseases related to Agent Orange exposure](#). Service in Vietnam means service on land in Vietnam or on the inland waterways (“brown water” Veterans) of Vietnam.

(Cont. on pg.20)

(Cont. from pg. 19) Agent Orange

3. VA has linked several diseases and health conditions to Agent Orange exposure.

VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for compensation benefits.

AL Amyloidosis

A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters and collects tissues or organs

Chronic B-cell Leukemias

A type of cancer which affects a specific type of white blood cell

Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)

A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

Diabetes Mellitus Type 2

A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to produce or respond properly to the hormone insulin

Hodgkin's Disease

A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia

Ischemic Heart Disease

A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that can lead to chest pain (angina)

Multiple Myeloma

A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue

Parkinson's Disease

A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement

Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset

A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and muscle weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

Prostate Cancer

Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among older men

Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)

Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus

Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

A specific group of malignant of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues

4. Veterans who want to be considered for disability compensation must file a claim.

Veterans who want to be considered for disability compensation for health problems related to Agent Orange exposure must file a claim.

During the claims process, VA will check military records to confirm exposure to Agent Orange or qualifying military service. If necessary, VA will set up a separate exam for compensation.

5. VA offers health care benefits for Veterans who may have been exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides during military service.

Veterans who served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are eligible to enroll in VA health care. Visit VA's Health Benefits Explorer to check your eligibility and learn how to apply.

6. Participating in an Agent Orange Registry health exam helps you, other Veterans and VA.

(Cont. on pg 21)

(Cont. from pg. 20) Agent Orange

VA's Agent Orange Registry health exam alerts Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to Agent Orange exposure during their military service. The registry data helps VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively.

The exam is free to eligible Veterans and enrollment in VA health care is not necessary. Although the findings of your exam may be used to inform your subsequent care, they may not be used when applying for compensation as a separate exam is required. Contact your local [VA Environmental Health Coordinator](#) about getting an Agent Orange Registry health exam.

7. VA recognizes and offers support for the children of Veterans affected by Agent Orange who have birth defects.

VA has recognized that certain birth defects among Veterans' children are associated with Veterans' qualifying service in Vietnam or Korea.

[Spina bifida \(except spina bifida occulta\)](#), a defect in the developing fetus that results in incomplete closing of the spine, is associated with Veterans' exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during qualifying service in Vietnam or Korea.

[Birth defects in children of women Veterans](#) are associated with their military service in Vietnam but are not related to herbicide exposure. The affected child must have been conceived after the Veteran entered Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone during the qualifying service period.

8. Vietnam Veterans are not the only Veterans who may have been exposed to Agent Orange.

Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam were used, tested or stored elsewhere, including some military bases in the United States. Other locations/scenarios in which Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange may include:

[Korean Demilitarized Zone](#)

Exposure along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

[Thailand Military Bases](#)

Possible exposure on or near the perimeters of military bases between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975

[Herbicide Tests and Storage Outside Vietnam](#)

Possible exposure due to herbicide tests and storage at military bases in the United States and locations in other countries

[Agent Orange Residue on Airplanes Used in Vietnam War](#)

Possible exposure of crew members to herbicide residue in c-123 planes flown after the Vietnam War

9. VA continues to conduct research on the long-term health effects of Agent Orange in order to better care for all Veterans.

VA and other Federal government Departments and agencies have conducted, and continue to conduct, extensive research evaluating the health effects of Agent Orange exposure on U.S. Veterans.

An example is the Army Chemical Corps Vietnam-Era Veterans Health Study designed to examine if high blood pressure (hypertension) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are related to herbicide exposure during the Vietnam War. Researchers have completed data collection and aim to publish initial findings in a scientific journal in 2015. Learn more about Agent Orange related studies and their outcomes here: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/research-studies.asp>

10. VA contracts with an independent, non-governmental organization to review the scientific and medical information on the health effects of Agent Orange.

VA contracts with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences every two years to scientifically review evidence on the long-term health effects of Agent Orange and other herbicides on Vietnam Veterans. The IOM uses a team of nationally renowned subject matter experts from around the country to gather all the scientific literature on a topic, identify peer-reviewed reports, and then examine the studies to determine the most rigorous and applicable studies. The IOM looks for the highest quality studies. The IOM then issues its reports, including its conclusions and recommendations to VA, Congress, and the public.

About the author: Dr. Ralph Erickson is an Army Veteran of the Gulf War (1990-91) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003). He retired with 32 + years active-duty service, during which he held a number of leadership positions to include: Commander of The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research; Command Surgeon, US Central Command; and Director, DoD Global Emerging Infections and Response System (DOD-GEIS). He is a board certified physician in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. He received his medical degree from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), Masters of Public Health from Harvard University, and Doctorate of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University.

Western New York Hispanic American Veteran Memorial - Buffalo, NY

This memorial is located in the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park in Buffalo, New York. The monument has statues of two figures over looking a grave of a fallen soldier. The first tier of the monument has the text:

"IN GRATITUDE TO ALL WESTERN NY HISPANIC AMERICAN VETERANS FOR THEIR SERVICE"

The 2nd tier has the flags of Hispanic countries and regions including Mexico, Spain, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Surrounding the monument is a series of engraved bricks dedicated to individual Hispanic soldiers.

A tablet in the ground states the Ground Breaking was on November 11, 2011. The statue was erected June 4, 2013 and Dedicated on June 14, 2013.

(Cont. from pg. 19) VVA #8

Town of Oyster Bay Holiday Concert – On December 2, 2019 we provided the color guard to open the event.

Pearl Harbor Ceremony – On December 7 we provided the color guard for the dropping of the roses ceremony at the American Air Power Museum.. At this event 25 World War II veterans were recognized for their service. Members of the chapter also attended this event.

Hagendorn Little Village School – On December 9th Chapter 82 members hosted a school holiday event. We provided gifts for the physically and mentally challenged students at the school and one of our member's played Santa Claus.

Scholarship Awards – On December 17 Chapter 82 presented 7 scholarships to students attending an institution of higher education.

Tribute for Veterans – On January 11 2020 Chapter 82 provided the color guard for this event

(Continue on pg. 23)

Veteran Suicide in New York

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States—it affects all demographic groups, and our nation’s veterans are particularly at risk

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States—it affects all demographic groups, and our nation’s veterans are particularly at risk.

Veterans Die by Suicide at Higher Rates than the Overall Population

While making up 8% of the U.S. adult population, veterans accounted for 14% of all deaths by suicide among the adult population in 2017.

Similarly, New York State veterans die by suicide at a much higher rate than the overall State population. Particularly concerning is the increasing rate of suicide among New York’s youngest veterans, even as rates among older veterans have declined.

Although New York has the second-lowest rate of veteran suicide in the nation (as of 2017), we can and must do better. Governor Cuomo announced in his 2020 State of the State a commitment to focus on suicide prevention among veterans and other vulnerable groups, and NYSHHealth plans to emphasize suicide prevention in its veterans’ health program in 2020.

This NYSHHealth issue brief presents how New York’s veteran suicide rate compares to the rest of the country, examines how veteran suicide rates are changing in New York over time, and explores how State policies might influence veteran suicide rates.

Veterans in New York die by suicide at a much higher rate than the overall State population.

Although New York has one of the lowest rates of veteran suicide in the country, 136 veterans in the State died by suicide in 2017—one nearly every other day.

Between 2005 and 2017, the suicide rate for New York veterans ages 18 to 34 years old more than doubled. Similarly, across the country, young veterans have the highest rates of suicide.

From 2015 to 2017, Livingston, Columbia, and Wyoming counties experienced the highest rates of veteran suicide in the State.

Veterans are more likely than the overall population to use firearms as a method of suicide. New York State’s strict gun laws may offer insight into its comparatively low rate of veteran suicide.

Firearms are the most lethal method of suicide (85% of those who use firearms as a method of suicide die, compared with 5% of those who used other methods of suicide).

By NYSHHealth Veterans’ Health January 28, 2020

Join us for
12th Annual
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor*
“Tribute Ride”

The 100-mile ride is free and open to the public - motorcycles, cars,
trucks,

planes and helicopters welcome

Ride will Begin @: 11:00 am ...

@ Owego Free Academy, Sheldon Guile Blvd. Owego, NY

(Register to ride between 8:00 & 10:00 AM on day of ride) (Police Escorted Ride)

Ride Ends: @ American Legion

Village of Hannibal, NY

Itinerary:

Ride Route 38 to the American Legion Post 800, Groton, NY
(stop for gas and food), and then on to the American Legion in Hannibal

Groton, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:

2LT TERRENCE GRAVES, USMC

Throop, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:

SP4 ROBERT F. STRYKER, US ARMY



SPONSORED BY:

VVA Chapter 377, 480 & 704 & Blue Knights Chapter 17

For more information contact:

Harvey Baker, Chapter #377 Vietnam Veterans of America (607)898-3507

Dan Baker – Chapter #17, the Blue Knights (607) 229-8153

And see us on (www.Cyberspokes.com) as well.



VVA NEWS UPDATE

More Than 100 Troops Have Brain Injuries From Iran Missile Strike, Pentagon Says

The number of troops injured has steadily increased since the Jan. 8 attack

More than 100 American service members have traumatic brain injuries from Iranian airstrikes on Al Asad Air Base in Iraq in January, the Defense Department said, a number that was more than 50 percent higher than previously disclosed.

Of the 109 troops who have been diagnosed with brain injuries, 76 had returned to duty, officials said Monday.

“We are grateful to the efforts of our medical professionals who have worked diligently to ensure the appropriate level of care for our service members, which has enabled nearly 70 percent of those diagnosed to return to duty,” said Alyssa Farah, the Pentagon press secretary.

The latest tally, which has steadily grown since the Jan. 8 strike, drew a sharp contrast with the assertion by the Trump administration in the hours after the attack that no Americans were hurt. The number also underscored the unseen effects of traumatic brain injuries, which sometimes do not manifest symptoms for days or weeks but can have long-term physical or mental effects.

And as the injury toll has mounted, veterans groups and others have levied criticism at the White House, in part because, in January, President Trump [dismissed](#) the injuries as “not very serious.”

“I heard that **they had headaches** and a couple of other things,” Mr. Trump said at a news conference.

“The number just keeps going up,” Paul Rieckhoff, the founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, [said on Twitter](#) on Monday. “It’s time for Congress to demand a full investigation. The public and our military families deserve the truth.”

How to Protect the Female Heart

Heart disease is the number one killer of women

When it comes to heart disease and stroke, women can have different experiences than men. Did you know that women have different warning signs for heart attacks? Or that women typically have a higher risk of having a stroke? In fact, one in three women dies from heart and blood vessel disease, while one woman dies every minute from a stroke. Learning the traits of heart disease, stroke, and heart attack can help you, or someone you know, receive the right care.

Symptoms of heart disease

While some women don't have any symptoms until they suffer a heart attack, others may have:

A dull or sharp chest pain

Pain in the neck, jaw, throat, stomach, or back

An irregular heartbeat

Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling

Symptoms of a stroke

Compared to heart disease, signs of a stroke differ. You may experience:

A drooping face

Weak arms

Difficulty speaking

If you have any of these symptoms, call 911 for immediate help.

Legislative Alert; Restore ‘Bed Hold’ for veterans and their spouses, Gold Star Parents on Medicaid Program—who reside at the five NYS Veterans Homes. Support NYS A 8935 and NYS S.7224

(Continue from pg. 25)

[A Delay in Patient Notification of Test Results and Other Communication Issues at the Bath VA Medical Center, New York](#)

The VA OIG conducted a healthcare inspection to assess allegations of delays in providing patient test results, communication issues between providers and paramedics related to transporting patients to a community hospital emergency department, violations of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, and quality of care concerns resulting from paramedic care at the Bath VA Medical Center (facility).

The OIG substantiated a surrogate provider failed to follow test notification policies when a patient received positive stress test results 36 days after the test; however, the patient did not experience an adverse event as a result. The OIG substantiated a paramedic failed to comply with the facility's standard operating procedure when the paramedic transported a patient to the nearest community hospital rather than one instructed by the provider.

The provider recommended a hospital that was further because the nearest one lacked the necessary equipment to complete the patient evaluation. The OIG team noted that the facility's transfer policy did not clearly define a process for outpatient transfers to a higher level of care utilizing facility paramedics. The OIG did not substantiate that facility paramedics violated the intent of the law by transporting patients to a community hospital emergency department. Facility providers medically screened and provided care to the patients prior to transfer.

The OIG did not substantiate that facility paramedics provided poor quality of care to the reviewed patients. The paramedics asked suitable and clarifying questions of the providers, assessed the patients, and documented their findings.

The OIG made two recommendations to the Facility Director to ensure that surrogate providers comply with their responsibilities to notify patients of test results when providing coverage and to ensure that the Patient Transfer Policy clearly defines a process for outpatient transfers to a higher level of care utilizing facility paramedics.

Opportunities Missed to Contain Spending on Sleep Apnea Devices & Improve Veterans' Outcomes

The VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine if the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is efficiently managing positive airway pressure devices (sleep apnea devices) and supplies for veterans diagnosed with sleep apnea. The number of veterans diagnosed with sleep apnea who receive devices and supplies increased dramatically between fiscal years 2014 and 2018. This has significantly increased the financial risk to VA. If VHA does not change its practices and leverage opportunities to save money, the OIG estimates it risks spending about \$261.3 million over the next five years on devices and supplies veterans will not use. VHA did not efficiently manage sleep apnea devices and associated supplies. The OIG found that almost half of the 250,000 veterans issued a device from October 2016 through May 2018 used it less than half the time. This can reduce therapy effectiveness. The mismanagement occurred in part because VHA did not identify and follow up with veterans who were not using their devices as recommended. The OIG also found that VHA did not have a sleep medicine staffing model to help ensure it conducted patient follow up. A model will determine staffing to help ensure follow up is conducted. VHA could save up to \$39.9 million per year by loaning devices to veterans rather than issuing them for permanent use. A loan program would allow unused devices to be returned and reused. VHA could save up to an additional \$12.4 million per year by not purchasing device supplies for veterans who do not use their devices. The OIG made three recommendations to the under secretary for health regarding sleep apnea device management. The recommendations include studying staffing levels, looking at using existing technologies to better monitor device use, and looking at alternatives to purchasing devices.

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