



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 1

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

January 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

The winter months are a bit slow for the Chapter as there are not many events going on and most of us like to stay indoors and stay warm.

Our Chapter Christmas Party was even better then we could have expected and if I remember correctly we had about 160 Members and their family present. We were lucky to have Santa, Mrs Clause and also a new Elf, which thrilled the 30 plus children who attended. A Thank you goes out to all who helped make this a success.

Our Chapter member of the Year award went to DJ Todd Taylor for providing the entertainment throughout the year for our Picnic and Christmas Party. Todd is always there to help us out. Congratulations Todd.

I received a call from Stephany at Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice who advised me a Vietnam Vet had passed away and his last request was to have his Brothers in Arms attend the memorial service at his home. As this was very short notice I spoke to some of the guys at our Thursday meeting and Myself, Joe Siems and Matt Fredericks were able to attend the Memorial. We went to his home and were greeted by his son and also his wife who started to cry because we showed up to Honor a fellow Veteran. He was not a Chapter member but that did not matter because as Veterans we are all the same. His wife held my hand and Joe's and just stood there talking to the three of us as if we had known each other for years. The family was so grateful, that even because we did not know him we came out of respect for our Brother.

In case you are not aware of it the VA Clinic opened in Newton on Monday January 9th. Right now they have a Nurse Practitioner there and are expecting a Full time

Doctor sometime in the Spring. I want to clear up some confusion on the Clinic. Some Veterans have concerns that now that there is a clinic in Sussex County they have to go there, "FALSE" if you go to Port Jervis, Lyons, Morristown, Goshen or any other VA facility you do not have to change, you may keep the primary Doctor you have now and continue to go to the Clinic you have been attending. If the Newton Clinic is closer, you do have the option of changing over to it but it is not a requirement to do so.

I want to Thank all of our VVA and AVVA members who have made Chapter 1002 as successful as it is. Because of your continued support and commitment we are going to be reaching 200 VVA members in the near future and by you getting the word out about the Chapter other Veterans have joined and become a vital part of this group. Again Thanks. That's it for now See you at the Meeting.

John

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

My wife Kathy and I just returned from a vacation at Villa Roma. While there the activities director, Doc Holiday, who is an Air Force veteran, presented the following verse during his Tribute to the Troops show. I had never heard it before but found it very moving. This was written by Johnny Cash very early in his career.

The Ragged Old Flag

I walked through a county courthouse square.
On a park bench an old man was sitting there.
I said, your old courthouse is kinda run down.
He said naw, it'll do for our little town.
I said, your old flagpole has leaned a little bit.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

And that's a ragged old flag you got hanging on it.
 He said, have a seat and I sat down.
 Is this the first time you've been to our little town?
 I said, I think it is.
 He said, I don't like to brag
 But we're kind of proud of that ragged old flag.
 You see we got a little hole in that flag there
 When Washington took it across the Delaware.
 And it got powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key
 Sat watching it writing say can you see.
 And it got a bad rip in New Orleans
 With Packerham and Jackson
 Tuggin' at it's seams.
 And it almost fell at the Alamo
 Beside the Texas flag, but she waved on though.
 She got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville
 And she got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
 There was Robert E. Lee,
 Beauregard, and Bragg
 And the south wind blew hard on
 that ragged old flag,
 On Flanders field in World War One
 She got a big hole from a Bertha gun
 She turned blood red in World War Two
 She hung limp and low a time or two.
 She was in Korea and Vietnam
 She went where she was sent by Uncle Sam.
 She waved from our ships upon the Briny foam
 And now they've about quit waving her here back at
 home.
 In her own good land here she's been abused
 She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused.
 And the government for which she stands
 Is scandalized throughout the land.
 And she's getting threadbare and wearing thin
 But she's in good shape for the shape she's in.
 'Cause she's been through the fire before
 And I believe she can take a whole lot more.
 So we raise her up every morning
 We take her down every night
 We don't let her touch the ground
 And we fold her up right.
 On second thought, I do like to brag
 "Cause I'm mighty proud of that ragged old flag.

SERVICE OFFICER:

Submitted by Skip Kays

No report.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

From Farm Girl to Protecting the Secretary of Defense

January 10, 2017

A groundbreaker, a trailblazer, a female first in many aspects of the Army, a life mentor, a fighter for the underdog and a great inspiration. These are a few of the titles leaders used to describe Chief Warrant Officer 5 Mary A. Hostetler during her retirement ceremony after a 40-year career in the U.S. Army. The ceremony took place at the Women's Military History Museum in Arlington, Virginia, Jan. 7.

The museum walls were adorned with images depicting milestones of women throughout the military's history. Considering Hostetler's military career, this was the perfect location to honor her 40-year-tenure in the Army. According to her, it all started because a skinny little farm girl wanted to be a police officer.

Not only would Hostetler fulfill her dream of becoming a police officer, but perhaps her most monumental career milestone was when she served as the team officer in charge of the executive protective detail for former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. She was recognized for completing more than 50 successful protective missions for Panetta within one year in the U.S.

The daunting reality of providing nearly one protective mission a week for the secretary of defense was a long way away for the daughter of an Amish father and Irish mother.

First Female Infantry Marines Joining Battalion on Thursday

January 4, 2017

The Marine Corps will make history on Thursday when the first three female infantry Marines join their unit at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, officials said.

The women are headed to 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, where they will serve in the following infantry military occupational specialties: rifleman, machine gunner and mortar Marine, said 1st Lt. John McCombs, a spokesman for II Marine Expeditionary Force.

The battalion has a team of women leaders consisting of a logistics officer, motor transport officer and wire chief to support the female infantry Marines, McCombs said.

All three of the infantry Marines graduated from the School of Infantry as part of the service's gender integration research, said Marine Corps spokesman Capt. Philip Kulczewski.

"The Corps applauds the time and efforts of those Marines who volunteered," Kulczewski said. "As we continue to move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensure that the men and women who earn the title 'Marine' will be ready, and will provide America with an elite crisis-response force that is ready to fight and win."



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POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

MIA_POW UPDATE

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Torres)
January 06, 2017 — The Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, killed during the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Cpl. Luis P. Torres, 20, of Eagle Pass Texas, will be buried [MORE](#)

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Griffiths)
January 04, 2017 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Maj. Jack D. Griffiths, 31, of San Diego, will be buried January 11 in [MORE](#)

MIA_POW UPDATE

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

11/23/16—1/6/17

USS Oklahoma Sailor From World War II Accounted For (Johnston) November 30, 2016 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman from World War II have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Navy Fireman 1st Class Jim H. Johnston, 23, of Wesson, Mississippi, will be buried Dec. 7 [MORE](#)

Soldier Killed In Korean War Accounted For (Presswood) November 23, 2016 — The Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, killed during the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Cpl. Vernon D. Presswood, 19, of Pinckneyville, Illinois, will be [MORE](#)



Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Hunt) November 23, 2016 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Pfc. Daniel Hunt, 18, of Columbiaville, Michigan, will be buried Dec. 2 [MORE](#)

Sailor Missing From World War II Accounted For (Sollie) December 30, 2016 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman from World War II have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Navy Water Tender 1st Class Walter H. Sollie, 37, of Myrtlewood, Alabama, will be buried [MORE](#)

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For (Curtis) December 16, 2016 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korea War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. Harold L. Curtis, 18, of Hannibal, Missouri, will be buried Dec. 23 [MORE](#)

Soldier Killed In Korean War Accounted For (Nordin) December 09, 2016 — The Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, killed during the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Cpl. David T. Nordin, Jr., 23, of Los Angeles, will be buried [MORE](#)



AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

1. US agrees to pay billions to Marines affected by toxic water



The Associated Press FILE – In this March 19, 2013 file photo, the globe and anchor stand at the entrance to Camp Lejeune, N.C. The Obama administration has agreed to provide disability benefits totaling more than \$2 billion to veterans who had...

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration has agreed to provide disability benefits totaling more than \$2 billion to veterans who had been exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

The decision was quietly made public Thursday with a notice in the Federal Register, the government's official journal.

Beginning in March, the cash payouts from the Department of Veterans Affairs may supplement VA health care already being provided to eligible veterans stationed at the Marine base for at least 30 days cumulative between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987. Veterans will have to submit evidence of their diagnosis and service information.

Outgoing VA Secretary Bob McDonald determined that there was "sufficient scientific and medical evidence" to establish a connection between exposure to the contaminated water and eight medical conditions for purposes of awarding disability compensation.

The estimated taxpayer cost is \$2.2 billion over a five-year period. The VA estimates that as many as

900,000 service members were potentially exposed to the tainted water.

“This is good news,” said retired Marine Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger, whose daughter Janey was born in 1976 while he was stationed at Lejeune. Janey died from leukemia at age 9. Ensminger now heads a veterans group, The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten, which advocates for those seeking disability compensation.

“This has been a hard, long slog,” said Ensminger, who says the government must go further in covering additional diseases. “This is not the end of the issue.”

The new rule covers active duty, Reserve and National Guard members who developed one of eight diseases: adult leukemia, aplastic anemia, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and Parkinson’s disease.

Documents uncovered by veterans groups over the years suggest Marine leaders were slow to respond when tests first found evidence of contaminated ground water at Camp Lejeune in the early 1980s. Some drinking water wells were closed in 1984 and 1985, after further testing confirmed contamination from leaking fuel tanks and an off-base dry cleaner. The Marine Corps has said the contamination was unintentional, occurring when federal law didn’t limit toxins in drinking water.

Spurred by Ensminger’s case, Congress in 2012 passed a bill signed into law by President Barack Obama extending free VA medical care to affected veterans and their families. But veterans were not automatically provided disability aid or survivor benefits. The issue has prompted lawsuits by veterans organizations, which note that military personnel in Camp Lejeune housing “drank, cooked and bathed” in contaminated water for years.

“Expanded coverage is making progress, but we also need to know whether the government may be purposefully leaving people out,” said Rick Weidman, executive director of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Affected veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune may now submit applications for benefits, once the rule is officially published Friday. Roughly 1,400 disability claims related to Lejeune are already pending, and will be reviewed immediately, according to the VA.

2. Agent Orange Widows Club

Pegi Scarlett had just returned from her husband’s grave this past Memorial Day — the first since his death — when, on a whim, she decided to search online whether other Vietnam vets had died of the same aggressive brain cancer.

With a few keystrokes, she found a Facebook group with a couple hundred widows like herself, whose veteran husbands had died of glioblastoma. She also found an intriguing article: A widow in Missouri had fought for

almost eight years before convincing the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that she was entitled to benefits for her husband’s fatal brain cancer because of his exposure to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange.

“Shocked is probably the word,” Scarlett said, describing her reaction to what she found. “Story after story after story.”

Many Vietnam veterans are battling the VA to compensate them for a growing list of ailments they believe are caused by their exposure to Agent Orange. But because of the seriousness of glioblastoma multiforme — which is often fatal within months — widows are the ones left to fight.

The Department of Veterans Affairs must decide whether to add new diseases to its list of conditions presumed to be linked to Agent Orange. It also faces calls to compensate naval veterans and those who served along the Korean demilitarized zone.

“There’s not a lot of people who fully understand what we’ve all gone through,” said Scarlett, who is now one of the leaders of the Facebook group, where women trade stories and help each other build their cases for benefits.

Scarlett, who lives outside Sacramento, brought an important skillset. As a certified tumor registrar, the 64-year-old spends her days searching through patients’ medical records, logging details about their lives and cancer diagnoses to help the state of California look for patterns.

Now, in her off hours, she gathers information about veterans who’ve died of glioblastoma, hoping to persuade the VA it should provide benefits to their widows. They believe dioxin, a contaminant of Agent Orange, caused their husbands’ cancers.

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

Last month Rosemary Fuch’s daughter Erin Kaegi along with her co-worker Jamie Patel, organized donations for the vets at Lyons Hospital, from the classes of Devine Mercy Academy in Rockaway, where they both teach. The amount of their donation was spectacular. The students, families and faculty donated everything from clothing, blankets, puzzles, books, etc. to snacks and treats totaling over \$1,000. The children and staff included cards and notes for the vets. When we delivered everything to Lyons before Christmas, they were amazed at their generosity and very grateful to have so much for the vets for Christmas. I was very proud to be the delivery man.

On January 10th, we made our trip to Lyons PTSD for dinner service. Myself, Carl Ohlson and John Drinkard



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attended. The food from ShopRite was again great and as always we had a good visit with the vets. Anyone wanting to join us in March can sign the sheet up front or contact me.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

- 22nd January
- 26th February
- 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.

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

No report.

PASSINGS:

No report.

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

No report.

MEMBERS CORNER:

- *Submitted by William Heaney*

While we may have read many other books on the subject of the Vietnam War, I have just completed reading this one which I highly recommend; especially to each of us currently experiencing the effects of PTSD with its impact on our lives and our families’ lives.

Authored by 1st Lt. Lee Alley with Wade Stevenson and an introduction by General Tommy R. Franks *****, it is titled, “BACK FROM WAR” – Finding Hope & Understanding In Life After Combat For the American Soldier & Their Loved Ones.

While the first half contains factual depictions of certain combat situations in the lives of Lee Alley and the men he fought beside, the second half delves deeply into the affects the war had on their families and others and how they were helped.

Reading it has been an aid to me and I hope it does the same for everyone who reads it.

- *Submitted by Walt Hazelman*

What are the symptoms of PTSD?

Symptoms of PTSD may disrupt your life and make it hard to continue with your daily activities. You may find it hard just to get through the day.

There are four types of PTSD symptoms:

1. **Reliving the event (also called re-experiencing symptoms)**

Memories of the traumatic event can come back at any time. You may feel the same fear and horror you did when the event took place. For example:

- You may have nightmares.
- You may feel like you are going through the event again. This is called a flashback.
- You may see, hear, or smell something that causes you to relive the event. This is called a trigger.

News reports, seeing an accident, or hearing a car backfire are examples of triggers.

2. Avoiding situations that remind you of the event

You may try to avoid situations or people that trigger memories of the traumatic event. You may even avoid talking or thinking about the event. For example:

- You may avoid crowds, because they feel dangerous.
- You may avoid driving if you were in a car accident or if your military convoy was bombed.
- If you were in an earthquake, you may avoid watching movies about earthquakes.
- You may keep very busy or avoid seeking help because it keeps you from having to think or talk about the event.

3. Negative changes in beliefs and feelings

The way you think about yourself and others changes because of the trauma. This symptom has many aspects, including the following:

- You may not have positive or loving feelings toward other people and may stay away from relationships.
- You may forget about parts of the traumatic event or not be able to talk about them.
- You may think the world is completely dangerous, and no one can be trusted.

4. Feeling keyed up (also called hyperarousal)

You may be jittery, or always alert and on the lookout for danger. You might suddenly become angry or irritable. This is known as hyperarousal. For example:

- You may have a hard time sleeping.
- You may have trouble concentrating.
- You may be startled by a loud noise or surprise.
- You might want to have your back to a wall in a restaurant or waiting room.

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 February newsletter to me by Sunday, February 19th (email skelle@ptd.net) or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger
174 Lewisburg Rd.
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