



BACK IN THE WORLD

Vol 16 Issue 1

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

January 2016



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.'

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Paul Bausch, Delegate
Tony Ponzo, 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.

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.**

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: vva12p@verizon.net or nlava12@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

A special thanks goes out to Bob Hopkins and his committee of Elves who put together another outstanding Chapter Holiday Party at the Middletown VFW on December 12. The attendance was overwhelming with members and all their grandkids. Rabbi Michael Berman and Lt gave their blessing to start off the event, and a half hour into the party, the Large fellow in the red suit made his appearance for an hour and a half. Thanks goes to AVVA member Carmen Peterson for preparing the delicious roast beef and ham that was served. Speaking of thanks, Santa wishes to thank the members for all the unwrapped toys that were donated. Each year Santa travels to local hospitals and distributes them to children that are hospitalized during the holidays.

On December 5, a number of Chapter members attended VVA Chapter 800 annual Tree lighting and menorah lighting at the Memorial. Bobby Lopez placed a wreath for the Chapter. This was a great event that Chapter 800 has been doing for a number of years, and as always they did an outstanding job.

Eight Chapter members assisted in the December Kid's work shop at the Home Depot Store in Hazlet; it was a great four hours of fun helping 200 kids with their monthly project. In January we will be helping at the Plainfield store. Please contact, John Aitken at 732-757-1711 for date and time , the more the merrier .

At the December State Council meeting that was held in Kenilworth, the Council Cruise raffle to support our VSO program for New Jersey was won by our own Newsletter Editor Rob Ford. Congratulation!

THE COLONEL



UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

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

January 10, VFW 2179 Fund Raiser (see flyer)

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

I guess there is no one!!

Anyone born in 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.

VFW 2179 & AUXILIARY

Special Projects Fundraiser

An Afternoon of Jazz



Greetings,

VFW Post 2179 and Auxiliary are holding a special fundraiser to support the State Commander's and President's Special Projects. These projects will benefit Veterans and their families.

Each year the State Commander and President choose a project that they feel is worthy of being supported. Commander Dan Viveiros and President Paula Pinto both have chosen such projects for this year. The Commander chose to get needed items for Veterans facilities and a changing room for the Color Guard at Brigadier General William Doyle Cemetery and The President chose Deborah Hospital.

We hope you will join us at this event, which will have The VFW Jazz Band (our group of talented musicians) perform, a DJ for more dancing, refreshments, raffles and gift baskets. We are asking if you so desire to donate a gift basket to this effort.

Thank you for your help and participation.

Respectfully,
Dennis Beauregard and Carmen Peterson, Chairmen

January 10, 2016



1 to 5 PM

A joint sponsored fundraiser by
VFW Post 2179 and Auxiliary
For the Commander's and President's Special Project Refreshments, gift
baskets, apron sale,
and music by the VFW Jazz Band

Cost \$20.00

Call Patty O'Grady for tickets: **732-232-0279**

**So come and join us for fun, being with
good people, and fabulous music, and
dancing!**

VFW Post 2179
1 Veterans Lane/Route 36 S Port
Monmouth, NJ 07758

Veterans Courts, Are They in Jersey's Future?



By Vince Conti

Members of Veterans PTSD Task Force listen to testimony at Stone Harbor American Legion Post 331 Dec. 4.

Posted: Tuesday, December 8, 2015 11:06 am

By Vince Conti

STONE HARBOR – Joseph Griffies, a 68-year-old Vietnam veteran, was one of the first to testify at a state hearing Dec. 4 at the Stone Harbor American Legion Post 331.

Griffies, angrily at times, chastised the state for not doing enough to help veterans, whom he called “young heroes,” deal with the return to civilian life. Griffies, a veterans advocate, wants the state to institute veterans courts where judges would consider the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and help veterans facing a variety of offenses get help rather than incarceration.

The hearing was one of three events aimed at allowing the state’s Veterans PTSD Task Force to gather testimony. Task force members heard information on the high rates of incarceration among returning veterans along with stories of substance abuse, broken marriages, and constant run-ins with law enforcement.

The task force was charged to “study how veterans diagnosed with PTSD are treated in judicial proceedings.”

The Stone Harbor hearing followed ones in Bergen and Ocean counties. Only three of the 11 members were in attendance to hear testimony locally. A report to the governor and legislature is due by May 2016.

New Jersey is home to over 400,000 veterans. While other areas of the state boast more veterans in absolute numbers, Cape May County has the highest percentage of the 18 and older population who are veterans.

As Griffies and others noted, New Jersey is not one of the 37 states that have established veterans courts. This is only part of the problem, according to those giving testimony.

Dealing with how the judiciary treats veterans diagnosed with PTSD is important, but all too often veterans run into trouble before they can obtain a diagnosis.

One ex-Marine spoke of returning from Iraq in 2007 but not being diagnosed with PTSD until 2013. By then his marriage was over and he had served time in prison. The availability of mental health programs for veterans capable of pinpointing PTSD where it exists is another important issue raised by veterans, especially in South Jersey where travel outside the state is often required to get to veterans health facilities.

Delays in gaining the diagnosis leads some to argue that veterans court benefits should be extended to all veterans, not just those with formal PTSD diagnoses.

Assemblyman Robert Andrzejczak, (D-1st) a decorated Iraqi war veteran, stood in the back of the room with his young son. He heard repeated testimony that the state needs to catch up with what other states are doing for veterans.

“The time to act is long since passed,” was both one speaker’s statement and the theme of so many more. Andrzejczak was singled out for his staunch support for veterans’ issues.

With veterans disproportionately impacted by mental health problems upon return from service, advocates made both the moral and financial case for state action.

“Our prisons are not mental health facilities but we continue to use them as such,” one said. Early intervention, easier access to health care facilities, veterans courts and partnership programs with local law enforcement were all discussed.

Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton, attending an event at Post 331 just two days after the hearing, said that he would support veterans courts and that getting Veterans Affairs to put a health care facility in the southeastern part of the state was a battle he has been fighting for 25 years. “This is an issue for the judiciary,” he said, “but we on the freeholders would certainly support it.”

VA Plans to Propose Expanded Disability Benefits Eligibility for Veterans Exposed to Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune

12/17/2015 02:27 PM EST

VA Plans to Propose Expanded Disability Benefits Eligibility for Veterans Exposed to Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

“The water at Camp Lejeune was a hidden hazard, and it is only years later that we know how dangerous it was,” said Secretary McDonald. “We thank ATSDR for the thorough review that provided much of the evidence we needed to fully compensate Veterans who develop one of the conditions known to be related to exposure to the compounds in the drinking water.”

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks from 1953 to 1987. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA’s review of current medical science and ATSDR’s findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following conditions:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Aplastic Anemia / Myelodysplastic Syndromes

The Secretary’s proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of “Veteran.”

This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected Veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, it encourages Veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base, to file a disability compensation claim with VA.

VA will continue to grant claims for disabilities claimed to be associated with exposure to the contaminants that can be granted under current regulations and review of the evidence in each case. If a claim for service connection for one of the proposed presumptive conditions would be denied under current regulations, the denial will be stayed until VA issues its final regulations. VA will announce when the regulations are final and presumptive benefits can begin to be

awarded. For more information on applying for these benefits, visit:
http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp_lejeune_water.asp.

Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for up to 15 health conditions. More information, including a full list of covered conditions, can be found online at:
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp>.

Veterans can establish eligibility for healthcare benefits by submitting VA Form 10-10EZ online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, downloading it at www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf and returning it to any VA Medical Center or Clinic, or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time).

VA is reimbursing certain veterans' family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions. More information can be found at:
<https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov>

**(Veteran's Day speech is at very end, I had a bad time getting it
to copy)**

VVA Web Weekly, Dec 11
Several good articles dealing with PTSD, Dow Chemical, and incarcerated veterans

Veterans Day Speech at NJVVM is attached at the end

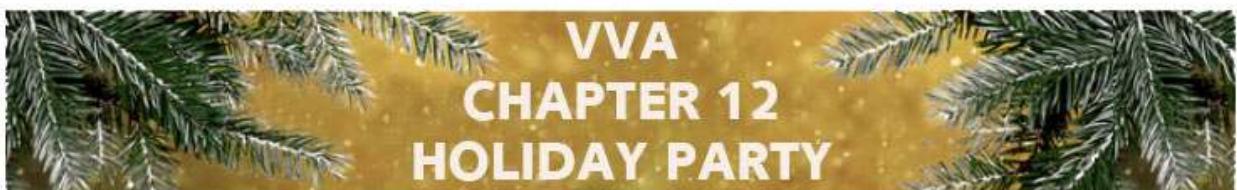
December 29, 2015 Ceremony

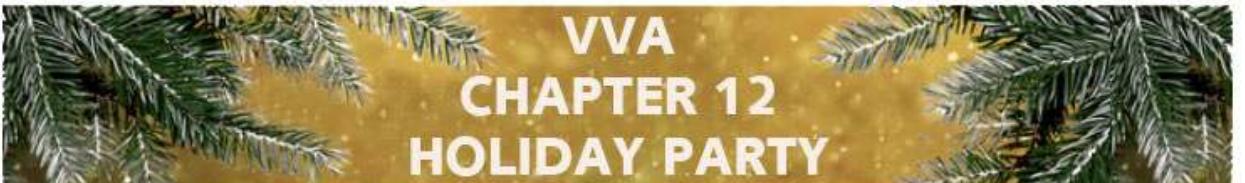
Pictured are Allison Martin and Mark Saltarelli from Home Depot along with Sarah Taggart and Bill Linderman of NJVVMF. The slim guy is yours truly with massive back pain and no smile.

The plaques were given to each for all the work Home Depot through Allison and Mark do for The Veterans in New Jersey.



2015 Holiday Party





**VVA
CHAPTER 12
HOLIDAY PARTY**



VVA CHAPTER 12

HOLIDAY PARTY



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HOLIDAY PARTY



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HOLIDAY PARTY

VFW POST 2179
DEC 12, 2015



VVA CHAPTER 12

HOLIDAY PARTY



**VVA
CHAPTER 12
HOLIDAY PARTY**



On December 4th we assisted Home Depot with their December Kids Workshop at the Hazlet store. Thanks to Dennis, Bob Hopkins, Dan Higgins, Mike Q, Tony Corbella, Bob Lopez, Rich Magovern and myself we were able to work with the kids. There were 192 kids at the workshop. Santa Clause and Mrs. Clause was provided by Home Depot and our own Mike Q sang to the kids. A great time was had by all as we assisted the kids with building their projects, trimmed a tree and handed out treats.

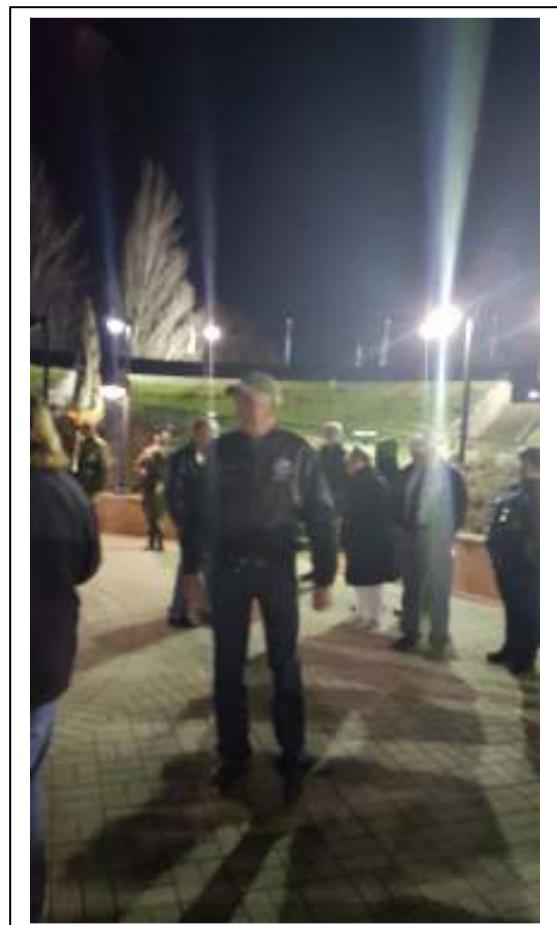
THE ELVES HARD AT WORK WITH SUPERVISION







Christmas Tree and Menorah Lighting
At the memorial
Bobby Lopez Placing the Wreath



Feeling Safe

I took down my Rebel flag (which you can't buy on e-bay any more) and peeled the NRA sticker off the front door.

I disconnected my home alarm system and quit the candy-ass Neighborhood Watch.

I bought two Pakistani flags and put one at each corner of the front yard.

Then I purchased the black flag of ISIS (which you **can buy on e-bay) and put it in the center of the yard.**

Now the local police, sheriff, FBI, CIA, NSA, Homeland Security, Secret Service and other agencies are all watching the house 24/7.

I've never felt safer and I'm saving \$69.95 a month.

A man goes to see the Rabbi. "Rabbi, something terrible is happening and I have to talk to you about it."

The Rabbi asked, "What's wrong?"

"My wife is poisoning me," the man replied.

The Rabbi, very surprised by this, asks, "How can that be?"

The man then pleads, "I'm telling you, I'm certain she's poisoning me. What should I do?"

The Rabbi then offers, "Tell you what. Let me talk to her, I'll see what I can find out and I'll let you know."

A week later, the Rabbi calls the man and says, "I spoke to her on the phone for three hours. You want my advice?

The man said, "Yes!"

Rabbi replies, "Take the poison."

TAPS

Shore Area Vietnam Vets Called Home By The Lord

Barnes, Jack Jr.,67, Jackson, Army

Butler, Raymone Edward, 95 Manchester (WWII,Korea,Nam) USAF

Evans, Hugh, 64 Howell, USMC

Hagan, James, Monmouth County, Army

Lewis, Richard Owen, 69, Brick, Navy

Maier, Albert, 70, Manchester, USAF

Mccombie, Glenn, 63, Bayville, Army

Mcgill, James, 70, Manchester, Army

Rohlfs, Donald, 70, Oakhurst, USAF

Vidovich, Matthew,"Butch", 69, Manchester, USMC

Wilcox, Francis, 64, Manchester, Navy

REST IN PEACE BROTHERS

(Eds. Note – this did not copy well, I'm sorry)

Veteran's Day Speech 2015

Col. McGowan, Holmdel Memorial

It is an absolute honor and privilege to be with you here today to celebrate Veteran's Day- as we remember and honor all of those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. At 11:00AM, on November 11 in 1919 the first Veteran's Day, was celebrated. Then called Armistice Day, it marked the temporary cessation of fighting that was declared in World War I exactly one year earlier. Armistice Day was officially changed to Veteran's Day by President Eisenhower in 1954, as the number of Veterans grew tremendously following World War II and the Korean War. This morning we stand at the Base of New Jersey's Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, a humbling reminder of the nearly 100 years of continuous selfless service and sacrifice since that first armistice day by the men and women of the United States Military and in particular of all of the brave men and women from New Jersey who served their country in Vietnam, especially the 1,563 that did not return home. This memorial is a powerful reminder that freedom is not free and each name reminds us that it is sons and daughters, brothers and sisters,

husbands and wives, fathers and mothers who put themselves in harm's way and are willing to sacrifice all in support of our nation's call.

Today is incredibly special for me personally. While I traveled from the Fort Leavenworth, KS area to join you today, I was born and raised in Woodbridge, NJ. I am the proud son of a New Jersey Vietnam Veteran, Bernard McGowan, whose service and sacrifice with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment from 1967- 1968 was a huge influence on my desire to join the military and serve our nation. It is an amazing honor and blessing to share this Veterans Day together with him on this hallowed ground. I also want to remember and thank two other Vietnam Veterans who, while they are no longer with us, are certainly not forgotten. Both had an incredibly positive influence on my life, without which I would not be here today. First, my uncle, John West, who in 1967 gave a picture and the address of his sister Nancy, now my

mom, to my dad while they were in Basic Training together getting ready to deploy to Vietnam. Needless to say I am forever grateful for that introduction. To Richie Sabot, my dad's best friend and a fellow Vietnam Veteran...who to me was always "Uncle Richie", who throughout my childhood and teenage years made our Families shared time together some of the most memorable and enjoyable of my life. It is his son Scott, my life-long friend, who paved the way for me to be here today.

I share my personal connection not only to pay tribute to those Vietnam Veterans who positively impacted my life and certainly played a part in my decision to serve in the military, but more broadly to highlight the powerful influence that all Veterans have had...and continue to have...in shaping the lives of those around them- often without even knowing that they are doing it. This is really at the heart of what I want to spend the next few minutes talking about-the value and importance of selfless service

and sacrifice for the good of others- for which I believe we have

no greater example than in our Veterans who we are here to remember and celebrate today.

In 1987, as a junior at Woodbridge High School I wrote my “Term-Paper” on the Vietnam War. However, I didn’t focus my paper on the policies, military strategy or operations surrounding the war, but rather I focused on the personal experiences of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who served and sacrificed during the war. I actually brought with me today one of the books I relied on for some of my research- “Dear America, Letters home from Vietnam”. I wanted to try and understand what motivated someone to be able to endure unbelievable hardship-at great risk to their life-while away from the comforts of home and the ones they loved. While I don’t think I understood this at the time, I believe writing my term-paper helped me understand why I wanted to join the military and follow in the footsteps of my Father, both of my Grandfathers, and all of the other Veterans

whose service and sacrifice I looked up to...I also believe this

experience has continued to guide my own leadership and service in the military over the last 27 years.

(Read a passage from book)

While it has been a long time since I wrote my term-paper, and there have certainly been many other influences since then, my conclusions then and my beliefs today remain consistent. I believe A Veteran's willingness to serve and sacrifice for others was then, and is still today, inspired by the legacy of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, neighbors, teachers, and coaches that were there for them in good times and bad and modelled what right looked like; I believe that this willingness to serve and sacrifice is sustained each and every day by the loyalty and support of those that stand beside them, both on the front lines and on the home front-there brothers and sisters in arms that they never want to leave behind....and it is strengthened over time by a motivation to make tomorrow better than today for those that they love and who will follow behind them. I believe that so

long as this continues to be the case, then regardless of the many imperfections and shortcomings of any institution, system, or policy the power of the human spirit and a shared selfless dedication to others, which has been demonstrated consistently by our Veterans throughout our Nation's history, will prevail and will ensure the security and prosperity of our Nation.

The legacy created by the service and sacrifice of our Veterans is incredibly powerful. It inspires in so many others the discipline, courage, pride and selfless spirit to succeed in all walks of life. I was inspired to want to be a Soldier and to try and make a positive difference in my life and the lives of others by the service and sacrifice of the Vietnam Veterans who I looked up to. Today, I am honored and privileged to serve alongside brave men and women who make me want to be a better leader every day, and I pray that our service continues to inspire future generations to value and pursue all types of public service for the good of others. Veterans share a common bond and calling with all of

those outside of the military who are willing to serve and sacrifice for others, it is why we see so many Veterans pursue non-military public oriented service professions after the military. Certainly we see this connection very clearly with fire fighters and police officers who risk their lives every day to provide for our health and safety. People like Bob Lavin, A New Jersey Vietnam Veteran and Retired Elizabeth, New Jersey Fireman who is here with us today. There is a connection to our teachers, who educate and inspire our future generations, people like Dennis Bourke, A New Jersey Vietnam Veteran, Bronze Star Winner and Purple Heart Recipient, who dedicated his life after the military to teaching here in New Jersey. He is no longer with us, but he is certainly not forgotten.

I am forever grateful to all of the Veterans here today and to all of those brave service members who have gone before me who were willing to serve and sacrifice for the good of others. I

am humbled at the opportunity to share this Veterans Day among

strengthened in knowing that today's Veterans are up to the task. We those outside of the military who are willing to serve and sacrifice find great strength in knowing that there are so many who have gone before us, who believe in us. There are so many who stand beside us, on the front-line and on the home-front, who count on us to do our part...and there are many more who look up to us and want to have the opportunity to follow in our footsteps....We will not them or you down. Happy Veterans Day to all, thank you for allowing me to share today with you, I am forever grateful. May God continue to bless all of you and continue to bless the United States of America.

am humbled at the opportunity to share this Veterans Day among