



The Sentinel

Vol. 6 No. 1

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

January 2019

Website: www.VVA1002.org

President: John Harrigan

1st Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2nd Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

FROM THE MINEFIELD:

Submitted by John Harrigan

Last year was a very busy one for the Chapter and I'm pretty sure this one will be also. Our Christmas party was attended by 120 members and their family and of course Santa, Mrs. Clause and an Elf from the North Pole.

Chapter members and our Color Guard again participated in the Wreaths Across America at the Veterans Cemetery and would like to Thank our members for their continued support in attending events at the Cemetery.

By now you should all have received the invitation from the Sussex County St Patricks' Day committee explaining what is coming up with regards to the pre-Parade events. The Committee wanted to be sure that any of our Members were informed of these events so they can be the first to sign up for them. With the Mass, Irish Breakfast and the Luncheon I'm hoping you will be able to attend one if not all of these events.

When I received the call asking if the Chapter would like to be the Grand Marshall in this years' parade it was a totally unexpected. I accepted on the Chapters behalf and told them what an Honor it was for us to be picked.

The Parade is on Saturday March 16th and I need to know how many will be attending so they can set up the chairs at the reviewing stand for us to sit and watch the rest of the Parade after we march. If you have trouble walking please let me know as they will have cars for you to ride in and we need to know how many so there are enough cars.

I hope we can get a large turnout for the Parade and show everyone how Honored we are to have been chosen to be the Grand Marshall. We are being recognized for

our work helping Veterans, getting the Veterans Cemetery up and running and being wherever we are needed to show our support.

See you at the meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

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

In the News

A new change contained in the 2019 defense bill now allows 100 percent disabled veterans to travel Space-Available aboard military and military-contract flights within the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. territories. According to an article in Military.com, the disabled veterans must possess a Defense Department ID Card (DD Form 2765) in order to not only fly Space-A but to access military installations.

As of December of last year, the Blue Water Navy Bill Continued to be stalled in the Senate: In July, the House unanimously passed H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018. The purpose was to end the VA denying Vietnam, Korean DMZ, and Thailand veterans who suffer from life threatening health conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange care and

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!

benefits as those who can show “boots on the ground.”
No updates as of this time.

New review finds ‘sufficient’ evidence linking hypertension to Agent Orange exposure

By NIKKI WENTLING | STARS AND STRIPES
November 19, 2018

WASHINGTON — Researchers with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found for the first time that enough evidence exists to link hypertension to Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

The finding, announced Thursday, bolsters the case for veterans with hypertension to be granted easier access to Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, advocates argued. Before last week’s announcement, researchers had determined there was only “limited” or “suggestive” evidence hypertension could be caused by chemical herbicides used in Vietnam.

In addition to hypertension, researchers determined there’s sufficient evidence linking Agent Orange to monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, or MGUS, a condition in which an abnormal protein is in the blood that progress to other disorders, including some forms of blood cancer. A link between the condition and Vietnam War service hadn’t been considered previously.

Based on the new report, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars called on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to add hypertension and MGUS to the list of diseases presumed to be caused by Agent Orange. There are 14 diseases on the list, and veterans suffering from them are allowed quicker access to VA benefits.

Congress requires the National Academies of Sciences to review scientific literature about Agent Orange exposure every two years. The first report was published in 1994.

There have been previous attempts to get hypertension onto the list of presumptive diseases.

Following the 2016 report, when researchers recognized there was “suggestive” evidence linking hypertension to Agent Orange, the VA sent a recommendation to the White House that it be added. At the same time, the agency recommended adding three other diseases: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson’s-like tremors.

The recommendation is still sitting in the Office of Management and Budget. Members of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs were told in June that OMB was waiting on the results of two studies before making a decision. One of the studies isn’t expected to be complete until 2020.

Call my cynical, but I have serious doubts that a commonly occurring condition well before Vietnam will be attributed to Agent Orange exposure. It really would break the bank.

Chinese companies have their eyes on what used to be the US Navy's biggest base in the Pacific

Subic Bay, PI, aka “Pubic Bay” and other colorful nicknames for generations of sailors is in the news.

Two Chinese firms are interested in the Philippines' largest shipyard, once the US's largest naval base in the Pacific, raising new alarm about Chinese expansion.

The firm that runs the shipyard, Hanjin Philippines, a local unit of a South Korean firm, has declared bankruptcy, defaulting on \$412 million in loans. It also owes \$900 million to South Korean creditors. The firm asked the Philippine government for help to find someone to take over the business, and Manila wants a new investor to safeguard thousands of jobs.

Two Chinese firms, one of which is state-owned, have contacted the Philippines about the facility. A Chinese takeover would give it a commercial presence in what was once Naval Base Subic Bay, the US's largest naval facility in the Pacific until it departed in 1992.

This mirrors the Chinese new attempts to “take over” Long Beach, Ca. harbor by one of their state owned companies. Every time something like this surfaces I remember the statement attributed to Lenin that “The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them.”

It may not be a done deal yet, but the Chicoms continually try and put their their thumbs in everyone’s pie.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

Helping Veterans with PTSD through partnerships and innovation

Posted on Friday, November 30, 2018 10:02 am

This Veterans Month we honor America’s Veterans for their bravery in war, their patriotism, and their willingness to serve our nation and protect our freedom. As Veterans Month draws to a close, we are reminded that there is no greater honor than to care for our nation’s Veterans. To serve those who serve.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to ensuring that our Veterans get the support they need to thrive when they return from their service, and that includes support for their physical and mental health and beyond. I know that this is work we at VA cannot do alone. Providing the best care for our Veterans and their families depends on strong networks of collaborative relationships that bring the best programs to the fore.



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I am proud of the VA's long history of innovation: the first successful liver transplant, development of medicine to reverse and cure Hepatitis-C, the first coronary artery bypass, the invention of the nicotine patch and the use of bar-code technology to track medications, to name a few.

Now we are leading the way in using innovative public-private partnerships to expand evidence-based services that improve quality of life for our Veterans, including and especially those with service-connected disabilities like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Veterans with PTSD continue to experience negative impacts that permeate throughout their lives. Increasingly we are finding that the work required to treat PTSD effectively extends beyond the hospital walls. Which is why we are pursuing opportunities to treat the whole person and not just the symptoms of PTSD.

This doesn't just mean more funding for additional programs, it means using the funding we have more wisely. It means exploring innovative ways to expand evidence-based programs with a track record of results.

Consider a project we just launched with partners across the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The Veterans Coordinated Approach to Recovery and Employment (Veterans CARE) Pay for Success project will expand an individualized approach to supportive employment for Veterans with PTSD, with a \$5 million investment from private investors.

Three key innovations underlie the project:

First, Veterans CARE will provide Veterans from recent tours of duty with the support they need to succeed. For the up to 1 million Veterans from the Gulf War era struggling with PTSD, finding and maintaining employment can present a seemingly insurmountable challenge. Yet, evidence shows that when we pair individualized employment support with clinical care, we can help Veterans overcome this obstacle, improving not only their lives but those of their families and communities, as well.

Second, Veterans CARE leverages private capital to improve outcomes for our Veterans, transferring the risk of innovating from the public to the private sector.

Through a model called Pay for Success, impact investors provided the upfront capital to fund the program. Specialists from our own research center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama are helping to implement Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) programs at our VA medical centers in New York, Boston and Western Massachusetts. As positive outcomes – including increased employment and improved earnings and job satisfaction- are achieved for our Veterans –then and only then, will government partners repay the project investors.

The Pay for Success model is being used across the United States and globally to address challenges around health, education, housing, criminal justice and more. Veterans CARE is the first Pay for Success project globally to serve Veterans.

Through the Veterans CARE project, we are building the evidence base to expand a promising national model for care. Veterans CARE is just one example of how we are employing 21st century technologies and principles. At VA, we are committed to innovating and to building public-private partnerships that improve the standard of care for all our Veterans, to help them live full and productive lives. Our Veterans deserve nothing less.

'Lend me your ears': Navy Veteran receives new prosthetic

Posted on Monday, November 26, 2018 11:07 am
Posted in Health, The American Veteran, Top Stories,
Videos by Ed Drohan 157 views

While "lend me your ears" may have been written by Shakespeare in the 16th century, it came true in a literal sense for a Veteran.

Navy Veteran Robert Chesser received a new prosthetic ear, created for him by prosthetist David Trainer, to replace the ear he lost to cancer. The custom-made auricular prosthesis, as the silicone ear is more properly called, is one of many different prostheses Trainer has made for Veterans at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital over the last several years.

Chesser was first diagnosed with squamous cell cancer on his right ear about three years ago. Since then

he has endured 15 operations, two rounds of radiation treatment and a round of chemotherapy. The first surgeries were done in an attempt to save his ear, but the spreading cancer forced doctors to completely remove his outer ear, leaving him with his hearing but also with a large hole on the side of his head where the ear used to be.

“I ended up with cancer in the whole ear area and down my jaw and my neck, the whole nine yards, and that’s when I lost the ear,” Chesser said. “They said, ‘That’s alright, never mind, they’ll fix you one up.’”

He was referred to the Dental Service, which works with Veterans like Chesser.

“We deal with restorations of head and neck cancer patients, both intraoral and extraoral (inside and outside the mouth) defects,” said Maxillofacial Prosthodontist Dr. Nicholas Goetz, who said he works primarily with patients needing restorations in the mouth. “There’s a lot of complex, large cases that I do, so David is able to come in here and do a great job for our patients with extraoral prostheses. They’re very time consuming, so it’s a great help for us.”

The 73-year-old Veteran had had some problems that complicated and delayed the day he could receive his new ear. Radiation had weakened the bone structure in the part of his skull that would normally be used to place pins usually used to attach the ear, and the surgery left him with an area of exposed bone that prevented the use of a prosthesis.

Home treatments with homeopathic medicines helped bring skin back over the bone, while it was decided to use an adhesive to hold the prosthesis in place.

Trainer, who has been making prosthetic ears, noses and eyes for patients for 35 years, has worked with the VA for the last several years out of his office in Naples, Florida. He drives almost 170 miles each way for at least three visits with the patient before the final prosthesis is ready.

“On the first visit, I take an impression of both sides (including the left ear). With that I, then, I create models from which I sculpt the opposing ear for Mr. Chesser,” Trainer, who received his training in his native England, said. “I come back to the VA, I try that on, make sure it looks right, fits, everything is correct. Then I go back and I make a mold of that wax ear, then replace the wax with silicone. Then on the last visit I extrinsically paint it and fit it on the patient.”

While he spends an average of an hour-and-a-half with the patient on each visit, it will normally take him four to five hours to sculpt the wax ear, then another two days making the mold and the silicon ear. He uses

medical grade silicon that can be left attached for days at a time with no ill effect for the patient.

For Chesser, Trainer brought three different silicone ears in different shades so he could most closely match the Veteran’s skin tone. Selecting one, he then laid out his paints and began the process of matching the patient’s skin tone, mottling and even vein structure found in his remaining ear.

Trainer, who said he is not artistic, “... but I can copy well,” constantly checking the copy against the real ear, Trainer worked for more than an hour before he was satisfied that the copy was as close to the original as possible.

Using silicone adhesive to attach the prosthesis and petroleum jelly to smooth the edges. In the opinion of everyone in the room, it was almost impossible to tell the real ear from the prosthetic one, even to Chesser, who first put on his glasses and then sat looking at both ears in a hand mirror.

For Trainer, each person who receives one of his prostheses makes his day.

“It’s always a joy. For the last 35 years, I tend not to see people as patients. I call them my big happy family because you’re entering a very intimate part of their world,” Trainer said. “It’s something that they don’t want everybody to know about, so you’re forming a very close relationship with them, and as long as that person is happy at the end of the day, I’m very happy.”

Chesser, who said he’s maintained a positive outlook during his entire ordeal, seemed happy enough that he joked with his wife when the session was finished.

“I can’t wait until the day when she’s yelling at me, and I can take the ear off, lay it on the table, and tell her, ‘Talk to the ear.’”

As You Wave On

September 27, 2016 by alicia Filed under Bras & Boots,

This poem was written in Ramadi Iraq, 2005. At the end of a particularly gruesome day, feeling so many emotions, I became fixated on the lone American flag flying above our post. I became jealous of its materialistic nature that allowed it not to feel the great pains of war.



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AS YOU WAVE ON By Larissa Stone

In the midst of innocence fading from the eyes of children And the youthfulness of a generation gone in the pull of a trigger Just above the shallow trenches you fly Becoming a colorful headstone to some And to others remaining as a guilty survivor's souvenir

All around the world you have left your mark Gleaming in the weary sockets of forgotten prisoners of war Carried silently over combative terrain Violently protested, spit upon, and burned You have seen unspeakable torture and pain And flown proudly through every season of America's rain

But where are your tears for the sadness you've seen? Are they in the tattered edges of your windblown fabric Or the fading colors of your soul

And where are your sleepless nights filled with fear? While you drape over caskets, forever silencing practiced battle cries Or lay folded in the patriotic hands of another proud widow . If only your threads could re-weave these unraveled lives And give your flailing a rest to respect the stillness of death But still you wave on, Still you wave on 'Ol Glory

In the early morning graveyard mist you can faintly hear The nameless whisper from under their unmarked graves They expended their last breath and last heartbeats As the bombs and bullets fervently chase life away Just so you might spend a few more moments held high And

remain glorious above those around you who are too busy dying

With the promise of brighter futures they followed you Wore you proudly in the air, sea, and land With their inexperience clutching childlike to your hand

But when the smoke has cleared and a new morning dawned After the treaties are signed and it's finally time to head home With the blood of many dripping from your star spangled cloth You triumphantly arrive and fly again all alone

Leaving only memories to try to etch themselves into history Young women and men killed before they really ever lived So where are your tears Where are your tears for those that make you a hero You will always be wherever the war may go But without the sacrifices of the soldier You are only a flag made up of red, white, and blue

So please, while you sway gently in the summer breeze And while you caress the stars in a calm night sky Remember the quiet stillness of death And for the fallen heroes remember to cry

As you wave on, 'Ol Glory As you wave on

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

Army Air Forces Sgt. John Kalausich, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 13, 2018. On March 21, 1945, Kalausich was a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment

Army Pfc. James C. Williams, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for on Dec. 20, 2018. On July 20, 1950, Williams was a member of Medical Company, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry

Navy Steward 2nd Class Felicismo Florese, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Aug. 31, 2018. On Dec. 7, 1941, Florese was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Burleigh E. Curtis, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 13,

2018. On June 13, 1944, Curtis was a member of the 377th Fighter Squadron, 362nd Fighter Group,

Army Cpl. John G. Krebs, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for on Dec. 17, 2018. On July 11, 1950, Krebs was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry

Navy Machinist's Mate 1st Class George Hanson, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 17, 2018. On Dec. 7, 1941, Hanson was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma

Army Pfc. William F. Delaney, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 17, 2018. On Nov. 22, 1944, Delaney served with Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry

Army Air Forces Sgt. Vernon L. Hamilton, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 13, 2018. On March 21, 1945, Hamilton was a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Lynn W. Hadfield, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 13, 2018. On March 21, 1945, Hadfield was a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

If you reach [100% P and T](#) there are more benefits available to you. This is by no means an extensive list and we recommend calling the Veterans Affairs at 1-800-827-1000 with any questions about the following benefits.

- [Check your state benefits here](#)
- [Dental treatment](#) for 100% disabled veteran benefits.
- [Educational Assistance for Dependents](#): (under chapter 35) Must be rated a 100% disabled veteran by the VA.
- Civilian health and medical program for dependents/survivors ([CHAMPVA](#)). Must be rated a 100% disabled veteran by the VA.
- [Specially Adapted Homes](#)
- [Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance](#): Decreasing term mortgage insurance up to \$90,000 for veterans who have received a Specially Adaptive Housing grant and have an existing mortgage.
- Waiver of cost of Service Disabled life Insurance: and additional \$20,000 of life insurance at cost to veteran. Veteran must have applied for insurance within two years of initial disability rating or within two years of a new disability rating. An increase in a disability rating does not qualify as a new disability.

- Commissary and Exchange privileges for veteran and dependents: The veteran must request a letter from the VA specifying veteran is in receipt of 100% disability, and then applies for a military ID card at the nearest ID card issuing facility.
- Emergency treatment in non-VA facilities: if VA facilities are not available.
- Annual Eye exams and prescribed eye glasses.

Supreme Court rejects U.S. troops' appeal over 'burn pits' illnesses

By Lawrence Hurley

WASHINGTON, Jan 14 (Reuters) - The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday turned away a bid by U.S. troops sickened by smoke from open-air pits used to burn waste in Iraq and Afghanistan to revive a lawsuit against defense contractors KBR Inc and Halliburton Co.

The justices left in place a 2018 lower court ruling in favor of the companies. The former service members said in the lawsuit that they developed various cancers, neurological damage and other illnesses, often fatal, because of KBR's negligent operation of the burn pits.

The case centered on the liability of KBR and Halliburton over waste disposal services they provided the U.S. military in Afghanistan starting in 2001 and Iraq starting in 2003. KBR was part of Halliburton until it was spun off in 2007.

The Richmond, Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the various consolidated lawsuits brought by service members and their relatives amounted to a "political question" that Congress and the president should resolve, not the courts.

The plaintiffs, whose cases were consolidated in Maryland in 2009, said they were harmed because the companies did not follow correct safety procedures. They accused KBR of placing the burn pits too close to occupied areas and operating them without regard to wind conditions. The contractor used the pits to dispose of plastics, tires, batteries, medical waste and other material that released airborne toxins when burned.

Both companies said they should not be held liable.

The Supreme Court in 2015 declined to hear the cases at an earlier stage in the litigation after the companies lost a prior bid to dismiss the lawsuits.

Dick Cheney, who served as chairman and CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000, was U.S. vice president at the time the American military operations involved in the case began in Afghanistan and Iraq.



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COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

On Tuesday January 8th, myself, Bob Lewis, Carl Ohlson, Ken Geer, John Fedynich, John Drinkard and Bob Cubby made our visit to the Lyons In-Patient PTSD Unit to serve dinner to the vets there and to the third floor Ladies Unit. Once again the dinner was supplied by ShopRite of West Milford and it was excellent.

We all had some great conversations with the vets and they all really enjoyed the meal.

Our next trip will be on March 12. Anyone wanting to join us can sign the sheet up front or contact me.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

2019

- 27th January
- 24th February
- 24th March
- 28th April
- 26th May
- 23rd June
- 29th July
- 25th August
- 22nd September
- 27th October
- 24th November

December – TBD – Christmas Party

Calendar of Events:

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

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

John Lewis
Lawrence Chesnut

PASSINGS:

Chet Mohrhoff

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Happy November Anniversaries:
Kathy & Lenny Weakland
Audrey & Jerry Magnus

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 February newsletter to me by Sunday, February 17th by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

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