



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 3

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

March 2017

Website: www.VVA1002.org

President: John Harrigan

1st Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2nd Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

FROM THE MINEFIELD:

Submitted by John Harrigan

Once again I have to start the Column with sad news about the passing of another of our members Richard Leavy. Richard passed away this month after a long illness but during that time he attended many of our monthly meetings and was always glad to be here. Again our sympathy goes out to his family.

Our Chapter 1002 and Chapter 327 hosted the State Council this month and I would just like to Thank all our members who attended. It was an informative meeting and gives us a chance to see what other Chapters in the State are doing. Like I have said before this is open to all our members and we will keep you posted on the upcoming meetings and where they will be located.

We would like to welcome the people from Snow Companies in Williamsburg VA who along with the Veterans Health Council and the Vietnam Veterans of America to today's meeting. They have a program on the risk of Hepatitis C in Veterans. One thing they will stress is the importance of being checked for this disease and letting us know that it can be cured.

The Chapter raffle is coming along and Jack and Sharon have some dates set up to sell our 50/50's and they will let us know at the upcoming meetings.

We are in need of some gift baskets for the Cemetery Casino night and could use your help. If you would like to donate a basket for the event please drop it off at the Church on Thursdays. (A few examples for gift basket are stuff to wash your car, fishing equipment, garden supplies, gift certificates to restaurants, home depot or Lowes just to name a few. However, anything will be appreciated.) All of the proceeds will be put into the Cemetery building fund. That's it for now see you at the meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, are effective as of today, March 14, 2017.

"Establishing these presumptions is a demonstration of our commitment to care for those who have served our nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, [Dr. David J. Shulkin](#). "The Camp Lejeune presumptions will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned."

The presumption of service connection applies to active-duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

This presumption complements the health care already provided for 15 illnesses or conditions as part of

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

the [Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012](#). The Camp Lejeune Act requires VA to provide health care to Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, and to reimburse family members or pay providers for medical expenses for those who resided there for not fewer than 30 days between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987.

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

VA Mental Health Care for Vets with OTH

Discharges:

During a hearing before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on Tuesday, Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin announced that VA will no longer turn away veterans seeking urgent mental health care simply because they received other-than-honorable discharges. VA plans to implement the new rule later this year.

Veterans in crisis should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup to consider five bills.

The committee deliberated and advanced bills to:

1. Give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs increased authority to hold VA employees accountable for wrongdoing and poor performance.
2. To protect veterans' second amendment rights and destigmatize mental health care by ensuring veterans who seek VA mental health care and require the assistance of others to manage finances are not reported to the firearms no-sell list without proper due process.
3. A bill to remove the secondary payer requirements under the Choice Program, so veterans no longer receive bills from Choice providers simply because they are covered by private health insurance.
4. No. 3 would also prolong the program by authorizing VA to use funds that are due to expire in August 2017.
5. A bill that would provide full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to veterans who have earned the Purple Heart, but were unable to complete 36 months of active duty.

All five bills await consideration by the full House, which is scheduled to consider the accountability bill and other veterans' bills next week.

US Parks Service Senior Pass

Seniors (meaning those over 62) can obtain a National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for **\$10.00**. A pass covers entrance, standard amenity fees and day use fees for a driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle at per vehicle fee areas (or up to four adults at sites that charge per person). Children age 15 or under are admitted free.

The fee for the pass is scheduled to go up to \$70.00 at the end of the year so this is the time to get it.

The pass is good for the lifetime of the holder. If you order it online it ends up costing \$ 20.00, but you can purchase it in person for the \$ 10.00. I bought mine at Wallkill and you have to pay by check, they don't take cash.

Go to the National Parks Service web site at <https://www.nps.gov> and search for senior pass.

You can buy the pass in person at the Wallkill River Refuge. 973-702-7266 Sussex NJ
https://www.fws.gov/refuge/wallkill_river/.

New tax breaks in New Jersey for veterans and seniors

A series of changes to the New Jersey tax code took effect on January 1 designed to help offset the rise in the gas tax. Starting with this 2017 tax year these two changes help most veterans and seniors (of which we are both):

Expanding tax deduction for retirees

A married couple filing their taxes jointly can currently exclude their first \$20,000 in retirement income from state income taxes. But beginning in 2017 and phased in over four years, that amount will ultimately increase to \$100,000 for joint filers, \$75,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for those married who are filing separately.

Tax deduction for veterans

The tax deal introduced a \$3,000 tax deduction for veterans. The law defines veterans as those who are "honorable discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, a reserve component thereof, or the National Guard of New Jersey in a federal active duty status."

Donations of used prosthetics / artificial limbs

A man I know who builds artificial limbs and prosthetics and he said that he will take any donated devices. He will provide a receipt for a tax deduction and will re-use the parts that are able to be used. Contact me with any inquiries and I will provide his contact information.



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WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

No report.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

Pow-Mia Report--2/22/17--3/17/17

USS Oklahoma Sailor from World War II Identified (Dusset) February 24, 2017 — Remains of Navy Steward's Mate 1st Class Cyril I. Dusset, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, now have been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Dusset was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

USS Oklahoma Sailor from World War II Identified (Raimond) February 24, 2017 — Remains of Navy Seaman 1st Class Paul S. Raimond, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, now have been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Raimond was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

USS Oklahoma Sailor from World War II Identified (Fecho) February 24, 2017 — Remains of Navy Fireman 1st Class Lawrence H. Fecho, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, now have been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Fecho was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

USS Oklahoma Sailor from World War II Identified (Rogers) February 24, 2017 — Remains of Navy Fireman 1st Class Walter B. Rogers, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, have now been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Rogers was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

Airman Missing From Vietnam War Identified (Barnett) February 22, 2017 — The remains of Air Force Capt. Robert R. Barnett, missing from the Vietnam War, has now been accounted for. On April 7, 1966, Barnett was a member of the 8th Bomb Squadron, and was the pilot of a [MORE](#)

USS Oklahoma Sailor from World War II Identified (Thompson, C.W.) February 22, 2017 — Remains of Navy Fireman 1st Class Charles W. Thompson, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, have now been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Thompson was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

Marine Missing From World War II Accounted For (Spayd) March 17, 2017 — Marine Corps Reserve Pvt. Donald S. Spayd, unaccounted for from World War II, has now been identified. In November 1943, Spayd was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine [MORE](#)

Remains of USS Oklahoma Sailor Identified From World War II (Casto) March 16, 2017 — Remains of Navy Fireman 1st Class Charles R. Casto, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma during World War II, have now been identified. On Dec. 7, 1941, Casto was assigned to the USS [MORE](#)

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Mitchell) March 15, 2017 — Army Pfc. Robert E. Mitchell, missing from the Korean War, has now been identified. On Sept. 6, 1950, Mitchell was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, [MORE](#)

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Jimerson) March 10, 2017 — Army Cpl. Billie J. Jimerson, missing from the Korean War, has now been identified. In late November, 1950, Jimerson was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry [MORE](#)

Soldier Missing From World War II Accounted For (Oxford) March 9, 2017 — U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Robert E. Oxford, unaccounted for from World War II, has now been identified. On Jan. 25, 1944, Oxford was a member of 425th Bomb Squadron, 308th Bomb Group, 14th Air [MORE](#)

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

Courtesy of Congressman LoBiondo's Office....



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2017

VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune

VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. are effective as of today.

“Establishing these presumptions is a demonstration of our commitment to care for those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. David J. Shulkin. “The Camp Lejeune presumptions will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

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- kidney cancer
- liver cancer

- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
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The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

This presumption complements the health care already provided for 15 illnesses or conditions as part of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. The Camp Lejeune Act requires VA to provide health care to Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, and to reimburse family members, or pay providers, for medical expenses for those who resided there for not fewer than 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987.

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

Scheduled Meetings:

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

26th March
 23rd April
 28th May
 25th June
 23rd July
 27th August (Picnic – subject to change)
 24th September
 22nd October
 26th November
 December (TBD-Christmas Party)

Calendar of Events:

Visit www.VVA1002.org for information on upcoming events.

March:

18th – St. Pat's Parade – Newton

19th – State Council – Elks in mine Hill

May:

27th – Can Shake – Mac & Lindys, Vernon

July:

14th-16th – DAR Christmas in July, Wantage

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

Kenneth W. Geer

John G Koza

Dennis A. Shilanski

PASSINGS:

Richard Leavy

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy Anniversary:

Happy Birthday:

MEMBERS CORNER:

Nothing submitted this month.

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,



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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 April newsletter to me by Sunday, April 16th (email skelle@ptd.net) or by snail-mail to:

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