



BACK IN THE WORLD

Volume 31 • Issue 3

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

September 2022



THE GOLD STAR: AMERICA'S PROMISE TO NEVER FORGET

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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STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES

Michael Berman, Delegate	Phil Pesano, Alternate Delegate
Carmelo Burgaretta, Delegate	Tony Corbella, Alternate Delegate
Dan Higgins, Delegate	

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NOTES FROM CHAPTER 12

- ⇒ 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 Facebook page, “Vietnam Veterans NJ Shore Area Chapter 12” for info on what we are doing.
- ⇒ Please visit our CHAPTER WEBSITE—www.vvchapter12.net for photo albums, news letter archives, Chapter history.
- ⇒ 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’ll 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, pass it on to 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 nivva12@gmail.com by the 25th of each month. Anything received after that will be placed in the following month’s newsletter. (Make sure your article can be verified.
- ⇒ 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 help via gift card. This is also a money and effort saver on our part. Donations to the PX gift care 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.**

President's Message



Even though we have not had a meeting in the past two months during July and August, our Chapter E board member were still out doing their job as always.

On June 9th, Bob Lopez and myself supported our 30 volunteers from Hazlet Home Depot in our partnership of annual clean up of the Memorial.

The Memorial tour guides gave a great tour for all the Home Depot volunteers.

On June 16th, the Cremains committee interned 14 Veterans and 1 spouse. That has put us over a 100 Veterans that we have interned, see Rich Gough's after action report. Next internment is schedule for Sept 8, 2022 at 1300hrs.

Thanks to our friends from the Home Depot Hazlet, we were able the received a grant to continue with our Cremains program. Many thanks to Kim, Eric and Lisa for their help in filing Home Depot Home new grant programs.

On June 26th, the Chapter had hosted the VVA State council meeting at VFW 4303. This meeting under new business was election of Officers for State Council, congratulations to our new State Council President Phil Pesano, Mike Quilty, and Regional Director Allen Saltzman Guard Carmelo Burgaretta.

On July 11th, myself and 10 Chapter memorial tour guides attended a Thank You luncheon for our friend for 12 years Sarah Taggert, Director of the Memorial. Sarah was a main pillar for the Memorial and will be missed by all. It was agreed by three Chapter Board members that we present her with a donation check of \$300.00 just a little thanks for all her hard work over the years

On July 12 I received a call from Eric of Home Depot in Hazlet that our friend Kim the store manager was able to get us a \$2000.00 Grant for our cremains program.

President's Message (continued)

I hope that a number of you had answered Bud Force email? Requesting HELP Needed. Thanks to Rich Knight and his drive his was able to get Chapter 12 a spot at the Ocean Italian American fair free. We have purchased Poppies and flag for our membership poppy drive.

On August 9 thru August 13, I attended VVA National Leadership Conferences in Greenville South Carolina which I always find very educational and helpful.

On September 16 Chapter 12 will be a little busy, I accepted the request from the NJVVMF to be the Color Guard for this year's POW/MIA and Gold Star Service at the memorial 11:00am.

District 6 Gold Star Luncheon will be held on October 1st, at 1:00 at Post 1333.

Mark your calendar: September 7, 2022 at 4:00pm Chapter 12 meeting.

"Like the song goes "SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER"

The Colonel

VA Secretary's Statement on the Signing of the PACT Act

"The [PACT Act](#) is a historic new law that will help VA deliver for millions of Veterans — and their survivors — by empowering us to presumptively provide care and benefits to Vets suffering from more than 20 toxic exposure-related conditions. It will also bring generations of Veterans into VA health care, which will improve Veteran health outcomes across the board.

We at VA are ready to implement the PACT Act and deliver for toxic-exposed Veterans and their survivors. **If you think you might be eligible for PACT Act benefits, here's what you need to know:**

- You can apply for PACT Act-related benefits now by filing a claim at VA.
- As President Biden announced at the bill signing, we are making all 23 presumptive conditions in the PACT Act eligible for benefits effective today, August 10.

You can learn more about the PACT Act by visiting [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or calling [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411).

Thank you to all of the Veterans, survivors and family members who fought tirelessly to make this day possible, and thank you to President Biden for keeping our nation's promise to those who served. We at VA will stop at nothing to make sure that every Veteran and every survivor gets the PACT Act-related care and benefits they deserve." - VA Secretary Denis R. McDonough



Contact:
Mokie Porter 301-996-0901

VVA Applauds Passage of PACT Act of 2022

(Washington, D.C.) — “This evening, the Senate voted and passed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act, and while this bill is not perfect, it is the long-overdue action we have needed which will allow veterans of so many generations to receive the care and treatment for the toxic wounds of war without having to endure the mistrust and denials that the Vietnam generation of veterans were forced to endure,” said Jack McManus, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America.

“Now we must ensure that the law is implemented in a quick and just manner.

“For over 40 years, VVA has steadfastly advocated for veterans living with chronic illnesses resulting from toxic exposures during their service,” said McManus. “All veterans have earned the comprehensive relief this bill offers them. For our aging Vietnam veterans, the speedy passage of this bill is especially important, not only for the care they desperately need, but as an acknowledgment the country recognizes and honors their service.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families.



Vets can apply for all PACT Act benefits now after VA speeds up law

Veterans Affairs officials are now accepting claims for all presumptive illnesses included in the massive toxic exposure legislation signed into law last month, including cases concerning burn pit smoke and carcinogenic chemicals that were not scheduled to go into effect for several more years. Source: Vets can apply for all PACT Act benefits now after VA speeds up law (militarytimes.com)

The military's sexual assault problem is only getting worse

More incidents, less reporting, plummeting confidence in the system to get justice — those are the take aways from the Defense Department's most recent annual sexual assault prevention and response report, released Thursday. For years, officials have couched increases in sexual assault reports by claiming that survivors are becoming more comfortable with reporting, but for 2021, that math doesn't bear out. Source: The military's sexual assault problem is only getting worse (militarytimes.com)

VA Disability: Clearer Claims Processing Guidance N

For decades, Veterans Affairs has denied most disability claims by Vietnam veterans for 3 conditions associated with exposure to herbicides like Agent Orange. These conditions—which involve nerve damage, skin cysts, and blistering—must have manifested within 1 year of service in Vietnam for VA to presume a connection between the condition and exposure. Sources: [GAO-22-105191, VA DISABILITY: Clearer Claims Processing Guidance Needed for Selected Agent Orange Conditions](#); Pub. L. No. 116-315, § 2011, Comptroller General briefing and report on repealing manifestation period for presumptions of service connections for certain diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents and VVA Resolution AO-17 - Remove One Year Cutoff Date For Chloracne, Acute/Subacute-peripheraNeuropathy, Porphyria And Cutanea Tarda

VA extends temporary hardship suspension for benefit debts

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is extending its financial hardship suspension on benefit debts through Dec. 31. This relief option, established to help Veterans through the COVID-19 pandemic, was set to expire Sept. 30. Source: VA extends temporary hardship suspension for benefit debts



Monmouth County Sheriff's Office

in support of

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12

MILITARY HONORS

FOR

FORGOTTEN VETERANS

SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

Please join the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, Missing in America Project, and VVA, Chapter 12, for a final Salute to Arms at the Military Honors For Forgotten Veterans service. The event will pay tribute to 16 forgotten veterans and two spouses from WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam War eras.

Services begin with a military recognition at 11:00am

MONMOUTH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
2500 Kozloski Road, Freehold, NJ 07728

Followed by a Veteran's Internment Ceremony at 1:00pm

BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM C. DOYLE MEMORIAL CEMETERY
350 Province Line Rd. Wrightstown, NJ 08562

RSVP to Rich Gough, Cremains Project Chairman, VVA, Chapter 12
at 732-350-7926 or rpg3706@aol.com





Missing In America Project

www.miap.us

AFTER ACTION REPORT **BG William C Doyle Veterans Cemetery** **Wrightstown, NJ** **JUNE 16, 2022**

The 1430 hr. ceremony was held at the shelter area. We interred 14 veterans and 1 spouse:

Filmore A Fergusson US Navy WWII
Joseph Fucci US Army WWII
Edward Eriksen US Army WWI
Richard D Dixon US Army Korea
John J Feehan Sr US Navy Vietnam
John J Stasik US Army WWII
Anthony P Saeaa US Army WWII
Hugh Allan Jr. USMC Korea
Donald B Jamieson US Army WWII
William N Lutz US Navy WWII
George Urbanowicz US Navy WWII
Edward E Tompkins US Army WWII
Frank S Krulikowski US Army WWII
John J Nelson US Army AF WWII
Margaret Duda Spouse of PVT Theodore Duda

What started out to be a horrendous rainy day unfolded just in time to make our ceremony a dry comfortable day. The ceremony was attended by a large number of Chapter 12 members and their sister VVA chapters. Also in attendance were representatives from Manalapan Veterans Advisory Committee, Sons of the American Legion, AUSA, our MIAP Virginia Representative, as well as members of many VFW and American Legion Posts. Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder Riders, Jester Highway Riders, and American Legion Riders were all represented. As always, we were honored to have the participation of the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Color Guard along with many members of the Monmouth County Sheriffs and Correction Officers. We were especially honored by the attendance of Col. Yvonne L Mays, Deputy Adjutant General, NJ Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs and members of her staff.



Missing In America Project

www.miap.us

AFTER ACTION REPORT

BG William C Doyle Veterans Cemetery

Wrightstown, NJ

JUNE 16, 2022

Echo taps was played by the Freeman family and bag pipes were provided by the Allan family. Acting Chaplain Bob Hopkins gave the memorial speech as well as the closing remarks about our responsibility as veterans to never leave a fellow veteran behind, whether on the battlefield or on the shelf of a funeral home. We would like to thank Jacqueline Ryan Home for Funerals for their continued cooperation, the Covered Bridge Senior Community wood shop for making the urns and Home Depot for donating the wood and supplies. Thank you should also be extended to the staff at the BG William C Doyle Cemetery, whose dedicated cooperation was invaluable.

For the Committee

Richard Gough



Hope's Haven

PRESENTS:

**The benefits of
healing and horses!**

OCTOBER 15TH, 2022

OCTOBER 22ND, 2022

What to Expect:

Join us for a 90 minute group session as we work together with rescue horses to help build confidence, reduce stress, conquer fears, build boundaries, increase trust, and more!

Additional Info:

Cost: *Donations accepted*

Time: 10:00-11:30 am

Space is limited! Register Now!

No horse experience required

Ground work only (no riding)

FOR MORE INFO AND TO
REGISTER:

HOPEHAVEN42@GMAIL.COM

AMY: 732-814-8893



**LEARN HOW
HORSES HELP:**

REDUCE ANXIETY AND

DEPRESSION

BUILD CONFIDENCE

CREATE TRUST

CONQUER FEAR

IMPROVE FOCUS

42 Hill Road, Allentown, NJ

"Play HOOK-e" From PTSD

By Greg Kucharewski

Our Military Honored **Disabled Kid's Smile & Fish**



View pictures at VVAChapter12.net

On August 27, 2022, veterans, active-duty military personnel and disabled youngsters along with their families enjoyed a fun day at Ponderosa Estates Farm, Millstone, NJ to catch and release fish at Lake Julianna. The goal of the fishing day was to offer special needs children and disabled veterans a day to fish and feel the health benefits of getting in touch with nature while making good memories.

Don Marantz, Event Chairman, Vito Cardinale, Cardinale Enterprises LCC, and Randy Johnson, Laurita Winery provided a fun filled day for all in attendance. Over 450 attendees enjoyed the festivities at Lake Julianna.

As children and veterans arrived at the event, they were greeted by the Play HOOK-e welcome team volunteers that provided instructions for the day, welcome bags, loaner rods/reels, toys for children, KWTGF youth tee shirts, and goodie bags. Corporal Philip A. Reynolds Detachment [Marine Corps League](#), Freehold, NJ helped set the tone for a patriotic fishing event by providing a Color Guard and trumpet/music. Members of the 514 Mobility Wing helped gather families for the opening ceremony. During the opening ceremonies, our host Vito Cardinale stated: "this is the "Welcome Home" that our Vietnam Veterans never received" and we are here to honor all our service men and women every year at Ponderosa Estate Farm.

New Jersey State Police provided mounted Troopers on horseback, K-9 demonstrations, and a fly over to salute our military heroes. Members of the Armed Forces Heritage Museum conducted demonstrations for youngsters, and they also had an opportunity to ride in a vintage military vehicle. More than 40 fishing volunteers were available to assist children and veterans that came to fish. Veterans attending the event also helped youngsters cast a line. Participants had the use of loaner fishing rods and reels, rigs, and Spring Lake Freezer Bait Company made sure there was plenty of worms for catching fish. "NJ Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs" certified instructors Mike and Debbie Bennett of Boating Education and Rescue provided fishing tips and bait rod/reel trailer. Helping Hands of Jackson provided food, pony rides, and ice cream from Jackson PAL, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Heroes On The Water, Jersey Shore Surfcasters, Newark Bait and Fly-Casting Club, New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, Hudson River

Fishermen's Association, Berkeley Striper Club, NJ State Federation of Sportsmen Clubs, Trout Unlimited, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 all helped children and disabled veterans' fish.

Youngsters enjoyed pony rides, friends and family of Mr. Cardinale served food to everyone in attendance at the BBQ area, Red Express Pizza, and Helping Hands of Jackson provided breakfast sandwiches for our volunteers. We thank our gracious hosts and all the volunteers that assisted to make the 6th Annual Play HOOK-e KWTGF and Take a Veteran Fishing Day a great success.

Many organizations/businesses contributed and came out to volunteer their time, NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife, New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen Clubs, Pro Tapes C.O.R.E., Big Brother Big Sister, BEAR Environmental Educators, NJ State Police, Hamilton Station, Millstone Fire Department, Boy Scouts, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, The Fisherman Magazine, Bogan's Brielle Bait & Tackle, Gabriel CO., Jersey Hooker Outfitters, Betty & Nicks B&T, The Tin Man Lures, Grumpy's B&T, Reel Seat B&T, Pell's Sport and Fish, Boating Education and Rescue, Central Jersey Rifle and Pistol Club Warrior Program, MA 22, Recalibrate, Jersey Shore Surfcasters, New Jersey Elks, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Shore Surf Club, Newark Bait and Fly Casting Club, Hudson River Fisherman's Association, New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, and several other volunteers/veterans organizations.

Contributors: Cardinale Enterprises LLC. family and friends, Randy Johnson Laurita Winery, P & W Services, Dunkin Donuts, Military Support Alliance of NJ, Associated of Builders and Contractors of NJ, East Gate Nursery, Bill- Jim Construction Co., SFC Enterprises, [Bimbo Bakery](#), Top shelf nursery, My 3 Sons HVAC, Circle Chevrolet, Village Donut Shop, Pizza Express Wood Fire Pizza/Blackie's Welding Service, Model Military, First Commerce Bank, Phinas Farms, Magnakron, Rosetto realty, PDS Engineering, Joint Base McGuire 514th Air Mobility Wing, Tom Zapcic Photography, MA22 Operation Hook It, DR Horton builders, Sea Coast, Helping Hands of Jackson, Phil's Tree Service, Mrs. USA, Red Wagon Farm Stand, Spring Lake Freezer, Teddy Bears By the Seashore, Bagel Bistro, Suggs Nicholas Shea Inc, Jersey Coast Anglers Association, Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America Shore Area Chapter 12. Donations were also received from individuals, and we graciously thank all that contributed. We regret there are too many contributors to mention in this article.



SUPPORT LOCAL TACKLE DEALERS

We recently visited local tackle dealers to setup our Play HOOK-e display and inform veterans and their families about our “Play HOOK-e from PTSD” programs. All our Play HOOK-e veterans are encouraged to shop at local tackle dealers. Most tackle dealers offer discounts to veterans. [Tackle Dealer List>>](#)

Veterans that stopped by our table received a welcome gift bag supplied by Vietnam Veterans of America Shore Area Chapter 12 and Jersey Coast Anglers Association. We informed veterans about our JCAA newspaper and Play HOOK-e by-monthly newsletter. Many thanks to participating tackle dealers for supporting our magnet campaign and allowing us space to speak to veterans at their business. If your business would like us to setup a Play HOOK-e Go Fishing display, please email Greg at the email address below.

During September and October, we are offering veterans with PTSD an opportunity to relax for a few hours by the water and visit natural calming areas. If you would like to experience saltwater and freshwater fishing, we have a short one-to-one fishing program to get you outdoors to fish and boat. Connect with nature at Lake Julianna, LZ- 64, Island Beach State Park, and other open spaces. To schedule a day and time, please email Greg @ gkucharews@jcaa.org

NJ FREE FISHING DAY

The Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program's Youth Fishing Challenge statewide event will take place on the state's second Free Fishing Day, Saturday, October 22, 2022, when no license is required to fish regardless of age. This fall, think about becoming a HOFNOD instructor. New Jersey HOFNOD facilitator workshops are hosted by the DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife it is well worth the time to learn creative aquatic activities to teach youngsters the importance becoming environmental stewards. This workshop is a great learning experience. If you are interested in attending a NJ HOFNOD workshop, please phone or email Liz Jackson, NJ HOFNOD Coordinator Phone: 908- 637-4125 x 122 email: liz.jackson@dep.state.nj.us

Rebecca's Quilts of Valor Presentation



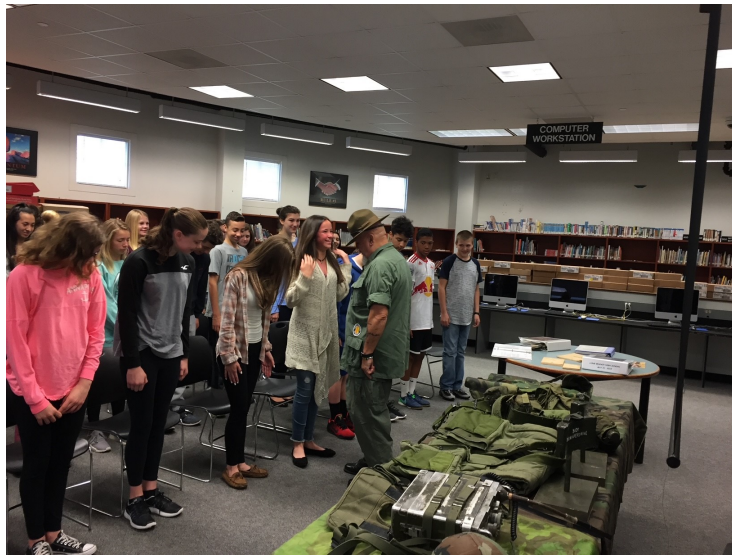
Quilts of Valor



Central Jersey Rifle and Pistol Club Warrior Parade

. The annual Wounded Warrior Parade/Escort will take place this year on the morning of Saturday, October 8, 2022, starting at the Jackson Township Justice Complex. The lineup will begin at 9 a.m. with the parade starting at 9:30 a.m. This year marks the 14th Annual Wounded Warrior event hosted by the Central Jersey Rifle and Pistol Club located on South Stump Tavern Road in Jackson. Warriors will be escorted by members of the Township Police Department, Township Volunteer Fire Companies, Jackson Township First Aid Squad, various motorcycle groups, as well as many other volunteers to show support for these veterans. Contact Al Dolce if you would like to attend. 732-637-7881

**Picture from our school program we will be doing our first school November 7
of this year Manalapan High School**



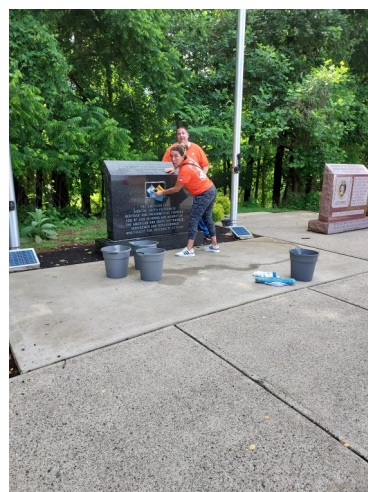
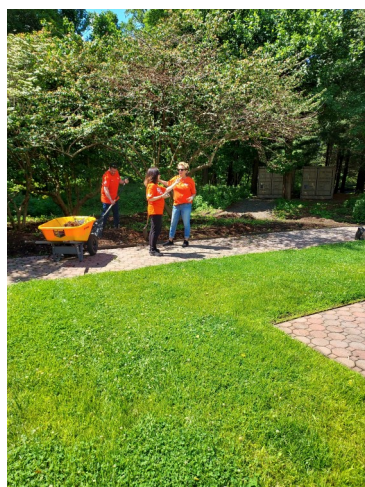
FAREWELL LUNCHEON FOR SARAH



Richard Knight at work Italian-American festival Oakhurst with helpers Bobby Lopez and Sue Barrett



HOME DEPOT CLEAN-UP



Pack your duffle bag: It's time to fly Space-A again!

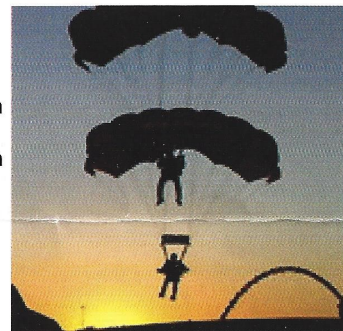
By Jeffrey F. Vaughan and Willie C. Williams, Soldier Support Branch U.S. Army Reserve Command

It's time to pack a bag! With COVID restrictions easing, all Space-Available travel program categories have been reinstated, including retirees. These are generally military flights with a mission, but they travel around the country and overseas. They are open to retirees of all services (Gray Area sponsors can only fly in CONUS). While sometimes unpredictable, Space-Available travel is a free or a discounted way to travel with dependents.

You can check what flights are regularly leaving to a determined destination. Most terminals have a Facebook page with their flight information out about three days in advance. You can also contact the closest Air Mobility Command passenger terminal for specific information at <https://www.amc.af.mil/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page/>.

Space-A travelers are prioritized into one of six categories in which category one is designated for emergency leave. Retirees are in category six. Here are some tips:

- Retirees and their dependents should sign up 50-55 days before their planned travel date, as those on the list for longer will board before others in the same category.
- Closer to the travel date, call the terminal to double-check your status on the list.
- Check-in at the terminal at least an hour before your flight's roll call for passengers on your intended departure date.
- Check your terminal's online schedule frequently, as flight schedules and roll calls can change without notice.
- Have luggage in hand, paperwork signed, car parked, and all dependents corralled and ready to board.
- Expect to wait; remember, this is the military. As mentioned, boarding priority is by category, not rank. If you get "bumped" from your flight due to not having enough space, ask the terminal attendant to consider all flights going to your desired destination. There might be a flight to another location close to where you wanted to land. You still have "sign-up" time seniority in your category. You may still be able to depart that same day.



The U.S. Army Golden Knights Jump started the 27th Annual Army-10 Miler with an aerial demonstration and landing, Oct. 9, in Washington, D.C. More than 30,000 people participated in the race, supporting Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation, a network of support and leisure services designed to enhance the lives of soldiers and their families.

Is it worth it? That is up to you, but you're trading some of your time for a discounted ticket. Being flexible is crucial and understand you may have to build in some buffer time in the beginning and/or end of your trip to accommodate changes or delays in traveling. In addition, make sure your family understands delays may happen due to availability. If you try to travel during peak season, around school breaks and major holidays, you will be waiting or may not get a flight out at all.

Space-Available travel is typically not a traditional civilian flight but a military "Gray Tail." Sometimes you will be sitting in "jump seats," a nylon fold-down seat on the side of the plane. If you plan to sleep on your flight, remember to take a blanket, pillow, or even a yoga mat. You may end up sleeping on a pallet of tires. If it is a long flight, they will charge a small fee for a boxed meal, but it doesn't hurt to bring your own snacks.

Flights can sometimes take an emergency to reroute to fulfill their primary mission. If your flight back from Florida is rerouted to Maine in winter, it may not be ideal, but again be flexible. Pack a little extra clothing, with the understanding you may experience a diversity of climate changes.

If traveling to Europe or Asia, consider grabbing a more open flight from the base to a country near your destination and then taking local civilian transportation. As the pandemic continues to evolve, travel conditions and requirements are changing.

Space-A travel can be the best way to take a trip with your family with the proper planning and documentation. The key is... FLEXIBILITY. Make the delays and alternate routes an adventure rather than an inconvenience. You may not have expected to go to Germany instead of France, but it's an opportunity for spontaneous sightseeing. Enjoy your trip.

Vacation planning with MyArmyBenefits

WASHINGTON —After two years of a worldwide pandemic with varying degrees of shutdown in the U.S. and overseas, many are preparing to travel this summer and venture outside their staycation zone. Travel experts are predicting a record travel season this summer as consumers turn pent-up demand into action. With higher demand, comes lower availability and often higher costs. What does MyArmyBenefits (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/>), the Army's official military benefits website, have to do with your travel plans? We can help you plan, by providing some cost-saving benefits information.

If you are planning to enjoy the great outdoors and visit some of our nation's most beautiful landscapes, check out the National Park Annual Interagency Military Pass (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/National-Park-and-Interagency-Military-Pass>). This pass provides free entrance to national parks and other federal recreation areas for current U.S. servicemembers, their eligible family members, veterans, and Gold Star family members. The free access includes the pass holder and traveling companions in a single, private non-commercial vehicle, or the pass holder plus three persons aged 16 and older when admission is per person. The 2022 NDAA, which became law on 27 December 2021, authorized veterans and Gold Star families a free lifetime pass to national parks and other federal recreation areas. These passes are not available yet but should be obtainable later this year.

Another travel benefit available to retired servicemembers and their eligible family members is the use of Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) ([https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-\(MWR\)](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-(MWR))) Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRC). If you are considering a trip to the "Mouse's House" in Florida or vacationing in Germany, Hawaii, or Korea, check out these four full-service resort hotels run by MWR that provide family-oriented vacation recreation opportunities: Shades of Green on Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in the German Alps, Hale Koa Hotel on Waikiki Beach in Hawaii, and Dragon Hill Lodge in Korea.

If you are planning to stay closer to home, visit your nearest MWR Outdoor Recreation office ([https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-\(MWR\)](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-(MWR))), recreation areas, and a variety of equipment rentals like campers, tents and camping equipment, kayaks, and more. Whether traveling far away or exploring your local and

regional areas be sure to visit your nearest MWR Leisure Travel ([https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-\(MWR\)](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Morale-Welfare-and-Recreation-(MWR))) and see what tickets, tours, and discounts they offer to attractions in the area you plan to visit. Browse our state/territory fact sheets (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits>) for benefits and recreation activities offered to veterans and retired military and their eligible family members. Some states offer free or discounted admission to state parks as well as discounted hunting and fishing licenses.

Before you depart on your adventure, or if you are traveling near a military installation, plan to visit the commissary ([https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Defense-Commissary-Agency-\(DeCA\)](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Defense-Commissary-Agency-(DeCA))) and PX (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/The-Exchange>) for snacks and supplies. If you need help finding services at an installation, use our Resource Locator (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Resource-Locator>) to find location and contact information for all installations in every state and U.S. territory. As part of your travel preparations, use your TRICARE pharmacy (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/TRICARE-Pharmacy>) benefit to fill any prescriptions you need to take on your trip. Also, be sure you know what to do if you forget your medications and where to get replacements filled.

One benefit that has returned since being restricted to specific categories of travelers last year is Space-Available (Space-A) travel ([https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Space-Available-Travel-\(Space-A-Travel\)](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Space-Available-Travel-(Space-A-Travel))). See the article on page 13 for more details. Additionally, MWR's American Forces Travel (<https://www.americanforcetravel.com/>) specializes in travel deals and military discounts for eligible military travelers, including retired military, on hotels, flights, cars, cruises, travel packages, and more.

When you travel this summer, don't forget to take advantage of all the benefits you earned. Use MyArmyBenefits (<https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/>) to find out about travel-related benefits and more!





New 988 Veterans Crisis Hotline: VA announced veterans now have the option to **Dial 988 then Press 1** to connect with caring, qualified responders for 24/7 crisis assistance. “During a crisis, every second counts,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This new, shorter number makes it easier for veterans and those who care about them to reach life-saving support without having to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care.” While [Dial 988 then Press 1](#) is a new option for contacting the Veterans Crisis Line, the original number, 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, remains available, and individuals can make contact via chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or by texting 838255.



Dear Veteran,

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities specifically pertaining to the respiratory, auditory and mental disorders body systems. The proposed updates to the rating schedule for these conditions will enable VA to incorporate modern medical data and terminology to provide Veterans with more accurate and consistent decisions. Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated. Updating the rating schedule allows Veterans to receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge relating to their condition.

By incorporating modern medical data in the assessment of disabilities and how they impact earning capacity, Veterans will receive evaluations which more accurately compensate them for their service-connected disabilities. Proposed updates include:

Modernizing the evaluative rating criteria for sleep apnea, using developments in medical knowledge to evaluate it based on its responsiveness to treatment, bringing the rating criteria for sleep apnea more closely in line with the stated purpose of the rating schedule.

Evaluating tinnitus (ringing in the ears) as a symptom of the underlying disease which causes it, rather than as a stand-alone disability.

Evaluating mental health conditions based on a more robust and holistic approach that assesses how impactful the disability is to cognition, interpersonal relationships, task completion, life activities and self-care. Additionally, the proposed evaluation criteria include a 10% minimum evaluation for having one or more service-connected mental health conditions and will no longer require "total occupational and social impairment" to attain a 100% evaluation.

No change to a Veteran's current rating would occur due to these proposed changes. If the proposed changes are finalized, Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation, but no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the Veteran's disability is shown to have occurred. The public has 60 days to provide comments to VA regarding the two proposed updates via the Federal Register notices located [here](#) and [here](#).

Thomas J. Murphy Director, Northeast District

Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits

4th Annual Flame Out - A Walk to Extinguish RSD/CRPS



Sunday, September 18, 2022
Joe Palaia Park, Oakhurst, NJ

RSDSA NEEDS YOUR HELP

FOURTH ANNUAL FLAME OUT – A WALK TO EXTINGUISH RSD/CRPS.

As we emerge from the Covid Pandemic life is returning, in small steps, to an evolving normal. What hasn't changed is the need to support the **Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association**. This year's goal is \$15,000

Our daughter, Judy, suffers from a disabling, chronic, neuropathic disease, RSD/CRPS. Misfiring nerves send continual pain signals to the brain. The McGill Pain Index classifies RSD as one of the most painful disorders, ranking as high as 46 out of 50. It ranks higher than the pain of childbirth and kidney stones. It has been described as more painful than amputation of a finger, without anesthesia. RSD patients liken it to your skin being on fire, with no relief.

There is presently no cure for the disease. As an Orphan disease, there is little incentive for pharmaceutical companies or the medical community to address the underlying causes or explore treatment options. Only awareness and education of the medical profession and the public will result in research and treatment options. That is where RSDSA comes in. As the only National advocate, for over thirty years, they need your support. Please join us as our **Pain Warriors** step off to remember those who, daily, battle this insidious disease. You'll meet some of the bravest and most inspiring people you'll ever come in contact with. This year's walk is dedicated to the memory of **Stephanie Theresa Smith**, who succumbed to the ravages of this disease on October 4, 2021.

DATE: Sunday, September 18, 2022 (rain or shine)

TIME: 9:00 a.m. pre-registration. Walk starts at 10 a.m.

WAIVER: All participants must sign our waiver.

LOCATION: Joe Palaia Park, Dow Ave. and Whalepond Rd., Oakhurst, N.J. 07755 (entrance closest to Deal Road, by the bandshell).

ONLINE REGISTRATION:

REGISTRATION FEE: \$25 – Adult and Children over 12

\$10 - Children 12 and under

\$30 – Day of walk registration

You can register and/or donate at <https://secure.ggiv.com/event/flameout/>. If you feel that you will not be able to participate in the walk, we ask that you make every effort to donate. RSDSA needs funding to continue its mission. If you prefer, you can send a check made out to **RSDSA**, to Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 12, PO Box 276, Allenhurst, N.J. 07711. We will record the donation and forward it to RSDSA.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 12, Oakhurst, has already signed on as a Sponsor. Additional Sponsors are welcome. For information, contact us at 732-531-2574 or herc3000@aol.com. We thank you, in advance, for your support. Let's make this a memorable day. Linda, Bob, Judy, Dana, & Charlie

Greenville Leadership Dinner





POW/MIA REPORT

September 2022

At present, more than 81,500 Americans remain missing from WW2, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf Wars, and the El Coronado Canyon. Out of the more than 81,500 missing 75% of the losses are located in the Indo-Pacific, and over 41,000 of the missing are presumed lost at sea (i.e. ship losses, known aircraft water losses, etc. Below are the numbers of missing as of August

World War 2 72,293 North Korea 5 Americans

Korean War 7,530 South Korea 7 Americans

Vietnam War 1,582

Cold War 126

Gulf Wars 5

El Coronado Canyon 1

Total POW/MIA 's 81,537

Report Submitted by"

Bucky Grimm, POW/MIA Committee



Honoring Gold Star Families

How did the term gold star originate? During World War I, families displayed small banners with a blue star for every immediate family member serving in the armed forces. If their service member died in service, the family replaced the blue star with a gold star. The gold star let the community know that their service member died or was killed while serving their country.

Today, the nation recognizes gold star survivors in several ways to show its deep gratitude, including:

- Designating the last Sunday of September as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day
- Recognizing April 5 as Gold Star Spouses Day

Authorizing the [Gold Star Lapel Button](#)

These buttons are a symbol of the nation's appreciation of a service member's sacrifice to country and service, allowing us to honor and recognize the families of these brave men and women. To learn more about the Gold Star Lapel Button and how to honor gold star families:

Even though gold star families have experienced a great loss, their ties to the military community remain strong. Their military networks are dedicated to supporting them

Chapter needs to recruit AVVA members to carry on our Legacy.



ASSOCIATES OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
8917 Colesville Rd • Silver Spring • MD • 20910 www.avva.org

NEW MEMBER:

State/Chapter: 12 At-Large? ☐
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Email: _____

RENEWAL:

Membership #, if known: _____ State/Chapter: _____ At-Large? ☐
Name: _____ Email: _____
Mailing Address: _____

DUES

☐ Annual Membership \$20 ☐ Life Membership Full payment \$100
☐ Life Member Time Payment Option: \$25 down / \$25 monthly until paid in full

VVA Dual Membership:

☐ Life Membership: \$50

PAYMENT METHOD

DO NOT SEND CASH

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____
Card holder's signature: _____

Make your check payable to **AVVA**

Remit this application and payment to:

AVVA • PO Box 49029 • Baltimore • MD • 21297-4929



Hello my fellow men and women Vets!

My name is Dennis Champ I am giving guitar lessons for Veterans at two locations. These lessons are free, if you don't have a guitar I can supply one for you.

On Tuesdays I am at the Manalapan Community Center 114 RT 33 at 11:30.

On Thursdays at 10 AM at the Jackson ELKS Lodge East Veterans Highway, Jackson.

If you are interested you can contact me anytime at dsclnc1953@gmail.com or 732-239-6288. You are never too old to learn, come on out and have some fun and meet other Vets. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Thanks, Dennis

Agent Orange Zone

Filing a VA claim for disability compensation

Disability compensation benefits are a monthly, tax-free payment to Veterans who were injured, sustained a long-term illness or experienced a worsening medical condition during their military service.

In addition to compensating Veterans whose disabilities incurred while serving in the military, Veterans may also be granted compensation for specific post-service medical conditions that arose because of their military service. Known as presumptive disabilities, these conditions may not have arisen in service but may be granted as service-connected because its occurrence can be linked directly to military service.

VA recently added new medical conditions to a growing list of presumptive disabilities, which you can view [here](#). These conditions can be presumed to have occurred because of an exposure to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and service in the Gulf War.

How to file a claim for disability compensation

The COVID-19 pandemic has not halted the claims process. Veterans can still file claims, and VA is still processing them. VA recommends filing a claim online, but it can still be done in person or through the mail. To get started, visit the [VA disability compensation webpage](#) and follow the steps listed below.

Step One: Prepare documents before starting your application

Gather any [evidence](#), documentation and/or required forms that support your claim before beginning your application. This might include:

- A completed [Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits Form \(VA Form 21-526EZ\)](#),
- Private medical records related to your condition, and/or
- Military personnel records

You must include both the required and (if necessary) supplementary documents or your application will be voided. In some cases, you may need to turn in [one or more forms](#) to support your claim.

Step Two: File your claim

There are three ways to file a claim: online, in person (with a VA representative, or with a Veterans Service Organization) or through the mail. Online applications are simple and easy to complete. You can access the application by visiting the [Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits webpage](#), then sign into your VA.gov account (or create a new account at the [ID.me website](#)). You can save your progress online for up to one year before the application expires.

If you do not have access to a computer or internet device, VA also accepts printed disability claim applications that can be filed either in person or through the mail. In person applications can be submitted to your local VA regional office. Visit [VA.gov/find-locations](#) to find a VA regional office in your state. If you wish to mail your application, please do so by sending it to the following address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

Step Three: VA will review your claim and notify you of its decision

VA [may require a few months](#) to make a decision on claim applications. The time it takes to review your application depends on three factors:

- The type of claim filed
- How many injuries or disabilities claimed and how complex they are, and/or
- [How long it takes VA to collect additional evidence](#) needed to decide your claim. This evidence may include service treatment records, service personnel records, private and federal treatment records, and [compensation and pension exams](#).

Once your disability claim application has been reviewed and all required documentation has been received, VA will decide on your claim and send you a notification letter of its decision. The notification letter will include specific details regarding the decisions made on your claim. You can expect to receive your notification letter 7 to 10 business days after a decision is made. Please contact a [VA call center](#) if it does not arrive within this period.

Step Four: After you receive a decision

You may ask for a second review if you are not satisfied with VA's decision. Veterans who filed a claim on or after February 19, 2019, may choose from three application review options. The first, a [Supplemental Claim](#), allows you to add new and relevant evidence (that VA doesn't already have). The second, a [Higher-Level Review](#), asks for a senior reviewer to examine your case. This option does not allow you to edit or add to your current application. And lastly, a [Board Appeal](#) requests a Veterans Law Judge with the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review your application.

If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after submitting a request to have your decision reviewed, please visit the [VA Decision Reviews and Appeals website](#).

For more information

Life comes with plenty of challenges, but ensuring the wellbeing of you and your family should not be one of them. Visit [VA.gov](#) to learn more about VA benefits and services.

If you wish to learn more about the claims process, visit the [Vantage Point](#) blog platform to keep up to date on disability claims and benefit eligibility requirements.

For more general information on the VA disability compensation and the process, [click here](#). For more on eligibility, [click here](#). You can also watch this [video series](#) produced by the Office of Information and Technology (OIT).

To request additional help filing a disability claim, learn more about [accredited representatives](#) or contact a VA regional office near you to speak with a counselor by calling 800-827-1000.





**New Pilot VAVS Program
“Courtesy Transportation”**

**VA New Jersey Health Care System is seeking contributions of Uber
gift cards for Veterans
in need of transportation assistance.**

**Uber services will be offered to Veterans that are not eligible for
beneficiary travel and have no means of transportation home.**

Uber gift cards are now available nationwide.

**Any questions regarding this special need, please contact Voluntary
Service at
908-604-5814.**