



# The Sentinel

Vol. 5 No. 9

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

November 2018

Website: [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org)

President: John Harrigan

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

## **FROM THE MINEFIELD:**

*Submitted by John Harrigan*

This will be the last newsletter of the year as we have our Christmas Party on Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup> and there is no meeting scheduled due to Christmas and New Year's.

Our Chapter was busy in November attending The Salute to Veterans at the fairgrounds, putting flags on Rt. 23 in front of the Hardyston School and then attending a Veterans Day breakfast and assembly to Honor Veterans. This was the first time this was done and the Children did a fantastic job as did the staff.

The Daughters of the American Revolution invited us to a Veterans Breakfast which was outstanding as usual with all homemade foods.

On Veterans Day itself we had a service at the Veterans Cemetery which was attended by about 100 Veterans, Family and Friends and we proceeded to place Flags on our Brother and Sisters Graves. At 2pm Members and their Families attended a Veterans Mass at St Francis De Sales in Vernon where Farther Chris and Deacon Dennis celebrated a Mass for all Veterans past, present, and future. Afterwards we were invited to a Luncheon which was put together by the Conformation Candidates which was excellent.

I would like to Thank all of our Chapter Members who attended these events and also ask our members that didn't to please try and come to events we are invited to as this shows our Thanks for their support for Veterans and shows our gratitude to them for what they are doing for Veterans.

This meeting we will be having our 50/50 drawing which at this time should have \$5,000.00 going to the

winner. I would like to Thank Teri Deaver for stepping up and taken over this Committee and for all the work she has put into it. We will be able to give out 5 one thousand dollar scholarships at our June meeting.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas party is next Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup> and we will again have it catered by Sussex Meat Packing and we have 85 adults and 14 children who have signed up to attend.

One last note if you don't already know the Vietnam Veterans of America now has one membership fee and starting now it is \$50.00 for a Life Membership. All members who have paid for 3 years will automatically be converted to Life when they come up for renewal. So any one who joins from here on out will become a LIFE MEMBER.

I want to Thank all our Members for their continuing to support OUR Chapter and especially coming to our Meetings. When we have Guests Speakers they always come up to me after the meeting and state how surprised they are with our attendance. They have said they can really feel the comradery that we have in our Chapter.

I want to wish everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR, and again THANKS for being here. Stay safe and healthy.

Our next meeting will be January 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:**

*Submitted by John Brady*

Well, another Veterans Day has passed and soon Thanksgiving will be behind us and we'll be approaching Christmas. Just as you may hear that Thanksgiving is not about the turkey dinner (or whatever your particular

*Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!*

tradition may be) but to give thanks for what we have in our lives. Also, that Christmas is not about the presents we may receive but a celebration of the birth of the Christ child no matter what your religious preference may be. You may have heard or read the quote "Keep Christ in Christmas".

Sometimes we inadvertently do that about Veterans Day. Originally it was to remember the end of WWI, the "war to end all wars", known then as Armistice Day. I'm sure if you had said to someone back then that there would be another World War, a Korean "police action" and a Vietnam "conflict" plus other military wars, they would have thought you crazy. Eventually the day was renamed Veterans Day to honor all veterans past, present and even future veterans.

This is what we should truly remember about this day, not how many restaurants we went to for free meals, the free car washes or other deals or perks. We need to remember things like the ceremony and distribution of flags at the NNJVMC cemetery, the Mass celebrated at St. Francis de Sales church and the programs at all the different schools, veteran organizations and other places honoring veterans.

Just as they say "I wish it was Thanksgiving or Christmas everyday", Let's try to remember and make everyday Veterans Day.

Hope everyone has a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving and Christmas.

## **SERVICE OFFICER:**

*Submitted by Skip Kays*

If you want any further information, or have any suggestions you can contact me at 973 459-9392 or at [skays1@embarqmail.com](mailto:skays1@embarqmail.com)

### **VA returns medical professionals currently serving unions to serving Veterans**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2018

Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it will be moving nearly 430 medical professionals from taxpayer-funded union work back to health care jobs serving Veterans.

The move, which will improve VA's ability to deliver health care to Veteran patients, will take effect Nov. 15 when VA repudiates certain provisions of master collective bargaining agreements

VA accepted during the Obama administration with the following unions: American Federation of Government Employees, National Federation of Federal

Employees, National Association of Government Employees and National Nurses United.

VA has a separate employment system under title 38 of the U.S. Code for medical employees. The repudiation will apply to all of VA's nearly 104,000 title 38 employees, eliminating all forms of taxpayer-funded union work for the following professions:

Physician

Dentist

Podiatrist

Chiropractor

Optometrist

Registered Nurse

Physician assistant

Expanded-Duty Dental Auxiliary

"It's common sense," VA Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd said. "Allowing health care workers to do taxpayer-funded union work instead of serving Veterans impacts patient care negatively. President Trump has made it clear – VA employees should always put Veterans first. And when we hire medical professionals to take care of Veterans, that's what they should do at all times. No excuses, no exceptions."

As an example of the negative effect taxpayer-funded union time has on Veteran care, one VA registered nurse who was elected as a local union official receives 100 percent taxpayer funded union time. Although she no longer provides patient care, she continues to receive a nurse's salary, which at VA averages more than \$90,000 per year.

Department-wide in fiscal year 2016, VA employees spent more than a million hours doing taxpayer-funded union work at a total cost of more than \$49 million.

VA is in the process of renegotiating several of VA's national collective bargaining agreements to ensure official time allocations are putting Veterans first. The negotiations are guided by federal law that permits VA to set taxpayer-funded union work (also known as official time) amounts contractually that are reasonable, necessary and in the public interest.

### **Officials: Ronald Reagan LSD probe bigger than you think, 14 nuke sailors snagged**

Navy Times 11/7/18

Fourteen sailors from the nuclear reactor department of the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan face disciplinary action in connection to LSD abuse, Navy officials confirmed this week.

Two sailors are already heading to court-martial for using, possessing and distributing the hallucinogenic drug, while three are waiting to see whether they will be



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charged as well, according to 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley.

Another 10 sailors with the Japan-based ship were administratively disciplined on LSD-related charges, Keiley said. A 15th sailor was also disciplined, but that person was not assigned to the carrier's reactor department.

Keiley said the 14 reactor sailors charged or facing potential charges came from a department with more than 400 personnel. Accused sailors were removed from all duties pending the findings of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service probe, he said in an email.

"Out of an abundance of caution, Ronald Reagan leadership reviewed the work previously performed by the accused sailors and no improper work was identified," Keiley said in an email to Navy Times. Keiley declined to detail the ranks, ratings or charges that the administratively disciplined personnel faced but said "propulsion plant operations and maintenance are supervised by senior personnel."

"Due to the defense in depth of the design and operation of the propulsion plants, the reactors aboard (the Reagan) remain safe," he said.

News of the alleged drug ring broke in February when the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that an investigation was underway regarding drug selling and use among the crew of America's only aircraft carrier to be stationed outside the United States. Keiley said Japanese authorities also have closed their investigation into whether the American sailors were selling or getting their LSD from local citizens.

### **Former VA secretaries spar over 'blue water' Navy benefits**

WASHINGTON — The fight over extending benefits to "blue water" veterans who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam is now pitting former Veterans Affairs secretaries against each other, adding to the confusion over Congress' next steps.

Last week, four former VA secretaries — Anthony Principi, Jim Nicholson, James Peake and Bob McDonald — wrote to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee urging lawmakers not to grant presumptive illness status

to roughly 90,000 blue water veterans who claim exposure to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange, saying there is insufficient proof for their cases.

"(This legislation) is based on what we believe to be inconclusive evidence to verify that these crews experience exposure to Agent Orange while their vessels were underway," the group wrote. "We urge the committee to defer action ... until such a study is completed and scientific evidence is established to expand presumptions to those at sea."

The recommendation is in line with arguments laid out by current VA Secretary Robert Wilkie earlier this month. Department officials have argued that granting the presumptive status to veterans could upend the system by establishing new, non-scientific criteria for awarding benefits.

But advocates for the Vietnam veterans have argued that scientific proof of exposure is impossible given that proper sampling was not done decades ago, as the ships patrolled the waters around the South China Sea.

They say rare cancers and other unusual illnesses clustering among the blue water veterans should be enough to spur action from Congress.

Earlier this year, members of the House agreed. They overwhelmingly passed legislation that would require VA officials to automatically assume those veterans were exposed to Agent Orange for benefits purposes, the same status granted to troops who served on the ground in Vietnam or on ships traveling upon inland rivers.

Under current department rules, the blue water veterans can receive medical care for their illnesses through VA but must prove toxic exposure while on duty to receive compensation for the ailments. Advocates have argued that VA officials are systematically denying those claims.

In a letters to Wilkie and the committee this week, John Wells — counsel to the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association — blasted the department's stance as unfair and inhumane.

"Whether (the opposition) is due to bureaucratic intransigence or incompetence I do not know," he wrote. "The bottom line, however, is that they have

misrepresented and ‘cherry picked’ evidence to support their flawed position. That is a stain on the national honor.”

### **The Full Military Honors Act of 2018**

As reported by Matthew Burke for Stars and Stripes on September 16, The Full Military Honors Act of 2018 was introduced to the House Armed Services Committee earlier in the month by Rep. Mike Bishop (R-MI), Sam Johnson, (R-TX), and Tim Walz, (D-MN). The bill seeks to afford enlisted Medal of Honor recipients and former prisoners of war the right to be buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Those honors, which include an escort and a horse-drawn caisson, are currently reserved only for officers and service members killed in action. The congressmen are working to bring the legislation before the full chamber this fall.

### **Kilroy was here**



I used to see this in a series of old LIFE magazines we had in our basement, from the start of the magazine up to something in the early 60’s. It was popular for US military personnel to scrawl this log on walls, etc. overseas while on their duties of trying to end the war (WWII).

There was one person who led or participated in every combat, training or occupation operation during WWII and the Korean War. This person could always be depended on. GI's began to consider him the "super GI." He was one who always got there first or who was always there when they left. I am, of course, referring to Kilroy Was Here. Somehow, this simple graffiti captured the imagination of GI's everywhere they went. The scribbled cartoon face and words showed up everywhere - worldwide. Stories (some even true) abound.

I used to put this logo up from time to time when I stopped in various place overseas. I didn’t put it in areas that were going to be in plain view, not trying to vandalize and tick off the peace loving residents of our allied countries you know.

I do remember putting it in certain places in the Phillipines, Guam, and in some caves on the beach in Cam Rahn Bay. I believe it also ended up in some of the ahrder to access locations on my ship.

The following is one version, and the most accepted, of how Kilroy was here originated.

### **“Kilroy Was Here”-A Story from World War II**

The words, “Kilroy was here,” alongside a drawing of a long-nosed, bald fellow peering over a fence still pop up occasionally on walls and buildings today. But the original legend of Kilroy dates to World War II and a man named James J. Kilroy (1902-1962), who lived in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Who was Kilroy?

The “Kilroy was here” story began at Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts where Kilroy worked. During World War II the shipyard staff needed to increase production to turn out as many ships as possible for the war effort.

Kilroy’s job was as an inspector; one of the aspects of the process he checked were all the rivets that were involved in holding the ship together. They had to be put in properly and fastened solidly. As Kilroy made his inspections—often going into tight spaces and down into tanks—he counted the blocks of rivets as he went. He then used a waxy chalk to leave a checkmark as to the area that he had Kilroy was here approved.

Riveters were paid on a piecework basis, with their pay calculated by the rivet. After Kilroy left for the day, the workers sometimes erased the mark so that the inspector on the next shift would come through and count their work for a second time. This would increase their pay.

After a time, one of the shipyard supervisors called Kilroy in to discuss the circumstances. The count of ship parts completed seemed below what it should be, considering the number of rivets inspected.

### **WOMEN VETERANS:**

*Submitted by Walt Hazelman*

*“Will they walk alone?”*

Women have patrolled the streets of Fallujah and Kandahar, they have driven in convoys on desert roads and mountain passes, they have deployed with Special Forces in Afghanistan on cultural support teams, they have climbed into the cockpits of fighter jets and out of the bloody rubble after IED explosions. Many have begun their long journey home.





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Women have volunteered to serve in the U.S. military since the American Revolution. Today they constitute approximately 20 percent of new recruits, 14.5 percent of the 1.4 million active duty component and 18 percent of the 850,000 reserve component. Almost 280,000 women have served Post-9/11 in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the number of male veterans is expected to decline by 2020, the number of women veterans is expected to grow dramatically, to 11 percent of the veteran population.

Because of their role in the military and society, women have unique transition challenges. They experience deployment and reintegration differently than men. Women focus more on disruption of interpersonal relationships, feeling less social support once they return home, and do not find services or commanders prepared to support a woman and her family after deployment. When compared to men, women are less likely overall to be married, more likely to be married to a fellow service member, more likely to be a single parent, more likely to be divorced, and more likely to be unemployed after their service. Women veterans tend to be younger than men and are less likely to use VA benefits.

Women who served our country in the military are strong and heroic but their contributions have been underrecognized, even by the women themselves. The challenges of readjustment to post-military life affect women differently than men and should receive attention from their local communities and the federal government that is at least comparable to that received by men. The unique needs of women veterans are varied and complex, spanning the areas of health care, eradication of sexual assault, employment, finance, housing, and social issues. One of the most persistent problems is a military and veterans' culture that is not perceived as welcoming to women and does not afford them equal consideration. VA's Women Veterans' Task Force noted the "need for culture change across VA to reverse the enduring perception that a woman who comes to VA for services is not a veteran herself, but a male veteran's wife, mother, or daughter." Our nation does not yet adequately recognize and celebrate the contributions of women in military service, treat them with dignity and respect, or

promote their successful transition to civilian life. This is a foundational issue and will be one of the most critical but difficult to address.

There are serious gaps in every aspect of the programs that serve women, including health care, employment, finance, housing, social issues and the eradication of sexual assault. The vast majority of these deficiencies result from a disregard for the differing needs of women veterans and a focusing on the 80 percent solution for men who dominate in both numbers and public consciousness. The recent dramatic increase in reporting of military sexual trauma is an illustration of problems and solutions that require radical change in the culture of the Armed Forces.

Many women who return from deployment are made stronger by their experiences but a significant number have difficulty with transition and need support for health care, employment, finance, housing and social issues. With the withdrawal of ground forces from Iraq and the drawdown in Afghanistan, government and the public are already turning to new issues. There is a misperception that these problems associated with war will disappear when there are no more boots on the ground. History and research tell us that this is a false hope. Women who have deployed suffer from a complex array of medical conditions that will grow over time and present long-term challenges.

## **POW/MIA:**

*Submitted by Bob Gilbert*

Pfc. Nicholas J. Gojmerac U.S. Marine Corps  
Reserve Company Q, 4th Raider Battalion, 1st Marine  
Raider Regiment 7/20/1943 Solomon Islands 11/14/2018

Machinist's Mate 1st Class Ulis C. Steely U.S. Navy  
USS Oklahoma 12/7/1941 Pearl Harbor 11/14/2018

Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class John O. Morris  
U.S. Navy Reserve Carrier Aircraft Service Unit (CASU)  
17 12/16/1943 Tarawa 11/13/2018

Ensign Charles M. Stern, Jr. U.S. Naval Reserve  
USS Oklahoma 12/7/1941 Pearl Harbor 11/13/2018

Seaman 1st Class Kirby R. Stapleton U.S. Navy USS Oklahoma 12/7/1941 Pearl Harbor 11/1/2018

Cpl. Frederick E. Coons U.S. Army Company A, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division 7/29/1950 South Korea 10/31/2018

Pvt. Fred E. Freet U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division Fleet Marine Force 11/20/1943 Tarawa 10/29/2018

### **AGENT ORANGE:**

*Submitted by Owen Martin*

No report.

### **COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:**

*Submitted by Lou Storms*

On November 13th, myself, Bob Lewis and Bob Cubby went Lyons to serve dinner to the PTSD In-patient Unit and the Ladies Third Floor Unit. The food was excellent as was the socialization with the vets. We are back on the normal schedule now and will be going again on January 8th. Anyone wanting to join us can sign the sheet up front or contact me.

### **Scheduled Meetings:**

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

#### **2018**

25<sup>th</sup> November

**1<sup>st</sup> December – Christmas Party**

#### **2019**

27<sup>th</sup> January

24<sup>th</sup> February

### **Calendar of Events:**

Visit [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org) for information on upcoming events.

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

#### **“WELCOME HOME”**

No report.

### **PASSINGS:**

No report

### **CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:**

Happy November Anniversaries:

Kathy & Lenny Weakland

Audrey & Jerry Magnus

### **MEMBERS CORNER:**

Nothing submitted.

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

1. **Special Note: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call (toll free 24/7) 1-800-273-8255 and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.**
2. Jackets (\$60 (summer) & \$70 (winter)); t-shirts (\$15); hats (\$10); golf shirts (short sleeve \$28; long sleeve \$33) are still available. See Owen Martin for purchases or to place an order (pre-payment for orders are appreciated)
3. Important note to families of deceased veterans, and/or requestors:

*Submitted by Bob Caggiano*

It is the right of every deceased Veteran to have a Military honors team attend the graveside service, to present the Flag at no charge to the family. Honors Teams are sent out, at the expense of the US Government.

In January 2000, Congress passed legislation guaranteeing Veterans the right to at least two uniformed servicemen, a flag ceremony, and the playing of TAPS at their funeral. Unfortunately, there are not enough buglers to play TAPS, so the historic melody has been played on a CD player at many Veterans' last ceremony, or more currently on a bugle that plays Taps using an electronic insert. The volunteer organization "Bugles Across America" (a.k.a. BAA) was created to honor the service of veterans by providing Taps live by a



## *The Sentinel*

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Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

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bugler using a real instrument (such as a bugle, trumpet, cornet, or flugelhorn) at funerals or any other ceremony requiring a bugler. There are currently over 7500 volunteer buglers nationwide in all 50 states, and some overseas who stand ready to serve. BAA volunteers perform Taps as a free service.

As a Vietnam era veteran member of VVA Chapter 1002 and a BAA volunteer bugler, I am available to play for anyone who needs a bugler for Taps (or other appropriate bugle calls) for any honorable discharged veteran or related military ceremony. In the event I cannot play because of a scheduling conflict, I can generally still provide a substitute bugler so please contact me - Bob Caggiano, USAF Veteran, (973) 222-7591 (cell) or FinalTaps@gmail.com.



### **Editors Corner:**

By Linda Skellenger (AVVA)

Please have information to be included in the January newsletter to me by Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup> by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger  
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Sussex, N.J. 07461