



The Sentinel

Vol. 7 No. 1

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

January 2020

Website: www.VVA1002.org

President: John Harrigan

1st Vice President: John Brady

Secretary: Carl Ohlson

2nd Vice President: Walt Hazelman

Chaplin: George Burns

Treasurer: Owen Martin

Sergeant at Arms: Ted Andrews

FROM THE MINEFIELD:

Submitted by John Harrigan

Our Christmas party was a great success with over 120 Members and their families attending. This did not include the 25 Children who had a chance this year to meet Mrs. Clause and her helper. I want to Thank all of you who attended.

Our Chapter once again participated in the Wreaths Across America at the Veterans Cemetery and there were over 150 people present.

The Cemetery is continuing to grow and we have completed the Office/Chapel Building where we can hold the services indoors in case of inclement weather. I can't Thank Phil and Maryann Deacon for all they have done to make this happen. We will have a Grand Opening and Dedication of the Building in the Spring and unveil the plaques of who made this possible.

Rich and Cyndie Predmore have mailed out the Scholarship applications and we again will be giving out Five, One Thousand Dollar Scholarship's. I would like to thank Teri Deaver for all the hard work so that we are able to do this again. We need someone to step up and take over the Can Shakes as Teri will not be doing it this year. If anyone is interested please let me know so we can get started going to different places to set this up. If no one steps up we will have to discontinue giving out the Scholarships. We have given out over \$35,000 in Scholarships since the Chapter started and would hate to see this stop.

The St Patrick's Day Parade in Newton is on again this year and we will be marching as past Grand Marshalls. The date is either March 14th or 21st and as soon as I hear which it is I will let you know.

Our Chapter Can shake will be on May 23rd at Mac and Lindy's in Vernon and we are thinking of having one for the Chapter on November 7th and will let you know.

Blue Water Navy Claims are now being accepted by the VA so if you have one of the presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange, I urge you to file your claim now and not wait. There is a list of Ships on the VA web site that are recognized by the VA so check it out and file.

Our meetings will continue to be on the fourth (4th) Sunday of the month here at St Francis and will stay at 2pm. Remember if it snow's we don't go. We continue to meet here on Thursdays every week to help each other, so if you have nothing to do on a Thursday come around and get in on the laughter you won't be sorry.

On a sad note, we lost one of our Members Sergio Prezioso passed away on December 29th at the age of 77. For those of us who knew Serg, he was quite a Character and will be missed. REST IN PEACE.

That's it for now see you at the meeting.

1st VICE PRESIDENT:

Submitted by John Brady

Hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and all is well with you and your families and friends in this new year.

Since the last newsletter we had our annual Christmas Party which was well attended as usual. Thanks to all the people who helped out to make the party a success. I would also like to thank Sussex Meat Packing for the delicious food they provided and of course a special thanks to the staff of St. Francis de Sales Church for providing the hall. Last but not least thanks to Dennis from the church who set up the tables and chairs and supervised in the kitchen.

The Vets Helping Vets program is doing well on Thursdays. Since the day after Christmas was a Thursday we did not have our usual meeting but started up again on the day after New Years. Also we did not have our monthly general meeting since we had the party instead.

Speaking of monthly meetings, just a reminder now that we're into winter, if it snows or is icy on the day of a monthly meeting (the 4th Sunday of the month not the last) the meeting will be canceled.

Have a safe and healthy New Year.

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

More on perceptions of the military and veterans in the media

This has been a continuing area of interest with me over the years. I know we have all sat through movies where the (Hollywood) take on military service makes us shake our heads and say "NFW." You know, hand holding a machine gun (and apparently unlimited belts of ammo) and wiping out whichever enemy was the issue of the movie. That sort of thing.

From the WWII movies we grew up watching, to the present day certain "liberties" were and are taken to "enhance the narrative," frequently in a negative way.

Here is one that was funny:

The first Captain America movie, which I generally liked, not only because of a generally respectful take on the war and military (WWII of course – "The good war" some called it), but also not as much special effects super hero stuff, at least compared to the later movies. There was a great scene where CA is trying to inspire the troops to buy war bonds, and they razz him unmercifully, in a completely believable way. (Nice boots Tinker Bell).

Here are a few that stood out and have bugged me:

In more than one movie, when the SHTF (you know what hits the fan) all of a sudden enlisted men (usually Army, but I have seen Navy also) start screaming "We're gonna die," over and over, and they frequently do, mostly it would seem because they are not defending themselves but wetting their panties.

In the Godzilla movie that came out in 1998 starring Matthew Broderick: While it was entertaining and I generally liked the movie, the military was portrayed as a bunch of hopeless dunces who could only blow up the Chrysler building and one of our own subs (any submariners out there have an opinion on multiple attack subs operating submerged in the Hudson River?), although in the end they finally managed to kill Godzilla.

In Kong, Skull Island: This took place in the immediate post Vietnam War years. When all their choppers are destroyed by Kong (they apparently could not spread out when he started bashing them) the Army crews and the scientists are forced to trek it on foot carrying what they can. The various monsters on the island keep killing them off here and there, reducing their carrying power. At one point a particularly large monster starts attacking and the commander yells out "Bring up the .50." Out of nowhere a .50 cal Browning on a tripod is set up and starts shooting what seems to be unlimited ammo, until the thing swipes him away.

I remember a .50 cal being very heavy carrying up up and own decks from the armory to the mounts (80 lbs or so) and while on ship there is no tripod, that had to be very heavy also and I definitely remember boxes of ammo being heavy when carrying them up and down 2 decks from magazine to mount and back.

As time passes and since the all volunteer force came into effect, less and less as a percentage of the population serve in the military. Which means their perceptions are not shaped by either experience or by



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someone they know or are related to who is/was in the service.

The media has a large part in forming these perceptions.

One of my clients, close to 40 years old assumed that since I had been in the military, I must have been trained in hand to hand, etc. and was an Arnold S. or Dolf L. type and was basically a walking self defense machine. That is one end of the perception.

We are probably all familiar with the other end. During Vietnam it was all too prevalent and many of those dweebs grew up to be politicians shaping way too much policy.

US Army warns about fake text messages about military draft

(CNN)The US Army is warning Americans about a wave of "fraudulent text messages" falsely telling Americans they have been drafted into military service.

The fake texts instruct the recipient to report to the nearest Army recruiting branch "for immediate departure to Iran," and warn about multiple attempts to contact recipients, in at least one case warning "you'll be fined and sent to jail for minimum 6 years if no reply."

The messages appear to have been sent to individuals nationwide amid mounting military tensions between Washington and Tehran. The Pentagon said last week following the US airstrike that killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani that it is deploying thousands of additional troops to the Middle East, catching military families off guard.

US military conscription was suspended in the 1970s. To resume the draft, Congress would need to enact legislation, according to the Selective Service System, the independent agency that would manage the draft in an emergency.

Last week, the Selective Service website crashed amid heightened searches, which the agency attributed to "the spread of misinformation" about the potential for a draft following the US strike. "The Selective Service System is conducting business as usual," the agency said on its official Facebook page.

I found this one kind of humorous. Somewhere around 1980 or so I was finishing up college (finally) and one war emergency or another was in the headlines, if might have been the Falklands War. The kiddies in the music Dept at school were getting all bent out of shape as the same rumors of a draft, etc were circulating. Being a vet, when asked what the chances were, I took some satisfaction in piercing their bubbles with how the military really worked and how their plans to either be excluded or get the easiest berth after induction hit reality. Fortunately, then as now WW X was avoided. Now, because of social media the rumor mill is instantaneous.

Here are some headlines as to current VA projects:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program

HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help Veterans who are homeless and their families find and sustain permanent housing.

Through public housing authorities, HUD provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to Veterans who are eligible for VA health care services and are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers may connect these Veterans with support services such as health care, mental health treatment and substance use counseling to help them in their recovery process and with their ability to maintain housing in the community. Among VA homeless continuum of care programs, HUD-VASH enrolls the largest number and largest percentage of Veterans who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. At the end of FY 2019, there were 90,749 Veterans with active HUD-VASH vouchers and 83,684 vouchers in use.

I do not have any firsthand knowledge of a veteran's homeless "crisis," but I do know that the

incidence of homelessness being rampant is routinely touted by the media.

It certainly stands to reason that as with any sizeable part of the general population, a certain segment will likely be represented in the homeless population, at some point in their lives at least.

The implication by the media, and those who require public funds to “help” the crisis du jour is that there was something inherent in military service that results in being homeless, a drug addict, and being involved in criminal proceedings, and on and on. More on that later.

However it does seem that the VA is performing a useful service, and in line with its basic reason for existence in helping vets and their families who have specific problems, and homelessness for any number of reasons would certainly qualify.

This would be a much better use for funds than bonuses to non or under performing administrators and expensive “art” to grace VA entrance halls.

House Approves Joint Resolution 80 (CPCV)

On Monday, January 13, 2020 the House of Representatives approved House Joint Resolution 80. The bill allows VA to more fully support community partners in connecting Veterans with dental care providers. Current law does not allow VA employees to provide administrative support to local providers who agree to furnish pro bono dental care for Veterans - the bill waived those restrictions for a new pilot program, namely Community Provider Collaborations for Veterans (CPCV). Enactment of this bill clears the way for VA to act as a force-multiplier to connect Veterans with pro bono or reduced-cost dental care in the community, in cases where VA is not authorized to provide or pay for that care.

WOMEN VETERANS:

Submitted by Walt Hazelman

No report.

POW/MIA:

Submitted by Bob Gilbert

- 11/14/2019: Cpl. Jackey D. Blosser, U.S. Army Dog Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, Lost 12/2/1950, North Korea
- 11/14/2019: Tech Sgt. Max W. Lower, U.S. Army Air Forces, 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 9th Air Force, Lost 8/1/1943, Romania
- 11/20/2019: Fireman 1st Class Hadley I. Heavin, U.S. Navy, USS West Virginia, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 11/20/2019: Fireman 3rd Class Welborn L. Ashby, U.S. Navy, USS West Virginia, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 11/20/2019: Sgt. Maximiano T. Lacsamana, U.S. Army, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division, Lost 12/3/1950, North Korea
- 11/21/2019: Pfc. Edward A. Nalazek (See note), U.S. Marine Corp., Company D, 2nd Battalion, 18th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Lost 11/21/1943, Tarawa
- 11/21/2019: Fireman 1st Class Andrew J. Schmitz, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 11/21/2019: Pfc. Alfred Edwards, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Company E, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Lost 11/20/1943, Tarawa
- 11/22/2019: Fireman 1st Class Rex E. Wise, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 11/27/2019: Master Sgt Harold F. Drews, U.S. Army, King Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, Lost 12/12/1950, North Korea
- 12/5/2019: Fireman 1st Class Leo T. Keninger, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 12/5/2019: Seaman 1st Class Orval A. Tranbarger, U.S. Navy, USS Oklahoma, Lost 12/7/1941, Pearl Harbor
- 12/13/2019: 2nd Lt. Lowell S. Twedt, U.S. Army Air Forces, 71st Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Group, Lost 10/20/1944, Bolzano, Italy
- 12/16/2019: 2nd Lt. George M. Johnson, U.S. Army Air Forces, 38th Bombardment Squadron, 30th Bombardment Group, Lost 1/21/1944, Tarawa



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- 12/16/2019: Sgt. John V. Phillips, U.S. Army, Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, Lost 7/27/1942, Philippines
- 1/6/2020: Gunnery Sgt. Arthur B. Summers, Gunnery Sgt., Company I, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Lost 11/23/1943, Tarawa

NOTE: **Edward A. Nalazek:** In November 1943, Nalazek was a member of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 18th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Nalazek was killed on the second day of the battle, Nov. 21, 1943. His remains were reportedly buried in the Central Division Cemetery 8th Marines #2 on Betio Island. (See more info at [dpaa.mil/our missing/recently accounted for](http://dpaa.mil/our-missing/recently-accounted-for))

AGENT ORANGE:

Submitted by Owen Martin

No report.

COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Submitted by Lou Storms

Due to recent scheduling and communication problems with the personal at the Lyons VA, it has become necessary to cease our bi-monthly dinner service program for the PTSF Unit and the Ladies Upstairs.

The Chapter has been operating the program for around 10 years, over 4 of which I have been involved. It's been a rewarding experience for myself and all of the members who have unrelentingly been there through the years.

I will be contacting ShopRite to explain the circumstances and thank them for their generosity

and support in allowing us to continue the program for the past 4 years. It was their donation that enabled us to supply the dinners.

I'd just like to thank members Bob Lewis, Carl Ohlson, John Fedynich, Ken Geer, Norm Seider, Skip Kays, John Drinkard, Bob Cubby, and our newest enlistee Vinnie Perratore, for their steadfast support through the years.

Scheduled Meetings:

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

2020

26th January

23rd February

22nd March

26th April

24th May

28th June

26th July

23rd August

27th September

25th October

22nd November

5th December – Christmas Party

Calendar of Events:

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

NEW MEMBERS:

“WELCOME HOME”

Fred Carrell

PASSINGS:

No report.

Homeless Committee (new):

Submitted by John Drinkard

Community Hope

Our mission is helping individuals, including veterans, and their families, overcome mental illness, addiction, homelessness and poverty by providing housing and support services. Since 1985, we have provided housing, basic essentials, vital services and restored hope to thousands!

Community Hope is the leading nonprofit serving homeless veterans and families in New Jersey. We address a major underlying source of veterans' homelessness: High rates of mental illness, trauma and substance abuse and the challenges are increasing. Roughly half the soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with mental health conditions, including one in five that suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

A proactive approach to helping veterans and their families with immediate support when facing homelessness. We provide rapid re-housing to homeless veterans in addition to keeping veteran households from losing their housing when they are facing eviction. Our first priority is to either assist the family in remaining in their current housing, or, if they are homeless, to quickly locate and help them secure affordable housing. To accomplish this, we assist in the housing search; provide access to emergency housing when possible in the interim; intervene with landlords; provide support and case management services that can include assistance with medical care, mental health or substance abuse treatment, child care and job training. Temporary financial assistance may also be available to help with such expenses as security deposits, back rent, utility payments or bedding and household essentials.

Delivering a rapid response has proven essential to meeting the needs of veterans and their families, especially those we have rescued from living in shelters, emergency motels, their cars or the woods.

Community Hope Administrative Office
959 Route 46 East, Suite 402
Parsippany, NJ 07054
Phone: (973) 463-9600

CONGRATULATIONS/CONCERNS:

Nothing for the month of January.

MEMBERS CORNER:

Submitted by Owen Martin

Treasurer Muoio Urges NJ Veterans to Apply for Newly Doubled \$6,000 Income Tax Exemption

Treasurer Muoio Urges NJ Veterans to Apply for Newly Doubled \$6,000 Income Tax Exemption

(TRENTON) – With the Veterans Income Tax Exemption doubling to \$6,000 for 2019, State Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio is urging New Jersey veterans to check their eligibility and pre-certify to make claiming the exemption easier during tax filing season.

“Under the law signed by Governor Murphy earlier this year, the veteran’s income tax exemption has now doubled to \$6,000,” said Treasurer Muoio. “We can never fully repay our service men and women for their sacrifices, but it is our hope that this increased benefit will make a sizable difference for veterans acclimating to civilian life, raising a family, or living on a retirement budget. Our personnel in the Division of Taxation stand ready to help and urge veterans to pre-certify to expedite the process when it comes time to file.”

Muoio noted that since the exemption went into effect for the 2017 tax year, Treasury’s Division of Taxation has conducted extensive outreach in concert with the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to ensure veterans are aware of this benefit. That initiative included outreach to civic organizations and veterans groups, public presentations by Taxation staff, an informative online video, and numerous other initiatives. As a result, the Division of Taxation has pre-certified roughly one-third of the state’s approximately 400,000 eligible veterans to date.

Applicants need only apply the first year they claim the exemption. A veteran’s spouse or civil union partner, who is also a veteran, can take the exemption if they are filing a joint return. However, a veteran cannot claim this exemption for a domestic partner or dependents.

Veterans who file paper New Jersey Income Tax returns (NJ-1040) or Non-Resident Income Tax returns (NJ-1040NR) must:

- Enclose a copy of Form DD-214, Certificate of Release, or Discharge from Active Duty, with their tax returns the first time they claim



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the exemption(s). This form does not need to be submitted each year. The [United States National Archives and Records Administration](#) can assist with obtaining DD-214.

- Check the oval on a resident tax return that indicates the veteran is taking the exemption, or click the box on the non-resident return that indicates a veteran is taking an exemption.

Veterans who normally electronically file their New Jersey Income Tax return (NJ-1040) or New Jersey Non-Resident Income Tax return (NJ-1040NR) should pre-certify for this exemption by sending necessary documents before filing taxes. This will allow returns to be processed without delay or time lost because of requests for additional proof of exemption status.

There are three ways to send materials to the Division of Taxation:

By mail:

New Jersey Division of Taxation
Veteran Exemption
PO Box 440

Trenton, NJ 08646-0440

By secure upload:

<https://www.njportal.com/DOR/TCM/>

Use POB 440 Code: VET

By fax:

(609) 633-8427

Treasurer Muoio also encouraged New Jersey veterans, their spouses, and caregivers to take advantage of other tax benefits that the state offers.

The [Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption](#) allows honorably discharged veterans who are 100 percent permanently disabled as a result of active wartime service to qualify for an annual property tax exemption.

A [\\$250 Veterans Property Tax Deduction](#) is offered to certain honorably discharged veterans and their surviving spouse/civil union/domestic partners, including military veterans who live in continuing care retirement communities.

The [Wounded Warrior Caregivers Relief Act](#) provides a tax credit to qualified family caregivers who take care of a military service member who has a disability arising out of service in any war or conflict on or after September 11, 2001. The credit is equal to 100 percent of the federal veteran disability compensation, or \$675, whichever is less.

Lastly, a [Gold Star Family Counseling Credit](#) is available to mental health care professionals who provided counseling through the Gold Star Family Counseling program. The amount of the Income Tax credit may be equal to the amount documented annually by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for the Gold Star Family Counseling Program.

Treasurer Muoio also encouraged New Jersey veterans and their dependents to consult the [Benefits Guide](#) created by the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs for assistance in obtaining information regarding a host of other state and federal benefits, including housing, financial assistance, employment, education, transportation assistance, and mental health aid.

**-NJ VETERAN TAX EXEMPTION 2020
INCREASES TO \$6000**

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 Friday, February 14th by email: skelle@ptd.net or by snail-mail to:

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