



# The Sentinel

Vol. 5 No. 5

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley  
P.O. box 463, Vernon, NJ 07462 - 973-271-2413

May 2018

Website: [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org)

President: John Harrigan

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

## **FROM THE MINEFIELD:**

*Submitted by John Harrigan*

Teri Deaver has picked up the raffle tickets for our 50/50 Scholarship fund for next year, and Teri has dates and places lined up for selling them. She will let us know where and when and it will be posted on our website. Remember we need help in doing this so please see Teri and sign up to help out.

Rich Predmore and his trusty group of helpers have read the (I believe it was 75) essays that were sent in for this year and have come up with the four winners and they will be invited to the June meeting to pick up their checks. From speaking to Rich it was not that easy picking the winners. Once again Thanks to Rich and all those who helped out.

This past Friday May 25th some of our Members along with the Students from Sussex Tec placed American Flags in front of the Auditorium on Rt 94 in honor of Memorial Day. Erin Ashton a History Teacher has again asked our Chapter to attend Sussex Tec on Thursday May 31 from 8 till about 1 to give a talk on the Vietnam War. This year we have about 22 people who will be attending and giving talks at different stations about the War. We have been doing this for about 3 or 4 years now and the students find it very interesting and it is a good experience for us to convey what went on there.

Our Chapter can shake was yesterday at Mac and Lindys in Vernon and I want to Thank all who attended and helped out. This is really the only one we have for the Chapter during the year and it helps us fund the Picnic and Christmas Party. As for the Picnic it is not too early to start getting people signed up to help out. We will have a sign-up sheet for helpers and one for people attending

because we need to know how many will be coming so we can purchase enough food.

That's about it see you at the meeting.

John

## **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:**

*Submitted by John Brady*

This is just info about a couple of programs that look to help veterans either with information or for those who are looking for help.

First on Friday, June 8, from 5 pm to 8pm at the Chatterbox Drive-in restaurant located at One State Route 15, Augusta, NJ (intersection of Rt15 and Rt565) the Pocono Mountains Corvette Club will be hosting the 6th annual "Vettes to Vets" veterans outreach program. This program provides the opportunity for veterans to obtain information on services available through the Veterans Administration, various Sussex County agencies and other local service organizations.

Each veteran who visits the agency tables will receive a \$5 coupon towards their food purchase at the Chatterbox Drive-in restaurant for that day.

For additional information contact the Sussex County Dept. of Health and Human Services at 973-579-0555, Ext 1221 or seniorservices@sussex.nj.us.

Second is Project Help Inc. whose mission is to help veterans and their families during difficult times. They assist veterans in New Jersey's 7 northern counties in getting back on their feet. Some of the issues they help veterans with are poverty, homelessness, criminal offenses, lack of gainful employment, sub-standard housing and more.

*Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!*

For more information contact Sandy Mitchell at 973-875-2068 or email at Sandy@mitchellclan.com. You can also find Project Help online at [www.ProjectHelp.US](http://www.ProjectHelp.US).

Also, this Memorial Day let's remember those who have given their lives in defense of our country and those who gave a part of their lives to serve so we may enjoy the freedoms we have today.

## **SERVICE OFFICER:**

*Submitted by Skip Kays*

If you want any further information, or have any suggestions you can contact me at 973 459-9392 or at skays1@embarqmail.com.

### **This is what is happening these days with the VA when you file a disability claim.**

Not too long ago I saw where the VA published that they had a plan to resolve disability claims within 30 days of filing when you filed through a service representative. I had filed a claim on my own on 3/22/18.

The VA has hired a 3rd party company to arrange and schedule C & P exams. This company is called QTC, which stands for Quality Timeless Customer Service, their phone # is 800 682-9701.

When you file a claim you will eventually get a call from & emails from QTC after you create an account on their web site. They initially called me on 4/2/18, so this process is moving quicker.

QTC arranges the C&P exam for you. In this area you can either go to Allentown, PA or Manhattan.

The name of the place in Allentown is Industrial Medicine Assoc. (IMA). This is a medical provider that QTC uses to perform the actual exams. It is right off Rt. 78 West and pretty easy to find.

QTC sets up a time and then lets you know who you will see. It seems that all of the Dr.'s they use are nurse practitioners.

I originally had an appointment for a Monday. QTC then called me on Friday and said that the scheduled Dr. would not be there so they set me up for the following Thursday.

On Wednesday I received a call from a woman at IMA telling me not to show up as the Dr. QTC scheduled me for was not going to be there at that time. She also said that QTC does not do a good job noticing people and that many people have showed up for their appointment only to find out that the Dr. was not present and it was not going to take place, many coming from long distances.

On Thursday at about 3 pm, the time I would have had to leave for my appointment I received another email from QTC reminding me of my 5pm appointment. When you get an appointment you get a packet that includes a form for you to explain your condition, history, etc.

I called QTC to advise them of all of this and eventually got a new appointment.

On Friday I returned home late and found a UPS envelope, with a QTC reminder of my appointment for the day before. This is bureaucratic inefficiency at its best.

Eventually I went to the appointment (after having called IMA twice to verify the appointment) which took place as scheduled ON 5/7/18.

The nurse practitioner was pleasant, and told me that the VA had asked for certain things only. As my condition originated when I was on active duty, there were not a lot of records, etc. from outside providers. We discussed my history, problems, went over the papers I filled out, and had a brief exam. She had made a comment at some point that some people complain about the process and she said something to the effect of "if you don't succeed on your claim you can just appeal it." I do not know if this because many claims are denied, and if that is because of the new process, or just a statement of fact.

From the time I arrived, until the exam was over and I left it was only about an hour.

QTC pays you \$ .41 a mile from you home to the appointment and back. I received a QTC check in less than two weeks.

So overall the process does move quicker, however you will have to keep up on things and verify that the appointment QTC gives you will actually take place at the date and time given.

What I don't know yet is if having a nurse practitioner do these exams, and the limited nature of what the VA is looking for is in the veteran's best interests, or in the interest of closing out claims fast.

More as it happens.

## **WOMEN VETERANS:**

*Submitted by Walt Hazelman*

### **VA updates compensation rating criteria, adds women-specific conditions to the schedule**

Monday, May 14, 2018 Dominique Joseph

In September 2017, VA began updating the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities, the federal regulations used by claims processors to determine the severity of disabilities related to military service and decide claims. VA is completely updating this group of federal



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regulations commonly referred to as the “VASRD” or “rating schedule” for the first time since 1945.

On May 13, the new rating schedule for gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast and eye conditions is effective. The rating schedules for dental and oral conditions and conditions related to the endocrine system were updated in 2017. VA will continue updating the remainder of the VASRD affecting 15 total body systems over the next several months.

No conditions were removed from the new rating schedules for gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast and for eye conditions. However, several new diagnostic codes were added and others were re-titled, restructured or updated.

One notable update includes the addition of Female Sexual Arousal Disorder (FSAD) to the rating schedule for gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast. Currently, male Veterans with certain penile conditions are eligible for disability compensation if a condition is considered related to military service. They are also eligible for an additional monthly benefit under Special Monthly Compensation. However, there was no rating option for similarly disabling conditions affecting women Veterans. The new rating schedule guarantees both men and women Veterans are evaluated equally. VA is proud that this rating guidance now reflects both modern medicine and a better understanding of physical conditions affecting women Veterans.

Under the new rating schedule for eye conditions, the general rating formula for diseases of the eye includes a new definition of incapacitating episodes related to eye disease and three new diagnostic codes.

VA remains committed to continuously improving our service to Veterans and staying at the forefront of modern medicine.

## **POW/MIA:**

*Submitted by Bob Gilbert*

No report.

## **AGENT ORANGE:**

*Submitted by Owen Martin*

### FSIS set to begin dioxin analysis of U.S. meat, poultry

Federal agencies are set to begin a year-long testing program on U.S. beef, pork and poultry to measure the levels of a highly toxic group of chemicals called dioxins, which are best known for their use in Agent Orange and other herbicides.

The 2018 Dioxin Survey, headed by the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS), will be done in conjunction with the federal Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, ND.

This is the fourth such survey in a recurring five-year cycle. The FSIS collaborates with federal partners including ARS, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration. The previous dioxin surveys were done in 2003, 2008 and 2013.

Dioxins are a group of compounds that are of public health concern, according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the EPA, the World Health Organization and other public health agencies. The chemicals are widely found, but generally at very low levels, throughout the natural environment.

### **Monday, April 30, 2018**

### NVLSP Persuade Federal Court to award disability benefits for pain related to military service NVLSP and Its PrivateLaw Firm Partner Persuade the Federal Circuit to Overturn 19-Year Precedent, VACan Now Award Disability Benefits For Pain Related to Military Service

WASHINGTON – In a sweeping legal victory for veterans, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit overturned a 19-year lower court precedent which prohibited the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from awarding disability benefits to a veteran for disabling pain if it was not linked to a medical diagnosis.

“What this ruling means is that if a physician cannot diagnose the cause of the pain the veteran is experiencing, but the pain is related to an event, injury, or disease that occurred during the veteran’s military service, the veteran

should now win disability benefits,” said Bart Stichman, executive director and co-founder of the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and one of the attorneys who represented the veteran in the case.

The Federal Circuit’s decision in *Saunders v. Wilkie* overturned the 1999 precedential decision issued by the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims that said VA had no authority to award benefits for pain alone, if the pain was untethered to a medical diagnosis explaining its cause.

NVLSP partnered with pro-bono counsel, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP, on the case. They won the case on behalf of Gulf war veteran Melba Saunders, who served in the Army from November 1987 until October 1994.

Saunders did not experience knee problems before serving in the Army. During her service, however, she sought treatment for knee pain and was diagnosed with patellofemoral pain syndrome. Her exit examination reflected normal lower extremities but noted she had a history of swollen knee and hip joints and bone spurs on her feet.

After leaving the military, she suffered with pain from bilateral knee disorders. In 1994, Saunders filed a VA claim for disability compensation for knee pain, hip pain, and a bilateral foot condition. The VA Regional Office denied it. She filed a reopened VA claim for bilateral knee pain in 2008 and was denied again. She appealed to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals which remanded the case to the Regional Office for additional evidence.

A 2011 VA exam found that Saunders had functional limitations on walking, that she was unable to stand for more than a few minutes, and that sometimes she required use of a cane or brace. The VA physician diagnosed Saunders with bilateral knee pain and concluded that Saunders’ knee condition was at least as likely as not caused by her military service. Nonetheless, the Board of Veterans’ Appeals denied the claim, explaining that VA is not authorized to pay disability compensation for “pain” alone, without a medical diagnosis for the pain. The Board cited in support the 1999 Veterans Court decision in *Sanchez-Benitez v. West*, which held that “pain alone is not a disability for the purpose of VA disability compensation.”

## **COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:**

*Submitted by Lou Storms*

On May 12, myself, Bob Lewis, Kenny Geer and Skip Kays went to bring dinner to the PTSD Inpatient

Unit at Lyons VA Hospital. Dinner was also sent to the 3rd floor ladies unit.

The food was donated by Inserra's ShopRite of West Milford again. Our next trip in July will mark two years that Inserra has been donating the catered food for these dinners. I will be writing soon to ask them to extend their generosity to allow us to continue the program for another year.

The food was great and we were able to talk with several of the vets.

## **Scheduled Meetings:**

Meetings are held at 2:00 p.m. the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month unless otherwise **noted**.

### **2018**

27<sup>th</sup> May

24<sup>th</sup> June

22<sup>nd</sup> July

26<sup>th</sup> August

23<sup>rd</sup> September

28<sup>th</sup> October

25<sup>th</sup> November

**1<sup>st</sup> December – Christmas Party (TBD)**

## **Calendar of Events:**

Visit [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org) for information on upcoming events.

May 26<sup>th</sup> - Chapter can shake at Mac & Lindys in Vernon

31<sup>st</sup> - Sussex Vo-Tech School; 8:30 a.m. (See From the Minefield for details)

## **NEW MEMBERS:**

**“WELCOME HOME”**

Michael Weinstein

## **PASSINGS:**

No report.



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## CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy May Anniversarys:  
Kathy & John Brady 29

Happy June Anniversarys:  
Don & Rosemary Johnson 13

Happy May Birthdays:  
Linda Skellenger 4  
Bob Caggiano 8  
Don Johnson 8  
Dave Lambert 15

Happy June Birthdays:  
Kathy Brady 2  
Bea Harrigan 14  
Rosemary Johnson 21  
Kathy Schultz 30

Happy Birthday United States Army, June 14, 1775  
"THIS WE'LL DEFEND'

## MEMBERS CORNER:

*Submitted by* Walt Hazelman

**DEFOLIANTS USED BY THE US FROM 1961 TO 1971**  
**AMOUNT OF TCDD (DIOXIN) IN THE SOUTH VIETNAM**

(ppm equivalent to mg/kilogramme of defoliant)

- Agent pink	65.6 ppm
- Agent green	65.6 ppm
- Agent purple	32.8 to 45 ppm
- Agent orange and orange II (super orange)	1.77 to 40 ppm
(accounting for 61 percent of the total amount sprayed)	
- Agent white	no dioxin
- Agent blue	no dioxin

Dioxin is the common name of a chemical called 2-3-7-8 tetra chlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, or TCDD in short. In the dioxin family there are 75 different compounds, but the most dangerous of them all is the dioxin found in agent orange.

Today, dioxin is known as an extremely toxic and firm compound. Scientists agree that: dioxin is the most harmful and toxic chemical ever discovered by mankind to date.

Only as little as 85g of dioxin could kill a whole city with a population of 8 million.

## MISCELLANEOUS:

1. **Special Note: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call (toll free 24/7) 1-800-273-8255 and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.**
2. Jackets (\$60 (summer) & \$70 (winter)); t-shirts (\$15); hats (\$10); golf shirts (short sleeve \$28; long sleeve \$33) are still available. See Owen Martin for purchases or to place an order (pre-payment for orders are appreciated)

3. Important note to families of deceased veterans, and/or requestors:

*Submitted by Bob Caggiano*

It is the right of every deceased Veteran to have a Military honors team attend the graveside service, to present the Flag at no charge to the family. Honors Teams are sent out, at the expense of the US Government.

In January 2000, Congress passed legislation guaranteeing Veterans the right to at least two uniformed servicemen, a flag ceremony, and the playing of TAPS at their funeral. Unfortunately, there are not enough buglers to play TAPS, so the historic melody has been played on a CD player at many Veterans' last ceremony, or more currently on a bugle that plays Taps using an electronic insert. The volunteer organization "Bugles Across America" (a.k.a. BAA) was created to honor the service of veterans by providing Taps live by a bugler using a real instrument (such as a bugle, trumpet, cornet, or flugelhorn) at funerals or any other ceremony requiring a bugler. There are currently over 7500 volunteer buglers nationwide in all 50 states, and some overseas who stand ready to serve. BAA volunteers perform Taps as a free service.

As a Vietnam era veteran member of VVA Chapter 1002 and a BAA volunteer bugler, I am available to play for anyone who needs a bugler for Taps (or other appropriate bugle calls) for any honorable discharged veteran or related military ceremony. In the event I cannot play because of a scheduling conflict, I can generally still provide a substitute bugler so please contact me - Bob Caggiano, USAF Veteran, (973) 222-7591 (cell) or FinalTaps@gmail.com.



### **Editors Corner:**

By Linda Skellenger (AVVA)

Please have information to be included in the June newsletter to me by Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup> by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger  
174 Lewisburg Rd.  
Sussex, N.J. 07461