



Vol. 32 Issue 04 Veteran's News that needs to be Read WINTER 2022



To All of our Members & Supporters
Wishing You Peace and Joy This Holiday Season.

May You Be Guided By God's Wisdom Throughout Life's Challenges
From
The Officers and District Directors
Of Vietnam Veterans of America—New York State Council



In Memorial

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA #11
Joe Ingino

VVA #20
Louis Amarosa
Barry Culhane
Richard Switzer
Craig K. Wirth

VVA #72
Steve Corretto

VVA #77
William Schafer

VVA #268
Dominick J. Dellaccio

VVA #333
Ryall Anthony Kerner
Dave Pirell

VVA #421
Mel Hansen

AVVA #82
Gerald A Levano

Jill Goodman (wife of Ted Goodman #333)



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Please forward your deceased members
with photo, obituary, cause of death to:

Secretary@nyvietnamvets.org

membership@vva.org

Lin4456@msn.com

Rev. Phil Salois at National

**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2023**

February 3, 4, 5

April 28, 29, 30

June 16, 17, 18

September 29, 30, Oct. 1

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

I did not want to write this one until after our Executive Board Meeting, we have every December to plan for our activities. So, I am a little loss as what to write because I have our Joe Ingino on my mind. I won't go into all I would say as many others have already and this Interchange will feature Joe, our Gentle Giant. He will be missed.

At our national meeting, we did have a couple of our big issues somewhat resolved. The Camp Lejeune issue I have sent info to all chapters as to what we recommend. If you do not know it should be in this edition or ask your leadership for the info. What we need to do is to hold off on moving to sign up with a law firm until all questions have been resolved. With Congress taking up issue of how much these law firms can charge I see this to go on for long time if you know Congress at all. But VVA does recommend B & M to handle our claims. Also, just so you understand this is not a VA issue and Service Officers cannot file this suite for you. They should be able to advise but not do your claim. It is basically you are suing the Government if you have certain conditions.

The other which is long overdue is our MOU with Veteran Voices of America (VVOA) This is a foundation formed from our Lawyers and Benefits department and committee. and we hope soon that the VA will credential them to file claims. As you know we have a shelf life but no matter if we go away the VVA claims we have, we still are responsible for and we have several hundred thousand of them. As I see it, they would start taking new claims under VVOA and will be asking our clients who have VVA claims in the process to sign new power of attorney from VVA to them. Our VVA Service Officers will be dual accredited with them, and we hope to transfer over a period our claims.

Nothing really changes as it is the same people working your claim now, just be a new name and will have folks to work them when we cannot due as we age. Forget any rumors that are there. We are not giving VVA away and our membership. It has been voted by membership we are the last man organization, and we need to prepare for that day. They are a foundation not a membership organization. They will handle our claims period.

February 4th is our next meeting. We will again have our yearly memorial service to all our deceased members. With Joe Ingino passing it is my hope we have no more for a while, but I do know better than that. So, all take care of yourselves and your spouses as too many of them have left us.

With that I wish all a MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!





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.

JOE INGINO - REST IN PEACE**December 18, 1947—December 5, 2022**

He was born in Queens, NY and raised in Hicksville, NY and graduated from Hicksville High School and resided in Lindenhurst, NY with his lovely wife, Joan. Joe served with the First Infantry Division (Big Red One) from 1969 through 1970 in South Vietnam.



He has been active within Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), a congressionally chartered veteran organization with the Founding Principle of "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another." Has held many positions within the Chapter, former the Southern District Director of VVA-New York State Council overseeing seven local VVA Chapters as well as the Chair of Government Affairs.

His duty station was with the First Infantry Division, in the Dĩ An Army Base camp, located 13 km northeast of Tan Son Nhut Air Base and 12 km southwest of Biên Hòa. He was awarded, the National Defense Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal for his service during the Vietnam Conflict.

After being discharged from military service, he married, Joan, in 1971 and started to live a normal civilian life. Joe has suffered the effect of Agent Orange (AO) that was sprayed around the military base he was stationed in South Vietnam. He has three maladies from his exposure such as prostate cancer, diabetes and heart failure. And who knows what else as the VA is still doing research on the effect of AO.

His wife suffered many miscarriages but eventually they had six children, one of whom lived for only a brief time. Here is a veteran who has suffered the effect of Agent Orange (Toxins) and has transmitted its effects to his children and now to his grandchildren.

Joe has received many awards from the county and state government, including The Nassau County Veteran Service Award, Town of Oyster Bay Medal. He was on the Board of Directors of the New York State Veteran Nursing Home in Stony Brook, NY.

He has dedicated his life to helping those veterans and families in need of VA healthcare and legislations.

He has left us due to his exposure to Agent Orange – Rest In Peace - Brother

Agent Orange Report

Bill Paton – Chair

For those that are not enrolled in the VA healthcare system or have friends that are not. The below article may be of help to getting benefits. PLEASE SHARE.

You might have recently learned that the [PACT Act](#) could impact [your care and benefits](#). But did you know it also expands health care eligibility for many Veterans? The PACT Act began one of the largest expansions of VA benefits in history.

If a Veteran you know hasn't enrolled in VA health care before, here are some details you can share to help them get the care they've earned and deserve:

Vietnam Era Veterans

Vietnam Era Veterans who served in these locations and time periods are eligible to apply for enrollment now:

Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975

Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976

Laos between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969

Certain provinces in Cambodia between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969

Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters) between January 9, 1962, and July 30, 1980

Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

I'm going to be repeating some items from my last issue, by request. If you do not have the last issue of VVA Veteran then again, I would advise you to speak with your VSO, SO or whatever their title is. It is extremely important that this is done correctly.

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 was aptly explained in the last VVA Veteran on page 15. As I am not a Lawyer, don't play one on TV nor am I a Service Officer. I will offer the following advice. You have until August 10th, 2024, to file a claim. It would make sense to me to see my Service Officer, who is not going to take anywhere from 30 to 50% on a claim, for advice and when to file a claim with the government.

Everyone stay well and be safe.

VVA is committed to ensuring that veterans and family members considering filing claims under the *Camp LeJeune Justice Act* are not taken advantage of by bad actors. Accordingly, the VVA Board of Directors took two important actions:

(1) The National Board voted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Bergmann & Moore (B&M), a trusted law firm that has an established partnership with VVA. B&M will offer screening services to VVA members, their friends, and families, to advise them as to whether filing a CLJA claim is in their best interests (because of the offset, some claimants might lose money, depending on their VA rating; and

(2) The VVA National Board enacted the following motion: "To recognize that there are several law firms and organizations seeking to profit from the *Camp LeJeune Justice Act* (CLJA) at the expense of our veterans and **resolve** that no individual from VVA National, State Council, or Chapter should associate, in their official capacity, with a firm seeking to solicit VVA members for CLJA cases without the express approval of VVA's Board of Directors, effective November 10, 2022."

Bill Paton

716-208-5211

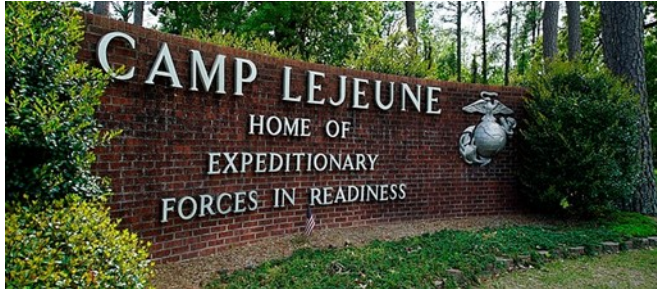
(Continue from pg. 6)

Ned Foote, President of VVA-NYSC sent this report.

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act

**Evaluating and Understanding the Benefits with Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
Ensuring You Understand the “Offset”**

The U.S. Government news about toxicants at have suspected for dec-
Act applies to military vilians who were
ply for at least 30
Dec. 31, 1987. Ex-
Camp Lejeune has
neurological disor-



has recently confirmed the troubling
Camp Lejeune, confirming what many
ades. *The Camp Lejeune Justice*
personnel, their families, and ci-
exposed to the toxic water sup-
days between Aug. 1, 1953, and
posure to the toxic water at
caused multiple forms of cancer,
ders, miscarriage, and death,

among other injuries. Since the passage of the *PACT Act* in August, mass-tort firms all over the country have been saturating the airwaves with advertising offering speedy settlements with no strings attached.

Vietnam Veterans of America and Bergmann & Moore have worked together for nearly 20 years to provide effective legal representation for veterans (at no cost) who have VA disability benefits claims pending in federal court. Since 2010, Bergmann & Moore has successfully represented over 1,100 VVA members and their families in disability appeal claims.

Recently, Vietnam Veterans of America and B&M expanded their long-standing association to include the historic *Camp Lejeune Justice Act*.

Although the *Camp Lejeune Justice Act* potentially offers significant benefits to veterans and their families, these benefits need to be carefully evaluated by a firm that understands VA disability benefits, as the law contains an offset.

We are not a mass tort firm. We are VA disability benefits attorneys who have represented Veterans, widows, and families for 19 years.

Bergmann & Moore is working with Vietnam Veterans of America to ensure veterans and their families understand the offset and will work to ensure a CLJA benefit is not accepted before the claimant understands whether (and to what degree) VA disability benefits or care may be affected.



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(Continue from pg. 7)

Frequently Asked Questions

About Bergmann & Moore and the Service Project

Q: Is Bergmann and Moore accredited by VA?

A: Yes. Bergmann and Moore is managed by former VA attorneys who are accredited by VA.

Q: Will VA benefits I have received reduce an award under the *Camp Lejeune Act*?

A: The language of the CLJA indicates that there will be some sort of offset. It's unclear at this time what that offset will be, however. It appears very likely that an award received under the CLJA will be reduced by the amount of VA disability benefits received pursuant to presumptions of in-service chemical exposure at Camp Lejeune. The extent to which this will happen is unknown, however

Q: Will an award made under the *Camp Lejeune Act* reduce my monthly VA benefits payments?

A: The short answer is that no one knows right now. This is our greatest worry, however – in fact it's why Bergmann & Moore decided we had to be involved in this litigation.

Q: What will Bergmann & Moore do to help prevent my VA and other benefits from being reduced by an award made under the *Camp Lejeune Act*?

A: Although the offset rules aren't even known yet, we're already working with a national firm to create an algorithm to give our clients notice about potential reductions in other benefits they receive. We will also use our experience in VA disability benefits law (we have been devoted to representing veterans and their families for over 20 years) to make sure our clients know of any risks to their current or future VA disability benefits that could occur.

Q: Can I file a VA claim and a (CLJA) tort case?

A: Yes. Bergmann & Moore encourages veterans to file both. To file a VA claim, please reach out to your Vietnam Veterans of America representative.

Q: I have a family member who died at CL. Can I file on their behalf?

A: Yes, survivors and loved ones may also bring suit.

Q: What are attorney fees and costs related to a CLJA claim?

A: We are in support of action by Congress or the Court to reduce the rate that can be charged by any firm. We believe veterans shouldn't be charged unreasonable legal fees – especially ones with added "costs" that can easily amount to over 50 percent of a veteran's award. Our legal fee is, therefore, 33½ percent. Not only is this fee well below the going rate, but we will charge no costs on top of that fee.

Q: When did I need to have been at Camp Lejeune?

A: August 1, 1953 - December 31, 1987

Q: Who can I contact?

A: Marc McCabe at MMcCabe@vetlawyers.com

Q: Where can I learn more?

A: For more information please visit: CampLejeuneLitigationTeam.com/vva/ or call 727-742-3188.

Marc L. McCabe- Bergmann & Moore's Camp Lejeune Spokesperson and Vietnam Veterans of America Liaison

Marc served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division FMF, before being assigned to India Co. 3rd Battalion 9th Marines 3rd Marine Division FMF Vietnam, later serving with Delta Company 3rd Force Recon and later with 2-1-2 2nd CAG 3rd MAF. He also served afloat with 3/9 BLT as well with 34 MAU and 31st MEU during his career. Among his decorations are the Combat Action Ribbon USMC Device, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 4 Bronze star devices and USMC Device, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, Cross of Gallantry (individual award) with Silver Star, Cross of Gallantry with Palm, The US Army Presidential Unit Citation, FMF BADGE, Republic of Vietnam Civic Action Medal, and the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), among others.

Marc has represented over 7,300 veterans before the Board of Veterans Appeal (BVA). He continues to be an advocate for veterans' issues, serving on numerous state and national committees.

I'm a Veteran who believes I was exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, what can VA do for me?

Since 2012, Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, have been eligible for hospital care and medical services for any of 15 illnesses or conditions identified in the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, as amended (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 1710(e)(1)(F)). Veterans are also eligible to enroll in VA health care for other services they may require. Veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members who served at least 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and later developed one of the following eight diseases: Adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and Parkinson's disease, are eligible for disability compensation benefits. For more specifics about VA benefits related to Camp Lejeune contaminated water, to include how to file a claim, visit www.VA.gov/CampLejeune or call 1-800-MyVA411.

What impact does the PACT Act have on Veterans and families who were exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune?

On August 10, 2022, the President signed into law the Honoring our PACT Act (Public Law 117-168). Section 804 of this law is the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 ("CLJA"), which allows new lawsuits for individuals exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. Whether Veterans and family members decide to seek relief under the CLJA is entirely their decision and will not influence VA's decision to provide them benefits or health care based upon their exposure; it also will not affect the amount of benefits or health care VA can provide them. It is important to know, however, that if a Veteran or family member is awarded relief by the court in a lawsuit brought under the CLJA, the award must be offset by the amount of any disability award, payment, or benefit VA provided to the Veteran, family member, or their legal representative relating to exposure to water at Camp Lejeune. This would reduce the amount of the award Veterans or family members receive from the court, but it would not affect their VA benefits.

I'm seeing a lot of commercials about benefits I may be entitled to based on my time at Camp Lejeune. Are these ads connected to VA?

Lawyers, firms, and others have engaged in extensive advertising offering to represent Veterans in CLJA actions. These entities are not connected with VA benefits or services. Be aware that these entities may charge you a fee for legal representation.

Will seeking relief under the CLJA impact my VA benefits or health care?

Your VA compensation benefits or health care services will not be impacted if you file a lawsuit. If you are awarded relief from a CLJA lawsuit, your VA benefits will not be reduced, and your eligibility for other VA benefits or services will not be affected.

Will my court awarded relief (from filing a lawsuit) be impacted by VA benefits and services I already receive?

Yes, potentially. If you already receive VA benefits or services (disability pay or health care services) for conditions related to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, the court awarded relief will be offset by the amount of any disability award, payment, or other benefit VA provided to you related to your exposure at Camp Lejeune.

What if I file for VA disability AFTER I receive an award from my lawsuit brought under CLJA, will VA reduce my benefits as a result?

No. Any action you take or award you receive under the CLJA will not influence VA's decision to provide you benefits or health care based upon your exposure or the amount of compensation you receive from VA.

Western District Report

Bill Paton

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

MASSING OF COLORS

I have been to the Wall over 25 times through the years with Rolling Thunder. I'll never forget the first time seeing the Marine standing there saluting, tears weld up in my eyes and I almost missed the turn on to Constitutional Avenue

This Veterans Day was the most special as I was able to be a part of the Ceremony. Vietnam Veterans of America was asked to provide the Color Guards. There were 33 States represented and the Territory of Puerto Rico. There were also Junior ROTC cadets representing the fine state of Utah. They had raised their own money to be a part of our group.

As I walked around, I didn't see 70 plus year old, but proud service men and woman holding their flags, waiting for their moment to step off and show the American, Pow, and Vietnam Veteran of America Flags. This was no easy task of assembling all. Grant Coates, Vice President of the New York State Council, his wife Kaye, by his side, sadly without a Harley. Grant acting as a subdued Drill Sargent attempting to get everyone in the proper order. NO easy task. Kaye on her part seeming to know ahead of Grants instructions what was needed to be done.

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As for my part, I did what I was asked too to do. It was raining and ponchos were needed. Instructions were handed out and naturally once everyone was all lined up everything came to a standstill. I was standing in front of the second group to go out and one of the flag bearers looked at me and said, "hurry up and wait, same old same old. Grant had ordered clear ponchos as a lot were wearing their medals.

We stepped off the rain had stopped, I remember seeing Chapter 11 from Suffolk County, one of our own, standing tall and proud as they entered the Vietnam Wall area.

It was an honor for me to meet and talk with Vets from across the United States that were there to represent Vietnam Veterans of America. Not one I will soon forget!



VVA Chapter #77 Report

Thom Thompson—President

The year seemed to fly by this year. We have not been extremely busy this last quarter. We had our second chicken barbecue fund raiser early in October and as usual it was a success, except for the cold weather. Next year we have opted for earlier dates, mid September.

I know all of you were probably concerned about Chp. 77 during the western NY/Buffalo November six foot deep snow storm. The chapter never closed as our museum and all inclusive veterans food pantry is situated on the northern edge of the snowbelt dumping a minor one foot of snow.

The food pantry has been busy as usual and we have been receiving many donations from other Veterans organizations. VFW's, Churches, a couple of schools, Tops markets , and the city of Tonawanda Police dept. have all given generously with food and cash to help resupply our pantry. The Chp.77 AVVA does a great job restocking and distributing the pantry items as supplies are brought in. They also raise funds to supply needy veterans children and veterans nursing home bound.



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The City of Tonawanda had started a program to honor an area Veteran each month. This honor has been given to five VVA chapter 77 members since February 2020. February-Joseph Pasek, March-Ronald Pioszki, July-Dale Zdrojewski, November-Paul Pietrowski and December-Daniel Brady. Thank you gentlemen, for your service to the Country and Community.

VVA Chaptier #268 Report

Gordie Bellinger—Treasurer

Vietnam Veterans of America, Niagara County Chapter #268, delivered a check (\$637.50) to the Niagara County Office for the Aging (OFA) this week to cover the cost of meals on Veterans Day for all the almost 90 veterans enrolled in the county's Home Meals program.

Home Delivered Meals Program is a partnership between OFA and Feed More WNY that enables delivery of hot meals to participants' homes, Monday through Friday, year – round. Present for the check were, from left: VVA #268 President Robert Hull and treasurer Gordie Bellinger: OFA's nutrition services coordinator Mindi Doran and Darlene DiCarlo; and Vice President Harry Houghtling.

REGION II Director

Ted Wilkinson



This is your Regional II Director and Membership Chair for VVA-NYSC

Somehow he planned his double knee replacement to coincide with his birthday so that the VA would give him a party, as well, as gifts and cake!

HEALTH ALERT—HEALTH ALERT

Covid 19 “Omicron”, the Flu and Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a contagious virus that is usually mild, but can severely affect the lungs and respiratory airways in older adults.

Please get vaccinated by your VA provider, your primary physician or pharmacy.

RSV symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose
- Congestion
- Headache
- Tiredness

Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz III

I would like to thank the Officers and District Directors that send in their reports in a timely manner. This is the last issue for the year 2022 and I am looking forward for the coming year of 2023 for another fantastic year of work. Out of 28 VVA Chapters only a few send in reports. Yet, they publish a newsletter and have tons of activities that they have done in their areas. Please share those good news with everyone!

Please continue your work in helping veterans receive their VA benefits and compensations. More VVA Chapters are being formed across the country. Yet, they are saying, that we are closing VVA? We are going to be around for a long time. We are not giving up or closing down!

Reminder that in February State Council meeting we will have the Memorial listing of our deceased Chapter membership and spouses.

Remember that we will not have a VVA-NYSC meeting in January this coming year due to sell out of rooms and conference hall. These are the dates for the coming year:

VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2023**February 3, 4, 5****April 28, 29, 30****June 16, 17, 18****September 29, 30, Oct. 1**

Make your room reservations as soon as possible. You can always cancel within 72 hours!

Wishing all a Feliz Navidad, Happy Hanukkah, A Merry Christmas, A Happy Ramadan and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year!

PS Military retirees and disabled veterans will see their monthly checks increase by 8.7% for 2023, thanks to an annual adjustment to the federal [Cost of Living Allowance](#) (COLA) due to inflation. This will be the largest increase since 1981 Retirees saw a 5.9% increase in 2022 and 1.3% in 2021; the annual adjustment has averaged 1.9% for the last 10 years.

www.facesoffreedom.us

Recently was contacted and then interviewed by Walter Schuppe (walter11_22@yahoo.com) 1-860-558-072 at the Palisades Center Mall in conjunction with Mark Woods-(Bridges)

Walter requested for Vietnam Chapter veterans to please contact him for an interview of your service, at a date to be determined your story will be added to www.facesoffreedom.us as a legacy.

Thank you, Roy Tschudy

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(Continue from pg. 13)

National Leadership/Educational Conference Report

Bill Paton

Western District Director

VVA-New York State Council

There were there of us from Chapter 77 of WNY. Tom Thompson, our President. Ed Bodine, Vice Treasurer and myself, Bill Paton, First VP.

I started with Agent Orange, which had 3 presenters. Healthcare and the Aging Veteran. Which was kind of look in the mirror and see what's in store for you and your fellow brothers and sisters.

Chapter Bylaws was great as I was able to see that our by laws were right on. Now that doesn't happen often.

Membership Info and News. Reminder to make sure our forms are up to date and naturally keep working the at large members. We as Veterans must stay active and involved. We do NOT want to become the forgotten ones!

One of the harder, but most important was Suicide Prevention. Too many of our brothers and sisters take theirs lives every day. What we can do to help when it falls in our lap.

One of the most interesting, yet sad, was "Where are the Dead of War."

Grant Coates and Mokie Pratt-Porter put together a presentation that went back in history to the Vietnam War. It was so interesting it ran over into the next seminars time, with questions still unanswered.

This is just a small synopsis of the Conference. Another part is seeing and meeting new brothers and sisters from across the country. Getting new ideas on how to help one another. Will there be another Conference in the future. Not my decision to make. But I will remember this one.

Veterans Incarcerated and In the Justice System Report

Nicholas Valenti—Chair

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2022, I met with the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA). It was just our second meeting in the past twelve months but held promise that more were in the making. Auburn Correctional is slowly but steadily returning to some level of pre COVID normalcy. Our discussions covered a wide range of topics including PTSD counseling, the annual giveaway program, future meeting dates and yarn supplies.

COVID has depleted the yarn supplies at the facility and the crochet squad is in need of supplies to continue their work. New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has not allowed nor will they allow the VGoA to purchase their own yarn. This practice has been in place for some time and has finally taken a toll on the ability of the squad to produce items for their annual giveaway. This group, in order to function, could use as many as sixty (60) skeins per week. The items they produce include toys, , stuffed animals and baby blankets to name a few. This year, there will be no giveaway program at Auburn Correctional.

(Continue on pg. 15)

(Continue from pg. 14)

If we can get supplies donated to the squad, they in turn will produce the items to be donate for the 2023 Giveaway Program. Just as a reminder to all, the banded colors are BLUE, BLACK, GREY, ORANGE and MULTICOLORED yarn.

A second impediment has arisen that will curtail the ability of the VGoA from having its own resources. It's the restrictions put upon them in the selling of instant coffee and the work they did with extension cables and head phones. These used to be items they repaired and sold in the facility and used the revenue to purchase yarn and other supplies that enabled them to make monetary donations to food banks and charitable organizations in the local communities surrounding the facility.

The bottom line, this crochet squad simply cannot function without yarn donations. If you have yarn you wish to donate you can leave a voice message on my home phone 315-252-4535 or email me at nickvalenti46@yahoo.com. There is a third way we can do this. Simply bring your yarn donation to the State Council meeting at Tioga Downs. Just give me a heads up that there will be yarn there. I have made almost every Council meeting for the past ten (ten) years.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

I was sent a very interesting email a little while ago that told the story of the establishment of a Prison Radio. The State of Colorado has allowed for the development of a statewide prison radio station by and for incarcerated people. They call it "Inside Wire." This Prison Radio broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, offering companionship, hope, play and the potential for positive change for creators and audiences alike inside prison.

The Colorado Prison Radio beams music, stories news and entertainment into prisons across Colorado. It also broadcasts its sounds to listeners outside facilities as well.

Want to learn more about "Inside Wire?"

There are three ways to tune in:

Listen on coloradoprisonradio.com (<http://www.coloradoprisonradio.com/>)

Listen on the Inside Wire App for iPhone (<https://apps.apple.com/bh/app/inside-wire/id1609080084>)

Listen on the Inside Wire App for Android (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.radio.mb515ba38c>)

The programs are created by incarcerated media producers for incarcerated listeners. At the same time, Inside Wire invites listeners outside facilities to shift their understanding of prison in the United States.

Meet the team and learn more at Explore Inside Wire (<http://www.coloradoprisonradio.com/>)

Central District Report**Nick Valenti****VVA Chapters #85, #103, #377, #480, #704, #708, #803, #827, #896, #944****Central District Directors' Report**

Nicholas C. Valenti

Since my last report things have not slowed down for me. When the recipients of the Cayuga County Scholarship Program were announced and shared with all of our partners there was a movement to prepare for 2023. I am happy to announce that three of the five partners have already created an account for 2023 and the remaining two have made verbal commitments to have their funds pledged before the end of the calendar year. We are currently contacting Cayuga County School Districts telling them we will be there for the graduating students next year.

On November 10th I had the privilege of attending a High School Veterans Day event in the Village of Weedsport, New York. The Village is located in the Town of Brutus who invited our Chapter #704 to erect the Cayuga County Vietnam Memorial. The Village, School District and Town have shown their support for our men and women in uniform for so many years that I have lost track counting. The High School students put together a Bob Hope style USO show. It was an hour of pure fun. Invitations went out to all veterans in the County. I was very proud to be there with my brothers and sisters from #704 and #377. Food and non-alcoholic beverages were served to all participants and to all in attendance.

On November 11, 2022 I spent Veterans Day at the New York State Department of Corrections Facility in my home town of Auburn, New York. I met for just the second time with the Veteran Group of Auburn (VGoA) the former Vietnam Veterans Incarcerated Chapter #205. They are excited about restarting their regular meeting schedule and rebuilding their crochet squad to pre-pandemic levels.

The Veterans Day weekend was packed with activities. The son of a VVA Chapter #704 member whose name is on our "In Memory" memorial held a Youth Hockey Tournament from November 11th thru November 13th. I was asked to speak at the November 12th games welcoming the players, their families, coaches, event organizers and fans. It was my pleasure to talk about the Dewey Program addressing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and the Expiration of Term of Service (ETS) Program addressing housing, employment and health care needs of active-duty personnel transitioning to civilian life. Both Programs are offered in Cayuga County. I made sure to give high praise to the 1% who protect the 99% and brought home the fact that what you did, where you did it, when you served or your gender did not matter. Serving is what mattered. The net profits of the tournament were donated to our local Veterans Support Fund. I accepted the check on behalf of our County Veterans Service Agency as the Director was unable to attend due to a previously scheduled commitment.

On November 14, 2022 VVA Chapters #704 and #377 paid their respects to one of the original members of Chapter #704 and former Chapter President Thomas Bryant. In attendance were Chapter #704 member Pastor Glynn English – presiding over the service, myself, Chapter #704 Chaplain Jerry Fulmer and current President James Bryant, Tom's brother (along with close family members). We were joined by a VVA Color Guard provided by Chapter #377 President Gary Napieracz. The Dryden Chapter had a full complement of flags and rifles with even more members standing in formation with Chapter #377 Secretary Mike Moran directing the honor Guard. The ceremony took place in Sampson Veterans Cemetery. It was a cold day to have travelled so far to pay their respects to one of our own. I would like to add that #377 and #704 share a close bond given our founder Frank Bell also worked to help establish #377 and Tom Bryant often worked and conferred with Frank back in the days of the founding of the Dryden, New York Chapter. Our Chapters give a special meaning to our motto "NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER." On this day we were one. Something I will always remember.

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I have been working with our Chaplain Jerry Fulmer, Dr. Linda Townsend and the Gold Star and Blue Star Mothers to finalize our planned Memorial in Cayuga County. We sent the approved design to Barnett Memorials, Auburn, New York. It is now a waiting game to get a price and rendition. Unfortunately, there is a nine-month waiting period for the granite - per the supplier. We are waiting anxiously to start fundraising and generating community support.

On the evening of November 28, 2022, I participated on behalf of my Chapter in a zoom meeting with Washington, D.C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund personnel. The meeting was an introductory one which finalized the visiting schedule of "The Wall That Heals." We are very proud to announce that of the 101 applicants who sought to have "The Wall" come to their community, Auburn, New York is one of the 32 chosen. There is going to be a flurry of zoom meeting for the remainder of 2022, with more scheduled in 2023. The preparation is very intense but needed to ensure a successful event. Currently Auburn, New York will see "The Wall" on display from Thursday, September 14th through 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 17th. Mark your calendars, the precise location will be announced in the very near future. We are enjoying the full commitment of the City of Auburn, the site organizers and the County of Cayuga.

The annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony is a go for December 17, 2022. On November 29th we were able finalize the location, National Guard personnel participation, American Legion 21-gun salute, taps, approximately 40 presenters and a free luncheon for all participants.

I would like to send my best wishes to everyone for a safe, and healthy Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

VVA Chapter 377 Report

Gary Napieracz—President

WWI Monument Restoration Has Begun

Work has started on the WWI monument in Cortland Memorial Park. At this point the estimated costs of repair, cleaning and upgrades will be approximately \$40,000 of which \$16,800 has been applied to the project. So, we still need to raise a little over \$23,000 for completion.

Contact Veterans Search and Rescue at 607-423- 9031 for donations to this restoration of one of the symbols of our freedom.

11/11/22 Ceremony at Dewitt Park, Tompkins County War Memorials, Color Guard form up 1030. Member Paul Moore has worked hard with VFW 961 to get this event restarted. Program was discussed.

11/11/22, Dedication Ceremony at Tompkins/Ithaca Airport for a Military/Veterans Courtesy Lounge and a Plaque showing names of Tompkins County Vietnam Casualties. Color Guard by 3:15pm. Start at 3:30pm.

11/11/22, Veterans' Day Watchfire at Living History Center, Cortland. Color Guard form up by 5:15pm, ceremony at 5:30, Fire at 6pm. Thursday

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11/10, 9 am, USO Show at Weedsport High School. All Veterans are invited. If you haven't gone before, it's great! If you never had a "Welcome Home", this is the event! Food too! Contact Prez. Gary for info.

11/12/22, Saturday, p.m., the Belle Tones will be at the Homer Elks Club. They are a WWII/USO type show which gets everyone involved & we've loved seeing in the past. Tickets are \$20, call Elks at 607-423-9031, or check with Prez. Gary.

Charlie Harrington spoke of the Sampson Veterans Cemetery event of "Wreaths Across America" this year. It will be on Saturday 12/17/22 about 1100 am.

National Defense Service Medal Won't Be Awarded After December.

With the end of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq the DOD is preparing to transition the military out of a wartime posture. So the National Defense Service Medal is going back into retirement on Dec. 31. The award which all troops serving since 9/11 have been able to pin on their uniforms after initial training won't be awarded in the foreseeable future.

PTSD VA REPORT

New Veterans Crisis Line Number Now In Operation

You just have to dial 988 then press 1.

You can still use the old number 1- 800-273-8255 if you wish.

VVA National President

Jack McManus

For as long as there have been wars, veterans have suffered traumatic stress symptoms that linger long after their service. Historically, little appreciation had been given to the impact of PTSD on veterans, their families, and their communities.

Veterans of the Vietnam War were the first generation of returning service men and women to be diagnosed with PTSD. Decades of PTSD research following the Vietnam War have been critical in understanding the long-term health effects of warzone service.

This research helps anticipate the long-term needs of veterans of more recent conflicts—including in Iraq and Afghanistan—and informs our nation's policies to better address their health needs and improve access to care.

VVA is committed to sharing resources and full access to quality healthcare for veterans and their families. **Your support makes this work possible. Thank you.**

What Is Moral Injury?

In traumatic or unusually stressful circumstances, people may perpetrate, fail to prevent, or witness events

that contradict deeply held moral beliefs and expectations (1). When someone does something that goes against their beliefs this is often referred to as an act of commission and when they fail to do something in line with their beliefs that is often referred to as an act of omission. Individuals may also experience betrayal from leadership, others in positions of power or peers that can result in adverse outcomes (2). Moral injury is the distressing psychological, behavioral, social, and sometimes spiritual aftermath of exposure to such events (3). A moral injury can occur in response to acting or witnessing behaviors that go against an individual's values and moral beliefs.

In order for moral injury to occur, the individual must feel like a transgression occurred and that they or someone else crossed a line with respect to their moral beliefs. Guilt, shame, disgust and anger are some of the hallmark reactions of moral injury (e.g., 4). Guilt involves feeling distress and remorse regarding the morally injurious event (e.g., "I did something bad."). Shame is when the belief about the event generalizes to the whole self (e.g., "I am bad because of what I did.") (5). Disgust may occur as a response to memories of an act of perpetration, and anger may occur in response to a loss or feeling betrayed (6). Another hallmark reaction to moral injury is an inability to self-forgive, and consequently engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors (e.g., feeling like you don't deserve to succeed at work or relationships).

Moral injury also typically has an impact on an individual's spirituality (7). For example, an individual with moral injury may have difficulty understanding how one's beliefs and relationship with a Higher Power can be true given the horrific event the person experienced, leading to uncertainty about previously held spiritual beliefs.

Morally Injurious Events

Most research to understand moral injury has been with military Service members and Veterans, as the nature of war and combat create situations where people may have experiences that contradict the values they live by in civilian life. Examples of potentially morally injurious events in the context of war include killing or harming others, when officers have to make decisions that affect the survival of others, when medics are not able to care for all who were harmed, freezing or failing to perform a duty during a dangerous or traumatic event (for example, falling asleep on patrol), failing to report an event that violates rules or ethics, engaging in or witnessing acts of disproportionate violence and feeling nothing or exhilaration while causing harm to or killing others.

Even though most research has been with Service members and Veterans, moral injury can occur in the context of many types of traumatic events (3). Studies have shown moral injury among law enforcement officers and civilians experiencing community violence (8,9). Moral injury among health care workers (10,11) may occur if they have to make difficult decisions related to life and death triage or resource allocation or when they believe they should have been able to save a patient's life but were not able to do so. In the time of a health care crisis, health care workers may witness what they perceive to be unjustifiable or unfair acts or policies that may lead to a sense of betrayal. They also may feel guilty about surviving when others are dying or for infecting people with whom they come into contact. Read more about [Moral Injury in Health Care Workers](#)

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Moral Injury and PTSD

There is a great deal of overlap between moral injury and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Both begin with an event that is often life threatening or harmful to self or others. Guilt and shame are core features of moral injury and are also symptoms of PTSD. The betrayal and loss of trust that could be experienced with moral injury are also common features of PTSD. For example, someone who was assaulted by a loved one may feel betrayed and have difficulty trusting others, whether or not they also suffered moral injury or PTSD.

In regard to differences between the two, PTSD includes additional symptoms such as hyperarousal that are not central to moral injury. Although the core features of moral injury overlap with symptoms and common features of PTSD, it is possible to have moral injury and not meet criteria for PTSD (12). In addition, distress from morally injurious events can lead to different symptom profiles than distress from traumatic events that elicit a fear-based reaction. For example, one study found that perpetration-based events (events where someone perpetrated an act outside of one's values) were associated with more re-experiencing, guilt, and self-blame than were life threatening traumatic events (13). Reporting perpetration is also associated with greater suicidal ideation, even after adjusting for PTSD, depression and substance use (14).

Having moral injury in addition to PTSD is associated with greater PTSD and depression symptom severity and greater likelihood of suicidal intent and behaviors (12,15,16). Studies that have evaluated core features of moral injury (e.g., guilt and shame related to trauma) have also found these to be associated with more severe PTSD, depression, and functional impairment (17,18).

Assessing Moral Injury

There are several self-report questionnaires to assess moral injury in regard to military and war-related experiences. Some are checklists of potentially morally injurious events (e.g., killing others). Some also ask about reactions common to moral injury such as guilt, shame, and betrayal. Examples of these assessments include the 20-item Moral Injury Questionnaire (MIQ, 19), which assesses exposure and frequency of events Service members may experience in war. A modified version also includes common reactions such as guilt, shame, difficulty forgiving self and others, and withdrawal (20). The 9-item Moral Injury Events Scale (MIES, 21), asks about war-related events that include perpetration by self, by others and betrayal. The 17-item Expression of Moral Injury Scale (EMIS, 22) asks about the experience of self- and other-directed moral emotions related to military experiences.

Another option for measuring moral injury is to assess its core features. For example, the Trauma-Related Guilt Inventory (23) measures feelings and beliefs regarding guilt related to a traumatic event. The Trauma Related Shame Inventory (24) measures shame related to a traumatic event. A benefit of these measures is that they have been validated with non-military samples and the items are not military specific.

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Treating Moral Injury

It can be difficult for patients to share morally injurious events because of the feelings of guilt and shame associated with them. Therapy may be the first time patients share the story, so they may be concerned about a therapist's reactions. They may wonder "Am I being judged? Is my therapist disgusted with me? Is this too much for my therapist to handle?" It is important for therapists to convey an accepting, non-judgmental, empathic stance. It is also important for therapists to stay alert to their own presumptions about perpetration, morals, values and spirituality. Moral injury may lead patients to believe that they do not deserve to feel better which could negatively affect how much patients engage in and comply with treatment. Self-sabotaging behavior in therapy or other facets of life such as in work or relationships may be clues to a moral injury that has not yet been disclosed. Thus, therapists should assess for such beliefs and address them in therapy.

Surprisingly little is known about whether PTSD treatment reduces moral injury, likely because until recently there have not been assessments appropriate for measuring change in moral injury. Researchers have hypothesized that trauma-focused PTSD treatment such as Prolonged Exposure (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) can be effective for patients with moral injury (25,26). In PE, patients have the opportunity for emotional processing and to gather context that helps them make sense of the trauma through imaginal and in-vivo exposure. They have the chance to reconnect with important values through in-vivo exposures. CPT is designed to help patients work through beliefs that generally underlie guilt, shame, and betrayal such as that the patient should have done something differently during the trauma. CPT also addresses beliefs about the self, such as "I am unforgivable," and beliefs around betrayal and trust. Thus, both treatments can target the core components of moral injury.

Some studies have shown that trauma-focused PTSD treatment such as PE and CPT effectively reduce trauma-related guilt and shame (e.g., 27,28), although one study found that trauma-related guilt was likely to endure following PE and CPT (29). A possible explanation for the discrepant findings regarding guilt is that traumatic events other than those that cause guilt or moral injury may have been the focus of treatment. It is common for people with PTSD to have experienced

more than one traumatic event in their lifetime, so it is possible that the traumatic event(s) processed in therapy were not the ones that involved trauma-related guilt. It is also common for patients to not share their worst traumatic event for fear of being judged, subsequently "testing the waters" with another event. In this case, a patient may not have had the opportunity to gather corrective information that could help to alleviate their guilt. There is also evidence that some individuals may need additional treatment to address moral injury specific concerns (e.g., self-forgiveness) that may require more honed and specialized treatment (30).

There are also new treatments under investigation that specifically target moral injury or its core components. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy adapted for moral injury (31) (Continue on pg. 22)

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is a 12-session group treatment focusing on helping patients live in accordance with values. Adaptive Disclosure (32) is a 12-session individual treatment that helps patients process moral injury through imaginary dialogue with a compassionate moral authority, by apportioning blame, making amends and in some versions, self-compassion and mindfulness meditations. The Impact of Killing intervention (33) is a 10-session individual therapy that helps patients explore the functional impact of not forgiving oneself, develop a forgiveness plan (e.g., including letter writing to the individual(s) killed) and helps patients develop an amends plan to honor the values that were violated in the act of killing. It is intended to be a phased treatment delivered after PTSD treatment. Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction Therapy (5) is a 6-session individual therapy that helps patients identify and evaluate beliefs such as hindsight bias and responsibility that contribute to guilt and shame, identify important values including those that were violated during the trauma, and make a plan to live in line with those values going forward. Building Spiritual Strength (34) is an 8-session group therapy that can be led by a chaplain and addresses concerns about relationship with a Higher Power as well as challenges with forgiveness.

Each of these novel treatments has trials in progress with Service members or Veterans that will inform whether they are effective in reducing moral injury. If these treatments are effective, it will be important to understand how they compare to PTSD treatments in reducing PTSD and moral injury among patients who have both and who may benefit most from which treatment. It also will be critically important to learn more about moral injury from traumatic events other than war.

Conclusion

Moral injury can occur in reaction to a traumatic event in which deeply held morals or values are violated. The resulting distress may lead to PTSD, depression, and other disorders in which feelings such as guilt, shame, betrayal and anger are predominant, although these feelings may occur in the absence of a formal disorder. Although most research that has been conducted has focused on military Veterans, moral injury can occur outside of the military context.

The attention that moral injury has received over the past decade shows that the concept resonates with individuals who have experienced a morally injurious event as well as with clinicians and researchers. A biopsychosociospiritual model has been recommended as a framework for obtaining the knowledge needed in order to understand and address moral injury in treatment (3).

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Inspire change

End Racism

Accept Diversity/Differences

Eastern District Report**Sam Hall****VVA Chapters #8, #49, #79, #140, #333, #541, #869****VVA Chapter #49 Report**

Dan Griffin – Executive Director

Since January we have given kitchen & bath kits to seventeen former homeless vets; these kits consist of a set of four dishes & silverware, pots, pans, toaster, coffee maker, bowls etc. And for the bathroom; shower curtain, towels, washcloths, bath mat and wastepaper basket.

Also in December we will send our annual Scholarship kits to the Schools in Westchester County, every year we give six \$1,000.00 Scholarships to children and grandchildren of veterans

VVA Chapter #333 Report

Roy Tschudy

Below is the proposed dates for our teaching program VN Memories, Stories Left At The Wall. As we get closer we will have the class times, etc.

March 2023 schedule

March 13-17, 2023 Vietnam Memories, Stories Left At The Wall Nanuet High School

March 13 full Assembly 9-12grade

March 14-17 grades 11-12 teaching in the museum Felix Festa Middle School

March 22 – 30 March 22nd Auditorium presentation

March 23, 27, 28, 29, 30 Library presentation

December 05 1964**Army Captain awarded first Medal of Honor for action in Vietnam**

The first Medal of Honor awarded to a U.S. serviceman for action in Vietnam is presented to Capt. Roger Donlon of Saugerties, [New York](#), for his heroic action earlier in the year

Captain Donlon and his Special Forces team were manning Camp Nam Dong, a mountain outpost near the borders of Laos and North Vietnam. Just before two o'clock in the morning on July 6, 1964, hordes of Viet Cong attacked the camp.

He was shot in the stomach, but Donlon stuffed a handkerchief into the wound, cinched up his belt, and kept fighting. He was wounded three more times, but he continued fighting—manning a mortar, throwing grenades at the enemy, and refusing medical attention.

The battle ended in early morning; 154 Viet Cong were killed during the battle. Two Americans died and seven were wounded. Over 50 South Vietnamese soldiers and Nung mercenaries were also killed during the action.

Once the battle was over, Donlon allowed himself to be evacuated to a hospital in Saigon. He spent over a month there before rejoining the surviving members of his Special Forces team; they completed their six-month tour in Vietnam in November and flew home together.

In a [White House](#) ceremony, with Donlon's nine surviving team members watching, President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) presented him with the Medal of Honor for

“conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty.” Donlon, justifiably proud of his team, told the president, “The medal belongs to them, too.”

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

VVA Chapter #82 Nassau County

Richard Guevara - 1st Vice President

On October 28 we provided the color guard for the North Hempstead Chamber of Commerce annual meeting.

On October 31 VVA member Arturo Edwards led the “Pledge of Allegiance” at the October 31 Town of Oyster Bay legislative meeting.

On November 7 members of Chapter participated in the Veterans Day Parade in New York City.

On the same day members of the Chapter provided the firing detail and spoke at the Hicksville Veterans Day ceremony.

On November 9 we provided the color guard to the Nassau County “Salutes Women Veterans Past and Present” ceremony.

On December 5 our color guard opened the Town of Oyster Bay's holiday celebration at the Tillis Center.

On December 7 our color guard and members of our chapter provided the color guard for the Dropping of the Roses ceremony. These roses were loaded on a plane in Farmingdale and dropped off the waters of the Statue of Liberty in remembrance of Pearl Harbor.

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Color Guard & Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena

Jennifer DeSena was elected the 38th Supervisor of the Town of North Hempstead in November 2021, her first time holding elective office. Before seeking elective office, Supervisor DeSena was an attorney and a leader of nonprofit organizations supporting family health and safety



Veterans Day Parade in NYC

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration

We are excited to announce a new **VWC Honorary Partner** distinction being conferred to organizations made up solely of those who **bore the battle** of the Vietnam War (i.e., Vietnam Veterans of America state councils and chapters), or those **who bore the loss** (i.e., Sons & Daughters in Touch ... Vietnam War Gold Star children)

Veterans and Legislative Affairs

A Single Tooth Points to Soldier Who Died on His Birthday in Vietnam

Chief Warrant Officer Larry Zich turned 24 on the last day of his life, recounts Wyatt Olson in a December 5 story for *Stars and Stripes*. On his birthday, April 3, 1972, Zich was copiloting a Huey helicopter that crashed somewhere in South Vietnam. Searchers were unable to find the crash site, and the remains of Zich and the other three crew members were never found. Last month, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency notified Zich's next of kin that the young soldier had been accounted for using the sole remains in its possession for more than three decades: a single wisdom tooth.

RAISING YOUR VA COMPENSATION RATES

As the cost of living goes up, VA ensures that your benefit rates do too! Starting Jan. 1, 2023, all compensation benefit rates have increased by 8.7% to match adjustments made to Social Security benefits. This increase impacts disability benefits [3], clothing allowance, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), as well as other VA assistance programs. If you receive VA compensation benefits, learn your new rates today.

SUPPLEMENT YOUR PENSION WITH AID AND ATTENDANCE

Did you know that VA's Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits [9] can increase your pension payments to support the additional care you need? If you need help with daily activities, or if you are housebound, you may qualify for an increased VA pension to help pay for in-home care, assisted living, or a nursing home.

NDAA FY2023 Appropriations

On Tuesday December 6, the House is scheduled to consider the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776, the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among many other provisions, the bill addresses military child development centers, military sexual assault, and Department of Defense recruiting efforts for women.

The bill is expected to authorize spending close to \$847 billion in fiscal 2023, which was the Senate Armed Services Committee's recommendation. Another nearly \$11 billion for defense is authorized by other committees, for a likely total of closer to \$858 billion. However, no word on the movement of any other FY23 Appropriation bills which are part of the continuing resolution set to expire on Dec 16, 2022, to fund the federal government.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Watch the VA Secretary's last press conference for 2022. The Secretary discussed the importance of the VA Vet Centers, extension of VA life insurance to all veterans, updated initiatives to house homeless veterans, and PACT Act payment for partial compensation benefits when processed in January 2023. Click on link to watch [\(1519\) VA Secretary press conference, Thursday, December 1, 2022 -](#)

YouTube

VA to Host Town Halls for “PACT Act Week of Action”: VA will be hosting 90+ town hall events to discuss new eligibility and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances while in service. These events will take place in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia the week of December 10-17, dubbed by VA as the “PACT Act Week of Action.” These sessions will provide veterans and survivors of toxic-exposed veterans with needed information and resources such as potential eligibility, help enrolling in benefits, and claims assistance. Click on the Link to find a town hall meeting near you. [VA to host town halls for Veterans, families during 'PACT Act Week of Action' - VA News](#)

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House Veterans Affairs Committee

The House of Representatives passed five bills to support and honor veterans by expanding maternal healthcare for women veterans, increasing outreach and access for tribal veterans, expanding clothing benefits for disabled veterans and improving long-term healthcare options for veterans. House Passes 5 Bills to Honor and Support Veterans and their Families | The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

On Tuesday, December 6, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold an oversight hearing entitled, "Transitional Housing Reform: Examining the Future of the VA Grant and Per Diem Program." The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

On Wednesday, December 7, the full Committee will hold a hearing entitled, "Fulfilling our Pact: Ensuring Effective Implementation of Toxic Exposure Legislation." The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

VVA provides resources and guidance for homeless and at-risk veterans applying for benefits—many of whom don't even know they qualify for help. We work with local agencies across the country to provide transitional housing referrals for veterans experiencing homelessness.

As the temperatures drop, many homeless veterans will struggle to survive the long winter ahead. We're doing all we can. But I'm also asking for your help.

Your gift will be put to immediate use, furthering our essential work on behalf of veterans—who especially need our support this time of year.

Your generosity helps build powerful support systems to assist veterans and remind them that they are not alone in their struggle to access housing assistance, healthcare services, and social services, as well as resources for coping with PTSD, TBI, substance abuse, and service-related toxic exposure.

Suicide among veterans is a persistent national challenge despite increased federal and state attention.

Many predicted that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate behavioral health and related challenges for the veteran population and increase suicide rates, but newly released data show that veteran suicide rates in New York State have stabilized in recent years.

Yet suicide rates among veterans are still significantly worse than they were 15 years ago. And warning signs on the horizon suggest that progress is fragile and the recent stabilization of veteran suicide rates could be fleeting.

This data brief examines the latest data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other sources to explore the current state of veteran suicide in New York State and nationally.

Key Takeaways:

The rate of veteran suicide in New York State appears to have stabilized in recent years, but warning signs suggest that progress is fragile.

Suicide rates among veterans are twice as high as among the civilian population.

Younger veterans (ages 18–54) experience the highest rates of suicide.

New York veterans have had a dramatic increase in firearm use for suicide.

Click on link:

<https://nyhealthfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/veteran-suicide-in-new-york-state-the-latest-trends-dec-2022.pdf>

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Who is eligible to get a free Military Lifetime Pass as a veteran?

For purposes of this program, a veteran is identified as an individual who has served in the US Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and is able to present one of the following forms of identification to get the Interagency Military Lifetime Pass when entering a national park:

Unexpired Department of Defense Identification Card (DD Form 2, DD Form 2765, or Next Generation USID replacement)

Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)

Veteran ID Card

Veterans designation on a state-issued US driver's license or identification card

Vietnam through my lens

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PRESS More Use tab to navigate through the menu items. Written & performed by Stu Richel A soldier's reflective journey as a combat photographer, through Vietnam and beyond. © 2017 LSNelson Productions

TWELVE COMMANDMENTS FOR SENIORS

Great for older seniors -- especially the rule following the 12th Commandment. That's an absolute fact!

TWELVE COMMANDMENTS FOR SENIORS:

#1 - Talk to yourself. There are times you need expert advice

#2 - "In Style" are the clothes that still fit.

#3 - You don't need anger management. You need people to stop pissing you off.

#4 - Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

#5 - The biggest lie you tell yourself is, "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."

#6 - "On time" is when you get there.

#7 - Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it sure does muffle the sound.

#8 - It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller.

#9 - Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

#10 - Growing old should have taken longer.

#11 - Aging has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.

#12 - You still haven't learned to act your age and hope you never will.

... And one more:

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house

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POW/MIA/Veterans Initiative Committee Report**Grant T. Coates – Chair**

I was extremely gratified to see the announcement on October 27 by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency that U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Sanford I. Finger, of Miami Beach, Florida, who was killed during the Vietnam War, was accounted for on August 23.

Finger was assigned to the Army Air Force Regional Exchange, as the manager of the An Son Post Exchange, in October 1971. Less than a month later, on Oct. 26, Finger was lost when the CH-47B Chinook helicopter in which he was a passenger went down over water in bad weather while flying from Tuy Hoa to Cam Ranh Bay. Remains of four of the ten soldiers on board were recovered during search-and-rescue operations following the crash, but Finger was not accounted for.



Recovery attempts were made in 1974 when divers from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center investigated what was believed to be the crash site, but their search was unsuccessful. Several investigation-and-recovery efforts took place between 1994 and 2021. Then, in June 2021, a recovery mission discovered possible human remains and material evidence.

To identify Finger's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as material and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA and autosomal DNA analysis.

Finger's name is inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and listed on the American Battle Monuments Commission's Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, along with others who are unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

We thank the DPAA and the government of Vietnam for their tireless work in this mission.

THE WORK CONTINUES

1,582 Americans are now listed by DPAA as missing and unaccounted from the Vietnam War:

Vietnam – 1,242

Laos – 285

Cambodia – 48

Peoples Republic of China territorial waters – 7

A joint investigation team conducted a series of investigations and surveys in Vietnam, after which two sets of remains from unilateral turnovers were repatriated. In August, DPAA worked with one host nation team to conduct last-known-alive advance work investigating seven incidents involving nine unaccounted-for servicemen; additional work on these cases is in progress. DPAA funded a short-notice host nation

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recovery team in August after a Vietnamese landowner recovered aircraft wreckage, possible human remains, and life-support items while digging in a shrimp pond. In late May, a DPAA detachment in Thailand conducted a repatriation ceremony at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, ensuring the proper transfer of material evidence and possible remains recovered in northern Thailand.

The Vietnam War Identification Project (VWIP) produced two first-time identifications this quarter. In addition, three more partial identifications were produced, bringing the FY2022 total to seven. To date, 40 individual collections of possible human remains and materials have been closed, and 25 new accessions have been added to VWIP. Of the new cases, eight contain possible human remains and the rest include material evidence and life support.

Joint field operations in Laos have increased. Laos began authorizing an increased number of U.S. personnel in the country, allowing ground transportation to accessible sites, and is working with a private company to provide reliable, smaller-scale helicopter support to gain access to remote sites.

Vietnamese witnesses are also being allowed to participate, resulting in joint U.S.-Lao-Vietnamese operations. The Lao government authorized two additional officials to work year-round with DIA's Stony Beach POW/MIA specialist, who works in-country full time.

ACCOUNTABILITY

At the end of the Vietnam War, there were 2,583 Americans classified as prisoners, missing, or killed in action/body not recovered. Today, the Department of Defense lists 1,582 Americans as missing and unaccounted-for, 90 percent of them in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos where Vietnamese forces operated during the war.

VVA's Veterans Initiative Program needs your help. Objects taken from the battlefields of Vietnam are more than souvenirs or war trophies. Maps, stories, after-action reports, pictures, and military items may have a story that could result in finding the location of missing war dead.

Contact the Veterans Initiative at:

Veterans Initiative Program
Vietnam Veterans of America
8719 Colesville Rd., Suite 100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
vi@vva.org

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Military Moral Injury

Rev. Dr. Fred Miller

U.S. Air Force Veteran

The Department of Veterans Affairs reports 20 veterans commit suicide every day. It is important to note that about 8 out of the 20 veterans were under the treatment of the V.A. The report goes on to state that its not just the veterans returning from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who are taking their own lives. Approximately 65 percent of all veteran suicides are by individuals fifty years and older who have had little or no exposure to the most recent conflicts. Those veterans fifty and older are mostly from the Vietnam War. They also report that the suicide rate in our active duty military has increased 150 percent since 2001. An estimated 30 percent of those veterans in combat came home with a mental problem. A number of non-combat veterans also suffer from stress to the extent where they are among those that commit suicide. In addition the divorce rate among veterans has increased at a large rate. In order to help them and reduce the number of suicides one first has to understand the course of the problems. Thus we need to start by looking at the wars our country has been involved in.

First and very important is the fact that from the Civil War through the Korean War both sides wore uniforms. In addition there were definite front lines of the battles most of the time. Thus the enemy was obvious. War historians found some strange facts, for instance many soldiers did not fire their weapons. In the Civil War many of the muzzleloaders had been found that their weapons were double-loaded up to four times, indicating that soldiers incorrectly reloaded their weapons rather than shoot at the enemy. It has been asserted that less than 25 percent of America's soldiers fired their weapons in World War II. During the Korean War approximately 50 percent of the soldiers fired their weapons. There are numerous explanations for the low fire rates, including lack of experience, having no target and fear. One of the main reasons is that man s instinctually averse to killing. While there is some disagreement about the percentage that pulled the trigger, it is clear that many soldiers were unable to do it when they had another human being in their sights. Because of this the military changed its approach to training to incorporate more desensitization, including shooting humanlike targets rather than bull's eyes.

In the World Wars there were large numbers of troops that went and returned on transport ships together. The trip took weeks allowing them time to debrief each other. With the Vietnam War and the present wars, the troops travel in much smaller groups by airplanes and the trip is made in hours so they don't have much time to debrief each other. In addition the enemy is not wearing a uniform and there are no true battle lines. The fighting has shifted from battle lines to street fighting known as Guerrilla Warfare. A very important fact that needs to be considered here is that many of those in combat that were and are Conscientious objectors.

With the Vietnam War several important changes started to take place in warfare that increased moral injury. First was the factor that the enemy was no longer in uniform. In addition there were no real front lines of battle. The major principle of a "just War" does not exist. That principle is discrimination between combatants and civilians. Thus the war involved guerrilla tactics, city warfare and non-uniformed civilian enemy forces. This resulted in that many of the troops did not have the choice of just shooting the enemy. Instead it was shoot and kill or be shot and killed. In many cases they saw the enemy they

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shot fall dead or their dead bodies shortly after the shooting. They also had to throw a grenade into a house where the enemy was shooting from and later discover that there were others including women and children also in the house. These facts caused many of our troops to develop a very strong feeling of guilt that developed into PTSD and/or Moral Injury. The moral injury increased when they returned home to be met by the public spitting on them and calling them baby killers. The present Iraqi and Afghanistan war is causing even more moral injury. Again the enemy is in civilian clothes, and they now include women and

children. In many cases a woman or child tries to enter an area where are troops are with a bomb strapped to their body. A soldier spotting the wires of the bomb has no choice but to shot and kill them or be killed with his fellow troops if the bomb explodes close to them. Unfortunately that soldier who shot and killed the bomb carrier is often left with the picture of killing a woman or child, not including the fact that he saved his fellow troops lives.

Post Traumatic Stress is the result of a near death experience or witnessing a tragic event such as your fellow troops being blown up or killed. Moral Injury is mental injury cause by being forced to do or witness things against your moral values. Such as the killing or harming others, witnessing death, failing to prevent immoral acts of others, or giving or receiving orders from authority that are against ones moral values. Up until 1980 the above were referred to in the military as Shell Shock, War Neuroses, or Battle Fatigue. The term Post Traumatic Stress was introduced in 1980 and has replaced those terms. If the symptoms continue for a couple months it becomes classified as a disorder (PTSD). The veterans labeled with PTSD are afraid to seek help because of the term "Disorder" which indicates that they have a mental disorder and are labeled crazy.

Unfortunately there is still no official separation between PTSD and Moral Injury. To put it in civilian terms there is no difference between the men in combat afraid to die (those with PTSD) from those who suffer from Moral Injury and no longer feel live is worth living. Moral Injury can occur when a personal moral code – one's understanding of "what's right" – is violated. Most of us develop this code in childhood based on instructions from parents, teachers and religious leaders. The difference between PTSD and Moral Injury is important. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is fear-based. Moral Injury is not. Therefore the treatment is very different. Treating a patient with Moral Injury the same as PTSD will increase the injury. While medications can relieve the fear factor they do not work with the shame or guilt in Moral Injury. In addition reliving the incident with Moral Injury can cause greater shame and guilt.

Up until 2014 the military services, not surprisingly, were reluctant to discuss moral injury, as it goes to the heart of military operations and the nature of war. The Army is producing new training videos aimed at preparing soldiers to absorb moral shocks long enough to keep them in the fight. The Navy refuses to use the term, referring instead to "inner conflict."

Only one small program, based at the San Diego Naval Medical Center routinely provides therapy designed for moral injury. Several clinicians launched the program early in 2013 after realizing that many of their PTSD patients needed a different kind of help. Recent articles from the VA's PTSD committee are acknowledging the difference between PTSD and Moral Injury and that the treatment is completely different.

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The veterans are afraid that they will lose their job or be unable to get a job if labeled with a mental disorder or crazy which even if cured will not go away. So the veterans often seek self treatment such as alcohol or drugs or both.

Moral Injury like PTSD often does not always develop its symptoms right away. True some servicemen will show symptoms right away and be admitted to the hospital, or some commit suicide. In many cases the injury is buried in the back of the mind for long periods of time. Those that do not show symptoms at time of discharge from the service or within two years of discharge are presently not eligible for claims of disability connected to military service. Yet the actual symptoms may not show for years. Often the Veteran will come home, find a job and become very involved in the job and family. All the Veterans time and mind are devoted to the job and family. When the job or family became boring or lost the Veteran's mind and thinking often goes into a guilt complex, which builds up to where they recall the guilt or shame problems from their active duty. For example, a Veteran walked into a local church and told

the minister that he wanted to confess to killing five people. In counseling the Veteran the minister was informed that the Veteran had thrown a grenade into a hut that a sniper was shooting from and that when he later looked into the hut he found not only the sniper but four family members all dead. Thus the killing the Veteran was confessing to took place some forty years prior. As stated previously with the Iraq and Afghanistan war the enemy is not only in civilian clothes, includes women and children. But it is common for the enemy to tie bombs to the waist of the women or children and send them into areas where our troops are located. To save the platoon one of our troops has to shoot and kill them. That soldier has to face the fact that he killed a child, even though he saved his fellow troops.

Recalling those experiences brings back the guilt and shame which he faced when they first occurred. The shame and guilt can continue to build and the memories get stronger over time. This leads to depression, anxiety, emotional numbing, anger, and a feeling of questioning the meaning of life. Veterans often try to control the emotions by self medicating with alcohol or drugs. They become unstable and isolate themselves. They have difficulty trusting others and there is sleep disturbances. This is why suicide becomes common as they see no other options open for them.

Symptoms and Helping the Veteran to recovery

It is up to us fellow veterans and our religious leaders to help our Veterans suffering from moral injury to recover. Please do not misunderstand me, the VA medical centers and doctors are very important in the medical care and cure of our veterans. The problem is that in most cases the veteran suffering from PTSD or Moral Injury will not seek help. That becomes our job, to get them to the final help that they need. In addition to actually driving them to a VA hospital or church we need to befriend them, remember the buddy system or peer to peer works.



Start the best treatment for Moral Injury is by the support with other veterans, either one on one or in a group. Listening is important. If possible have the veteran tell his story, or write his story. As stated before the cause of the Moral Injury is the killing of the enemy or witnessing an act against their moral beliefs. At that point you can explain some Scriptures to him. First and most important is explaining the Commandment “You shall not kill.” However, the Commandment is “You shall not Murder.” (Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17) That the Hebrew language employs several words to express the idea, *to kill*. The verb used here can only mean murder. Murder is a crime, while killing is done with some form of justification, such as being directed to do *so in* war, or to save you or someone else’s life. Ecclesiastes 3:3 states “a time to kill and a time to heal” and in Verse 8 “a time for war ad a time for peace.”

For example Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew he killed him. Yet God called him to lead His people. (Exodus 2:1-12) In Exodus 17:4-13 Moses orders Joshua to war against the Analects to save his people. Just about everybody knows the story of David and Goliath. There was a war between Israel and the Philistines. The Philistines had a champion named Goliath who the Israel fighters were all afraid of and would not fight. David a very young man runs toward the battle line to meet Goliath. Then he kills Goliath with a stone from his sling. He then cuts off Goliath’s head. The Philistines saw this and ran. David not only becomes a king, but in the book of Matthew we are told that Jesus is the son of David and Abraham. comes from the line of David.(Matthew 1:1 Then in Acts 7:57-60, 8:1 Paul witnesses and approves of the stoning of Stephen, but still God makes Paul one of His top apostles. This, even though Moses, David and even possibly Paul killed someone they did not murder them. In Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 Jesus is asked by a Roman centurion to heal his servant. From the description given by the centurion he is a high ranking Roman officer. The Roman army was known for flogging and beating Jews as well as followers of Jesus to death, yet Jesus accepts him as a man of faith. It is also important to point out that there is only one sin that God will not forgive and that is rejecting the Holy Spirit. So even if the acts were a sin God will forgive them! It is important to be aware of the fact that even though God is forgiving and will forgive sin the veteran may not be able to forgive his own sin, even if it is not really a sin.

That often takes time and therefore is important that the peer to peer continues.

It is also important to get the veteran to become active in the community and for the community to welcome him. Have the work in the churches food panty or kitchen or other community projects where they are helping other people. This will help them to repent their ill feelings.

Let me first explain how the Suffolk County American Legion got involved in helping Veterans suffering from PTSD. In 2013 as a chaplain on post 1533 in Mastic Beach I became aware of the suicides of the veterans and military personnel. I started a program in the post where veterans could reach out to others in a peer to peer program to help prevent the suicides. The program was immediately picked up by the County American Legion and I was appointed as chairman of the PTS committee. We started the program meeting in posts but after meeting with the doctors at the VA hospital we then moved the program from the posts into the churches. We then discovered that the suicides resulted more from Moral Injury rather than from PTSD. Thus the move into the churches was the right move for the help the Veterans in need. Moral Injury can be better treated in the church than in the hospital and that the clergy are the best for that treatment. Actually the VA National Center for PTSD report Volume 23, No. 1 back in 2012 states; “Study of participants also made important suggestions about ways to repair moral injury; these can be categorized into spiritually directed, socially directed and individually directed interventions. This last point emphasizes that in addition to traditional individual-based therapies, interventions

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for moral injury should be considered across multiple disciplines (e.g., involving spiritual leaders).

The Suffolk County, New York American Legion established a program to reach out and help our fellow veterans. A simple outline of that program is as follows;

Form a committee in the American Legion at a county or equivalent level to oversee and direct the program.

Offer training to both the American Legion members and the Auxiliary. It may be possible for the VA to have a training program that can be used. The program we use is the one offered by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation's.

Setup roundtable meetings in the church starting with the veterans that belong to the church and two to four trained Legionnaires. The meeting is confidential and what is said there must remain there. The floor is open to anyone that wants to tell their story.

After a couple of meetings the church and Legion will continue to work together to invite veterans from the neighborhood to the meetings. Tell the newcomers what's on the agenda. Those who have experienced traumatic wounds have more anxiety if they don't know what is coming next. So give them a general idea of what is planned for the meeting.

Warm-up sharing, or having someone to share their testimony or story, or show a video clip.

Then just go around the room allowing everyone to share their story or problems. However, do not let anyone else take control of the meeting. But the leaders are not there to give a lecture either, but to guide the group.

The meeting should only be an hour in length and should start and end with a prayer.

We have presently setup church meetings in four churches; Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Aquebogue on the first Thursday of the month starting at 7:00PM, in Harbor Church in Center Moriches on the second Thursday of every month starting at 7:00PM; Messiah Lutheran Church in Setauket the second Thursday every month starting at 7:00PM and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Centereach the fourth Thursday every month starting at 7:00PM. We are hoping to sign up at least 25 churches by the end of the year.

Again let me stress that they are afraid to seek medical help because of the stigma. Therefore, they will not talk to a doctor or any other official about their problem. However, they will talk to a fellow veteran. Thus the peer to peer or veteran to veteran program in your church and help these and other veterans with other problems. If you can prevent one suicide the program is more than worth the effort. But be assured you will be helping your veterans who were willing to endanger their lives to insure your freedom.

1: Litz, Brett T., Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, Shira Maguen, Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29, 2009, pp. 695-706.



Membership Affairs Committee
Winter 2022 Report
Ted Wilkinson, Chair

Monthly and Yearly Growth Percentages

New York State VVA			
Monthly	Oct2022	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	6218	6231	0.20%
Yearly	Nov2021	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	6267	6231	-0.57%

National VVA			
Monthly	Oct 2022	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	89,180	89,318	0.16%
Yearly	Nov2021	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	89,104	89,318	0.24%

New York State AVVA			
Monthly	Oct2022	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	700	709	1.3%
Yearly	Nov2021	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	699	709	1.4%

National AVVA			
Monthly	Oct2022	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	10,184	10,205	0.21%
Yearly	Nov2021	Nov2022	% +/-
Growth	9,910	10,205	2.98%

Top 24 VVA Chapters In Membership

Rank	Chapter	State	Members		Rank	Chapter	State	Members
1	172	MD	955		13	941	ND	442
2	862	PA	906		14	317	MO	428
3	203	TN	880		15	137	TX	401
4	1036	FL	874		16	299	IL	384
5	154	MI	800		17	628	WV	378
6	77	NY	695		18	165	WA	373
7	1067	AL	663		19	227	VA	364
8	20	NY	615		20	12	NJ	359
9	391	CA	608		21	49	NY	352
10	451	MD	536		22	295	IN	349
11	11	NY	520		23	47	CA	343
12	1054	SD	491		24	82	NY	331

(Continue on pg. 39)



Vietnam Veterans of America
New York State Council
8 Queen Diana Lane, Queensbury, NY 12804
(518) 338-8147 / Fax (518) 291-4884
www.nyvietnamvets.org

“Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another”

November 14, 2022

Senator Jabari Brisport
NYS Senatorial District #25 Office
55 Hanson Place – Suite 702
Brooklyn, NY 11217

RE: CHAPTER 582 OF 2022

Dear Senator Brisport:

The above-referenced chapter was signed into law by Governor Hochul this past Friday, Veterans Day, November 11, 2022. This new law establishes the “New York State Vietnam War Commemorative Medal” to be awarded to all veterans who served in Vietnam.

It has been brought to my attention that, of the more than 200 members of the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly eligible to vote on this then-proposed legislation, you were the sole legislator to vote "Nay" .

On behalf of our Executive Board and, more importantly, our members, and all the veterans we serve, I write today to ask you: Why did you vote in the negative?

Copies of this letter are being sent to the members of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security (which committee voted unanimously in favor of advancing the measure), and to the president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #72 (Brooklyn).

We eagerly await your response, which will be shared with all those referenced above.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Ned D. Foote
President

Editor’s Note: Guess we will not hear from him!

WEALTH__WHAT IS REAL WEALTH?

For each of us wealth may be defined in a few different manners. All of us no matter who we are now, entered into this world the same way, headfirst, and for the most part all of us will leave this world the same way in one way or another.

In the very small time frame of our lives, what should matter most is what we do in that lifetime to make this world a better place for our children and grandchildren.

Life is a gift, a beautiful offering from our creator, it should be embraced, appreciated and shared. the wealth we accumulate can be described in monetary ways, education, privilege, health and love along with a host of others as well.

If what you have, what you need and want seems to be lacking or not enough, if your friends or neighbors seem to have more than you in that vein, I suggest you consider what your real wealth truly is.

Does a socialite mother who spends her time away on extravagant vacations or attending dinner parties while her hired nanny watches over her children have true wealth? Or the mom who makes a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for her children and tucks them in bed at night with a hug and kiss have more wealth?

The father who is a corporate executive too busy to attend a birthday party, a graduation and simply sends a check for a large amount of money to his child, is he a man of wealth?

As opposed to a dad who has a catch with his son or helps puts nail polish on his little girl's nails playing "dress up" the wealthier of the two?

What is important and relevant to one may not be for another. again, what is wealth and how is it measured? None of us need to look at another and wish we had what is theirs, sometimes the wealth in your very own life is worth much more than some who seem to have it all.

If your glass is half empty then take a closer look, think of what you have, not what you don't have. appreciate the little things that bring a smile to you, things that touch your heart.

Each and every one of us have wealth in one form or another, sometimes all we need to do is just open our eyes and see that your very own wealth is staring right back at you like an old friend. wealth, it's all how you measure it.

Chapter		2022 NYSC Attendance				1-Feb-13	1-Jan-23	10 YEAR MEM-BER	Cur-rent
		22Jan	9Apr	18Jun	24Sep	Members	Members	CHANGE	Dele-gates
0	At LARGE					701	1015	314	9
8	ALBA-NY	X	X		X	56	66	10	2
11	SUF-FOLK		X	X	X	415	520	105	10
20	ROCH-ESTER	X	X	X	X	558	615	57	13
32	QUEENS	X	X		X	259	233	-24	5
49	WESTCHESTER	X	X	X	X	277	352	75	7
72	BROOK-LYN		X	X	X	162	178	16	4
77	BUF-FALO	X	X	X	X	557	697	140	14
79	GLEN FALLS	X	X		X	86	68	-18	2
82	NASSAU	X	X	X	X	337	331	-6	7
85	ONEONTA	X	X	X	X	44	41	-3	1
103	SYRACUSE	X		X	X	208	196	-12	4
126	MANHATTAN	X	X	X	X	99	110	11	3
140	ORANGE COUN-TY				X	123	119	-4	3
193	WARSAW	X	X	X	X	116	156	40	3
268	LOCKPORT			X	X	44	118	74	3
333	ROCKLAND	X	X		X	210	211	1	5
377	FINGER LAKES			X		61	97	36	2
421	STATEN ISLAND	X	X	X	X	217	255	38	6
459	DUNKIRK				X	46	41	-5	1
480	OWEGO					84	80	-4	2
541	PUTNUM/DUTCHESS	X		X	X	37	35	-2	1
704	AUBURN	X	X	X	X	45	46	1	1

Chapter		2022 NYSC Attendance				1-Feb-13	1-Jan-23	10 YEAR MEMBER	Current
		22-Jan	9-Apr	18-Jun	24-Sep	Members	Members	CHANGE	Delegates

803	ELMIRA					160	248	88	5
827	HERKIMER					29	24	-5	0
865	JAMESTOWN	X	X	X	X	178	150	-28	4
869	DUTCHESS/ COLUMBIA					29	31	2	1
944	UTICA					62	168	106	3
978	FREWSBURG	X		X	X	27	36	9	1
	TOTALS	17	16	17	22	5227	6237	1010	12 2

The ten (10) year chart gives us a simple and quick look at where the strengths and weaknesses are within New York State Vietnam Veterans of America.

I have the statistics for the past few decades and there are a few trends that are quite noticeable. Both good and bad.



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