



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 11

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

November 2017

Website: www.VVA1002.org

President: John Harrigan

1st Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2nd Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

FROM THE MINEFIELD:

Submitted by John Harrigan

November was a busy month for the Chapter with The Veterans Parade at the Fairgrounds on the 5th, and then on Thursday the 9th about 20 Chapter members went to the St Moritz in Sparta for a free Veterans Day meal. There was a Breakfast at the DAR on Veterans Day which was attended by Chapter Members and their wives and after that was the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Veterans Cemetery and the placing of Flags on the graves by Family members, Cub Scouts and some of the people in attendance. Fr McHugh from Pope John attended and gave the blessing and we also dedicated the walkway and new wall around the Flag Pole. It was also the Day all Veterans went out and had a free meal at different restaurants. On Sunday Chapter Members attended the Veterans Mass here at St Francis De Sales and afterwards was treated to a nice meal by Melory Weber and the Religious Ed High School Kids. On that note I would like to thank Fr Brian and the Staff here at St Francis for all they do for us throughout the year. I hope that next year we can have a large showing for the Veterans Mass to show our Appreciation for everything they give us here so keep that in mind for next years' Mass.

This will be our last newsletter this year as we will not have a meeting in December due to the Christmas Holiday but will resume again in January with our first meeting of the New Year on Sunday January 28th at 2pm. (Weather Permitting) remember if it is snowing or chance of snow we will cancel.

We will still be doing our Thursday Veterans helping Veterans in the coming year so if you know anyone who needs help tell them we are here for them.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support in making Chapter 1002 something we can all be proud of.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and may we all be here this time next year. See you at the meeting.

JOHN

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving Day. It was a good way to relax after a busy November with Veterans Day, the service at the cemetery on Saturday, and the Veterans Mass on Sunday, November 12. The cemetery and the mass were well attended and the food was great that was supplied by the Confirmation class after the Mass.

We still have a busy lineup to look forward to with our monthly meeting Sunday November 26. This is followed by the annual Christmas Party on Saturday, December 2 at 14:00 (2P.M.). Also, let's not forget Wreaths Across America on Saturday, December 16 at the cemetery.

Don't forget there won't be a monthly meeting in December! This gives the officers and others who assist at the meetings to have time off and for everyone to spend time with their families this holiday season. Our next scheduled meeting will be Sunday, January 28.

Everyone have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John E. Brady

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

SERVICE OFFICER:

Submitted by Skip Kays

If you want any further information, or have any suggestions you can contact me at 973 459-9392 or at skays1@embarqmail.com

Vietnamvetradio.com

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

Toronto Classical Radio <http://classicalfm.ca/>

If you enjoy classical music, and even if you don't, coming up to Christmastime, Toronto's classical station plays a pleasant mix of music. It is sort of classical light, the "hits" and movie music, but also a good playlist. The DJ's are kind of chatty like on AM/FM stations and the news and traffic are for Canada, but it is worth a listen.

Am I just getting old or what ?

When I was in the Navy the uniforms hadn't changed much in decades, Blues and Whites - dress and undress, dungaree shirts & pants for work uniforms, white hats, watch caps and blue ball cap, working jacket and pea coat. While I was in some horrible "improvements" came in which I fortunately didn't have to "move up" to. Pull over work shirts made of polyester and the like, hard to put on and take off, didn't breath so the wearer was always hot.

Lately, and I just saw that the Navy has made some new "upgrades" to the previous ones that have me scratching my head with a "WTF?" They have fatigue type uniforms that are of course in camouflage, and some form of uniform that makes them look like Marine enlisted men.

One must wonder why a Navy sailor needs camouflage uniforms, especially the blue ones they phased in a few years ago, which are apparently being phased out, called blue beanies by sailors. The only purpose seemed to me to make a sailor who fell overboard blend right in with the ocean.

I never saw anyone in camo when I was in the service, granted I was in the Navy, but even in Vietnam when we were on shore, I saw green fatigues, and the like, but no camo. On shore bases close to Vietnam and far away from CONUS I never saw it either. When we worked with the Seals, they were dressed in a nondescript manner, and my guess is when in their normal postings they didn't wear camo either.

Over the years in reading extensively about VN, the political, historical and day to day ops of the members of the various services, apparently camo was not the norm,

and it was only in certain areas of the ground forces and persons in Saigon and places like that who wanted to look tough that it was found.

Everyone wears some form of camo now, even if they don't hunt/ fish (blending into the landscape so not to spook the trout?). It's a challenge to go to buy a pair of winter gloves without having to bypass all the woodland camo choices.

As a kid and watching the various war movies that came along, there were many times when either my father or one of his friends/relatives who served in WWII would shake their head and say how a lot of the stuff in the movies was not true" or anything like reality. (he didn't swear in front of us kids then). As time passed and we got older we could pick a lot of the Hollywood BS out also. All of us have seen way too many movies/TV and so on where the view of the military and the way it works is either "modified" to fit the prevailing social views, or just plain BS. That's life.

I can only guess that as the years moved on, and popular culture affected the civilians who would make up the standing military and end up in charge, made it so that everyone had to wear camo to look tough, cool and "military." So now we have Navy sailors looking like Army or Marine soldiers and the loss of traditional and historical appearances of those serving.

Along with this I see that the services are approving "sex reassignment" surgery for serving personnel who feel that they should be the other sex, and other instances of the like that are becoming all too common in civilian life. The last administration got rid of a lot of personnel that believed their duty was to the service and the country, and not just to the current political leadership. While standards have been dropping for a long time (at least in the eyes of us oldsters), even before the last administration, I can't help but wonder if that was a tipping point.

I will leave it up to those who were in the other services to check if that is happening there also.

Am I really getting old or what ?

Once, on shore leave in the Philippines, some of my shipmates and I were being entertained at one of the local's homes, and we met a sailor from some other ship who had gone AWOL and was hanging out on the beach at this house. I just couldn't understand how someone could be that stupid because it was just a matter of time till he was caught, and he knew it. He probably faced Captain's Mast, possibly time in the brig, extra duty and the usual punishments.

These days we have military personnel flagrantly violating their duties and putting others at risk, and sometimes causing injuries or even deaths by their



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Vol. 4 No. 11

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

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actions, and they “get off” compared to what would have happened years ago.

Bradley Manning, who just had to release classified documents because he was so upset, was court martialed and given a 35 year jail sentence. But then, after we paid to convert him to what passes for a female, in prison, had his sentence commuted by Obama.

Bowe Bergdahl, who deserted his post and for whom others were injured, and possibly killed in the search for him, is ransomed by Obama for multiple senior Taliban chiefs, an even swap as he saw it. He was court martialed and a military judge did not give him any jail time as he had already suffered enough in his captivity. This sentence took place in the current administration, and it is possible that the president’s comments may have affected the sentence, but even so, what used to be a potential death penalty offense (no one had been executed for desertion since Pvt. Eddie Slovik in 1945, and that the first since the Civil War), while tried as a serious offense, received a sentence that a thief might have received.

These behaviors are exceptions to that of the average soldier and sailor, but it makes one wonder as to the state of discipline and accepted behaviors in the service nowadays.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

Five myths about female veterans

Army Staff Sgt. Cantress R. Noel-Mabrey speaks during the 20th anniversary celebration for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial on Oct. 21 at Arlington National Cemetery. (Salwan Georges/The Washington Post)

Veterans Day is an occasion to recall the service of our troops. But women’s stories have often been absent from those recollections. Works of fiction and nonfiction, memoirs (such as Mary Jennings Hagar’s), documentaries (including “The Invisible War”) and dramas (such as “Blood Stripe”) have helped show this side of the armed forces. Still, myths about female veterans endure. Kayla

Williams, who wrote a memoir about serving as an Army linguist in Iraq, remembers an infantryman who was “sure that women troops would be flown by helicopter to shower every three days.” Here are some of the most persistent misconception



MYTH NO. 1

There aren’t that many female veterans.

The National Veterans Foundation reported this year that, because of stereotypes about veterans, perhaps developed from movies and television, “when most people think of ‘veterans,’ they think of men.” A 2014 report from Disabled American Veterans noted “the enduring perception that a woman who comes to VA for services is not a veteran herself, but a male veteran’s wife, mother, or daughter.”

Congress established a regular women’s component in all branches of the armed forces in 1948 but capped women’s participation at 2 percent of the total force. This kept the numbers of female veterans proportionally low until the cap was lifted incrementally, beginning in 1973, to enable the creation of an all-volunteer force. Women now make up 20 percent of new recruits, 15 percent of the active-duty force and 18 percent of the reserve and National Guard. Almost 280,000 women have served in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. More than 2 million veterans — about 9 percent of the total veteran population of 21 million — are women.

MYTH NO. 2

American women began serving in combat recently.

Many hold the misperception that “official military policy has long kept female service members away from the front lines,” as a History Channel essay put it. And

it's true that two provisions in the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 prohibited Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps women from combat Air Force sorties and naval vessels (they were already barred from direct ground combat). In 1998, an ambiguous Defense Department rule closed noncombat positions to women if the risk of exposure to direct fire, combat or capture equaled or exceeded that experienced by combat units in the same theater of operations.

But women have fought for this country as long as it has existed. In April 1775, a 35-year-old mother of six named Prudence Cummings Wright formed a women's militia in Pepperell, Mass. Dressed in men's clothing and armed, the women captured a suspected British courier at the bridge over the Nashua River and delivered him and his documents to the rebellion. At the Battle of Fort Washington in 1776, Margaret Corbin took over her husband's gun when he was killed. Disabled by grapeshot that nearly severed her arm, she was placed in the Continental Army's Invalid Regiment at West Point, drew a lifetime military pension and was reinterred at West Point with full military honors in 1926. In 1778, a Creole woman named Sally St. Clare fought disguised as a man and became the first woman to die in action in the service of America. And historians estimate that at least 200 women disguised themselves as men to fight on both sides in the Civil War.

Since the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901, American women have served overseas, under fire and at the front lines in every major U.S. military conflict.

MYTH NO. 3

The Pentagon integrated women as a social experiment.

In the 1990s, conservative activist Elaine Donnelly accused Rep. Patricia Schroeder and "her feminist friends at the Pentagon" of trying to "undermine readiness and morale for the sake of social engineering" by opening combat billets to women "to advance the career ambitions of a few." This idea had staying power: In 2013, retired Army Gen. Jerry Boykin repeated a version of it to CNN. It recurs almost daily in the comments on military-related news sites, blogs and social-media pages.

In fact, the activism of military women is what drove the expansion of their roles. Doctor Mary Edwards Walker, awarded the Medal of Honor in 1865 for her work as a military surgeon and spy, wrote in 1859 that women should serve as soldiers. Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers (R-Mass.), who served in the Red Cross in Europe during World War I, and Rep. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine), who later joined the Air Force, crafted the 1948 legislation establishing permanent women's components in the armed forces. Hundreds of women in uniform

assigned to personnel commands lobbied quietly for incrementally greater opportunities. Navy electrician Yona Owens, Army helicopter pilot Mary Jennings Hegar and other military women even sued the U.S. government to open chances for women to serve legally on naval combatants and in direct ground combat.

MYTH NO. 4

Women are less able to meet the military's demands.

We've come a long way since 1979, when former Marine and future Navy secretary Jim Webb articulated this idea in a misogynistic (*reflecting or exhibiting hatred, dislike, mistrust, or mistreatment of women*) rant in *Washingtonian*. Still, in September 2015, the Marine Corps sought an exemption from then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's 2013 direction to integrate women fully into every branch of the armed forces; the Marines cited a study that claimed to have found mixed-gender units slower, less lethal and unable to evacuate casualties as rapidly as all-male units. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus rejected the Marine Corps request to exclude women from infantry billets.

The 1994 Defense Women's Health Research Program, a \$40 million initiative that funded research targeted at improving the health and performance of women in the armed forces, demonstrated more than a decade ago that women equal men in their ability to tolerate gravity forces, respond to stress and survive in extremes of heat and cold. A 2015 Army study found no reason to exclude women from any military occupational specialty as long as they measured up to newly established physical standards for their jobs. A few women have already met the physical, academic and leadership standards for the Army's demanding Ranger School and the Marine Corps Infantry Officer Course.

MYTH NO. 5

The typical homeless veteran is a man.

In a 2014 study by the veterans advocacy group Got Your 6, almost half of the adult Americans who were shown a photo of a man who appeared to be homeless identified him as a veteran. The stereotype persists: a white man, often a Vietnam-era veteran, panhandling with a cardboard sign at an intersection and sleeping under a highway overpass or on the streets. He has long-term mental health issues and/or substance use disorders. Veterans advocate Lily Casura found in a nationwide survey of thousands of female veterans that even these veterans, 40 percent of whom had themselves experienced homelessness, repeated such details when asked to describe a homeless veteran.

In fact, the Department of Veterans Affairs has found that female veterans — including those with children — are the fastest-growing share of homeless veterans. Based



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 11

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

November 2017

Website: www.VVA1002.org

on VA estimates, between 20,000 and 40,000 female veterans are homeless. But most of these women, especially those with kids or histories of trauma, don't sleep on the streets or find shelter placements. They prefer to couch-surf with friends and relatives. Casura discovered in her survey that female veterans are two to four times as likely as their civilian counterparts to experience homelessness.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

MIA-POW- November 2017-Update

Funeral Announcement Soldier Captured During The Korean War (Mueller, G.) November 09, 2017 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, recently accounted-for from the Korean War, was returned to his family and buried with full military honors. Army Sgt. Gerald J. Mueller, 20, of Saint Paul, Minnesota, buried November 8.



Funeral Announcement For Soldier Missing From Korean War (Baer, D.) November 08, 2017 — 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 Cpl. Donald L. Baer, 20, of Racine, Wisconsin, will be buried November 11.



Funeral Announcement For Soldier Killed During World War II (Counter, P.)

November 08, 2017 — 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. Army Technician Fourth Grade Pete M. Counter, 24, of Detroit, will be buried November 11.



Funeral Announcement For Soldier Killed During World War II (Sowell, R.)

November 08, 2017 — 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. Army Sgt. Richard G. Sowell, 21, of West Palm Beach, Florida, will be buried November 10.



Funeral Announcement For USS Oklahoma Sailor Killed During World War (Dusset, C.) November 08, 2017 — The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman from World War II have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Navy Steward's Mate 1st Class Cyril I. Dusset, 21, of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Funeral Announcement For Marine Killed During World War II (Ball, W.)

November 14, 2017 — 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 Sgt. William D. Ball, Jr., 21, of Hollywood, California.



Funeral Announcement For Airman Missing From World War II (Spence, H.) November 13, 2017 — 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. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Homer A. Spence, 22, of Manteca, California.

Funeral Announcement For Marine Killed During World War II (Masoni, F.)

November 09, 2017 — 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 Assistant Cook Frank L. Masoni, 21, of Gilroy, California.



Funeral Announcement For USS Oklahoma Marine Killed During World War II (Keaton, V.)

November 09, 2017 — 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 Pvt. Vernon P. Keaton, 18, of Lubbock, Texas, will be buried November 16.

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

November 09, 2017 — 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 Cpl. Anthony G. Guerriero, 22, of Boston, will be buried November 14.



AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

Reliving Agent Orange

VA Delays Key Agent Orange Decisions

Since March 2016, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has been weighing whether to expand Agent Orange benefits to Vietnam vets with bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, as well as other ailments. It keeps missing its own deadlines to act.

by [Charles Ornstein](#)

Nov. 2, 6:20 p.m. EDT



Reliving Agent Orange

ProPublica and The Virginian-Pilot are exploring the effects of the chemical mixture Agent Orange on Vietnam veterans and their families, as well as their fight for benefits.

Days after he was sworn in as Veterans Affairs secretary this year, Dr. David Shulkin held a [digital town hall meeting](#) to take veterans' questions.

A veteran named Jack posed a question of paramount importance to many Vietnam veterans: Would the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs expand the list of diseases that are presumed to be linked to Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide used to kill forests during the Vietnam War?

"We're getting very close to being able to give you a final answer on that," Shulkin said on Feb. 24, adding that he was weeks away from being presented with the data he



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 11

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

November 2017

Website: www.VVA1002.org

needed to make a decision. “I’m anxious to get it so that we can begin to get answers to people like Jack, because it’s been too long that they’ve been waiting to get those answers.”

Yet more than eight months later — and after his department promised a decision by Nov. 1 — the VA essentially punted, issuing a statement late Wednesday saying it would “further explore” the issue and pushing its decision to some undisclosed point in the future.

Help Us Investigate the Impact of Agent Orange

We’re interested in hearing from veterans and family members for our ongoing investigation into the effects of Agent Orange on veterans and their children. [Share your story.](#)

The VA said the department would now work with others in the Trump administration to conduct a legal and regulatory review of conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.

Many veterans said they thought that was exactly the review that has been ongoing since March 2016, when the National Academy of Medicine, then known as the Institute of Medicine, [said there is now evidence](#) to suggest that Agent Orange exposure may be linked to bladder cancer and hypothyroidism. The National Academy also confirmed, as previous experts have said, that there is some evidence of an association with hypertension, stroke and various neurological ailments similar to Parkinson’s Disease.

In the past, the VA has found enough evidence to link [14 health conditions](#), including various cancers, to Agent Orange, which the U.S. military sprayed by the millions of gallons in Vietnam.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 had required that the VA secretary take action on National Academy recommendations within 60 days of receiving a report; the law expired in 2015.

“Son of a gun,” said Dick Pirozzolo, 73, when he was informed of the VA’s decision to delay. Pirozzolo served as an information officer in the Air Force in Vietnam and has had bladder cancer and a thyroid condition called Graves’ disease. “That sucks.”



Dick Pirozzolo on the banks of the Saigon River during a day off (Courtesy of Dick Pirozzolo)

Pirozzolo said he applied for benefits based on his bladder cancer — and was denied. He is in the process of seeking benefits for his thyroid. “It’s frustrating,” he said. “The politicians all talk a good game about the VA, but then when it comes down to making a decision, they drag their heels.”

Carla Dean’s husband, James T. Dean Jr., died of bladder cancer last year at age 72, six days after his birthday. His application and appeals for VA benefits have been denied. Dean said she feels “gobsmacked” by the VA’s actions this week, especially because her husband died feeling relieved that he and his wife had helped persuade the National Academy of the link between his disease and Agent Orange exposure.

“My husband gave 11 1/2 years of his life to the United States Army willingly, 19 months in Vietnam, heavy combat,” Dean said. “Never in a million years did he dream basically that his government betrayed him.”

ProPublica and The Virginian-Pilot have [profiled the efforts of vets with bladder cancer](#) to secure benefits.



James T. Dean Jr., who served in Vietnam as a field artillery forward observer (Courtesy of Carla Dean)

Since the National Academy of Medicine issued its report last year, saying there was some evidence to link Agent Orange exposure to bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, the VA has set and then missed numerous deadlines for action.

First, in March 2016, former VA Secretary Robert McDonald formed a working group of scientists and experts to evaluate the National Academy report and make recommendations. A VA official said the department hoped to [make decisions](#) by August of that year. None were made.

Then, that November, the VA said its working group was “nearing completion” of its work and preparing a draft response and action plan, which would be given to a more-senior task force in early December 2016. From there it would be forwarded to the VA secretary for review. But because of the changeover in presidential administrations, “the deadline for proposing new rules for potential new presumptions (of service connection) has passed and this will become work for the new administration to take to completion.”

The Senate Committee of Veterans Affairs inquired about the status of the review in February and was told that recommendations had been forwarded to the secretary. The panel inquired again in June and was told that the decision was still with the secretary.

More recently, the VA had been pledging action by this week, specifically Wednesday.

“Because of the importance of this issue, VA has followed a deliberate, established process to review the National Academy of Medicine’s report carefully and to ensure a thoughtful consideration of the issues it raises. The Secretary will announce a decision on or before November 1st,” agency spokesman Randal Noller wrote in an email last month.

The VA did not provide a new date by which it expects to act.

Asked why the VA did not meet its deadline, Noller responded Thursday: “Your premise is incorrect ... Yesterday’s [press release](#) announced his decision — he is considering possible new presumptive conditions that may qualify for disability compensation related to Agent Orange exposure.”

[Vietnam Vets Push VA to Link Bladder Cancer to Agent Orange](#)



The Department of Veterans Affairs is evaluating new research as it decides whether to extend benefits to exposed vets with the disease.

Numerous senators have been raising pressure on the administration to act. Five Democrats signed a [letter to Shulkin](#) in September. “The care owed to our servicemembers should not be delayed and denied any longer,” they wrote. “They fought for our country, were exposed to a toxic chemical while carrying out their daily duty, and in return, we are failing to provide medical care and disability compensation.”

Some veterans groups say they believe Shulkin has made up his mind but is working to get approval from other parts of the administration, namely the Office of Management and Budget, which has to sign off on new federal outlays, and perhaps the White House.

“We believe this is just absurd,” said Rick Weidman, the legislative director of Vietnam Veterans of America. “If you can afford the goddamn war, you can afford to take care of the warriors.”

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

We went on Tuesday the 14th to Lyons to bring dinner to the PTSD Inpatient Unit and the 3rd floor ladies unit. Myself, Bob Lewis, Carl Ohlson and John Fedynich served dinner to the vets. The food was great and was again supplied by Inserra's ShopRite of West Milford. We always have a good visit with the vets, and we always hope that we are able to help them in some way

On our visit in September, Carl and I spent quite some time speaking with one of the vets, staying a little later than usual. When we arrived he was very agitated and kept repeating that he didn't want to join the group for dinner. After speaking to him a bit, we convinced him to stay and when he finished his meal we sat with him for a long while. When we returned in November he was there to greet us. He told us that speaking with us made all the difference, and made him realize that he could get the help he needed if he just gave it a chance. We couldn't believe the change in just two months. I can't begin to tell you how it felt to know that we had played a small part in



The Sentinel

Vol. 4 No. 11

Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 1002 – Wallkill Valley

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this man's recovery. I think that just letting them know that we care and that they are not forgotten can help.

Bob and Carl have been with me for the past 3 years and John joined us this year, and I want to thank them for their steadfast commitment to this program.

Our next scheduled trip will be January 9th. Anyone wanting to join us please email me at stormy2@optonline.net or call me at 973-728-3859, two weeks prior.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

26th November

2nd December – Christmas Party

2018

28th January

25th February

25th March

22nd April

27th May

24th June

22nd July

26th August

23rd September

28th October

25th November

1st December – Christmas Party (?)

Calendar of Events:

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

2nd December – Christmas Party at St. Francis
De Sales at 2:00 pm

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

John Burger
Eugene Valos

PASSINGS:

No report.

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy Anniversary:

Kathy & Lenny Weakland (12/11)

Audrey & Jerry Magnus (12/24)

Happy Birthday:

MEMBERS CORNER:

Submitted by: Walt Hazleman

Income Tax Exemption for Veterans

New for Tax Year 2017. You are eligible for a \$3,000 exemption on your Income Tax return if you are a military veteran who was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States by the last day of the tax year. Your spouse (or civil union partner) is also eligible for an exemption if he/she is a veteran who was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances and you are filing a joint return. This exemption is in addition to any other exemptions you are entitled to claim and is available on both the resident and nonresident returns. You cannot claim this exemption for a domestic partner or for your dependents.

Providing Documentation You must provide a copy of Form DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, the first time you claim the exemption. **This form does not need to be provided each year.** The

United States National Archives and Records Administration can assist with obtaining a copy of your DD-214.

You can certify for the exemption by sending a copy of your DD-214 and Veteran Exemption Submission Form to the Division **before** you file, which may help process your return faster. To certify:

- Use our secure document upload feature to submit your DD-214 and Veteran Exemption Submission Form. Enter the notice code VET and select PO Box 440; or
- Mail a copy of your DD-214 and Veteran Exemption Submission Form to: The New Jersey Division of Taxation, Veteran Exemption, PO Box 440, Trenton, NJ 08646-0440; or
- Fax your DD-214 and Veteran Exemption Submission Form to 609-633-8427.

If you do not certify before you file for the exemption, you will need to submit a copy of your DD-214 when you file using:

- *A Paper Return.* Enclose a copy of your DD-214 with your return;
- *NJ Fill'nFile.* Upload your DD-214, along with all of your other documentation, into the repository;
- *Other Electronic Filing Methods.* If you file your return using NJ WebFile, third-party software (such as TurboTax), or you have a tax professional who electronically submits your return, you can send a copy of your DD-214 and Veteran Exemption Submission Form using one of the three certification methods listed above.

You may go to the following web site to access the form online to print out the form.

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/pdf/veteransexemptionform.pdf>

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 January newsletter to me by Sunday, January 21st (email skelle@ptd.net) or by snail-mail to:

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