



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 7

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

July 2017

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

Summer is in full swing and we can always tell by the number of Can Shakes we have scheduled. Please check the newsletter for time and place and come out and give us a hand.

Some Chapter members attended the 4th of July parade in Sparta with the boat ride before the parade, and like usual we received a nice reception.

On July 10th myself, Owen, and John Brady attended the Flag retirement ceremony at Abbey Glen which was sponsored by the Sussex County Municipal Authority. This year they had 1000 lbs. of flags that were burnt.

Six of our members attended the DAR Christmas in July on July 15th and 16th.

With August fast approaching we will again be at the Sussex County Fair August 4th to the 13th. Again this year we will have a table set up in the Veterans Tent and will be selling hats and raffle tickets. This year we have more space and also an air-conditioner at our table so the heat should not be too much of a problem. The people at the fair go all out to give us free space and try to accommodate us with everything we need and they do a great job of it. Just like last year we need help manning the table for the 10 days. The fair is open 10 am to 10 pm and has to be manned on a continuous basis. We will have sheets out at the meeting for people to sign up so please pick some times to fill in and help your Chapter out. We can't do this event without a lot of involvement from our members so please give us a hand. If you can't make it to the meeting please call the Chapter phone 973-271-2413 and sign up to help.

This year there will not be a Chapter Picnic as there was not enough people signed up to participate. We will have our regular meeting on Aug 27th at 2pm.

That's it for now see you at the meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

Recently I spoke to a representative of the Hudson Valley Honor Flight and found out that they fly out of Stewart International Airport and Westchester County Airport. For those veterans eligible in our area Stewart would be the closest and most convenient.

At this time priority is given to those veterans of World War II and terminally ill veterans from other wars. HVHF is currently taking veterans of the Korean War as well and will eventually move up to the Vietnam War. However, there is as yet no timeline when this will happen. HVHF will still accept applications from Vietnam Veterans and will keep them on file and they will be notified when they will begin accepting those applications.

To make sure the trip is a safe and memorable one, veterans are allowed to bring a guardian with them. There are also many volunteer guardians who are ready to accompany a veteran if necessary.

HVHF honors veterans from Orange County, Ulster County, Sullivan County, Westchester County, Rockland County, Putnam County, Dutchess County, Pike County, PA, Bergen County, NJ, and Fairfield County, CT. They will also consider veterans from surrounding counties including Sussex.

If you want an application or would like to donate, volunteer, or want more information please go to www.hvhonorflight.com or call 845-391-0076

"We can't all be heroes. Some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they go by." -Will Rogers.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

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.

Vietnamvetradio.com

This is an Internet radio station that is put together by vets and plays music from the Vietnam era, roughly from the late 1950's till 1975 when Saigon fell. Plus the Adventures of Chicken Man. TUNE IN.

US Parks Service Senior Pass

Seniors (meaning those over 62) can obtain a National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for **\$10.00**. A pass covers entrance, standard amenity fees and day use fees for a driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle at per vehicle fee areas. The pass is good for the lifetime of the holder.

The fee for the pass is scheduled to go up to \$ 70.00 at the end of the year so this is the time to get it.

If you order it online it ends up costing \$ 20.00, but you can purchase it in person for the \$ 10.00. I bought mine at Wallkill and you have to pay by check, they don't take cash.

Go to the National Parks Service web site at <https://www.nps.gov> and search for senior pass.

Bradley Manning is out of prison, collecting benefits and posting picture of his "new" look

In one of those quirky things that happens regarding "the system," Bradley Manning, who served about 7 years of a 35 year sentence for disseminating classified documents, was released early as then President O Bama commuted his sentence. But as an earlier appeal is still pending, Manning will still collect health benefits and some commissary, etc. benefits until the appeal is resolved.

As his sentence was commuted and not pardoned, he will received a dishonorable discharge and then not be eligible for the "gender Dysphoria" treatments at government expense he has been receiving. So there is a somewhat appropriate ending to this travesty.

UPDATE: BM managed to attend one of the "pride" parades decked out in the duds of his current sex of choice and the media were happy to quote him as an expert, on something.

VA in Critical Condition but Improving

On his 100th day in office, VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin gave the White House press corps an open and very frank top-to-bottom review of the successes, problems and challenges his department faces. He listed 13 key focus areas that include changes that require congressional approval and some that he has the authority to make in-house.

His focus areas include: access to care, paying providers, community care, improving the quality of care, disability claims and appeals, information technology, capital assets, employee accountability, staffing, bureaucracy, veteran suicides, and fraud, waste and abuse. Shulkin said VA is still in critical condition, but that it is improving. Watch video of the 41-minute briefing or read the transcript.

White House Hotline Opens:

During his White House press conference, VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin also announced the "soft launch" of President Trump's promised White House hotline for veterans' complaints. The hotline opened yesterday and is expected to be fully operational by Aug. 15. The hotline's phone number is 855-948-2311. An automated greeting welcomes callers to the "White House-VA veteran complaint hotline." It is currently only operational weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT, and is closed on federal holidays, but is expected to be manned 24/7 by mid-August.

"Forever GI Bill" Could Be One Bright Spot in Divided Washington

By Jennifer Van Laar Jul 16, 2017
TOWNHALL.COM

A bill introduced Thursday seeks to create the largest expansion of veterans benefits in over a decade. Dubbed the "Forever GI Bill," the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 would provide technical fixes and improvements to the post-9/11 GI Bill, creating permanent benefits to those who served that are not tied to the whims of a political season.

Charles E. Schmidt, American Legion National Commander, said the changes are overdue. "We believe that all veterans who have honorably served this nation have earned education assistance as partial compensation for the sacrifices they have made. Unfortunately, many who have served in uniform are currently left behind."

The bill enjoys bipartisan support in the House and is supported by numerous veterans organizations.

Under this bill, Purple Heart recipients would receive full GI Bill benefits. Currently, access to full benefits depends on the number of days in active duty, with no exceptions for our wounded veterans. Jonathan Richard Goldman, a Marine Reservist and Purple Heart Recipient, said: "It was an honor to deploy to Fallujah in 2006 and take part in the mission, which I still believe in after all these years. Coming home and continuing my education was; however, not what I expected. My active duty days were counted as points towards education, regardless of the days I was shot at, and had bombs explode underneath me. And given my Purple Heart, the obsession with days accrued versus deeds done, and blood spilled, is truthfully criminal."



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Additionally, it lifts the current 15-year time limit to use benefits, extends full GI Bill eligibility to some members of the National Guard and reservists, allows survivors of those killed in action to participate in the Yellow Ribbon program, and allows GI Bill recipients whose schools close mid-semester to have their loans forgiven.

HR 3281 has 58 sponsors and is scheduled for a hearing Monday in the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

VA and GAO Agree: Appeals Reform Needed: Current legal process detrimental to Veterans

In response to a report released by the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO), “VA Disability Benefits: Additional Planning Would Enhance Efforts to Improve the Timeliness of Appeals Decisions,” the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the following statement:

This report confirms that the current law and process for adjudicating appeals is not consistent with the commitment made to our nation’s Veterans.

“Veterans are waiting far too long for decisions in our current appeals process,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin. “We have made bold changes to remove the bureaucratic red tape that has caused Veterans to wait an average of three years before they get a decision.”

VA has developed sound and aggressive plans regarding hiring, training and mitigation strategies that are already being aggressively implemented. In addition, VA recognizes the importance of effective management practices for the development of information systems to help integrate and streamline the appeals process. Our new Caseflow system will help us anticipate new information requirements, allowing us to quickly address challenges and provide our employees the support they need.

There is broad consensus that the current VA appeals system is broken and in urgent need of reform. Our proposal for a new appeals process was designed in conjunction with Veterans Service Organizations and other key stakeholders. VA strongly disagrees with GAO about the need for any type of piloting, which would only

unnecessarily delay the implementation of the bold changes Veterans expect us to make.

“We have a number of reports and studies, including this one from GAO, which have helped us clearly identify the problems in the current system,” said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Tom Murphy. VA is working to make as many changes to the system allowed by current law.

Preneed Burial Planning through the VA

Instead of waiting until after you have passed away, it is possible to work out arrangements ahead of time how. This should make it much easier to speak on your own behalf, and remove some stress from your family.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented the pre-need burial eligibility determination program to assist anyone who would like to know if they are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA is promoting pre-need eligibility determinations to encourage Veterans and their eligible family members to plan in advance to use VA burial benefits that Veterans have earned through their military service. Planning in advance for a Veteran’s or loved-one’s final resting place can eliminate unnecessary delays and reduce stress on a family at a difficult time. Veteran families will have increased confidence that their loved ones are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery at their time of need.

If pre-need eligibility has not been determined, upon the death of the Veteran or his or her spouse or dependent (also called the time of need), family members should locate the Veteran’s DD-214 or other discharge papers if readily available and click “Schedule a Burial” to begin the process. Then make arrangements with a funeral home, National Cemetery Scheduling Office, or directly with a VA national cemetery.

Use VA Form 40-40007, PRENEED BURIAL PLANNING

Go to <https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/pre-need/index.asp>

MI Senator Co-sponsors Blue Water Navy Bill

In March of this year, U.S Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, recently announced that he is cosponsoring the bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act to help ensure that Vietnam veterans who served aboard deep-water

naval vessels, known as "Blue Water" veterans, are eligible for the disability and health care benefits for illnesses linked to exposure to Agent Orange.

VA Launches New Wait Time Transparency Site

The Department of Veterans Affairs rolled out a new website that will enable veterans to track which VA facility has the shortest appointment wait times, as well as to compare the quality of care between different VA facilities and private-sector providers. Veterans who reside in urban areas will benefit more from the new online comparison tool than veterans in rural areas simply because they have more VA facilities from which to choose, provided they are willing to travel the extra distance. VA also responded to questions regarding data accuracy, since everything listed is compiled from information received from the field, and no veteran nor the department wants a repeat of the secret waiting lists debacle from three years ago. VA gave assurances that there is only one tracking system now, which is constantly measured. The new VA site is expected to be improved over the coming weeks.

Go to <http://www.accesstocare.va.gov/>

Navy Exchange opens to Veterans on Veteran's Day in 2017

Beginning this Veteran's Day, November 11, 2017, myNavyExchange.com is proud to expand our online shopping privileges to ALL honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Military.

Visit VetVerify.org to establish your authentication.

The shopping benefit will be available exclusively online via all military exchange websites. The benefit does not extend to in-store purchases/pick-ups or grant access to your local military installation or facility.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

Acknowledging the Risk for Traumatic Brain Injury in Women Veterans.

Since the Iraq and Afghanistan wars began, an unprecedented number of women have been engaging in combat operations. Likewise, the number of women using Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services has doubled since 2001. Military service, and deployment to combat in particular, poses certain risks for traumatic brain injury (TBI)-for all service members. However, women may have additional military and nondeployment risk factors such as intimate partner violence (IPV). We briefly review the definition and classification issues related to TBI, as well as common acute and chronic health symptoms after TBI. Specific sex differences in prognosis after TBI, in particular the neurobehavioral symptoms, are also reviewed. We then focus on the emerging literature regarding TBI in women veterans

including the etiologies, outcomes, and unique challenges this population faces. The article concludes with suggestions for enhanced screening by VA and non-VA providers alike, as well as directions for future research and clinical inquiry.

A Pilot Study of Interpersonal Psychotherapy for PTSD in Women Veterans.

Krupnick JL, Melnikoff E, Reinhard M.

OBJECTIVE:

This pilot study aimed to determine whether interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) would be effective with a sample of women veterans who experienced military-related PTSD.

METHOD:

Women veterans presenting for mental health services through the Trauma Services Program at the Washington, DC, Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) were referred to the study by Veterans Affairs (VA) clinicians if they experienced trauma during their military service and scored > 35 on the PTSD Checklist-Military Version. A total of 20 women completed a baseline assessment and were referred to treatment, the first trial of this treatment method with a veteran sample. Of the 15 women veterans who started treatment, 10 completed a trial of 12 individual sessions. Assessments were conducted posttreatment and at three months posttreatment follow-up.

RESULTS:

There was a significant decline in PTSD symptom severity from baseline to posttreatment, and these gains were maintained at three-month follow-up. Approximately one-third of the group no longer met full criteria for PTSD diagnosis, results that are comparable to studies of evidence-based treatments for PTSD (prolonged exposure and cognitive processing therapy) in military samples.

CONCLUSIONS:

IPT, a non-trauma-focused intervention that aims to increase social support and improve interpersonal functioning, shows promise as another means of addressing PTSD in veterans. It should be tested in a larger sample to determine if IPT for PTSD might serve as an alternative for veterans who would prefer a non-trauma-focused intervention to address their difficulties.

Large study assessing needs, experiences of pregnant and postpartum Veterans

June 7, 2017

By Mike Richman VA Research Communications

In the VA system, maternity care is almost entirely provided by community obstetricians but paid for by VA. (Photo: ©iStock/Jovanmandic)

Nearly 10 percent of former U.S. military members are women. Many of these women are of reproductive age—45 or younger—resulting in a steep increase in the



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number of Veterans delivering babies who have used VA maternity benefits in recent years.

In the VA system, maternity care is almost entirely provided by community obstetricians but paid for by VA. Veterans are encouraged to go to private facilities for services such as prenatal screenings, labor and delivery, and postpartum care.

Yet, little is known about how women Veterans access and use maternity care during pregnancy and following childbirth. Researchers are thus undertaking one of the most comprehensive VA studies yet of women's maternal health care issues. It is intended to give a broad assessment of pregnancy and maternity care among female Veterans, with a focus on obstetrics and mental health treatment, and on challenges receiving care from VA and private providers.

Dr. Kristin Mattocks, associate chief of staff for research and development at the VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, is leading the VA-funded study. She and her colleagues are two years into the research, with about a year to go.

"The number of women Veterans delivering babies using VHA maternity benefits has nearly doubled in the past five years," Mattocks says, "and yet virtually nothing is known about how they access and use maternity care services, how their maternity care is coordinated, or how ongoing VHA care, including primary care, specialty care, and mental health care, is managed during and after pregnancy. Coordinating maternity care with ongoing VHA care for pregnant Veterans is crucial because many women using VHA care have complex medical and mental health conditions that may increase their risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes."

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced the following U.S. servicemen, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

1. Army Technician 4th Grade John Kovach, Jr., 21, of Gypsum, Ohio, will be buried July 10 in Port Clinton, Ohio.



2. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Byron H. Nelson, 28, of Primghar, Iowa, will be buried July 1 in his hometown.



Staff Sgt. Byron H. Nelson (Front row, center)

3. Army Sgt. James W. Sharp, 24, of Mannington, West Virginia, will be buried June 29 in Grafton, West Virginia.
4. Machinist's Mate 1st Class Earl R. Melton, 24, of Lakewood, New Jersey, will be buried June 28, in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C.
5. Air Force Col. Patrick H. Wood, 36, of Kansas City, Missouri, will be buried June 28

in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C.



6. Army Air Forces Pvt. Harold S. Hirschi, 29, of Oklahoma City, will be buried June 28, in Andersonville, Georgia.
7. U.S. Air Force Reserve Capt. Joseph S. Smith, 25, of Assumption, Illinois, will be buried July 17 in his hometown.



8. Navy Fire Controlman 3rd Class Robert L. Pribble, 19, of St. Petersburg, Florida, will be buried July 18 in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.
9. Army Cpl. John Lane, Jr., 18, of El Monte, California, will be buried July 17 in Mountain Home, Tennessee.
10. Marine Sgt. James J. Hubert, 22, of Duluth, Minnesota, will be buried July 15 in his hometown.



11. Army Staff Sgt. Gerald L. Jacobsen, 27, of Little Canada, Minnesota, will be buried July 14 in Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

For complete stories on any of the above go to www.dpaa.mil/.

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

Tennessee restricts use of Monsanto pesticide as problems spread

[Reuters](#)

By Karl Plume



© REUTERS/Denis Balibouse/File Photo A

Monsanto logo is pictured in the company headquarters in Morges

Tennessee on Thursday imposed restrictions on the use of dicamba, a flagship pesticide for Monsanto Co, to become the fourth state to take action as problems spread over damage the weed killer causes to crops not genetically modified to withstand it.

on crops genetically modified to resist it but it has drifted, damaging vulnerable soybeans, cotton and other crops across the southern United States. Farmers have fought with neighbors over lost crops and brought lawsuits against dicamba producers.

Arkansas banned its use last week and Missouri, which initially halted dicamba spraying, has joined Tennessee with tight restrictions on when and in what weather spraying can be done. Kansas is investigating complaints.

Monsanto, which said it has spent years working to make dicamba stickier and limit drift when it is sprayed, is campaigning to overturn the bans.

The company, together with BASF SE and DuPont, which also produce dicamba-based weed killers, has agreed to additional safeguards for product use, Missouri Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn said in a statement.

Dicamba is key to Monsanto's biggest-ever biotech seed launch, which occurred last year. Its Xtend line of soybeans and cotton are designed to tolerate the weed killer, which replaces earlier products that contained only glyphosate.

Some weeds have developed resistance to glyphosate, which Monsanto introduced in the 1990s. Crop seeds such as corn, soybeans and cotton are genetically modified to survive the pesticide while yield-sapping weeds die.

Dicamba has long been used to kill weeds prior to the planting of crops, but its use has spiked this season across



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the United States after regulators last year approved it for crops that are already growing.

Monsanto sells a new dicamba formulation under the name Xtendimax. The company says that Xtendimax drifts less than older versions. BASF and DuPont also sell less drift-prone formulations.

New restrictions in Tennessee include allowing application only from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to limit potential pesticide drift.

"I'm confident that we can address this issue as we have in other cases to ensure the safe and effective use of these tools," Tennessee Agriculture Commissioner Jai Templeton said in a statement.

(Reporting by Karl Plume in Chicago; Editing by Riham Alkousaa)

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

On July 11, myself and Bob Lewis visited the Lyons Inpatient PTSD Unit for dinner service, which was again supplied by ShopRite of West Milford. Everyone loved the food and we had a really nice visit with the vets. Dinner was also brought to the ladies on the third floor.

I will also be making a trip down to Lyons to bring several bags of lap blankets which were made and donated by Caroline Podesta and Edwina Maccagnano of Post # 129 Ladies Auxiliary, and walker/wheelchair tote bags made by the ladies of the North Jersey Chapter of The American Sewing Guild. This will be the third time we will be making a delivery of the items generously donated by these groups.

Our next visit to Lyons will be on September 12th. Anyone wanting to join us should sign the sheet up front or contact me.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

23rd July

27th August

24th September

22nd October

26th November

December (TBD-Christmas Party)

Calendar of Events:

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

July:

29th – Walmart Newton – can shake

August:

12th – Shop Rite Newton – can shake

26th – Acme Sussex – can shake

September:

16th – Walmart Franklin – can shake

October:

7th – Shop Rite Warwick – can shake

21st – Shop Rite Franklin – can shake

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

No report

PASSINGS:

No report.

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy Anniversary:
Kathy & Tony Alia

Happy Birthday:
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD –
AUGUST 4, 1790
Tony Alia – August 22

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 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 20th (email skelle@ptd.net) or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger
174 Lewisburg Rd.
Sussex, N.J. 07461