



The Sentinel

Vol. 6 No. 5

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

May 2019

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

On Saturday May 11th Walt Hazelman and I represented the Chapter by attending the Dedication of the Traveling Wall at Garrett Mountain. Both myself and Walt thought it was one of the best walls we have seen. The people who organized this deserve a lot of credit for all the work they put into making it happen. The grounds around the Wall were absolutely beautiful and you could see how committed they were in doing this. For those of you who have not been to Washington I suggest the next time one of these Walls comes to our area you go out there and see it. It might not be the large one in Washington but it still has the same effect on us as we look on and remember our Brothers and Sisters we lost.

On Friday May 24th we had the Groundbreaking at the Cemetery for our Office Building/Chapel and I want to Thank all those who attended. I will write more about this in the next newsletter.

On Saturday was our Chapter Can Shake and as usual we had a lot of laughs while we sold hats and shirts and collected donations for our Chapter. I especially want to thank our Haberdasher Owen Martin for keeping us supplied with things to sell.

Tomorrow, May 27th is the Memorial Day Parade in Newton and we have been asked to attend by the organizers who saw us at the St Patrick's Day parade.

Remember this is a Parade to Honor and Remember those who did not return from all Wars and I'm pretty sure everyone here is Thankful they made it back so I don't think it is asking too much for you to take a couple of hours out of your day and come out and march to say THANK YOU to Those Men and Women who did not.

The Parade starts at 10am and just goes down the Main Street so it is not far and pretty level. Please find the time to come out and march for the Fallen.

Veterans' Family night will be coming to a close this month and Ayla who is in charge thanked us for being able to help with this. Some of the talks I attended were very informative and she will let us know what else they will be doing.

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

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

Memorial Day weekend is normally a very busy one for members of the chapter and other veterans. This upcoming weekend will be especially busy with activates happening from Friday to Monday.

On Friday, May 24, at 13:00 (1 P.M.) we will have the ground breaking ceremony for the new building at the Northern New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sparta (Next to Sussex Vo-Tech) on Rte. 94. We'll be able to move out of the trailer to a permanent structure.

Saturday, May 25, we have our annual can-shake at Mac and Lindy's Liquor store in the Acme parking lot on Rte. 94 in Vernon. We'll begin around 09:00 (9 A.M.) until mid-afternoon. This is the only can-shake for the chapter to raise money for our activities and it is always fun. The people of Vernon are always generous to us and all who attend have a great time. There will be hats and shirts for sale but we do not sell our annual raffle tickets at this time.

Of course Sunday, May 26, is our monthly meeting at St. Francis de Sales Church at 14:00 (2 P.M.). Come have a cup of coffee with us and hear the latest on what

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

the chapter is doing and info about what is happening at the VA and government.

Finally, we will be marching (walking) in the Newton Memorial Day Parade for the first time on Monday, May 27. We were invited when the chapter was selected to be the Grand Marshall at the St. Patrick's day parade. The parade will start at 10:00 (10 A.M.) and is a short march. Lineup will be at 09:00 where we assembled for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Please come if you are able, It is a chance to honor our fallen brothers and sisters.

One more thing, at our Thursday Vets Helping Vets meeting on June 13 there will be people staying in the room where we usually enter. Instead of using the back door we will have the side door unlocked and a sign showing where to enter. The other room will be marked as being occupied. We are still unable to use the glass doors that we use for our monthly meeting because of the pre-school children being in attendance.

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

Back in the early 1980's, I had only been out of the service about 10 years and I obtained my ships log books form the Naval Records Center from the time I reported on board until after we returned from overseas and Vietnam. I was expecting the actual rough log kept 24/7 on a Navy ship, but received the smooth logs, transcribed and kept by junior officers as part of their junior status.

We all remember things that happened, but we don't always remember the date, and when it took place and in what time frame.

I get back to them from time to time and I have been updating a log of dates and occurrence, but time is not always available and I have to decipher the individual officer's handwriting.

This time in 1971 we were just finishing our first tour/cruise in Vietnam and getting ready to head back to the Philippines for the ship to go in dry-dock.

The House Passes Blue Water Navy Act

I guess it may actually happen. But the Senate may not "act" and may wait for the legal challenges to conclude, which could take years.

Two of my shipmates have conditions that are linked to Agent Orange. One, Don, is collecting disability bennies, but only because his one of his state

representatives got involved. The other, Woody, has just filed.

I am not sure when I first heard of Agent Orange, but it certainly was not until after I was discharged. I always assumed that I was never near the stuff, being on a ship and all. However when I got back in touch with Don years ago he was telling me that we were living in the stuff, not just because the runoff went in to the ocean and was distilled into our fresh water, but also because we were drinking shore water that came from hot zones. I have no symptoms of known conditions so I consider that a plus, but some of my shipmates do.

It stands to reason that the VA has to consider new data and pay up in disability and/or services. But I am sure there are areas that they can cut or shift money from that is being wasted (bonuses, certain perks to higher ups) to cover actual veterans, instead of proposing to charge non-disabled vets to use the VA mortgage system. See below.

May 14, 2019

WASHINGTON – For the second time in less than a year, the House unanimously approved a bill Tuesday that would extend benefits to Vietnam War sailors who have fought for years to prove they were exposed to the chemical herbicide Agent Orange.

The House voted 410-0 to advance the bill to the Senate, following a vote last year of 382-0.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 aims to grant Department of Veterans Affairs benefits to "Blue Water" Navy veterans who served aboard aircraft carriers, destroyers and other ships but had been deemed ineligible for the same disability benefits as others who served on the ground and inland waterways. Agent Orange, a dioxin-laden herbicide, has been found to cause respiratory cancers, Parkinson's disease and heart disease, as well as other conditions.

The House approved a similar bill last June in the previous congressional session, but the effort stalled and ultimately failed in the Senate.

Reps. Mark Takano, D-Calif., and Phil Roe, R-Tenn., leaders of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, are pleading with the Senate to take the bill up quickly this time. They asked senators to vote and pass the bill by May 27, which is Memorial Day, just less than two weeks away.

"That would be a proper, fitting tribute," Takano said.

It was unclear Tuesday whether the Senate would schedule a vote on the bill. There remained questions of whether the chamber would wait for the end of an ongoing court battle regarding Blue Water Navy veterans.



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The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled 9-2 in January that Blue Water Navy veterans are eligible for VA disability compensation and other benefits.

However, the Department of Justice could appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

“It’s sort of got everybody in a freeze frame right now. Do we go ahead? What do we do?” Roe said Tuesday during a news conference prior to the House vote. “If we codify this in law, then [the VA has] their marching orders. There’s absolutely a simple way to solve this.”

Takano argued the legislation was the “quickest and clearest route to delivering benefits.”

“I would urge the Senate not to wait to see what the Justice Department decides to do,” he said.

Some of the hesitation last year was caused by cost concerns. At the time, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie and several previous secretaries opposed the measure, citing high costs and insufficient scientific evidence.

Like last year’s bill, the measure that passed the House on Tuesday would increase fees for nondisabled veterans who apply through the VA home loan program in order to help offset costs.

Eight national veterans organizations issued a letter Tuesday in support of the bill, writing it was “time to correct the injustice.”

However, Military-Veterans Advocacy pulled its support, arguing the bill would inadvertently limit the number of veterans who would be eligible for benefits if the court ruling were to stand.

John Wells, director of Military-Veterans Advocacy and one of the attorneys involved in the court case, has asked lawmakers to use broader language.

Nikki Wentling | STARS AND STRIPES
Wentling.nikki@stripes.com

Trump Shows Signs He Will Pardon Servicemen Accused or Convicted of War Crimes

This from the New York Times

President Trump has indicated that he is considering pardons for several American military members accused

or convicted of war crimes, including high-profile cases of murder, attempted murder and desecration of a corpse, according to two United States officials. The officials said that the Trump administration had made expedited requests this week for paperwork needed to pardon the troops on or around Memorial Day.

One request is for Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher of the Navy SEALs, who is scheduled to stand trial in the coming weeks on charges of shooting unarmed civilians and killing an enemy captive with a knife while deployed in Iraq.

The others are believed to include the case of a former [Blackwater security contractor](#) recently found guilty in the deadly 2007 shooting of dozens of unarmed Iraqis; the case of Maj. Mathew L. Golsteyn, the Army Green Beret accused of [killing an unarmed Afghan](#) in 2010; and the case of a [group of Marine Corps snipers](#) charged with urinating on the corpses of dead Taliban fighters. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly, said they had not seen a complete list, and did not know if other service members were included in the request for pardon paperwork.

The White House sent requests on Friday to the Justice Department’s Office of the Pardon Attorney, which alerted the military branches, according to one senior military official. Pardon files include background information and details on criminal charges, and in many cases include letters describing how the person in question has made amends.

The official said while assembling pardon files typically takes months, the Justice Department stressed that all files would have to be complete before Memorial Day weekend, because the President planned to pardon the men then. A second United States official confirmed the request concerning Chief Gallagher.

While the requests for pardon files are a strong sign of the president’s plans, Mr. Trump has been known to change his mind and it is not clear what the impetus was for the requests. But most of the troops who are positioned for a pardon have been championed by conservative lawmakers and media organizations, such as

Fox News, which have portrayed them as being unfairly punished for trying to do their job. Many have pushed for the president [to intervene](#). The White House declined to comment.

Pardoning several accused and convicted war criminals at once, including some who have not yet gone to trial, has not been done in recent history, legal experts said. Some worried that it could erode the legitimacy of military law and undercut good order and discipline in the ranks.

“These are all extremely complicated cases that have gone through a careful system of consideration. A freewheeling pardon undermines that whole system,” said Gary Solis, a retired military judge and armor officer who served in Vietnam. “It raises the prospect in the minds of the troops that says, ‘Whatever we do, if we can get the folks back home behind us, maybe we can get let off.’”

Chief Gallagher’s lawyer, Timothy Parlatore, was surprised by the news that the president could be considering a pardon, and said ideally the chief would be acquitted at trial.

“We want the opportunity to exonerate my client,” Mr. Parlatore said in an interview. “At the same time, there is always a risk in going to trial. My primary objective is to get Chief Gallagher home to his family. To that end, Chief Gallagher would welcome any involvement by the president.”

Other than violating military law, the cases the president is said to be considering defy easy categorization.

Navy SEALs who served with Chief Gallagher told authorities he indiscriminately shot at civilians, gunning down a young woman in a flowered hijab and an unarmed old man. They also said he stabbed a teenage captive, then bragged about it in text messages. His trial is set to start at the end of this month. If convicted, he faces life in prison. He has pleaded not guilty and denies all charges.

Major Golsteyn is charged with killing an Afghan man that he and other soldiers said had bomb-making materials. After an interrogation, the soldiers let the man go. Fearing that the man would return to making improvised explosives, which had already killed two Marines in the area, Major Golsteyn later said he killed the man.

Mr. Trump has singled both men out on Twitter, calling Major Golsteyn a “U.S. Military hero,” and praising Chief Gallagher for his service to the country.

The Blackwater contractor, Nicholas A. Slatten, is one of several Blackwater contractors charged in the killing of 17 Iraqis and the wounding of 20 more on a Baghdad street. After a number of mistrials and other delays, he is the only one who has been convicted.

The Marines charged in urinating on the corpse of a Taliban fighter were caught after a video of the act was found.

This year is the 75th anniversary of D Day Normandy

We humans like to remember things by decades generally, ten fingers and all. However time passes and there are fewer and fewer WWII veterans.

Granville Coggs, a Tuskegee Airman and Renaissance man, dies at 93

May 11, 2019

Granville Coggs, who was one of the nation’s first black military pilots during World War II, has died at the age of 93. He died Monday in San Antonio after a bout of pneumonia.

Coggs served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen from 1943 to 1946. He then went on to become a doctor, invented a non-invasive patented device for breast cancer detection, played and sang with a variety of musical groups, and was a gold medalist in the Senior Olympics.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

No report.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

No report.

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

VSO: Blue water veterans should file claim now.....

By Staff Reports

Tuesday

Posted May 7, 2019 at 9:20 AM Updated

May 7, 2019 at 9:20 AM

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced they will not appeal a federal court ruling that awards disability benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange, according to Ricky Johnson, director of Davidson County’s Veteran Service Office.

Johnson said the move to let the decision stand is a victory for “blue water” Navy veterans who have been prevented from receiving VA disability claims. Blue water veterans refer to those who served on ships in open waters off the coast of Vietnam during the war while brown water veterans refer to those who operated on inland waterways. Before the decision, blue water



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veterans were not eligible for the same disability benefits as brown water veterans.

According to Johnson, if you served on a U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship off the coast of Vietnam and you were denied VA compensation for a presumptive illness because of the “blue water rules,” you should refile your claim immediately. If you have never filed a claim for compensation because of the “blue water rules,” you need to file now.

Additionally, if you are the surviving spouse of a veteran who died from an Agent Orange presumptive illness, you should also file.

Agent Orange presumptive illnesses include:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chronic B-cell leukemia
- Chloracne
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Ischemic heart disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Parkinson’s disease
- Early onset Peripheral Neuropathy
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers
- Soft tissue sarcomas

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

On May 14th myself, Carl Ohlson, Bob Lewis, Bob Cubby and John Drinkard went to Lyons to serve dinner, supplied by ShopRite of West Milford, to the In-patient PTSD Unit and the 3rd Floor Ladies Unit. As always, the food was outstanding and we had a great social hour with the vets. Our next trip will be on July 9th. Anyone wanting to join us can sign the sheet up front or contact me.

On Friday May 17th, I delivered donations for the Ladies Unit from the Sussex County Women's Club, organized by member Rosemary Fuchs. They donated items requested by the ladies and they were very generous. The items had a total value of over \$700.

I also delivered items donated to the PTSD Unit from Mrs. Miller/McCann's 5th grade class here at St Francis. Again, they supplied items requested and were very generous. Their items totaled over \$800. The students also included personal notes for the vets, thanking them for their service and asking them to write back.

And I delivered lap quilts and wheelchair totes made by Caroline Podesta and Edwina Maccagnano which they donate on a regular basis, for the vets living at Lyons in their nursing care facility.

On behalf of the Vets I would like to thank the Sussex County Women's Club, Rosemary Fuchs, Mrs. Miller/McCann and her students and Caroline and Edwina for their caring generosity

Scheduled Meetings:

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

2019

26th May

23rd June

29th July

25th August

22nd September

27th October

24th November

December – TBD – Christmas Party

Calendar of Events:

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

May 25th – Can shake a Mac & Lindys, Vernon at
9:00 a.m. until ???

27th – Memorial Day Parade, Newton
Line-up 9:00 a.m.

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

Ray Tarino
Guy Latimer

PASSINGS:

No report.

Homeless Committee (new):

Submitted by John Drinkard

Community Hope

Our mission is helping individuals, including veterans, and their families, overcome mental illness, addiction, homelessness and poverty by providing housing and support services. Since 1985, we have provided housing, basic essentials, vital services and restored hope to thousands!

Community Hope is the leading nonprofit serving homeless veterans and families in New Jersey. We address a major underlying source of veterans' homelessness: High rates of mental illness, trauma and substance abuse and the challenges are increasing. Roughly half the soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with mental health conditions, including one in five that suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

A proactive approach to helping veterans and their families with immediate support when facing homelessness. We provide rapid re-housing to homeless veterans in addition to keeping veteran households from losing their housing when they are facing eviction. Our first priority is to either assist the family in remaining in their current housing, or, if they are homeless, to quickly locate and help them secure affordable housing. To accomplish this, we assist in the housing search; provide access to emergency housing when possible in the

interim; intervene with landlords; provide support and case management services that can include assistance with medical care, mental health or substance abuse treatment, child care and job training. Temporary financial assistance may also be available to help with such expenses as security deposits, back rent, utility payments or bedding and household essentials.

Delivering a rapid response has proven essential to meeting the needs of veterans and their families, especially those we have rescued from living in shelters, emergency motels, their cars or the woods.

Community Hope Administrative Office
959 Route 46 East, Suite 402
Parsippany, NJ 07054
Phone: (973) 463-9600

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy June Anniversaries:

Jo & Larry McDermott
Don & Rosemary Johnson

Happy June Birthday's:

United States Army
Bea Harrigan
Rosemary Johnson
Kathy Schultz

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.



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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 June newsletter to me by Sunday, June 16th by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

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