



The Sentinel

Vol. 7 No. 2

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

February 2020

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

February has been a very quiet month with not much going on within the Chapter or in the Government. The one big concern we have is that we are not reaching enough younger Veterans. I'm pretty sure that they do not know that regardless of our VVA name we are here to help all Veterans and their families. If you know of any younger Veterans let them know we are here for them and that they can also join our Chapter and attend meetings. I can't stress enough to our Blue Water Veterans to get those claims in. It took over 40 years to recognize their service in Vietnam so don't let it go by the wayside, if you have a presumptive Agent Orange disease file now.

The St Patrick's Day Parade will be held on March 21 at 11am in Newton. The Newton Fire Department will be hosting it this year and we have again been invited to participate. As we were last years Grand Marshall, I hope we can have a great turn out just like last year. The sign-up sheet will be at the meeting.

The Sussex Elks Lodge #2288 and American Legion riders of Sussex County will sponsor "The Moving Wall" in September of 2020 at Woodburn Park. Myself and some other Chapter members will be attending the meetings about this and will update you on the progress. That's about it See you at the meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

Now that the groundhog has "officially" declared there will be an early spring let's see what else is going on in February.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

Of course it wouldn't be February without Valentine's Day on Friday the 14th not that any of our spouses would let us forget and heaven help you if you do. 😊

February 17 is President's Day which is a holiday for some people. Many of us remember that there used to be two separate days celebrating George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays. Weather permitting fly the American Flag in honor of not only these two presidents but all presidents.

Next is our monthly meeting at St. Francis de Sales Church at 14:00 (2 P.M.) on Sunday, February 23 along with coffee and..... Remember, if the weather is too dangerous (snow and or ice) the meeting will be cancelled!!

On the following Tuesday, February 25 we will be spreading the ashes of the American Flags that were retired last year on the graves of our fallen comrades at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery on Rt. 94 next to the Vo-Tech School weather permitting. Time to yet be determined.

That's all I have for this month see you at the meeting and let's hope the groundhog is right.

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

New List of Agent Orange Test and Storage Sites Omits More than 40 Previously Identified Locations

Patricia Kime, in a January 30 story for *MilitaryTimes*, reports that DoD has released a new list of locations outside Vietnam where herbicides like Agent Orange were tested and stored, a compilation that could provide some veterans proof of exposure needed to support their VA disability claims. But the list, published Jan. 27 by the VA, omits more than 40 locations previously noted as exposure sites by DoD in 2018 — deletions that could undermine other veterans' pending claims.

The Department of Defense has released a new list of locations outside Vietnam where herbicides like Agent Orange were tested and stored, a compilation that could provide some veterans proof of exposure needed to support their VA disability claims.

But the list, published Jan. 27 by the Department of Veterans Affairs, omits more than 40 locations previously noted as exposure sites by DoD in 2018 — deletions that could undermine other veterans' pending claims.

The new DoD list contains nearly 150 testing and storage locations, with updates that include specific dates of release or containment, as well as 26 additions, including places like Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, and Johnston Atoll in the central Pacific Ocean.

But it deletes or alters at least 50 previously identified locations, removing some dates and omitting testing sites like Hawaii, where the DoD previously said field tests were conducted, Puerto Rico, where herbicides were sprayed in forests between 1956 and 1967, and locations in Korea where components were stored.

And while the new list contains six locations in Thailand, it adds a new clarification to those locations' descriptions: "No herbicide was sprayed in Thailand."

"Information within those records was assessed against stringent joint VA-DOD criteria for what constitutes a location where tactical herbicides were tested, used and stored," Prichard said.

According to Prichard, locations were selected or deleted based on criteria including the existence of an official record, to include government reports, forms, unit histories, shipping logs, contracts,

scientific reports or photographs. The location must have been a DoD installation, land under control of DoD or a non-DoD location where service members were present during testing, application, transportation or storage.

The new list covers tactical herbicides including Agents Orange, Purple, Pink, Green, Blue, White and their active ingredients. Also, they must have been used in application at test sites, in labs or greenhouses, while being transported on vehicles or ships or stored.

Prichard said locations where exposure occurred under conditions already granted presumption of exposure such as Vietnam and the Korean DMZ were not included on this list.

It also does not include any places where the U.S. Department of Agriculture, academia, chemical companies or others tested or stored the chemicals if service members weren't involved, nor areas where trained DoD personnel engaged in vegetation management and control in accordance with the DoD Pest Management Program.

Several veterans services organizations told *Military Times* their analysts are comparing the old list, which dates to September, 2018 and was published by the Government Accountability Office in November, 2018, and the new version.

In its report, GAO called the list "inaccurate and incomplete," and urged DoD to update the publication, which hadn't been updated in more than a decade.

The office recommended that the Pentagon refine the list so that it was "as complete and accurate as available records allow," develop a process for updating the list, develop criteria for determining locations and work with VA to keep veterans informed of the information.

But Ryan Gallucci, director of National Veterans Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said the new list does not "live up to the guidance and recommendations of the GAO report."

"We have a lot of questions ... two specific locations that GAO identified aren't included on DoD's new list and certain ones that seemingly had verified spraying on the old list are now off the list," Gallucci said. "With the GAO report, DoD compelled to come up with a more comprehensive list, not go back and revise what they already confirmed."



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Veterans who served on the ground in Vietnam, on inland waterways or certain Navy ships engaged in combat operations and who have one or more illnesses thought to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other defoliants have presumptive status for disability benefits, meaning they only have to prove that they served in the theater to receive health care and compensation.

But veterans with one of the 14 diseases listed as Agent Orange-related conditions who were exposed outside Vietnam face the burden of proving exposure. The DoD list is instrumental in helping support many of these veterans' claims.

"Our message to VA would be that they should grant benefits if a veteran has any evidence demonstrating that the spraying may have occurred, and that would be if there is an old list where DoD confirmed that there was storage or spraying," Gallucci said.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said the update was "necessary to improve accuracy and [for] communication of information."

Troops from the First Cavalry Air Mobile Division watch the carrier USS Boxer after arrival at Qui Nhon, Vietnam, on Sept. 12, 1965. On Tuesday, Department of Justice officials announced they will not appeal a court ruling that will award presumptive disability benefits to thousands of so-called

90,000 'blue water' Vietnam veterans in line for disability benefits after Justice officials drop appeal

The move all but ends a years long legal fight over presumptive benefits for up to 90,000 Vietnam veterans.

"VA depends on DOD to provide information regarding in-service environmental exposure for disability claims based on exposure to herbicides outside of Vietnam," Wilkie said in a statement.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper added that the new list will be updated as "verifiable information becomes available."

"DOD will continue to be responsive to the needs of our interagency partners in all matters related to taking care of both current and former service members. The updated list includes Agents Orange, Pink, Green, Purple, Blue and White and other chemicals," used to create the defoliants, Esper said in a release.

Pentagon budget calls for 'civilianizing' military hospitals

Military Times

The Pentagon's fiscal 2021 budget request supports ongoing, sweeping changes to the military health system that will reduce the number of uniformed medical personnel and send non-active duty beneficiaries to contractors or civilian providers for their health care.

The \$50.8 billion proposed Department of Defense medical budget released Monday continues reforms initiated in 2017 that place the service medical commands in charge of providing health care for uniformed personnel and gives oversight and responsibility of all military hospitals and clinics to the Defense Health Agency, to include staffing decisions.

According to the budget documents, this means some non-uniformed beneficiaries — active-duty family members, retirees and their family members — will continue receiving care at military treatment facilities from civilian staff or contractors, while others, "where feasible will be transitioned to a local network provider."

The budget documents affirm what Defense Health Agency officials have said for months: the military health system must right-size the military medical forces to support operational medicine, while roughly 8 million non-uniformed beneficiaries will receive health care from civilian federal

employees, contract care or in the community, via Tricare.

In some locations, such changes are underway. In the past two years, military hospitals at Fort Knox, Kentucky; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, were downgraded to outpatient clinics, a reconfiguration that resulted in retirees, retiree family members and some active duty family members transferring to physicians off-base.

Military.com reported Friday that commanders of 50 military treatment facilities targeted for changes received a memo from Defense Health Agency officials detailing the changes, which could affect at least 200,000 beneficiaries.

According to the report, non-uniformed beneficiaries currently enrolled at 38 military hospitals nationwide will be forced to go off-base.

The details are spelled out in a report expected to go to Congress in the coming weeks.

“It is estimated that approximately 200,000 Military Health System beneficiaries who receive care at the MTFs identified for reduction in operations will transition to civilian providers” in the Tricare network, Military.com reported.

Military advocates and members of Congress have raised concerns over the impact of transferring military beneficiaries to community providers in locations where there are not enough doctors or specialty services or in areas where services are unavailable.

At a Defense Health Board meeting Monday, a DHA official said in some remote places, such as Twentynine Palms, Calif., hospitals will continue caring for all beneficiaries since services aren’t available in the surrounding communities.

The fiscal 2021 budget request of \$50.8 billion is a decrease of 1.2 percent from the fiscal 2020 enacted level, with the cuts coming mainly from the elimination of nearly \$1.6 billion in research funding added each year to the Pentagon budget by Congress as part of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program.

Each year in its budget proposal, the Pentagon lines out CDMRP and Congress adds the dollars back in, to fund research projects that members have deemed necessary to preserve the health of the armed forces. CDMRP research currently includes certain types of cancer, autism, tick-borne diseases, Alzheimer’s and more.

The budget also proposed to transfer several medical readiness activities and functions to the military services deemed outside the scope of the Defense Health Agency, although the documents did not provide specifics.

Defense health officials say their goal with the transformation is to maintain a healthy force, a military medical staff focused on operational medicine and an improved health care system for non-military beneficiaries.

But for those forced off-base to receive medical care, the transition will come with an additional financial burden. Currently, beneficiaries who receive care at military hospitals or clinics have no co-payments for services or prescriptions.

But in the community, retirees and their family members enrolled in Tricare Prime can expect co-pays ranging from \$20 for an outpatient primary care appointment to \$62 for an emergency room visit, while those who choose Tricare Select will pay between \$30 for a network primary care appointment up to \$118 for a network emergency room visit.

Prescription co-payments outside military pharmacies range from \$10 for home delivery of generic medications to \$60 for a medication not listed on Tricare’s formulary at a network retail pharmacy.

The proposed fiscal 2021 proposed \$4.8 trillion White House budget designated nearly \$741 billion for defense spending, including a 3 percent pay raise for military personnel.

Trump suggests Army should punish officer who testified in impeachment inquiry

National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, left, leaves Capitol Hill as they conclude a public impeachment hearing of President Donald Trump in Washington on Nov. 19, 2019. (Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP)

President Donald Trump on Tuesday suggested that Army officials should look into punishment for the officer who testified against him as part of the House impeachment inquiry last fall.

The comments, which occurred in the Oval Office during a ceremony to finalize a bill creating new job assistance programs for veterans, came five days after the officer — Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman — was dismissed from his post on the National Security Council.



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The Ukraine-born infantry officer made headlines in October after he testified before the House Intelligence Committee about Trump’s phone call with the Ukrainian president, expressing concerns that Trump attempted to use the call to start a foreign investigation into his political rival, former Vice President Joe Biden.

Vindman was scheduled to rotate out of the NSC post this summer. White House officials characterized his early move not as retribution for his testimony, but as downsizing bureaucracy and restructuring the office.

A day later, Trump attacked Vindman as having “problems with judgement” and suggested he was a substandard worker. On Tuesday, he said Vindman was dismissed for misrepresenting the call in his testimony.

“The military can handle him any way they want,” Trump said. “We’ll find out what happens. But I wasn’t happy with the job he did.”

When asked if that meant some type of discipline, Trump said “they certainly have to take a look at that.”

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

No report.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

- Pvt. Pearl F. Barrow (see note), U.S. Army, Company F, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Lost 11/20/1944, Hürtgen, Germany
- Cpl. Arthur C. Ramirez, U.S. Army, Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, Lost 12/6/1950, North Korea

- Fireman 2nd Class Joseph W. Carroll, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Fireman 1st Class Dan E. Reagan, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Seaman 1st Class Joe R. Nightingale, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Hospital Apprentice 1st Class John M. Mulick, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Fireman 2nd Class William P. Kubinec, U.S. Navy, USS West Virginia, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Fireman 2nd Class Martin D. Young, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Seaman 2nd Class Cecil H. Thornton, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Seaman 1st Class Warren C. Gillette, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- Pfc. Royal L. Waltz, U.S. Marine Corps, Company A, 1st Battalion, 18th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Lost 11/20/1943, Tarawa
- Cpl. Oscar E. Koskela, U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters Company, 29th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Lost 6/18/1944, Saipan
- MMC Lada Smisek, U.S. Navy, Naval Ammunition Depot and Submarine Base, Cavite, Philippine Islands, Lost 9/28/1942, Philippines

The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. No single vessel at Pearl Harbor, with the exception of the USS Arizona, suffered as many fatalities.

From December 1941 to June 1944, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uauu Cemeteries.

In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. The laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 35 men from the USS Oklahoma at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains in 46 plots at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable.

In April 2015, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a policy memorandum directing the disinterment of unknowns associated with the USS Oklahoma. On June 15, 2015, DPAA personnel began exhuming the remains from the NMCP for analysis.

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

1. Local veterans affairs offices gear up for new Agent Orange claims

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. (WCAX) Many Vietnam-era veterans suffer from illnesses related to the use of Agent Orange overseas, but until now not all veterans have met the criteria to get help from the VA.



Almost three million American men and women served during the Vietnam War and many were exposed to Agent Orange, a defoliant that has been linked to various cancers, heart disease, and Parkinson's. When Congress passed the Agent Orange Act in 1990, it only called for men and women serving on land to receive

benefits, but a recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals will change that in the new year.

"Vietnam at that time was just thick, thick jungle," said Steve Bowman with the Clinton County Veterans Service Agency. He says the court decision will make a world of difference to many. "Currently, through the Procopio case, it established that the VA wrongfully interpreted Congress' intent."

The VA will now pay back so-called "blue water" veterans -- particularly those serving in the Navy within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam -- who suffered side-effects but were denied disability claims or denied benefits to the families of vets who have died.

"Just on a rough number, you're talking millions of people," Bowman said.

Those vets who contacted the VA's office claiming their medical condition was caused by Agent Orange have until the end of the year to re-file that claim. Those spouses who lost a veteran to illness and made a claim to the VA will also need to re-file the paperwork. If those claims qualify, the veteran or their family will receive retroactive benefits from the initial claim.

"We're talking billions of dollars that could be paid out to this county," Bowman said.

If you already receive VA benefits, you will not need to re-file.

If a veteran never made those claims, they can still do so and will start receiving the benefits starting January 1st. Bowman says local veterans affairs offices are up to date on the new law and are there to help file paperwork before the deadline at the end of next year.

2. Veterans groups urge Trump to intervene on Agent Orange decision



A U.S. Huey helicopter sprays Agent Orange over Vietnam. Those who served "in-country" in Vietnam enjoy a nearly automatic VA presumption that they were exposed to these herbicides, sometimes popularly called "Agent Orange." Those who served in Thailand are offered no such presumption.

U.S. ARMY



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By NIKKI WENTLING | STARS AND STRIPES

Published: February 10, 2020

WASHINGTON — Seven of the country’s largest veterans organizations on Monday urged President Donald Trump to fast-track benefits, after years of delays, for thousands of Vietnam War veterans suffering from four medical conditions thought to be caused by Agent Orange.

The groups asked Trump to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson’s-like symptoms to the list of conditions presumed to be caused by chemical herbicides used in the Vietnam War. Being on the presumptive list lowers the amount of proof veterans need to provide in order to receive VA benefits.

Veterans have been waiting years for the Department of Veterans Affairs to add the conditions. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie recently indicated that a decision wasn’t likely to come until the end of 2020, when the results of two more scientific studies on the issue are expected to be published.

In a seven-page letter, the veterans organizations criticized the VA for dragging its feet and undercutting scientific data that already exists. They also raised concerns that members of Trump’s administration had rejected the addition of the four conditions because of cost concerns.

“The continued delayed action by VA is causing additional suffering for Vietnam veterans and their families,” the groups wrote. “We urge you to take action and to end the wait, needless suffering and disappointment for an entire generation of veterans.”

Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the Fleet Reserve Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America and AMVETS signed onto the letter.

article continues below

Senator quizzes VA about delaying Agent Orange decision

Burn pit legislation passed by Congress could lead to improved accountability, better care for vets exposed to hazards

The American Legion pulled its support Monday afternoon, saying it agreed in principal but didn’t support all of the language used.

The letter comes one week after Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, told senators that the VA wanted to take a closer look at whether hypertension, in particular, was caused by Agent Orange exposure. He said there’s doubt because the age demographic of Vietnam War veterans is at higher risk for the condition.

The veterans organizations that the delay was “unnecessary.”

“The scientific community has already provided enough significant data, studies and associations linking these four diseases to Agent Orange exposure,” they wrote.

In 2018, researchers with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found for the first time that enough evidence exists to link hypertension to Agent Orange exposure. Researchers also determined there was “suggestive” evidence linking Agent Orange to hypothyroidism.

A 2016 report from the academies determined that there was “limited” or “suggestive” evidence linking Agent Orange to bladder cancer. That year, the academies also clarified that Parkinson-like symptoms should be considered as part of Parkinson’s disease, which is on the list of presumptive diseases.

The veterans groups argued that in the VA’s recent reports to Congress about this issue, the agency had tried to undercut the reports from the National Academies. The groups also raised concerns that the White House’s Office of Management and Budget had rejected the addition of three of the conditions because of their monetary cost.

Under then-VA Secretary David Shulkin, the agency recommended in 2016 the addition of bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson’s-like tremors to the presumptive list. Shulkin’s recommendation never made it past OMB. Lawmakers were told at the time that OMB was waiting on the results of more scientific studies.

OMB and Mick Mulvaney, its director at the time, objected to the recommendation. In addition to a lack of scientific evidence, OMB had concerns about the budgetary implications of expanding access to VA

benefits to the thousands of veterans diagnosed with the conditions, Military Times reported, citing emails between Shulkin and OMB.

In their letter Monday, the veterans groups said it was “alarming” that the administration had weighed the cost of the benefits against the veterans in need of assistance.

“When taking all of this into consideration, it appears VA is not waiting on additional science, but continuing to stonewall and delay adding these four diseases based in part on monetary concerns,” they wrote. “This is troubling.”

They asked Trump to intervene immediately and to direct Wilkie to add the four conditions.

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

No report.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

2020

23rd February

22nd March

26th April

24th May

28th June

26th July

23rd August

27th September

25th October

22nd November

5th December – Christmas Party

Calendar of Events:

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

March 21st – St Pat’s parade, 11:00 am in Newton

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

Fred Carrell

John M. Card

PASSINGS:

No report.

Homeless Committee (new):

Submitted by John Drinkard

Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services

Sussex County

Homeless Outreach

Bridgeway provides outreach, support, and case management services to adult Sussex County residents who are homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless and who have a mental illness. Bridgeway does not own or manage housing facilities. Homeless Outreach Services Include:

- Hands-on assistance with finding both temporary and permanent housing
- Outreach to engage service recipients into mental health, substance abuse, medical, vocational, and social services
- Assistance with obtaining public assistance and/or social security benefits
- Comprehensive assessment of individual needs and psychiatric rehabilitation goals
- Individualized treatment planning to assist the service recipient with reaching his/her goals
- Ongoing case management and supportive counseling to assist the service recipient to live within the community
- Teaching and assisting with daily living skills, including medication management and education, budgeting, personal hygiene, and housekeeping
- Transportation to initial appointments and linkage to other available transportation options

Contact: Patricia Packard

Homeless Outreach Services

93 Stickles Pond Rd.

Newton, NJ 07860

Phone: (973) 383-8670 Fax: (973) 383-8676

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy February Anniversaries:

Brenda & George Gunderman



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MEMBERS CORNER:

Submitted by John Brady

At our last monthly meeting I reported that the N.J. Veterans Income Tax Exemption was increased from \$3000 to \$6000. I also said that I heard a rumor that last years list of veterans who had applied was "lost" and veterans would have to apply again.

To check on this I did a Google search for NJ Veterans Income Tax Exemption and went to this website: state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/military/veteran_exemption. At this site it explained about the increase in the exemption. There is also a link that will take you to a website where you can find out if you are eligible by putting in your SS# and Birth-date. I did this and found out I am still listed as eligible. Of course this is only if you already applied for the exemption.

If you haven't applied, on the first web page there is a link that will tell you what you need to send which includes you DD-214 and a form.

So I would urge anyone who has applied to check to be sure you are still on the list.

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 March newsletter to me by Sunday, March 22nd by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

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