



Volume 16 • Issue 04

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

April 2016



Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

The Wall

**Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12
PO Box 276, Allenhurst, NJ 07711**



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Paul Bausch, Delegate
Tony Ponzio, Delegate

Mike Quilty, Alternate Delegate
Dan Higgins, Alternate Delegate

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Please remember our fellow Chapter members, and their families in your prayers, as they continue to face very serious medical conditions.

Please visit and like our [Face Book](#) page, "Vietnam Veterans NJ Shore Area Chapter 12" for info on what we are doing – photos, and more.

Please visit our Chapter web site – www.vvachapter12.net for photo albums, News Letter Archive's, Chapter History.

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We have been informed that in lieu of specific items to send to troops on deployment, gift cards to the PX would be appreciated. The troops can get almost anything in the PX, but could use the help via gift card. This is also a money and effort saver on our part. Donations to the PX gift card fund are being accepted. We are also switching from actual food to gift cards for our food bank as this will better serve our veterans in need.

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Anyone needing a ride to the VA, please contact Ernie Diorio for assistance.

If you are able to provide transportation ,please let Ernie know, so the same people aren't doing it all the time.

If you are looking for a fellow vet that you lost track of, or someone that you served with, that might have information you need, please send it to us and we will put it in the monthly newsletter.

Check this link out if you need help with an appeal, or know a Vet that does. Keep it moving, and pass it on to all other Vets you know. <http://www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm>

Anyone wanting to submit an article, picture, or story please send it to: va12p@verizon.net or nlvva12@gmail.com by the 25th of each month. Anything received after that will be placed in the following month's newsletter. (Make sure it can be verified)

Presidents Message

With May 7th around the corner, it is that time again to clean the memorial wall for New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Day. John has set the date for April 16, and a rain date of April 23 at 9:00 am, we are hoping also to paint the railing on the two levels which are in need of a new fresh finish.

Later that same day we are holding our annual dinner dance and installation, our 34 th year, at VFW 2179, starting time is 1830 with live entertainment.

I requested that the tickets be pre purchased so that we can give the kitchen a better count, and sales are going well. If you have not purchased yet, please purchase your tickets at one of the next two Chapter meetings. If you can sell an ad (or two, or three) or purchase one it would be great, since this is our only fund raiser for the year. Please contact Ernie at 732-245-5552 or myself at 908-902-8789.

On March 6, Chapter members marched in the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Belmar and the following week marched in the Rumson Saint Patrick's Day parade. Both parades were very well attended with groups of 15 Chapter members.

On March 29 a number of Chapter members attended a VA Town Hall Meeting at the Memorial, which all found very interesting. Since we had a captive audience, Chapter members and Mother Margret handed out flyers for our Town Hall meeting scheduled for May 15, on Toxic Substances during our military service. This is a joint meeting with Chapter 721, and I believe that we will have a great turn out. Save the Date May 15, 2016 at 2:00 pm, spread the word, and most of all attend this event.

The Colonel



UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

The next Chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at 7:30PM. Location is at VFW 2226, 210 Norwood Ave., Oakhurst, NJ.

4/6 Chapter Elections

4/16 Mall Washing & Cleanup

5/7 34th Installation Dinner Dance

6/12 Car Show

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

4/13 Hedwig Davison

Anyone born in April ?? Please let me know so I can put it here!!

If you wish to post a birthday or anniversary please submit the info by the 20th of the month for the next month's news letter.

ELECTION NOTICE

As required by the Constitution and By Laws of Vietnam Veterans of America, The New Jersey State Council, and VVA Chapter 12, this is notice that the Annual Election of Officers, Board of Directors, Nominations Committee, and State Council Representatives will take place at the Annual Meeting of Chapter 12 on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, which meeting will commence at 7:30 PM.

The Offices of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer are for a term of one (1) year. The open positions, five (5) in number, for Board of Directors, are for a term of two (2) years. There are three (3) open positions for the Nominations Committee, which are for one (1) year terms. There are three (3) positions open for Delegate and two (2) for Alternate Delegate to represent the Chapter on the New Jersey State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America. The three highest vote getters will be the Delegates, with the remaining two being the Alternates.

Any member in Good Standing (membership dues paid to date), with a DD214 or other proof of eligibility on file with the Chapter, may run for any office. Simply notify the Nominating Committee, in writing, of your desire to run, or contact one of the Nominating Committee members listed below. Nominations and notifications of a desire to seek a specific office are open up to the recitation of the Nominating Committee final report on the night of the elections (April 6, 2016).

Bob Hopkins
Nomination Committee Chair
January 21, 2016

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Bob Hopkins	(732) 531-2574	herc3000@aol.com
Jay Vaughn	(732) 922-0304	jv4910@gmail.com
Rich Gough	(732) 539-0206	rpg3706@aol.com



Attention

**MAN POWER IS NEEDED FOR
April 16, 2016 AT 10:00 AM**

Rain Date: April 23, 2016 @ 10 AM

Where:

**The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Education Center,
Holmdel, NJ Exit 116 G.S. PKWY.**

**Work includes: Wall washing and clean up of all grounds
around the MEMORIAL, walkways and painting
handrails. (good painters needed)**

**PLEASE CONTACT: JOHN AITKEN
jwa437@comcast.net or 732-757-1711**

For information or directions.

**In brotherhood,
The Colonel**

VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA
NEW JERSEY SHORE AREA
CHAPTER 12



22th ANNUAL INSTALLATION & DINNER DANCE
CELEBRATING 34 YEARS OF SERVICE

Our Annual Dinner Dance will be held on Saturday,
May 7, 2016, 6:30 pm at VFW 2179, One Veterans Lane, Port Monmouth, NJ 07758. Tickets are
\$40 per person or \$75 per couple. To reserve tickets, please contact, Ernie Diorio at 732-245-5552
or Tony Ponzo 972-979-0142 We hope to see some more familiar faces there this year.

Featuring entertainment by **ROCK N RHYTHM**

VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA
NEW JERSEY SHORE AREA
CHAPTER 12



VVA Chapter 12 is looking for Corp donations for the Ad Journal for our **Annual Dinner Dance** on May 7, 2016. An integral part of our yearly operating budget is based on our fund raising efforts at this event.

Over the past years we have enriched the lives of veterans and their families through a variety of activities including lobbying for veterans legislation , both in Trenton and Washington; assisting veterans in the VA hospitals; aiding and referring veterans for counseling in PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] and substance abuse; providing assistance in filing service connected disability claims. We also sponsor public awareness programs connected with the POW/MIA issue. We are active in the community, providing speakers for elementary and high schools history classes; we participate in New Jersey Adopt a Highway program, to help keep our state highways clean. We are Identifying, Honoring, and Interring the unclaimed, abandoned cremated remains of veterans and are working to locate other abandoned remains to provide the proper Military Honors that they have earned.

We would appreciate your advertising in our ad journal. Let veterans know you care and support our activities. Business or personal ads are welcome. We also welcome donations of products or gift certificates to act as door prizes. Tickets are \$40.00 each or \$75.00 per couple
Please fill out the enclosed ad form and send your check or money order for the appropriate amount to the Chapter at PO Box 276, Allenhurst, NJ 07711. Make your check or money payable to: **VVA Chapter 12.**

FULL PAGE
\$100.00

HALF PAGE
\$50.00

THIRD PAGE
\$30.00

For Further Information call:

Dennis Beauregard

908-902-8789

Ernie Diorio 732-245-5552



Please enclose your business card or print card or print out your ad the way you wish it to appear in the ad journal.

Thank you for your support. You also can e-mail your ad to vva12p@verizon.net

Please check desired size

FULL PAGE
\$100.00

HALF PAGE
\$50.00

THIRD PAGE
\$30.00

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, NJ STATE COUNCIL

&



At the Linden Airport Mall
Route 1 North in Linden
701 West Edgar Road, (Rt. 1)
Linden, NJ 07036

Mike Damore ★ *Present* **The Cameos** ★ **Gina Royale**

DJ MUSIC **FOOD & TROPHIES** **VENDORS**



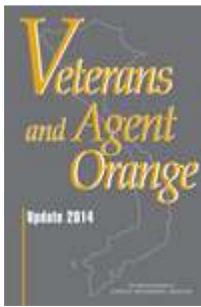
CAR SHOW

To support and benefit The NJ Vietnam Memorial/Museum and Education Center

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, From 10AM to 4PM

\$20 per car, \$20 per vendor table. Additional availability to advertise in the car show ad book is available at the cost of \$50 per half page or \$100 per full page. Ad page size is 5½"x8½". Ads with checks are to be mailed to VVA Car Show, 46 Drayton Rd., Manchester, NJ 08759. All funds are considered donations and as such are not refundable.

For additional information, call Herb at 732-849-5737



Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014

Released: March 10, 2016

[Download the cover image and citation slide>>](#)

From 1962 to 1971, US military sprayed herbicides over Vietnam. Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address whether exposure to these herbicides contributed to long term health effects in Vietnam veterans. The legislation directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to request the IOM to perform a comprehensive evaluation of scientific and medical information regarding possible health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam or to TCDD and other chemicals in those herbicides. *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014* is the tenth and last congressionally mandated biennial update. The current update presents this committee's review of peer-reviewed scientific reports relevant to this question that were published between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2014, and its integration with the previously established evidence database.

Based on the entire body of evidence, the committee *Update 2014* changed the categories of association with exposure to the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam for three health effects. Bladder cancer and hypothyroidism were moved from "inadequate or insufficient" evidence of association up to "limited or suggestive" evidence of association, while the birth defect spina bifida in the offspring of Vietnam veterans was demoted from "limited/suggestive" down to "inadequate/insufficient." The committee clarified that Vietnam veterans with "Parkinson-like symptoms," but without a formal diagnosis of Parkinson disease, should be considered eligible under the presumption that Parkinson's disease and the veterans' service are connected. For this last volume in the *Veterans and Agent Orange* series of reports, the committee distilled "lessons learned" into recommendations for the continued monitoring of the health of Vietnam veterans. The committee also set up procedures that will ensure military personnel are followed from the time they are deployed in order to anticipate the possibility of increased risk of health problems that arise later in life and could be associated with the exposures experienced during their service.

- See more at: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/reports/2016/Veterans-and-Agent-Orange-Update-2014.aspx#sthash.S7W5r8kB.dpuf>



[Nation & World News](#)

Researchers call for more study of Agent Orange effects

March 11, 2016 [Shane Nicholson](#) 2816 Views

A committee of the Institute of Medicine said even though the Vietnam War ended four decades ago, much is still not known about the way the herbicide Agent Orange has impacted vets and perhaps their children.

By **Mike Hixenbaugh** | The Virginian-Pilot
and **Charles Ornstein** | ProPublica

More than two decades of studying Agent Orange exposure hasn't produced a solid understanding of how the toxic herbicide has harmed Vietnam War veterans and possibly their children, according to a [report released Thursday](#).

Additional research is long overdue, the report said, but the federal government hasn't done it.

Those are among the conclusions of a committee of researchers that, since 1991, has been charged by Congress with reviewing all available research into the effects of Agent Orange, which the U.S. military sprayed by the millions of gallons in Vietnam to kill forests and destroy enemy cover.

Over the years, the biennial reports produced by the committee have identified numerous illnesses linked to the herbicide, in some cases leading the Department of Veterans Affairs to extend disability compensation to thousands more veterans.

But in its tenth and final Agent Orange report — with most Vietnam vets now well into their 60s or older — the committee concluded there's still much to learn and not enough research underway, especially related to potential health consequences for the children and grandchildren of veterans who were exposed.

“Although progress has been made in understanding the health effects of exposure to the chemicals,” the committee members wrote near the end of the 1,115-page report, there are still “significant gaps in our knowledge.”

[Some 2.6 million Vietnam veterans](#) were potentially exposed to Agent Orange, which contained the chemical dioxin. Calls from veterans to extend the research committee's work for at least a few more years have so far gone unanswered in Congress. The provision of the 1991 Agent Orange Act that established the committee expired last fall.

The panel, working under the auspices of the federal Institute of Medicine, reviewed scientific literature on Agent Orange released between October 2012 and September 2014 for its final review.

The committee members' parting thoughts about the lack of necessary research offered a wake-up call to a federal bureaucracy and researchers who have largely moved on from studying the health consequences of a war that ended 40 years ago.

Even in their final report, the researchers cited a new study of veterans from Korea who served in Vietnam, leading them to conclude that Agent Orange exposure may be linked to bladder cancer and

hypothyroidism — two conditions not currently covered by the VA. If certain conditions are linked to Agent Orange exposure, the VA assumes anyone with those conditions got them from their exposure and therefore makes them eligible for disability payments.

The decision over whether to begin compensating Vietnam veterans with those ailments rests with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald. The VA is not bound by the committee's recommendations, a point made clear in report's final pages. The researchers listed more than 30 past suggestions — including calls for additional government-led studies — that apparently haven't been pursued by the VA or other agencies.

“Some of the recommendations that we've made are not new, that's correct,” said Kenneth Ramos, chairman of the committee and an associate vice president at University of Arizona Health Sciences. “Why it has taken as long as it has taken for some of these things to come to fruition, I don't know the answer to them.

“But rather than finger pointing,” Ramos added, “I think it's important to emphasize that the VA has begun to recognize the importance of studying these issues and is taking action.”

Read more: [Vietnam vets hunt through ships' logs to prove benefits claims](#)

Following the release of the latest report, the VA has assembled a group of subject matter experts “to determine how the recommendations can be implemented to help improve the health and well-being of Vietnam Veterans,” VA spokesman Randal Noller said in an email.

The report, according to Rick Weidman of Vietnam Veterans of America, underscores what he called “25 years of willful ignorance” on the part of the VA: “They've tried to undo anything and everything that might lead to further research into the effects of Agent Orange exposure,” said Weidman, the group's legislative director. “They are sitting on a mountain range of epidemiological evidence — not just for Vietnam guys, but the health records of every generation of veterans — and they have simply refused to mine the data for the purposes of research.”

Vietnam Veterans of America has long been at loggerheads with the VA over compensation and research relating to Agent Orange.

Weidman and his colleagues called on President Obama and VA secretary McDonald to immediately add bladder cancer and hypothyroidism to the VA's list of Vietnam service-connected illnesses. They also want the agency to add three other ailments — hypertension, stroke and various neurological ailments similar to Parkinson's Disease — which were tied to Agent Orange exposure in past committee reports but are still not covered by the VA.

It's not clear how many Vietnam veterans suffer from those conditions or how much it would cost to begin compensating them. The VA spent \$22.4 billion to compensate Vietnam-era vets in [fiscal year](#) 2014 (the most recent year for which data is available), a figure that includes monthly cash payments, but not health care services.

As it concludes its work, the committee specifically lamented the lack of meaningful research into birth defects and other health problems in children of male veterans born after the war. For decades, Vietnam veterans have argued that their exposure has affected their children, but there's been little research on the matter and, as a result, no conclusive evidence.

That dearth of evidence led the researchers to reverse their previous position connecting spina bifida with a father's exposure to Agent Orange. No new research into the matter has been conducted since 1996, the committee wrote, even though recent rodent studies indicate it's possible that a father's exposure to toxins can affect sperm DNA and cause birth defects and other disorders later in life.

Despite the lack of research, the VA provides benefits for a limited number of birth defects in children of Vietnam veterans, including spina bifida for children of all vets (male and female) and 18 other health conditions solely for children of female vets. As of last year, about 1,200 offspring with spina bifida were receiving those benefits, along with 14 children of female veterans with other covered birth defects, according the VA.

Heather Bowser, the daughter of a Vietnam veteran and co-founder of the Children of Vietnam Veterans Health Alliance, said she was disturbed by the committee's reversal on spina bifida, fearing the VA could move to take away benefits from those already receiving them. (The VA has not sought to do this in the past.) However she supports the committee's call for additional research, which she says is “long overdue.”

Bowser's group advocates for thousands of members who believe their health problems are the result of their fathers' service in Vietnam.

With a new generation of troops now returning from war, the researchers also called on the VA and the Department of Defense to work together to better understand how wartime environmental exposures might affect future veterans and their offspring — even if it's too late for those who served in Vietnam.

“One of the biggest challenges for the past 30 years as we looked back at all this data on Vietnam veterans has been the fact that the important data was never collected to begin with,” said Ramos, the committee chairman. “Therefore, I think it behooves our society and our government to do whatever it takes to accumulate the relevant data so we can understand how veterans of future conflicts have been affected.”

The Vietnam Veterans of America and other groups are calling on Congress to create a national VA research center to study the generational health consequences for veterans — spanning all conflicts, from Vietnam to Iraq — who have been exposed to toxic substances. A bill to do this, the Toxic Exposure Research Act, has [179 co-sponsors in the House](#) and [40 co-sponsors in the Senate](#).

Weidman, who served a tour in Vietnam with the Army, said the report released Thursday proves the legislation is needed.

“We are going to press hard to get this done, and we are going to keep pressing them,” Weidman said. “This research will be coming too late for a lot of Vietnam vets, but it’s not too late to take care of our children, and it’s not too late yet to take care of the veterans who’ve come after us.”

ProPublica is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative newsroom

Social Media and Suicide Prevention

Social media's role in contributing to or preventing suicide has not been well studied, despite reports of deaths linked to cyber bullying, suicide clusters among online friends and numerous saves, experts say.

"I wouldn't say there has been a lot of research. There has been some, most of it in other countries, but it's scant. It's hard to get the data the way that is needed for studies," explained Dan Reidenberg, executive director of Suicide Awareness Voices of Education.

Keita Franklin, director of the [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#), said the hope was that the research would be useful to integrate understanding of social media observations and cues into suicide prevention.

"In these studies ... we found similar things to things we already know about factors that contribute to suicide, including high financial stress, isolation, depression," Franklin said. "What we'd like to do is tell people not to ignore the signs, online and in life — get out of your own comfort zone."

In phase one of "Indicators of Suicide Found on Social Networks," researchers looked at the suicides of 700 troops in 2010 and 2011 and compared them with a matched group of service members who died by means other than suicide in the same time frame. Narrowing the group to those with public social media sites — 315 service members — the researchers looked at their public posts up to a year before their deaths and also a month before they died.

They found that those who died by suicide were most likely to show indications of hopelessness, social withdrawal and insomnia the year before, and 30 days prior, were more likely to discuss general distress, relationship problems and religious affiliation.

In the study's second phase, the researchers looked for recurring themes in the posts to try to identify those who may be at risk for suicide. In the year before, the suicide group expressed a more pessimistic outlook on life than those who did not die by suicide and/or had a social network that communicated a "more pessimistic worldview."

They also were more likely to avoid interpersonal situations, lacked interest in social activities and frequently discussed sleep problems, according to the study.

Examining the posts 30 days before death, the suicide group frequently expressed generalized stress and posted about relationship problems. Surprisingly, though, they were less likely to communicate feeling any anger, which "may suggest the service member had "resigned" themselves to their situation," according to the researchers.

"These clues on social media are very consistent with what we see are the warning signs in life — expressing their intent to die, hopelessness, a sense of being a burden and having no purpose in the world. It's just another way for us to communicate," said Reidenberg, who did not participate in the research but has been working with the International Association for Suicide Prevention to develop guidance for bloggers and "citizen journalists" on writing about suicide and the Internet.

The telegraphing of suicidal intent has not escaped military personnel and veterans in their online lives. After a number of high-profile farewells in the past five years, including at least one by a Marine who documented his death on Facebook in 2014, groups have formed on various social media platforms to reach personnel in crisis. The nonprofit “Battle in Distress” was founded after Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Dan Caddy received a cry for help in 2012 regarding another guardsman in crisis, while the Durkheim Project, a collaboration by the Veterans Affairs Department and the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, offers an opt-in program monitoring veterans' posts on Facebook, Twitter and other social media for warning signs.

A number of veterans-only social media sites have popped up, as have informal friend- and unit-based groups. A series of [New York Times articles](#) last year documented the ongoing efforts by former members of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, to keep tabs on their fellow Marines, 13 of whom have died by suicide since the unit deployed to Helmand, Afghanistan, in 2008.

In at least two cases in 2/7, veterans rallied to respond to posts by their fellow Marines that they were “done with life” or they “can’t do it anymore.” A swift response to the posts helped save one of the service members’ lives.

“The upside to this is that social media gives us the opportunity to intervene because there are so many people involved and it can be done so quickly. That’s the real benefit,” Reidenberg said.

In 2015, Facebook introduced a feature for reporting suicidal content that provides support to the person who created a concerning post as well as those reporting the content. A user can send messages to a troubled friend through the option or reach out to a fellow friend who might be located closer physically to the friend in need. It also can send messages to the person who posted, telling them someone is concerned about them and providing links to the National Lifeline, suggested friends to speak to or tips for dealing with stress.

“People say, is this going to make them mad, is this going to upset them? No. The reality is when someone is struggling with thoughts of suicide, you have to connect with them at that level — you have to reach them where their head is at. So, having things like [the Facebook reporting] allows them to engage and be part of something ... those are the kind of things that are going to help someone through that situation,” Reidenberg said.

The recent DoD studies yielded several recommendations to improve the department’s understanding of suicides and prevention, to include integrating social media data in psychological “autopsies” conducted after a service member dies by suicide and figuring any publicly available social media data into wellness assessments.

The research also suggests the department add social network awareness and response to its suicide prevention training for troops and commanders and continue to promote lifestyle choices and factors that can bolster resilience.

“This study found evidence supporting established risk and protective factors, including positive family interactions, having children, engaging in sporting activities, animal companionship, gratitude, access to lethal means, and employment issues,” the authors wrote.

In saving a fellow Marine’s life, Boyd said he relied on his own gut instincts as well as compassion to intervene. But he also recommends service members pay attention in their annual suicide prevention classes, as trying as that might be.

“I think for a lot of Marines, [the suicide prevention training] goes in one ear and out the other, because they think it’s not going to happen to them or they will never be in that position. But listen. It does help. You need to act,” Boyd said.

The Veterans Crisis Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 800-273-8255, press 1. Services also are available online at www.veteranscrisisline.net or by text, 838255.



NEW JERSEY VETERANS CEMETERY



Come join us for a night of fun and help us

raise some much needed money to keep building!

Casino Night:

April 30, 2016

St Francis de Sales Church

Vernon, NJ 07462



Tickets \$45

includes \$50 in Play Money*, Dinner and
Dessert



Doors open at 0:30

Gaming from 6-90

Tricky Tray 9:30



* buy additional Play Money at a discount prior to the event!

For Tickets contact Michelle Devenezia
micheele1079@a010com -201-919-2458

Thank YOU for helping to make this event a success!!

Ticket Purchase Form For
Casino Night
April 30, 2016

Name/s

Phone # in case or question:

of Tickets _____ @ \$45= _____

Additional Play money Packages

_____ \$50 for \$40 _____

_____ \$100 for \$80 _____

_____ \$200 for \$150 _____



mail ticket purchase form and
check payable to *JVMC to:

Michelle DeVenezia, 139 Meriden Rd, Boonton, NJ,
07005. micheelS79@aol.com -201-919-
2458

NJ Beaches

Veterans and other armed forces personnel can now use their military identification to gain access to beaches in New Jersey.

The bi-partisan measure was signed Monday by Gov. Chris Christie.

The bill permits military personnel, veterans, their spouses and dependent children over the age of 12 to use their military identification, form DD-214 25 or similar document, or a state driver's license or identification card indicating that the holder is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces for beach access instead of having to pay for a beach tag.

The measure, which is at the discretion of individual municipalities, also applies to active members of the New Jersey National Guard who have completed initial active duty training as well as anyone 65 years or age or older or disabled.

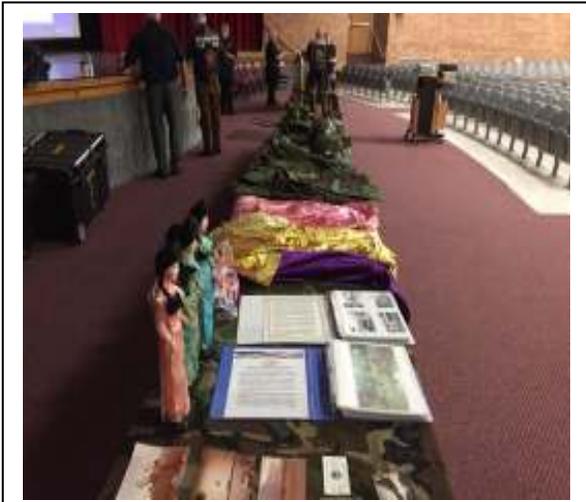
The bill was passed last year by the state Senate and the Assembly.

St. Patrick's Day Parades Belmar and Rumson





Manalapan High School Education Program



Railroad gauge

Fascinating Stuff . . .



Railroad Tracks

The U.S. Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches.

That's an exceedingly odd number.
Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the U.S. Railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.



Why did the wagons have that particular Odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in

England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.



So, who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.



Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

In other words, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification, procedure, or process, and wonder, 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.



Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, you will notice that there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank.

These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah.



The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit larger, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.



So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important!

Now you know, Horses' Asses control almost everything.

Explains a whole lot of stuff, doesn't it?

A famous art collector is walking through the city when he notices a mangy cat lapping milk from a saucer in the doorway of a store and he does a double take.

He recognizes that the saucer is extremely old and very valuable, so he walks casually into the store and offers to buy the cat for two dollars.

The store owner replies "I'm sorry, but the cat isn't for sale."

The collector says, "Please, I need a hungry cat around the house to catch mice. I'll pay you twenty dollars for that cat."

And the owner says "Sold," and hands over the cat.

The collector continues, "Hey, for the twenty bucks I wonder if you could throw in that old saucer. The cat's used to it and it'll save me from having to get a dish."

The owner says, "Sorry buddy, but that's my lucky saucer. So far this week I've sold sixty-eight cats."

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TAPS

Shore Area Vietnam Vets Called Home By The Lord

LOZINSKI, THOMAS M, 66, MANASQUAN, PSYCHOLOGIST

Brown, John, 69, Lakewood, Army

Connell, William, M, Atlantic Highlands, Army

Dultz, Robert E, 67, Jackson, USMC

Fetta, John J, 70, Point Pleasant, Army

Forest, Alan, 69, Brick, USMC

Henderson, William, 67, Middletown, Army

LOZINSKI, THOMAS M, 66, MANASQUAN, PSYCHOLOGIST

McGrantham, Gerald, 73, Lacey Twp., Army

Milzone, Frank, T, 65, Army

Quaterman, Kenneth, 71, Asbury Park, Army

Ruth, Edward F, 68, Manchester, Army

Scott, Christopher, 68, Toms River, Navy

Venti, Raymond, P, 67, Berkeley Twp, USMC

REST IN PEACE BROTHERS