



The Sentinel

Vol. 8 No. 5

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

July 2021

Website: www.VVA1002.org

President: John Harrigan

1st Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2nd Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

FROM THE MINEFIELD:

Submitted by John Harrigan

The Moving Wall is still on schedule to be at Woodbourne Park September 9-13. So far the schedule is as follows: Thursday Sept 9, at 6pm is a soft opening (I have no idea what this means but when I find out I will let you know), Friday Sept 10, at 7pm a 9/11 Ceremony, Saturday Sept, 11, at 2 pm is the Grand Opening, Sunday Sept 12, at 1pm is the POW/MIA Ceremony. When I get more information, I will pass it on.

Remember the Sussex County Miners are Honoring a Veteran at every Home game, you will get 4 free tickets and recognition at the game. Anyone interested please call Joann Ciancitto at 973-383-7644 and let her know you would like to attend.

On August 7th the Sussex County Horse Show is honoring Veterans with Veterans Trail Day and we have been asked to attend at 4pm to help honor a recently passed Veteran. They are donating 60% of all entry fees to the Northern New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery as they have done in the past. Hopefully we can have a good showing to Honor this Veteran.

The VVA Convention is November 2-6 in Greensboro, North Carolina. We are allowed to send 5 delegates this year and this will be an important Convention. This will likely set the course for the organization's journey to its eventual end. The way it is looking now we will still be a Chapter and continue in existence until our members decide our fate. This will all be discussed at the Convention.

That's it for now See you at the Meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

It looks as if some things are getting back to normal after this past year such as not having to wear masks in stores or restaurants unless the owner asks you to. However, with the new Delta variant going around it still makes sense to keep your hands washed or sanitized and keep a respectful distance.

The chapter is back to meeting in St. Charles Room, which is accessed by the lower back parking lot instead of Boland Hall for our weekly Vets Helping Vets program and our monthly meetings.

Our monthly meeting will be Sunday July 25 at 14:00 in St. Charles Room.

The Sussex County Fair will be held August 7 to August 14. This year, since it is under new management, Veterans will not be admitted for free. General admission is \$14.00, Veterans will be admitted for half price, \$7.00. Seniors will be \$10.00.

After 7:30 Adults will be \$10.00 and Veterans \$5.00.

Senior Day will be Thursday, August 12, all seniors (60 and over) will be admitted for \$4.00.

The Moving Wall will be coming in September. There will be more information about it announced at our monthly meeting and in the next newsletter.

We hope to have the Veteran's Mass again in November, probably November 14. Unfortunately it had to be cancelled last year due to the pandemic.

As I said some things are getting back to normal. Stay safe and well.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

SERVICE OFFICER:

Submitted by Skip Kays

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

Vietnam Vet Radio (on the web)

This station is on the internet

<https://vietnamvetradio.org/> and they play music from the Vietnam years, roughly early 60's to 1975 or so. No commercials as we are used to them but radio spots from the US Army (I guess) radio stations in Vietnam at the time and that sort of thing.

Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 1, 2021 -

Today, House Committee on Natural Resources Ranking Member Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) joined Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa), U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) and 129 other members in introducing the bipartisan Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act, which would give veterans and Gold Star families free lifetime access to public lands, and active-duty military free annual passes.

The America the Beautiful Pass provides access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, national forests and wildlife refuges. This includes some of the country's most iconic natural treasures, ranging from Acadia National Park to the Redwood National Forest.

The VIP Act would allow all veterans, active-duty service members and Gold Star Families to visit national parks and public lands free of charge. In 2020, the Trump administration made the America the Beautiful annual pass free for veterans and Gold Star Families. However, this benefit for veterans has never been put into law and could be undone by a future administration. The VIP Act would turn these free annual passes into lifetime passes, as well as codify the annual passes for current service members. These can then be converted into lifetime passes once they leave the military.

Now that the country is starting to open up again this should become useful.

This is kind of long, but worth reading.

The Real Reasons the U.S. Can't Win Wars Anymore

By Lawrence Korb

In his NATIONAL REVIEW article "Three Wars, No Victory — Why? (February 18, 2021)," Bing West, my former colleague at the Pentagon and the Naval War College, lays out a compelling case for why the U.S. — which he argues is the most powerful country in the history of the world — has lost the three major wars it has fought over the past 50 years: Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Bing divides blame for each of these losses among three hubs; namely, the military, the policy-makers, and the popular mood among the people of the country. He argues correctly that the policy hub, or the policy-makers, were primarily responsible for the failures.

While I have some experience in each of these conflicts, having served in Vietnam and having visited Iraq three times and Afghanistan once, it does not match that of Bing, who is one of the bravest people I have ever known. However, I still believe that he presents a sometimes incomplete and misleading picture of why we lost these three wars.

For example, in analyzing the Vietnam disaster, he ignores the fact that the war was fought under false pretenses. President Johnson received congressional authorization in 1964 to begin the massive escalation in Vietnam in response to an alleged attack by the North Vietnamese on an American ship in the Gulf of Tonkin. But, even before the congressional investigation, it was clear to any experienced naval officer that what the administration claimed had happened was bogus. I remember my commanding officer in VP-1, who had flown combat missions in WWII and Korea, telling us that the attacks did not happen the way it was claimed. This was something that Vice Admiral James Stockdale, who was Bing's and my boss at the War College and who received a medal of honor for his courage as a POW in Vietnam and who was in the area at the time, also affirmed. As did a naval officer who convinced Senator Wayne Morris (D., Ore.) to become one of the two senators who voted against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. (Both lost their next election.). When this came to light, it also increased opposition to the war among the American people.

Another reason we failed in Vietnam is that the war was never winnable in the first place. Bing argues that our poor military strategy from 1965–1968, bad policy decisions, and the popular mood doomed the Vietnam War. These factors played a role, but in truth only heightened an already existing reality. A reality made clear to me in 1966, when my colleagues and I got lost coming back from a meeting with SWIFT-boat officers in the northern part of Cameron Bay, South Vietnam. As we rode around aimlessly trying to find our way back to our base, we came upon a Catholic monastery. A priest there gave us directions



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and fed us. But as we were leaving, one of the monks asked me in French (which I had studied in school) why we thought we were going to make out any better in Vietnam than the French. President Eisenhower was conscious of this when he refused to bail out the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, even though most of his national-security advisers, including then-Vice President Nixon and the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford, recommended it. But Army chief of staff General Matthew Ridgeway, who prevented us from losing in Korea, helped convince Eisenhower not to intervene, because he, like the monks I met, believed Vietnam was unwinnable.

Similarly, the majority of the American people turned against the war in Vietnam not just because there was a draft, as Bing correctly points out, but because of how the privileged were able to avoid the draft, thus leaving it to the lower class to bear most of the burden. For example, the four most recent presidents who could have served in Vietnam avoided that war and the draft by dubious means. Bill Clinton pretended to join the Army ROTC; George W. Bush used political connections to get into the Air National Guard, when President Johnson made it clear that the reserve component would not be activated to fight the war; Donald Trump, of course, had his family physician claim he had bone spurs, (Trump himself cannot remember which foot); and Joe Biden claimed that the asthma he had in high school prevented him from serving even though he brags about his athletic exploits while in high school.

Similarly, in his analysis of why we did not win in Iraq, Bing ignores the fact that the Bush administration got the U.S. into war falsely claiming that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, in criticizing the Obama administration for withdrawing from Iraq in 2011, Bing ignores the fact that Obama had no choice. He did this because in 2008 the Iraqi government, which we had helped install, made it clear to us that it would not sign a Status of Forces Agreement unless we agreed to withdraw completely by the end of 2011.

I saw this firsthand when I worked in the Obama campaign and in the summer of 2008 met with Hoshiyar Zebari, the Iraqi foreign minister. When I asked him about the agreement to withdraw, he told me it was a non-

negotiable demand. When I relayed this to Denis McDonough, who was on the campaign trail with Obama and eventually became his chief of staff, he was surprised and asked me if I was certain about what I heard. In 2009, while on a visit to Iraq, I brought this up with several Iraqi government officials in the parliament and the executive branch and received the same answer. Finally, in December 2011, when Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Malaki came to Washington to finalize the deal, I and several others, including Obama's first national-security adviser General David Jones and future Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, met with him. I asked him directly if there was anything President Obama could have done to keep the troops in Iraq. He essentially said that Bush made an agreement and the U.S. just stick to it. At the meeting, Jones said Obama was willing to leave 10,000 troops.

Bing also ignores the fact that the Bush administration never publicly or privately praised Iran for its help in Afghanistan but actually publicly criticized that nation. I saw this myself. On 9/11, I was working at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. After the attacks, the Iranian ambassador to the U.N. invited me to dinner and told me to let our government know that Iran detested the Taliban and would be willing to help us in Afghanistan. I relayed this to the Bush administration, and Bush's representative to the Bonn Conference in December 2001, which established the Karzai government, told me that the Bush administration would not have succeeded without the Iranians. Iran's reward? In early 2002, Bush put the country on the axis of evil. It is an understatement to say that as a result Iran no longer played a positive role in the region.

Finally, in his Afghanistan analysis, while Bing correctly points out that our military could never transform Afghanistan, he is wrong to argue that we should remain indefinitely in the country to avoid damaging our reputation. Many who fought in this 20-year war already believe our reputation is damaged and want us to leave before it is damaged further. Sunk-costs logic should not apply here.

How bad will it be if we agree to leave on May 1, as Trump agreed to, and the Taliban takes over, especially for women? When I visited Afghanistan in 2011, I asked a Taliban official how they would treat women if or when

they took over. He told me not to worry — that they would not treat them any worse than our allies, the Saudis.

Bing’s article should be read by all those who believe that the U.S. can develop and sustain democracies by using military power. However, they should keep in mind that there are some other factors that also play into this decision.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

No report,

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

No report.

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

VA Expands Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases List

July 12, 2021 Community News, Latest Updates

Veterans Administration (VA) has expanded the Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases List and is now processing Claims for bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

“Many of our Nation’s Veterans have waited a long time for these benefits,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough. “VA will not make them wait any longer. This is absolutely the right thing to do for Veterans and their families.” Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War may be entitled to an earlier eligibility date for benefits. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. Veterans can contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000, to ensure their previously denied claims are being reviewed

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

No report.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

2021

25th July

22nd August

26th September

24th October

28th November

TBD December – Maybe Christmas Party

Dates to have information in for the newsletter:

15th August

19th September

17th October

21st November

Calendar of Events:

Visit www.VVA1002.org for information on upcoming events.

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

No report.

PASSINGS:

No report.

Homeless Committee:

We are in need of someone to take over this committee so if you or you know of someone who is interested, please contact John Harrigan.

MEMBERS CORNER:

Submitted by Owen Martin

Expert Warns of Post-Fire Dioxins: The Most Hazardous Substance in Structure Fire Environments



Sean Scott, author of *The Red Guide to Recovery – Resource Handbook for Disaster Survivors* and *Secrets of The Insurance Game*, is offering up important and often



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overlooked health and safety information for structural fire survivors, first responders and anyone moving into a home that had previously suffered a fire.

In an in-depth article posted on [The Red Guide to Recovery website](#), Scott, an author, disaster recovery expert and fire restoration contractor who has spent nearly four decades in the construction and restoration business, outlines in detail what 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD), better known simply as “dioxin,” is, how dioxins are formed in a fire, and why they pose such serious and overlooked health risks. Dioxins have been identified by scientists as being the second most toxic chemicals known to man – bested only by radioactive waste.

In this new article, Scott – who has worked on literally thousands of residential and commercial property damage claims and has spent decades researching the implications and challenges of post-fire scenarios – explains why most protocols for working in or around fire damaged structures or restoring contaminated textiles are actually woefully ineffective in terms of the detection and eradication of dioxins.

Dioxins are formed when products containing carbon and chlorine burn, especially plastic, paper, PVC, household chemicals or other products where chlorine is used in the manufacturing process. Dioxins do not typically exist in materials before they are burned. They are also especially prevalent in structure fires and wildfires. Depending on the ambient temperature in a fire, dioxins can be adsorbed or chemically bound to smoke particles or remain in a vapor phase.

“Since it has been established that there is no safe level of exposure to TCDD, the current culture of fire investigators, homeowners, disaster relief workers, insurance adjusters, restoration personnel, and others who enter post-fire structure environments without wearing personal protective equipment must change,” explained Scott. “Anyone who needs to enter a fire damaged home, building, or area recently impacted by a wildfire should wear the most protective PPE, including a proper fitting respirator with P-100 filters (or a supplied air respirator), disposable coveralls, gloves, eye protection, etc. Frankly, stricter protocols regarding dioxins are urgently needed across the board.”

Visit the article for free and vital information from Sean Scott about the toxicity of dioxins and precautions that should be taken: <https://theredguidetorecovery.com/dioxins-the-most-hazardous-substance-in-structure-fire-environments/>

For more information on wildfire recovery or to obtain an array of free recovery resources, visit: <https://www.theredguidetorecovery.com/free-preparedness-recovery-tools/>

Media: For more information on fire and restoration topics or to arrange interviews with Sean Scott, contact Paul Williams at 310-569-0023 or e-mail Paul@medialinecommunications.com

MISCELLANEOUS:

1. **Special Note: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call (toll free 24/7) 1-800-273-8255 and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.**
2. Jackets (\$60 (summer) & \$70 (winter)); t-shirts (\$15); hats (\$10); golf shirts (short sleeve \$28; long sleeve \$33) are still available. See Owen Martin for purchases or to place an order (pre-payment for orders are appreciated)
3. Important note to families of deceased veterans, and/or requestors: *Submitted by Bob Caggiano*
It is the right of every deceased Veteran to have a Military honors team attend the graveside service, to present the Flag at no charge to the family. Honors Teams are sent out, at the expense of the US Government.

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

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

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



Editors Corner:

By Linda Skellenger (AVVA)

Please have information to be included in the August newsletter to me by Sunday, August 15th by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger
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