



The Sentinel

Vol. 5 No. 3

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley
P.O. box 463, Vernon, NJ 07462 - 973-271-2413
Website: www.VVA1002.org

March 2018

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

It was a great day for the Irish in Newton. The weather could not have been more beautiful and I would like to Thank the 12 Chapter Members who attended the St Patrick's Day Parade in Newton on Saturday March 17th. Once again our Chapter received the greatest amount of applause and shouts of Thank you from the spectators. Once again Thanks to all who attended to make this happen.

Teri Deaver has stepped up to take over the Raffle for our Scholarships and will let us know when our license is approved so we can start selling the raffle tickets. The essays are slowly coming in and are being given to Rich to read.

As of now we have a Chapter can shake lined up for May 26th at Mac & Lindys in Vernon, but nothing scheduled after that.

In case you forgot when you file your State Income tax you have a \$3,000.00 deduction you can claim starting this year.

That's it for now see you at the meeting

John

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

No report.

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

Strengthen VA Healthcare System, Don't Let 'Privatization' Decimate It

VVA/March 6, 2018. "There are those who insist the VA healthcare system is irredeemably broken and that privatization is the only answer to improving health care for veterans," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America, to a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on March 6.

"This is far from the truth. VA's integrated, managed healthcare system needs to be strengthened, not decimated," said Rowan.

"What is absent is the organizational capacity to treat our nation's veterans in public and private hospitals across the country." Rowan said that the cause of the scandal at the Phoenix VA Medical Center leading to the enactment in 2014 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act was not incompetence or venality, rather it was a serious shortage of clinicians needed to meet a steadily increasing demand for health care.

Privatization would turn the Veterans Health Administration into a cash cow, giving veterans eligible for VA healthcare the choice to seek their medical treatment anywhere, with a clinician of their choosing." Citing the staggering cost estimates of varying levels of privatizing the VA's healthcare system (Commission on Care Final Report), Rowan cautioned, "there are those who would destroy VA healthcare for their own short-

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

term profit. Those who knock the ‘failed’ VA are seemingly oblivious to the reform efforts advocated for and instituted by VA Secretary David Shulkin.”

Private-sector medical providers in New York unprepared to treat veterans

From Stars & Stripes, 3/1/18.

Most civilian medical providers in New York state are ill-equipped to treat veterans, according to a new Rand Corp. study that found many aren’t well-versed in health issues specific to that population.

The study lends context to an ongoing debate in Congress about how aggressively veterans’ medical care should be outsourced to the private sector.

Two-thirds of medical providers who participated in the study were unfamiliar with military culture, researchers said.

Less than half of the medical providers (43 percent) said they regularly screen for conditions common among veterans, such as depressive disorders, substance abuse, respiratory and neurological conditions, chronic pain and traumatic brain injury.

Only 2.3 percent met all seven criteria that researchers looked for when deciding whether private-sector providers were equipped to treat veterans.

Besides military knowledge and the ability to screen for – and treat -- conditions common to veterans, researchers checked whether providers had the capacity to treat new patients and if they screened patients for military experience. They also reviewed whether facilities used clinical-practice guidelines and could accommodate patients with disabilities.

“These findings reveal significant gaps and variations in the readiness of community-based health care providers to provide high-quality care to veterans,” Terri Tanielian, the study’s lead author, said in a statement. “It appears that more work needs to be done to prepare the civilian health care workforce to care for the unique needs of veterans.”

Rand researchers conducted their study because of the push to get more veterans into the private sector.

Don’t Blame Veterans and the Disabled for Raising Park Entrance Fees

In reaction to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s plan to raise the entrance fees for national parks, saying the National Park Service must charge more because too many people, including veterans and the disabled, get in for free, VVA National President John Rowan issued the following statement:

“Secretary Zinke’s rationale to steeply increase the entrance fees for others because disabled veterans and active-duty military get in for free, is a small-minded and mean-spirited jab that pits some citizens against others. I

believe that we, as a nation, are more inclusive and compassionate than this. “By discounting fees, we honor our veterans and our seniors and bring a bit of inexpensive enjoyment to our disabled citizens. Does Mr. Zinke really think that citizens who pay \$25 or \$30 per carload to enjoy some of our most popular national parks are going to pay twice as much? Does he really believe that they will buy his ill-conceived argument that because veterans get in for free the rates must be doubled for everyone else? “Secretary Zinke’s flawed plan needs to be discarded and forgotten.”

VA Launches Telehealth Program to Treat Rural Veterans With PTSD

The Department of Veterans Affairs says the Telemedicine Outreach for PTSD (TOP) pilot program will connect veterans in rural areas with psychologists and psychiatrists for online treatment.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is launching a nationwide telehealth program to help rural veterans dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The pilot program, coordinated by the VA’s Office of Rural Health and its Quality Enhancement Research Initiative, will connect 12 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) across the nation with veterans in need of treatment for PTSD. Care managers will first contact veterans by phone, then set up therapy sessions with available psychologists and psychiatrists through an interactive video platform.

“Long travel distances to urban areas can be a major barrier to care for rural Veterans,” Dr. John Fortney, a research health scientist with the VA Puget Sound Health System and the pilot program’s coordinator, said in a press release. “In a prior trial, we were able to use telehealth technologies successfully to engage Veterans in evidence-based, trauma-focused therapy without their having to travel to a distant VA medical center.”

The Telemedicine Outreach for PTSD (TOP) program, which has already enrolled 500 veterans living in rural locations, is the latest effort by VA Secretary David Shulkin to expand and improve treatment for veterans through telemedicine and telehealth. “Our researchers have worked diligently in recent years to establish the safety and efficacy of PTSD psychotherapy delivered remotely, ensuring Veterans will get the same quality of PTSD care as if they were in a doctor’s office at a VA medical center,” Shulkin said in the press release.

According to the VA, some 702,000 veterans, or 12 percent of the country’s veteran population, used telehealth or telemedicine in FY 2016, accounting for 2.17 million telehealth episodes. Of that group, 45 percent were living in rural communities.



The Sentinel

Vol. 5 No. 3

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

March 2018

Website: www.VVA1002.org

Those encounters led to a 31 percent decrease in hospitalizations for veterans over the previous year, as well as a 39 percent reduction in acute psychiatric VA bed days, Shulkin pointed out in his order. “What we’re really doing is, we’re removing regulations that have prevented us from doing this,” he said when unveiling the program last year. “We’re removing geography as a barrier so that we can speed up access to Veterans and really honor our commitment to them.”

VA officials expect to have results from the TOP program in two years, at which time they’ll make plans to expand the program further.

The VA Will Eliminate Hepatitis C In Veterans By Year-End

Only a few years ago, stories appeared in the media about how tens of thousands of U.S. veterans were infected with hepatitis C and that the government couldn’t afford to treat them. Typical was a CBS News report headlined “VA can’t afford drug for veterans suffering from hepatitis C”. The drug in question was Gilead’s Sovaldi, a once-a-day pill that remarkably can cure hepatitis C over a 12 week regimen. The concerns being raised by the press was that Sovaldi cost \$1,000/pill – a cost that could cripple the VA’s budget if all of our veterans were to be treated.

The issue was especially timely. These veterans, many of whom contracted the disease during their service in the Vietnam War as a result of battlefield injuries requiring blood transfusions, were now suffering from the consequences of this largely silent menace. They were now experiencing liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Without Sovaldi, the sicker of these patients were facing certain death.

Fast forward to last Friday. At the 24th Annual Wharton Health Care Business Conference, Dr. David J. Shulkin, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, announced that the VA was on track to eliminate hepatitis C infections in the next 12 months for those who are willing and able to be treated. In October 2014, the VA had over 146,000 veterans afflicted with hepatitis C. By next October, this number will be only 20,000.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

Women served in the United States Military as early as the Revolutionary War. Since then, women of all ages, ranks, and levels of authority have entered every branch of service, made significant contributions, and suffered the same sacrifices as men. As a woman with military service, you may qualify for a wide range of benefits offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VA Benefits

Women Veterans may be eligible for a wide-variety of benefits available to all U.S. military Veterans. VA benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial. See the Veterans page for an overview of the benefits available to all Veterans.

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/index.asp>

The following sections provide information about VA benefits and programs specifically for Women Veterans.

VA Benefits and Programs for Women Veterans

Center for Women Veterans

VA’s Center for Women Veterans monitors and coordinates VA’s administration of benefit services and programs for women Veterans. The Center advocates for a cultural transformation that recognizes the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military, and also raises awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.

Learn more about the Center for Women Veterans.

<https://www.va.gov/womenvet>

Women Veteran Coordinators

There are Women Veteran Coordinator (WVCs) located in every regional office who function as the primary contact for women Veterans. WVCs provide specific information and comprehensive assistance to women Veterans, their dependents, and beneficiaries concerning VA benefits and related non-VA personal trauma claims.

VA Health Care for Women Veterans

At each VA medical center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) is designated to advise and advocate for women Veterans. The WVPM can help coordinate all the services you may need, from primary care to specialized care for chronic conditions or reproductive health. Woman Veterans who are interested in receiving care at VA should contact the nearest VA Medical Center and ask for the WVPM.

Learn more about the VA Health Care for Women Veterans.

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/healthcare.asp>

VA Benefits for Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma

VA has special services available to help women who experienced military sexual trauma (MST), including free, confidential counseling and treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to MST. You do not need to have a service-connected disability or injury and may be able to receive this benefit even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incidents when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred in order to receive MST services.

Every VA facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person is your advocate and can help you find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, and community resources.

Learn more about MST and other violence and abuse from the National Center for PTSD:

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov> Watch an overview webinar, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjXw8OyRTN8> on MST and learn about the benefits available to Servicemembers and Veterans.

How to Apply

The specific VA benefit or program web page will provide tailored information about how to apply for a particular benefit or program. Generally, Servicemembers, Veterans, and families can apply for VA benefits using one of the methods below.

- Apply online using eBenefits, **OR**
- Work with an accredited representative or agent, **OR**
- Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you. You can find your regional office on our Facility Locator page.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

Funeral Announcement For Soldier Captured During Korean War (Bryant, L.)

February 28, 2018 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently accounted-for from the Korean War, are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Pfc. Leroy W. Bryant, 22, of Autreyville, Georgia.

Funeral Announcement For Soldier Missing From The Korean War (Newman, L.)

February 23, 2018 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently accounted-for from the Korean War, are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Pfc. Lamar E. Newman, 19, of Griffin, Georgia.



Funeral Announcement For Marine Killed During World War II (Harrison, A.)

February 23, 2018 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently accounted-for from World War II, are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Arnold J. Harrison, 19, of Detroit, Michigan.





The Sentinel

Vol. 5 No. 3

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley
Website: www.VVA1002.org

March 2018

Funeral Announcement For Soldier Captured During The Korean War (Bensinger, A.)

February 08, 2018 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently identified after being captured and killed during the Korean War, are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alfred G. Bensinger, Jr.

Funeral Announcement For USS Oklahoma Sailor Killed During World War II (Ogle, C.)

February 05, 2018 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently accounted for from World War II are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Navy Fireman 1st Class Charles R. Ogle, 20, of Mountain View, Missouri.

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

See attached.

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**.

2018

- 25th March
- 22nd April
- 27th May
- 24th June
- 22nd July
- 26th August
- 23rd September
- 28th October
- 25th November
- 1st December – Christmas Party (TBD)

Calendar of Events:

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

May 26th - Chapter can shake at Mac & Lindys in Vernon

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

No report.

PASSINGS:

No report.

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy Anniversary:
Don Schultz

Happy Birthday:

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 April newsletter to me by Sunday, April 15th by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

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



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA,
INC.
NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL
559 W. 9th Avenue
Roselle, NJ 07203**



**TOWN HALL MEETING
SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2018**

**CONDUCTED BY: VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, NEW JERSEY STATE
COUNCIL,**

**HOSTED BY: VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, CAMDEN COUNTY
CHAPTER 1068**

**LOCATION: ROWAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY DOCTORS PAVILION
42 EAST LAUREL ROAD, SUITE 1300
STRATFORD, NJ 08083**

****TIME: 2:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M.****

**CONTACT: MICHAEL ECKSTEIN, CHAIR AGENT ORANGE/DIOXIN CMTE.
VVA NJ STATE COUNCIL & VVA CHAPTER 327
CELL (201) 874-1664, EMAIL - MRE1065@GMAIL.COM**

**LOCAL CONTACTS: ED DAVIS, PAST PRESIDENT, VVA CHAPTER 1068 CELL (609)
605-3652**

**FRANK HARTMAN, CHAIR, AGENT ORANGE/DIOXIN COMMITTEE, VVA CHAPTER
1068**

CELL (609) 472-0850, EMAIL-VVA CHAPTER.1068@YAHOO.COM

**ARE YOU A VETERAN EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER TOXIC
SUBSTANCES DURING & AFTER THE VIETNAM WAR?**

ARE YOU A VETERAN OF THE GULF WARS?

ARE YOU A VETERAN OF THE WAR IN IRAQ?

ARE YOU A VETERAN OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN?

**IF YOU SERVED IN THE MILITARY DURING THOSE TIMES THEN YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY MIGHT BE AT RISK OF ILLNESSES AND OF BIRTH DEFECTS
IN YOUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN AND IN FUTURE GENERATIONS
NOT YET BORN**

THE STATE SERVICE OFFICER, MARGARET WOJCIECHOWICZ WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE