



# The Sentinel

Vol. 6 No. 6

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

June 2019

Website: [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org)

President: John Harrigan

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

## **FROM THE MINEFIELD:**

*Submitted by John Harrigan*

We had a very nice showing for the Memorial Day Parade in Newton and I would like to thank all our Chapter Members who attended. I'm pretty sure we were the only Veterans Organization that marched this year, as there are many different events that mark Memorial Day throughout the County. I think it's time for all the Veterans Groups to get together and have one centralized parade on this day and do it in a different town each year. This way all of the Veterans Organization's would be able to March in one large parade each Memorial Day and Honor those Brave Men and Women.

Myself, Bea and our two Grandchildren, Matty and Zoey, attended the Horses for Heroes Day in Newton on Halsey Road. Also in attendance were Chapter members Don and Cathy Schultz, Guy McHugh, John Fednich, his wife and daughter, Maddy O'Keefe and Bob and Sharon who volunteer there. This is a very good program that they are starting with horses helping not only Veterans but also Children with problems. The program is funded by donations and honestly I don't know how they do it. They have 38 rescue horses at this time and it is great to see how they interact with the people. They will be doing more in the future and I will keep you informed.

I attended the last Military Family night and once again it was very informative with them covering different issues. At the end of the session, all those who attended received \$300.00 in gift cards for completing the program. Ayla will let us know when they will be doing it again and will let you know if anyone is interested in attending the next session.

We now have all of the paperwork for the Raffle and tickets have been printed and Teri will be giving out the date and location of where we will be setting up.

Starting at this meeting we will have the sign-up sheet for the Fair and just like last year we will need about 90 slots filled. We did very well last year with ticket sales and also the selling of hats and walking sticks that Matt Fredericks donated to us. Please sign up to help out at the Fair as we cannot do this alone.

Also at this meeting we will have a sign-up sheet for the Chapter Picnic. It is usually in place of our August meeting so if you are interested in coming please sign up as soon as possible.

One last note all BLUE WATER NAVY VETS if you have a disability associated with Agent Orange please file you claim now. If you need help come in on Thursday and see us.

Some of you knew Mike Eckestine our Agent Orange State Representative and I am sorry to inform you that he passed away this month from a massive Heart Attack. He was the voice of Agent Orange and will be missed. That's it for now see you at the meeting.

## **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:**

*Submitted by John Brady*

First I would like to extend a Happy Father's Day to all the fathers in the chapter for the past Sunday.

Many of us know that June 14 is Flag Day but some may not realize it is also the birthday of the United States Army, established June 14, 1775. So to all our members who served in the Army, Happy Birthday.

This next piece of information is not only directed to the Marines but to everyone who may be interested. It

*Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!*

concerns a movie being shown in the IMAX theater at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. It's called "SUPERPOWER DOGS". I think it best if I do a copy and paste that best explains the film:

“Join an immersive adventure to experience the life-saving superpowers and extraordinary bravery of some of the world’s most amazing dogs with Superpower Dogs. In this inspiring true story narrated by Chris Evans, our best friends are also real-life superheroes. Journey around the globe to meet remarkable dogs who save lives and discover the powerful bond they share with their human partners. Follow ‘Halo’, a rookie puppy training to join one of the most elite disaster response teams in America. Meet ‘Henry’, an avalanche rescue expert in the mountains of British Columbia, ‘Reef’, a Newfoundland lifeguard with the Italian coastguard, ‘Ricochet’, a Californian surf legend helping people with special needs, and the Bloodhound brothers, ‘Tipper and Tony’, who are leading the fight to save endangered species in Africa. As we discover the incredible abilities of dogs and the astonishing science behind their superpowers, we’ll never look at our best friends the same way again!”

Superpower Dogs is a family-friendly film and has a run time of 45 minutes. Learn more at <https://superpowerdogs.com>.

As you can see it's not meant only for Marines. So, if you happen to be in Virginia and interested pay a visit to the museum. Admission is free and you may find some of the other exhibits interesting. The museum is at 18900 Jefferson Davis Highway, Triangle Virginia 22172.

## **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](mailto:skays1@embarqmail.com)

### **Court rules VA must pay disability benefits to ‘blue water’ Vietnam veterans**

Military Times

WASHINGTON — A federal court ruled Tuesday that the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot deny disability benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans who claim exposure to cancer-causing chemical defoliants simply because those vets served in the waters off the country’s coastline, and not inland.

The ruling marks a major victory for so-called “blue water” Navy veterans who have fought the department for years over the denials. VA officials have said the existing scientific evidence doesn’t justify the presumption of toxic exposure for the group and have strongly opposed legislative efforts to overturn their decision.

But the 9-2 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit overturns past court opinions backing up VA, saying that Congress never intended to exclude service members in the seas around Vietnam when they awarded presumptive benefits for certain illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure.

Under current department rules, the blue water veterans can receive medical care for their illnesses through VA. But to receive disability benefits — worth up to several thousand dollars a month — they must prove that their ailments are directly connected to toxic exposure while on duty.

That’s not the case for other Vietnam veterans, who are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange and other defoliants known to cause serious and rare cancers.

So while a veteran who served on the shoreline could receive disability payouts after contracting Parkinson’s Disease or prostate cancer, another vet who served on a ship a few miles away would have to provide evidence of direct contact with hazardous chemicals.

Advocates have said that, given the time that has passed since the war, obtaining such proof is impossible and unfair. In their ruling, the federal judges agreed.

“These statutes cast no doubt on our conclusion that, by using the formal term ‘Republic of Vietnam,’ Congress unambiguously referred, consistent with uniform international law, to both its landmass and its 12-nautical-mile territorial sea,” the ruling states.

If VA officials opt not to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court in the next 90 days — or if the court decides not to hear the case — the result means that up to 90,000 blue water veterans could see disability payouts as early as this year.

In a statement, VA spokesman Curt Cashour said the department is reviewing this decision and “will determine an appropriate response.”

Advocates hailed the news as a major step ahead in their effort to win benefits for the aging veterans.

“This is a big win,” said John Wells, retired Navy commander and the executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy, which helped file the lawsuit. “We want to work with VA on how to implement this as painlessly as possible, but making sure these veterans get all they deserve.”

Bart Stichman, executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, said the decision “unequivocally rights a wrong that is a terrible injustice to all veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in the waters of Vietnam.”

Legislation that would have awarded presumptive status to the blue water veterans was blocked by a small group of senators at the end of last year, disappointing



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advocates who saw the legislative momentum as their best chance for a victory in years.

Now, instead of granting the benefits to veterans, lawmakers may be forced to scramble new bills to cover the cost of the court-ordered awards.

Congressional Budget Office officials had estimated that awarding the benefits to the blue water veterans could total about \$1.1 billion over 10 years, but VA officials have insisted the total is closer to \$5.5 billion. Disagreements over whether to use new home loan fees to pay for the costs stalled the previous legislation.

If the court order stands, VA will be forced to cover the costs regardless of whether an offset is agreed upon, a potential drain on the department’s annual budget. Several new bills on the issue are already pending before Congress, and the chairmen of both the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees have promised to deal with the topic quickly this year. In a statement, Senate chairman Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., said that he was pleased with the court decision and would work closely with VA on the next steps.

.....  
Notice how the issue of costs of paying for prospective benefits once the VA is ordered to do so always comes up.

Being a huge bureaucracy with a sky high budget, it seems the VA could make some internal changes to save money, perhaps not granting bonuses to administrators who don’t do their jobs but succeed at hiding scandals, etc.; as a matter of fact why are bonuses given at all? You know there is a lot of slush that could be eliminated that would not only save money, but could be put towards the VA’s primary function.

## **WOMEN VETERANS:**

*Submitted by Walt Hazelman*

Acting Governor Oliver Designates June 12th as “Women Veterans Appreciation Day” in New Jersey  
June 12, 2019, 2:10 pm



Acting Governor Oliver Designates June 12th as “Women Veterans Appreciation Day” in New Jersey  
06/12/2019

TRENTON – Today, Acting Governor Sheila Oliver signed Senate Joint Resolution No. 114 into law, designating June 12th of each year as “Women Veterans Appreciation Day” in New Jersey. This legislation will honor New Jersey women veterans for their great sacrifices to protect our country. In addition to signing the legislation, Acting Governor Oliver presented Prudential with the “We Value Our Veterans” Community Award for its efforts in supporting veterans. At the federal level, Senator Cory Booker and Representative Mikie Sherrill showed their support for this initiative by introducing a bipartisan resolution designating June 12th as Women Veterans Appreciation Day nationally.

“New Jersey is lucky to be home to many women who have put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “These women have proudly served our nation, and now their extraordinary dedication to our state and country will be commemorated each year.”

“Women have continually protected our rights and liberties throughout the history of the United States,” said Acting Governor Oliver. “We are thrilled to acknowledge the increasing number of women serving in our military, and proud to show our appreciation for the state’s upstanding women veterans.”

“We’re very honored to receive this recognition, and we hope that this day of appreciation for women veterans

draws much-needed attention to their unique needs,” said Charles Lowrey, Chairman and CEO of Prudential.

Prudential hosted the event to mark the signing of the resolution at its newest building in Newark, Prudential Tower.

“Our Veterans Initiatives team is heavily involved in advocacy, including the development of solutions to address the unemployment of both veterans and military spouses. We recognize and honor their service for our country and we value their skills in the workforce. And today, Prudential is especially proud to focus on the contributions and sacrifices of women in the military as we recognize the first Women Veterans Appreciation Day,” Lowrey continued.

“From serving as combat helicopter pilots in Afghanistan to disguising themselves as male soldiers during the American Revolution and the Civil War, women have served our country with valor and honor since our nation’s inception,” Senator Booker said. “Marking June 12 every year as Women Veterans Appreciation Day is a fitting recognition for their selfless sacrifice. To the nearly two million women currently serving in our Armed Forces today and to the many that came before them – thank you for your dutiful service and commitment to this country’s freedom.”

“Too often, female veterans do not seek care at the VA or even identify themselves as veterans. New Jersey is leading the way to make sure servicewomen are not only recognized for their contributions to the armed forces, but that their voices are heard,” said Representative Mikie Sherrill, Vice Chair of the Congressional Servicewomen and Women Veterans Caucus. “I applaud all the veterans, stakeholders, and officials who came together to mark June 12th as Women Veterans Appreciation Day in New Jersey. Senator Booker and I are proud to champion this effort at the federal level.”

“Too often women who have served in our military are ignored or forgotten,” said New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission Chief Administrator Sue Fulton. “We assume it’s their husbands or sons who served, who moved to the sound of gunfire, who tended the injured, who piloted the planes or helicopters, who delivered the ordnance, who strung the comms lines, who saw comrades killed and themselves suffered the wounds of war. As a proud Army veteran, I have long been in awe of the women who served before me, who served with me, who served after me. Thank you to Governor Murphy and the New Jersey legislature for acknowledging our most forgotten soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.”

“While all veterans are unique and treasured for their service, women have a special place in our military,” said

Adjutant General Jemal Beale. “They are the only members of our society that has not been drafted; hence, they willingly volunteered to serve our nation. We thank our women veterans for their service.”

“Women’s contributions in the military have drastically expanded with each passing decade,” said Deputy Adjutant General Dr. Lisa Hou, a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. “Women were initially limited to serving as nurses or clerks. Now, women are seen in every military occupational specialty and continue to achieve milestones in positions that were once thought attainable only by men. It is my hope that this designated day will shine the light on women’s achievements in the military and bring further awareness of women veterans.”

Primary sponsors of the bill include Senators Kristin Corrado and Linda Greenstein, and Assemblymembers Cleopatra Tucker, Valerie Vainieri Huttel, and Wayne DeAngelo.

“Throughout American history, women in the military have always played an invaluable role in the fight to protect the freedoms we hold dear, and yet, all too often, our servicewomen do not get the recognition they deserve,” said Senator Kristin Corrado. “Designating June 12 as ‘Women Veterans Appreciation Day’ is a fitting way to honor the millions of women veterans who have sacrificed so much to serve our country with valor.”

“Designating June 12th as Women Veterans Appreciation Day is a tribute to the achievements of the women who have served our country,” said Senator Linda Greenstein. “Highlighting these women will inspire and educate us all on the countless sacrifices and immeasurable heroism of women in defense of our freedom.”

“Women have a significant presence in the United States military in New Jersey, throughout the country and around the globe,” said Assemblymembers Cleopatra Tucker, Valerie Vainieri Huttel, and Wayne DeAngelo. “Undoubtedly, women have helped our nation’s military earn and maintain its stellar reputation domestically and abroad. Designating June 12 annually as ‘Women Veterans Appreciation Day’ in New Jersey to honor women on active duty in the armed forces and to highlight the state’s appreciation for women veterans is a fitting way to recognize their work, sacrifices and commitment.”

“I am so honored and privileged to be part of the grassroots movement led by Catholic Charities and the NJ SOS Veterans Stakeholders that saw the need for a Women Veterans Stakeholder Group,” said Lucy Del Gaudio, US Army Veteran and Veteran Advocate. “Women Veterans Appreciate Day gives us the opportunity to create a day where we can have a voice for



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issues that we as women veterans face that are uniquely different to those of our brothers in arms. We can recognize the fight, strength, resilience but more so, the diversity and inclusiveness women have brought and continue to bring to the military.”

## Meet the women helping VA work for women veterans

By: Pamela J. Powers



Airmen stand at attention during a retreat ceremony March 30, 2018, on Kadena Air Base, Japan. An all-female formation was coordinated in honor of Women’s History Month, which brings attention to the accomplishments and achievements of women throughout history. (Staff Sgt. Micaiah Anthony/Air Force)

Anyone who thinks the Department of Veterans Affairs is an old boys’ club should meet some of the women running it.

I’m one of them.

The VA has a long history of both serving women and putting them in a position to lead, and we’re better positioned than ever to help our women warriors when they return home.

Women have played an important role here since before my great grandfather fought in World War I, when veterans could get benefits from the VA’s predecessor, the Bureau of War Risk Insurance. By the time my

grandfather was in World War II, we were the Veterans Administration, and more than 10 percent of our employees were women.

By the mid-70s, women made up more than half of our workforce. Today, under Secretary Robert Wilkie, women are running major components of the VA, which shows his commitment to serving women veterans as they transition and seek care.

- Dr. Melissa Glynn heads up our Office of Enterprise Integration and is in charge of our modernization effort that will see the VA undergo the most dramatic evolution it’s ever seen.

- Cheryl Mason is chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals and leads a team of more than 1,000 judges, attorneys and staff that makes decisions on appeals brought by veterans and their families.

- Dr. Lynda Davis is our chief veterans experience officer and works to make sure we’re on track to becoming the top customer service organization in the federal government.

- Karen Brazell is executive director of our Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, and oversees procurement and risk management for the VA, which is the largest integrated health care system in the country.

- Dr. Tamara Bonzanto is assistant secretary for our Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, a new office that’s aimed at building transparency and public trust throughout the VA.

- Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd is executive director of our Center for Women Veterans, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and strives to make sure women can get the care and respect they deserve when they walk through our doors.

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• That's a challenge, but it's one we're meeting. We're providing more medical services for women than ever before, including comprehensive primary care, gynecology, maternity care and mental health services.

• Studies show that women veterans are more likely to receive breast cancer and cervical cancer screening than women using private sector health care.

• We're taking special care to focus on women who are at risk of suicide. Preventing suicide among all Veterans is one of our top priorities, but we're working hard to understand how the stress of a duty tour affects women differently and funding several studies that will shape treatment options.

• We've also been working for several years now to change the culture and prevent all forms of sexual harassment in our medical centers. Those efforts are yielding results — we're training our staff to intervene when they see harassment, and we are pushing to make sure women are comfortable coming to our clinics to get the care they've earned.

• How do we know we're making progress? Women have noticed the improvement and are voting with their feet.

• The number of women choosing VA health care has tripled since 2000, when we served about 160,000 women Veterans. More than 750,000 women are benefitting from VA health care or other benefits.

• That number is only expected to grow. Women are expected to make up about 10 percent of all U.S. veterans today, but as women swell our military's ranks, we'll be seeing even more women at the VA in the years ahead.

• Surveys show women like the changes they're seeing. A recent study said 84 percent of women veterans trust us with their medical care and are satisfied with the overall VA experience.

• The VA is succeeding with women because women are having more input than ever before into how the department is run.

## **POW/MIA:**

*Submitted by Bob Gilbert*

Cpl. Robert L. Bray, U.S. Army, Company C, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, 7/20/1950, South Korea

Pvt. Ballard McCurley, U.S. Army, Company M, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division 11/29/1944, Germany

Col. Roy A. Knight, Jr., U.S. Air Force, 602nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, 5/19/1967, Laos

Cpl. William S. Smith, U.S. Army, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, 9/1/1950, South Korea

Signalman 3rd Class William J. Shanahan, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor

Master Sgt. James G. Cates, U.S. Army, Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division 12/3/1950, North Korea

Pvt. Edward M. Morrison, U.S. Army, 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, 7/6/1950, South Korea

Tech. Sgt. Charles G. Ruble, U.S. Army Air Forces, 99th Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st Troop Carrier Group, 9/17/1944, Netherlands

## **AGENT ORANGE:**

*Submitted by Owen Martin*

Memorial fund makes sure others lost are not forgotten

Honor Roll salutes those who fought but later died as a result of their service



Linda Easterday, of Martinez, holds a photograph of her husband Vietnam veteran Ernest Easterday at her home in Martinez. Easterday died from cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange during his tour of duty in Vietnam. JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO-BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

By [Cat Ferguson](#) |

May 27, 2019 at 7:32 am

Ten feet tall at its highest point, its jet-black granite polished to a mirror shine, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors service members who lost their lives or went missing during the yearslong conflict in Southeast Asia.



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But thousands of names are missing: those of veterans who made it home and later died of physical wounds and other causes related to their service.

Now those who fought for their country but did not die in combat are being recognized as part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund’s In Memory Honor Roll. The program memorializes those who died as a result of their service, including from PTSD-related suicide and complications from exposure to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange. This year, 534 men are being added to the list.

“There are so many veterans left with the effects of their service for a lifetime and are just overlooked. They deserve to be acknowledged,” said Joy Lamboy of Walnut Creek, whose father, Ronald Lamboy, is being honored this year. He died last year of cirrhosis related to Agent Orange exposure.

Photos of the veterans on the Honor Roll will be displayed alongside The Wall That Heals, the VVMF’s traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, and the vets will have their own page on the program’s website. They also will be memorialized during a ceremony at the memorial in Washington, D.C., on June 15.



Linda Easterday, of Martinez, holds a photograph of her husband Vietnam veteran Ernest Easterday at her home in Martinez. Easterday passed away at the age of 69 on Dec. 8, 2016. He served as a Sgt. E-5 in the U.S. Army in 1968 from March to October. Easterday died from

cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange during his tour of duty in Vietnam. JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO-BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Every year on Memorial Day, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund brings together thousands of family members, and every name on the list is read. The application for family members is simple and can be found on the VVMF website.

“This is a recognition of people’s service, to let people know they’re important, that they served their country,” said Carol Taylor of San Francisco, whose husband, Thomas Taylor, died last year after a battle with prostate cancer related to exposure to Agent Orange. He also will be added to the Honor Roll this year.

After returning home, many Vietnam War veterans faced scorn and anger for their role in the deeply unpopular conflict, often while living with post-traumatic stress disorder, injuries and other problems stemming from tours of duty. Many families fought unsuccessfully to have the names of loved ones inscribed on the official memorial wall, a decision made by the Department of Defense.

“A lot of these people may have appealed to the DOD, and the DOD denied their appeal,” said Heidi Zimmerman, vice president of programs and communication with the VVMF. Her father is on the Honor Roll, having died of Agent Orange-related prostate cancer. “We always say, for every name on the wall, there’s a whole family that was forever changed by that loss.”

Agent Orange was used to strip leaves from trees in the thick jungles where the Viet Cong hid. But when it was dumped from planes, it coated anyone in the jungle. It wasn’t until years later that the government acknowledged that exposure can cause cancer.

“He was sprayed with Agent Orange — they were almost swimming in it,” Taylor said of her husband. “It coated their uniforms, he couldn’t see out of his glasses, it was in his food. It was everywhere.”

Linda Easterday’s husband, Ernest Easterday, was med-evaced out of Vietnam after breaking his back when his personnel carrier

ran over a land mine. Alongside residual pain from his injury, his service had a lasting effect on his relationships.

“You never get rid of it. You can’t control the nightmares. But it’s not something you bring up in conversations,” Linda Easterday said. “When people would ask him what it was like over there, he’d say, ‘It was hot, man. It was like 120 degrees.’” Lamboy remembers her dad as a wonderful family man and hard worker, despite his struggles with mental and physical health.

“Growing up, I didn’t look at him as having a mental illness. He was my dad. He was invincible to me,” she said. “But once they leave the war zone, the war never really ends. They come home with so many internal wounds.”

A 2015 study by JAMA Psychiatry estimated that 271,000 Vietnam veterans suffered from PTSD. Those who served in the military continue to be 1.5 times more likely to take their own lives, according to a 2018 report by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which also found that the rate of suicide among younger veterans has increased by as much as 10% in recent years. Those who regularly use VA services are less at risk.

Vietnam veterans and their survivors often are eligible for partial or full disability benefits if diagnosed with one of the many diseases the VA acknowledges are caused by Agent Orange exposure, including type 2 diabetes, Parkinson’s disease and more than a dozen kinds of cancer. Vets with PTSD are often eligible.

But the process of applying can be onerous.

Lamboy and her brother spent years helping their dad navigate the bureaucracy, including applying for disability benefits. Throughout their interactions with the government, including during his treatment for cirrhosis, Ronald Lamboy’s family served as staunch advocates, always pushing for him to get the best care.

“I honestly don’t think my dad would have made it as far as he did if it weren’t for my brother, my mom and myself,” she said. “I know a lot of veterans aren’t fortunate enough to have that. If you don’t have someone to advocate for you, you could easily fall through the cracks.”

Easterday is particularly looking forward to spending time with the other Honor Roll families in Washington.

“You can really talk with other people who have been in the same situation. They understand. You don’t even have to say anything — you just click,” she said.

The Honor Roll program is an extension of Easterday’s lifelong efforts to honor her late husband’s service and to make him feel proud.

“It was so bad when they came home because of all the demonstrations. Most of them were drafted, they had

no choice, and they had to go into a situation where they might not come home,” she said. “When he came home, he hid all his medals away. I was like, this is B.S. man, you fought for your country, we’re going to get them out and hang them on the wall.”

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

[Justice Department Will Not Challenge Benefits for Blue Water Navy Vets](#)

[READ THE STORY](#)

The decision by U.S. Solicitor General Noel Francisco ends months of uncertainty over whether the Trump administration would appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Trump administration’s Justice Department informed the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday that it will not challenge a landmark lower court ruling that “blue water” Navy veterans who served during the Vietnam War are covered by the federal Agent Orange Act.



The decision by U.S. Solicitor General Noel Francisco ended months of uncertainty for tens of thousands of former service members or their survivors who may now be eligible for benefits stemming from exposure to Agent Orange. The benefits have been estimated to cost the Department of Veterans Affairs more than \$1 billion over 10 years.

“I am thrilled that the solicitor general has determined not to seek certiorari review,” said Mel Bostwick, a partner at Orrick Henderson & Sutcliffe who represented veteran Alfred Procopio pro bono. “While I have every confidence that the Supreme Court would have upheld the Federal Circuit’s sound decision, the choice by the solicitor and by Secretary [Robert] Wilkie to enforce the court’s ruling now means that deserving Vietnam veterans will not have to endure further delay or uncertainty before obtaining the benefits that they were promised decades ago.”

In January, the so-called “blue water” Navy veterans, who served on ships within the 12-mile territorial sea of the Republic of Vietnam, secured a long-sought victory in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. The full



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court, ruling 9-2, said the Agent Orange Act of 1991 includes those veterans.

Until the ruling by the full Federal Circuit, those veterans had been denied the presumption of Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War. The Justice Department, supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs' interpretation, had argued that the Agent Orange Act covered only those veterans who served on the ground or inland waterways of Vietnam.

## COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

*Submitted by Lou Storms*

No report.

## Scheduled Meetings:

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

### 2019

23<sup>rd</sup> June

29<sup>th</sup> July

25<sup>th</sup> August

22<sup>nd</sup> September

27<sup>th</sup> October

24<sup>th</sup> November

**December – TBD – Christmas Party**

## Calendar of Events:

Visit [www.VVA1002.org](http://www.VVA1002.org) for information on upcoming events.

### 50/50 Scholarship Can Shake Schedule for 2019

6/29 Walmart - Franklin 9-2

7/6 Jumbo Land – Branchville 4-?

7/12, 7/13 and 7/14 DAR - Wantage 9-2

7/20 Shop Rite – Newton 9-2

8/3 Walmart – Newton 9-2

8/2 thru 8/11 Sussex County Fair (If we can get enough coverage)

8/17 Shop Rite – Newton 9-2

8/24 Jumbo Land – Branchville 4-?

9/7 Mac & Lindys – Vernon 9-2

9/21 Jumbo Land – Branchville 4-?

10/5 Mac & Lindys – Vernon 9-2

10/19 Walmart – Franklin 9-2

Any and all questions please direct them to the can shake coordinator, **Teri Deaver**.

## NEW MEMBERS:

### “WELCOME HOME”

Michael Flaherty

Guy Latimer

Robert Reffelt

Arthur Vander Sluis

Raymond Tarino

Carl Thompson

Kathleen Weakland

## 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 Birthday United States Army June 14, 1775  
 "This We'll Defend"

Happy July Anniversaries:  
 Rich & JoAnn Strader  
 Jim & Georgette Fox

Happy June Birthday's:  
 John Harrigan  
 Jerry Magnus  
 George Knorr  
 Jim Cahill

## 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 July newsletter to me by Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup> by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

Linda Skellenger  
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 Sussex, N.J. 07461