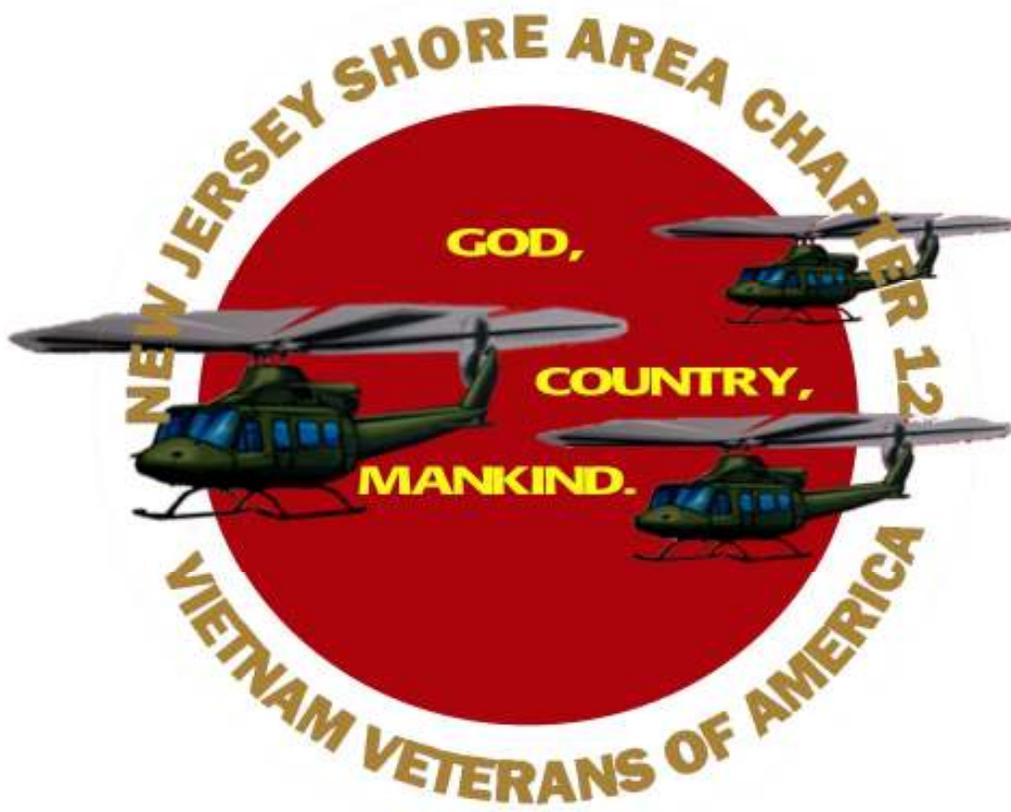




Volume 1 • Issue 05

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

Dec. 2014/Jan.2015



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

'For those who fought for it, Freedom has a special flavor the protected will never know.'



Chapter Officers & E-Board

Dennis Beauregard	President	908-902-8789	vva12p@verizon.net
Ernie Diorio	1 st Vice President	732-245-5552	litetrop67@aol.com
Don Davison	2 nd Vice President	732-988-4056	soulpony@aol.com
Paul Bausch	Secretary	732-323-8269	nayu67@aol.com
Rich Brandon	Treasurer	518-966-8347	

Committees

Bob Lopez	Minority Affairs	732-988-9241	seabees7@verizon.net
Tony Corbella	PTSD	732-272-8770	paddybella@optonline.net
Don Davison	School Speaker Program	732-988-4056	soulpony@aol.com
Tom Milmoie	Agent Orange	732-859-8783	milmoie7@aol.com
Ernie Diorio	School Speakers Program	732-245-5552	litetrop67@aol.com
Bob Hopkins	Membership, Grievance, Chaplain	732-531-2574	herc3000@aol.com
Bucky Grimm	POW/MIA	732-222-9376	wheat111@comcast.net
Jimmy Mack	Product Sales, Cremains	908-489-7438	jmack6649@gmail.com
Rich Magovern	Public, Community Affairs, Cremains	732-842-2950	richandnema@verizon.net
Michael Quilty	Homeless Vets, Car Show	732-939-8938	quiltym@gmail.com
Tony Ponzo	Finance, Fund Raising	973-979-0142	ybor47@ptd.net
Joe McCreary	Veterans' Health Care	732-228-7852	joecmbg@yahoo.com
Dan Higgins	Civil Affairs, Cremains	732-341-2544	danielhiggins123@comcast.net

State Council Delegates

Michael Berman Delegate	Mike Quilty, Alternate Delegate
Paul Bausch, Delegate	Dan Higgins, Alternate Delegate
Tony Ponzo, Delegate	

Other Contacts

Margaret Wojciechowicz	Chapter Service Officer	margaret.wojciechowicz@va.gov
Bob Parrella	AVVA Liaison	732-303-1689 bobpark4@aol.com
Rob Ford	BITW Editor & Web Master	732-687-3846 nlvva12@gmail.com

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)

President's Message

Let me bring you up to date on some of the happenings in the Chapter. I have not done a President's message since October, and we had no newsletter for December due to Rob's computer problem. Ten Chapter members attended the third State Council Town Hall meeting in Wildwood on October 19, 2014. Four Chapter members Ernie Diorio, Paul Bausch, Dan Higgins, and Mike Quilty visited four Government installations for the State Council, to full fill the commitment to National so that Council could continue to receive the grant from VSF for the State Service Officers program. Without their help and dedication, the State Council would not have received this year's \$20,000.00 grant.

On October 25, John Aitken and his brothers throughout the State were at the Memorial to clean up the grounds and to wash the Wall for Veterans Day.

The Chapter purchased two tables to support the Memorial Night at the Museum annual fund raiser on October 30th. All who attended enjoyed a great event that honored the supporters of the new Huey Plaza, and to honor the volunteers that restored it. Of the twenty volunteers, 10 are members of Chapter 12!

In November, the Chapter purchased a table of ten to the Chapter 800 Red, White and Blue Dinner; it was a great time for all. The Chapter Color Guard presented the colors at the Bi-annual Legislator's Brunch honoring Assembly Woman Tucker, and Home Depot for their support of Veterans. We sent 15 Chapter members to this important event to let the Legislators know what we Veterans need. Chapter members laid a wreath for Veterans' Day at the Memorial service, which was very well attended. On November 22 the Chapter sent 10 members to the Brennan Stand Alone Foundation annual fund raiser Dinner, and donated \$1000.00 to their fund to help Veterans. That night they presented two \$10,000.00 awards to needy Veterans.

Thanks to Bob Hopkins and his little Elves, Tony Corbella, John and Janet Aitken, Mike the Q Quilty, and John Finkel. The Holiday party was held on December 13 at VFW 2179 and was a great success with 125 in attendance. It was great to see all the grand kids who loved the special visit from Santa. A special thanks to our new Life AVVA member Carmen Peterson for cooking all the excellent food. All toys that were collect were given to Santa for his Hospital visits.

With the year 2015 coming in a week it is hard to believe that the Chapter will be 33 years old, and is still growing. I can remember our last break away when we were at 133, but never lost focus on our mission. Today we are the largest in the State at 338 strong and lead by example, and 17th in the Nation! WHY? Because of you as dedicated members always support this Chapter's programs and assist needy Veterans. As I look back to the month of November I turned a young age 68, and see that we all are in the Golden Years, still do not know why someone labeled it the Olden Years. We must plan for the future and where we go from here. I know that we made a difference to all Veterans, and if it were not for VVA our brother & sister Veterans from WWII, Korea, and the present would not be receiving what they deserve. With this year our goals are to look to see what is at the end of the tunnel for us as leaders, and to decide how to get there.

The Colonel



UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

The next Chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, January 7, 2014, at 7:30PM.
Location is at VFW 2226, 210 Norwood Ave., Oakhurst, NJ.

To Be Scheduled:

February 3, 2015
Chapel of the 4 Chaplains
Gold Medallion Recipient
Paul Sutton
(invitation attached)

March, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Belmar

April, Chapter Installation and Dinner/Dance

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

John Aitken, Dec. 16

SICK CALL

John Aitkin is home after his back surgery and during well.

Jim D"elia is home and doing well with his blood pressure issue.

Bill Travis home from his operation with the loss of a limb.

All Brothers are doing well, and we hope for a speedy recovery.

The Colonel

Anyone born in December or January ?? 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.

This is the highest honor that can be awarded

Chapter member Paul Sutton will be receiving the highest medal from the Chapel of the 4 Chaplains, the Gold Medallion. We, as a Chapter, must attend this event. I have reserved a table of 10. Please confirm if you will be going.

The Board of Directors of
THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS
Request the pleasure of your company at

**THE 47TH ANNUAL FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY
AWARDS DINNER**
Honoring
THE FOUR CHAPLAINS
&
Gold Medallion Recipients:

Ralph Galati, USAF, POW
Paul L. Sutton, Marine Corps League

On
Tuesday, February 3, 2015
6:00pm - 9:00pm

At the
Corinthian Yacht Club
300 West 2nd Street
Essington, PA 19029
[610-521-4705](tel:610-521-4705)

RSVP by January 23, 2015
Business Attire

I would like to pay by:

Check (Payable to the: Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation)

Credit Card: Am Exp M/C Visa

Card #: _____

Expiration date: _____ Security Code: _____

Print Name (as it appears on the card)

Signature: _____

MUST RSVP BY: January 23, 2015

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

AWARDS DINNER:

___ Please reserve _____ tickets at \$100 each (or 2 for \$150) for dinner \$_____.

___ Please reserve _____ table (s) of 8 guests at \$600 per table. \$_____.

___ Please reserve _____ Corporate Sponsorship at \$1,000: includes 1 table of 8 guests; corporate logo recognition and announcement from podium.

___ Unable to attend: Although I am unable to attend, please accept my donation listed to further the mission of The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation.

The renowned Corinthian Yacht Club 3 Course Buffet will be provided including a vegetarian option.

SEATS ARE LIMITED SO PLEASE RESERVE EARLY



1st 'Choice Cards' go to 320,000 veterans living far from VA care

Stars and Stripes: (6 November, Tom Philpott, 159k online visitors/mo; Washington, DC)

The Department of Veterans Affairs has mailed its first medical "Choice Cards," with letters explaining how to use them, to 320,000 VA-enrolled veterans who reside more than 40 miles from any type of VA medical facility.

By late November, another 370,000 vets, those facing waits longer than 30 days for VA appointments, will be the second group to get the cards, said Dr. James Tuchs Schmidt, VA's acting principal deputy under secretary for health.

These are the two groups of vets eligible immediately to use information on their Choice Card to try to secure more convenient or timely care than VA can provide. By the end of January another 8 million enrolled veterans also will receive Choice Cards. These vets, however, won't be eligible to use them to access non-VA care unless they move beyond 40 miles of a VA-owned medical facility or VA can't provide care within 30 days. The 30-day window is based on a veteran's preferred date to get care or the date deemed medically necessary by their physicians.

To receive a Choice Card, veterans must have been enrolled in VA health care by Aug. 1, 2014. Those who have enrolled later are eligible only if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations in the previous five years.

As vet advocacy groups have cautioned for months, the Choice Card is not a golden key to unlimited health care from any physician or facility a veteran might choose, despite what some lawmakers touted last summer while making it the featured item of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014.

"It is important to know that the Choice Card does not provide guaranteed health care coverage or an unlimited medical benefit," explains VA Secretary Robert McDonald in a letter to the first card recipients. "In fact, before your Choice Card for this benefit can be used, your eligibility must be verified and you must receive advance authorization from VA."

The card itself is similar to most health insurance cards, with the holder's name shown and a number to call to verify eligibility for outside care. Authorization to use it must be cleared by a program manager for every episode of care.

Those authorized to seek outside care can choose from a network of VA-approved providers or their own providers, if VA approved. To be approved, they must treat Medicare patients and accept Medicare rates or work at a Department of Defense or Indian Health Service facility or in a federally qualified health center.

"They also have to have a valid license to practice," said Tuchs Schmidt. "We put that stuff in there to make sure that the people we are engaging to see veteran patients are actually qualified to see them."

Angry at the discovery of systemic patient wait-time abuses across the VA health system last spring, Congress gave VA only 90 days to establish the Choice Card program as a way to guarantee more timely and convenient access to care.

The deadline left VA with no alternative to getting the program launched without partnering with two current contractors -- TriWest Healthcare Alliance of Phoenix, Ariz., and HealthNet Federal Services of Arlington, Va. Both already run VA Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) networks, which backstop VA health care with networks of primary and specialty care providers. The contracts swiftly were modified to include operation of the Choice Card program and expansion of provider networks and telephone call centers to meet significantly heavier demand.

Providers in the TriWest and HealthNet networks already are pre-screened and certify that they will meet VA measures for timeliness and quality of care, and will transfer medical records promptly back to VA to ensure continuity of care.

Though the law required cards to be mailed to every eligible enrolled veteran by Nov. 5, VA officials opted for a phased rollout to avoid any program crash.

"It just didn't make sense to mail cards to almost nine million veterans and try to build a telephone call center [large enough to answer all] those calls and questions," Tuchs Schmidt said. "It would have been inundated and [also] extraordinarily expensive for a vendor to build that surge capacity."

So VA choose to send cards first to veterans with mailing addresses more than 40 miles from a VA health facility. In about two weeks, after TriWest and HealthNet have handled the bulk of those calls by verifying eligibility, screening providers and making appointments within a five-day goal, the contractors will begin to process card usage by veterans facing long delays for VA care.

Tuchs Schmidt noted that the VA medical system continues its stepped-up effort since May to get as many patients as possible off waiting lists and into VA care. VA had 1.2 million more patient visits in fiscal 2014 than a year earlier, he said, with 500,000 patients seen on weekends and evenings. Also, while awaiting full implementation of Choice Card, many patients facing long waits will be referred to private sector care under previous VA authorities.

Last month, as the new law required, VA also streamlined how it pays for outside hospital care and medical services delivered by non-VA providers.

Choice Card is to end in three years or whenever VA spends all of the \$10 billion set aside to fund it. Tuchs Schmidt predicts that the money won't run out before card program expires in late 2017.

Veterans will find quirks in the how the law or VA's interpretation impacts eligibility. For example, the law's 40-mile rule is based on distance to any VA health facility regardless of size or services offered. So if a veteran needs routine care from a cardiologist, and lives 100 miles from the nearest VA cardiologist but within 40 miles of a small VA clinic, the clinic's location will disqualify the veteran from using Choice Card to get private cardiology care.

Also, VA interprets the 40 miles to be a "straight line" distance, not driving distance. That means a veteran won't be able to use outside care if the VA hospital is within 40 miles "as the crow flies" however long it takes to reach by car.

VA leases but doesn't own medical facilities in Alaska or Hawaii which means almost all veterans living there can use Choice Card to get private sector care if they choose, Tuchschildt said. VA also doesn't run any health facilities in New Hampshire. Vets who reside there can use the card unless they live within 20 miles of a VA facility operating in a neighboring state, he said.

**VVA National President States Strong Support
For H.R. 5484, the Toxic Exposure Research Act**

Washington, D.C.--Representatives Dan Benishek (R-MI) and Mike Honda (D-CA) have introduced the Toxic Exposure Research Act (H.R. 5484) that will, when enacted into law, establish a national center at a VA medical facility for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

On November 19, at 2:00 p.m., in testimony before the Subcommittee on Health of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, VVA National President John Rowan expressed VVA's strong support for this legislation. "This bipartisan legislation is multigenerational in scope and will provide a process for evaluating exposures that may result in toxic wounds to veterans and their offspring," said Rowan. "The invisible wounds of war may not manifest for decades. Most tragically, these wounds may be passed on to subsequent generations, and our children and grandchildren should not have such burdens visited upon them."

Toxins, such as Agent Orange, are suspected of being responsible for birth defects, cancers, developmental disabilities, and other adverse health conditions in the children and grandchildren of veterans at a rate disproportionate to the general population. Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War. During the Persian Gulf War, more than 100,000 troops were exposed to plumes of toxins after U.S. forces blew up the Iraqi ammo dumps containing chemical and biological weapons. These veterans and the next generation deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq were exposed to oil fires, as well as the toxic smog from burn pits in which chemicals, ordnance, and even body parts were incinerated.

"H.R. 5484 is a simple and straightforward proposal that will begin the needed research in the search for answers for the children, grandchildren, and in some cases, great-grandchildren who are manifesting a range of health issues suspected to be a result of a parent's exposure to toxins while serving in the armed forces. We applaud Congressmen Benishek and Honda for introducing this bill that addresses the conditions that are so heart-breaking to so many families," Rowan said.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the ne

Medical tests for PTSD and TBI not far off

By Patricia Kime, Staff writer

Researchers are inching closer to creating medical tests to detect post-traumatic stress or mild traumatic brain injury — conditions that now are diagnosed only with self-reported symptoms and subjective exams.

Scientists from five institutions are one year into a five-year, \$42.9 million study to find biomarkers that can indicate evidence of these injuries common to combat veterans.

Among the most promising findings, according to preliminary results presented Nov. 4 in a press conference at New York University Langone Medical Center, are brain imaging, blood and genetic variation tests, eye movements and even vocal changes evident in service members and civilians who have experienced a TBI or have been diagnosed with PTSD.

An estimated one in five of the 2.3 million troops who have served in combat since 2001 have suffered a brain injury and/or developed PTSD, according to researchers.

The scientists, supported by NYU Langone Medical Center and the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Veterans Center for the Study of PTS and TBI, are looking at the conditions in more than 4,000 troops and civilians, hoping to develop tests to detect these invisible wounds — and also help determine effective, individualized treatments.

"Our goal is to assemble all the relevant biomarkers and winnow them down to the best candidates for diagnosing," said Dr. Charles Marmar, chairman of the Psychiatry Department at NYU Langone Medical Center.

Using brain imaging, Dr. Amit Etkin, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University, has found that compared to individuals without post-traumatic stress, patients with that condition have above-average activity in the portion of the brain responsible for creating and storing memories, the amygdala, and below-average activity in the portion that controls social behavior and expression, the medial prefrontal cortex, as a response to fear-inducing stimulus.

The findings could lead to brain scan tests to diagnose the condition and confirm treatments appropriate for the individuals, such as psychotherapy, medication, brain stimulation or a combination of those, Etkin said.

Meanwhile, at Emory University School of Medicine, Dr. Kerry Ressler is examining the role of genetics in resilience and developing post-traumatic stress.

Ressler has found gene variants in 10 percent to 20 percent of the population that increase the risk for developing PTSD. When he compared the genetic makeup of a group of predominantly male Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans with PTSD to a group of black women who had been abused as children and also had PTSD, he found both groups shared the same gene anomaly.

Such evidence could lead to genetic tests to determine who may be at higher risk for developing PTSD, and designing pharmacological or psychological interventions, such as the administration of morphine or exposure therapy — both of which have been proven to prevent development of PTSD — following a traumatic event.

Other research in the study indicates that people with PTSD have distinct vocal patterns, which may allow measurement to determine whether a person has the disorder.

And at the Cohen Veterans Center, Dr. Uzma Samadani, who also serves as chief of neurosurgery at the Veterans Affairs New York Harbor Health Care System, is studying an age-old symptom of head injury — out-of-sync eye movements — to develop a quick test for concussion.

Standing in front of a slide showing Wile E. Coyote after the Roadrunner has clocked him, Samadani noted how cartoonists indicated the character's head injury, with his eyes moving in circles, not in tandem. In scientific terms, the condition is called an "anisocoric and disconjugate gaze."

Samandani tracked the eye movements of more than 400 troops and veterans as they watched a four-minute video and found that in patients with a concussion or those recovering from a mild head injury, their eyes did not track together.

Her work could lead to the development of a medical device that could be used in combat theaters to detect a a concussion after it occurs.

"If someone has weakness or swelling, you can figure it out with eye tracking," she said. "You can't cheat on this test."

Much of the research for the massive study is being conducted in New York and at Stanford with 1,500 participants, and with 2,500 personnel at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

The physicians said the next phase will involve determining the most promising biomarkers and how they can be used to personalize treatments for PTSD and TBI.

According to researchers, what works for some patients don't work in others, and scientists aren't exactly sure why. For example, psychotherapy works to alleviate PTSD symptoms in 98 percent of females who have rape-related PTSD, but is successful only for about half of veterans with combat-related PTSD.

"Nine months from now, we'll embark on a personalized medicine trial where we take the best of these and use them to try to understand who does or does not respond to these therapies, whether it be psychotherapy, medical therapy or brain stimulation therapy," Marmar said.

Obama Announces Nomination of Ashton Carter as Secretary of Defense



Today, in a White House Press Conference, President Barack Obama announced his nomination of veteran defense expert Ashton Carter as his defense secretary. Carter, a policy expert, has worked for eleven defense secretaries. He replaces Chuck Hagel, who resigned in frustration over the White House strategy on Iraq and Syria.

VA Updates List of Vietnam Ships Qualifying for Presumptive Agent Orange Exposure

VA has updated the list of ships that operated in Vietnam to add new ships, expand dates for ships already on the list, and add a new category of small vessels that operated on Vietnam's inland waterways. The list can help Vietnam-era veterans find out if they qualify for presumption of Agent Orange exposure when seeking disability compensation for related diseases. [Learn More](#)

Visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures to learn about military exposures and VA benefits.

The following are from VVA Web Weekly for week of 12/18. Please go to www.vva.org/webweekly for complete stories.

Blumenthal to Serve as Ranking Member of SVAC in 114th Congress

From a December 12 press release from the Office of Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT): U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal today announced that he will serve as the Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee when the 114th Congress convenes in January. In addition to his new role on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Blumenthal will maintain his positions on four additional committees: Armed Services, Judiciary, Commerce, and Aging.

As Reported by *CNN*

VA Misleads Congress and Media



According to a December 16 article on the *CNN* website by D. Griffin, C. Devine, and N. Black, the VA misled Congress and members of the media about how many veterans died or suffered serious harm as a result of extreme treatment delays, according to a new report by the department's top watchdog. The VA shared a fact sheet in April with Congress and the press that said 23 veterans died and a total of 76 suffered serious harm throughout the nation while waiting months or years for health care since 1999. But the report released Monday by the VA's Office of Inspector General highlights multiple errors with these findings and a lack of evidence for statements the VA released about them. Amongst the misleading facts highlighted in the report, the VA overstated the timeframe of its review by eight years, since the VA said it examined unresolved requests for health care since 1999, but in reality only examined requests dating back to 2007.

[Read complete article](#)

Senator Blocks Suicide-Prevention Bill

In a December 15 *AP* story by Matthew Daly, veterans groups blasted Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) Monday for blocking a bill intended to reduce a suicide epidemic that claims the lives of 22 military veterans every day.

[Read complete story here](#)

Coping with Holiday Stress and Depression



Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead, and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression. Here are some tips to prevent holiday stress and depression:

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died, or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious, or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails, or videos.

Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends, and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.

Learn to say NO. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

Don't abandon healthy eating habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Try these suggestions: have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheeses, or drinks; get plenty of sleep; and incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing, and restoring inner calm.

Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

From Military.com, Veterans report of 12/22/14

Report: VA Misled Congress A new report has found that the VA misled Congress and the media about how many veterans died or suffered serious harm as a result of extreme treatment delays. [Read More](#)

Sky-High Pricing Has VA Rationing Drugs VA has had to ration a break-through medicine that cures hepatitis C, a liver virus infecting 174,000 veterans. [Read More](#)

Beware of IRS Scam There is a new scam in which callers claiming to be from the IRS tell intended victims they owe taxes and must pay using a pre-paid debit card or wire transfer. [Read More](#)

[Log on to Military.com to access the above stories](#)

december 11, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301 Dear

Mr. Secretary:

When we last met on October 31, 2014, we voiced three primary concerns regarding the ongoing reorganization of the POW/MIA accounting community: the lack of transparency, the absence of senior military involvement in the process, and our belief that a military veteran should be named the Interim and Permanent Director of the new agency.

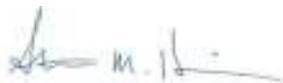
After you departed the meeting, the new Under Secretary for Policy said she would need two weeks to review the situation, and then would get back to us about our concerns. Now six weeks later, we are still waiting. Meanwhile, the DOD-only working groups and those on the groups continue to remain cloaked in secrecy. The only non-secret is how employee morale continues to plummet throughout the experienced workforce of DPMO, JPAC and elsewhere due to the total disregard of their opinions by the current PACT leadership.

Mr. Secretary, we write this letter out of total frustration, and are now considering withdrawing our support for reorganizing the POW/MIA accounting community. We have the highest respect for you and your commitment to the mission, but we truly believe those below you do not share that same level of commitment — not for the missing, the fallen or for their families.

We ask you to instruct the Under Secretary for Policy to make this process open and transparent, and for her to meet on a regular basis with us and others involved in this mission. We also urge you to appoint a senior military leader to be involved in the daily process, and to appoint a veteran as the Interim and Permanent Director of the new agency.

We are available to meet with you and discuss in detail the concerns we have mentioned above, as well as other concerns about the workings of the PACT. We all want this reorganization to be successful and the mission strengthened, but excluding dedicated rank- and-file employees from the conversation, as well as MIA family and veterans' organizations, is a recipe for failure.

Respectfully,



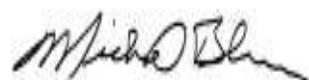
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National Executive Director
American Veterans



GARRY J. AUGUSTINE
Executive Director
Disabled American Veterans



HERB ROSENBLEETH



MICHAEL A. BLUM

Executive Director

Jewish War Veterans of the USA Marine Corps League



ANN MILLS-GRIFFITHS

Chairman of the Board

**National League of POW/MIA Families
of the U.S.**

National Executive Director

USA Marine Corps League



ROBERT E. WALLACE

Executive Director

Veterans of Foreign Wars of



RICHARD F. WEIDMAN

Executive Director

Vietnam Veterans of America

The following pictures of the Stand Down in Newark, on Oct. 25th are courtesy of Tony Corbella.





Dear Mr. D'Iorio,

I wanted to thank you and the fine gentlemen who presented to the children of Indian Hill Schools on Friday, November 14th. Our young people need to know that we owe our freedom and our lives to Veterans. Veterans have so much to teach and share with our young people. Your accounts of your experiences, your display of objects from foreign countries, your hands-on, honest and responsive approach to sharing your stories will be remembered throughout their lives. I know that I was deeply affected and I will remember!

You made a real difference when you fought for our country and you continue to make a profound difference when you talk to children. Thank you for coming to our school and thank you for your service to our country.

And Happy Thanksgiving!

With Warm and Sincere Appreciation,

Barbara Duncan
Superintendent of Holmdel Township School District



Sent from Windows Mail

THE PICTURES THAT YOU SEE ARE FROM VETERANS DAY IN MANALAPAN. WITH THE HELP OF DENNIS, WHO WAS ABLE TO GET ME LITERATURE TO HELP VETS AND JACK MCNABOE, DEPUTY MAYOR OF MANALAPAN, MYSELF AND OTHER VETS WERE ABLE TO GET DONATIONS FROM VENDORS IN THE AREA TO HAVE FOOD AFTER THE CEREMONY. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME MANALAPAN HELD AN EVENT LIKE THIS AND IT WENT VERY WELL. WE LOOK FORWARD TO A REPEAT PERFORMANCE NEXT YEAR.

I AM UNABLE TO INSERT THE PHOTOS OF THE MANALAPAN VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY, SO THEY ARE ATTACHED AS SEPARATE FILES.

LIKEWISE I CAN'T INSERT THE PHOTOS FROM THE HOLIDAY PARTY, SO THEY, ALSO, ARE ATTACHED AS SEPARATE FILES.

AND AGAIN, I RECEIVED AN E-MAIL FROM PAUL SUTTON LISTING VET BENEFITS. IT IS VERY LONG, SO THAT IS ATTACHED SEPERATELY.



I have to get me one of these (and I don't mean the VW !!!)



This is where the big gun goes – unfortunately this won't fit in my driveway!

SOME CHUCKLES OR GROANS, WHATEVER

A young man excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and is going to get married. He says,

"Just for fun, Ma, I'm going to bring over 3 women and you try and guess which one I'm going to marry."

The mother agrees.

The next day, he brings 3 beautiful women into the house and sits them down on the couch and they chat for a while. He then says,

"Okay, Ma. Guess which one I'm going to marry."

She immediately replies, "The redhead in the middle."

"That's amazing, Ma. You're right. How did you know?"

"I don't like her."

Two men died and went to Heaven. St. Peter greeted them, and said "I'm sorry, gentlemen, but your mansions aren't ready yet. Until they are, I can send you back to Earth as whatever you want to be."

"Great!" said the first guy, "I want to be an eagle soaring above beautiful scenery!"

"No problem," replied St. Peter, and POOF! The guy was gone. "And what do you want to be," St. Peter asked the other guy.

"I'd like to be one cool stud!" was the reply.

"Easy," replied St. Peter, and the other guy was gone.

After a few months, their mansions were finished, and St. Peter sent an angel to fetch them back. "You'll find them easily," he says, "One of them is soaring above the Grand Canyon, and the other one is on a snow tire somewhere in Detroit!"

A man received the following text from his neighbor:

I am so sorry Bob. I've been riddled with guilt and I have to confess. I have been tapping your wife, day and night when you're not around. In fact, more than you. I'm not getting any at home, but that's no excuse. I can no longer live with the guilt and I hope you will accept my sincerest apology with my promise that it won't happen again.

The man, anguished and betrayed, went into his bedroom, grabbed his gun, and without a word, shot his wife and killed her.

A few moments later, a second text came in: Damn auto-correct. I meant "Wi-Fi", not "wife".

A man is stranded on a desert island, all alone for ten years. One day, he sees a speck in the horizon. He thinks to himself, "It's not a ship." The speck gets a little closer and he thinks, "It's not a boat." The speck gets even closer and he thinks, "It's not a raft." Then, out of the surf comes this gorgeous blonde woman, wearing a wet suit and scuba gear. She comes up to the guy and says, "How long has it been since you've had a cigarette?"

"Ten years!", he says.

She reaches over and unzips a waterproof pocket on her left sleeve and pulls out a pack of fresh cigarettes.

He takes one, lights it, takes a long drag, and says, "Man, oh man! Is that good!"

Then she asked, "How long has it been since you've had a drink of whiskey?"

He replies, "Ten years!"

She reaches over, unzips her waterproof pocket on her right sleeve, pulls out a flask and gives it to him.

He takes a long swig and says, "Wow, that's fantastic!"

Then she starts unzipping a longer zipper that runs down the front of her wet suit and she says to him, "And how long has it been since you've had some real fun?"

And the man replies, "Wow! Don't tell me that you've got golf clubs in there!"

TAPS

Shore Area Vietnam Vets Called Home By The Lord

Brody, Richard D., 66, Millstone Twp., Army

Buchear, William, H, 67, Belmar, USMC

Critelli, Anthony J., 72, Lakewood, Army

Kosyla, Raymond Robert, 69, Brick, Army

Leggio, Angelo, P, 67, Manalapan, Army

Macklin, John, T., 65, Howell, Navy

Nelson, David Louis, Jamesburg, Navy

Patterson, George, 73, formerly Highlands, Miamisburg, OH, Army

Puma, Dominick, 63, Toms River, Army

Rivers, Russell "Rusty", 70, Waretown, USAF

Shirley, Charles F., 64, Long Branch, Navy

Wilbert, Ralph, 67, Lakehurst, Army

REST IN PEACE BROTHERS