



BACK IN THE WORLD

Volume 31 • Issue 4

VVA Chapter 12 ♦ Newsletter

December 2022



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12

PO Box 276, Allenhurst, NJ 07711

‘For those who fought for it, Freedom has a special flavor the protected will never know.’

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Carmelo Burgaretta, Delegate	Tony Corbella, Alternate Delegate
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NOTES FROM CHAPTER 12

- ⇒ Please remember our fellow Chapter members, and their families in your prayers, as they continue to face very serious medical conditions
- ⇒ Please visit and “like” our Facebook page, “Vietnam Veterans NJ Shore Area Chapter 12” for info on what we are doing.
- ⇒ Please visit our CHAPTER WEBSITE—www.vvchapter12.net for photo albums, news letter archives, Chapter history.
- ⇒ Anyone needing a ride to the VA, please contact Ernie Diorio for assistance. If you are able to provide transportation, please let Ernie know so the same people aren’t doing it all the time.
- ⇒ If you are looking for a fellow vet that you lost track of, or someone that you served with that might have information you need, please send it to us and we’ll put it in the monthly newsletter.
- ⇒ Check this link out if you need help with an appeal, or know a Vet that does. Keep it moving, pass it on to other Vets you know: <http://www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm>
- ⇒ Anyone wanting to submit an article, picture , or story, please send it to VVA12p@verizon.net or nivva12@gmail.com by the 25th of each month. Anything received after that will be placed in the following month’s newsletter. (Make sure your article can be verified.
- ⇒ We have been informed that in lieu of specific items to send to troops on deployment, gift cards to the PX would be appreciated. The troops can get almost anything in the PX, but could use help via gift card. This is also a money and effort saver on our part. Donations to the PX gift care fund are being accepted. **We are also switching from actual food to gift cards for our food bank as this will better serve our veterans in need.**

President's Message



First Dolores and I wish to say Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and a Happy New Years to you and your family.

Our Chapter continues to be very active in our municipalities and counties of New Jersey.

Once again, a great job by Rich Gough, Ernie DiOrio and Dan Higgins on their cremains service on September 8. See Cremains Report.

September 16, Sparkie and our Chapter Color Guard served as the honor guard for their annual POW/MIA service.

Sparkie and his committee have been very busy the last 2 month with our Veterans program in given our program to a number of schools. Great job to you and the committee.

When it comes to given a nickname to a month "September is Judy's flame out RSDS. Great job by Chapter members that walked or donated.

Congratulation to Four Chaplain news Humanitarian, Bucky Grimm and Jene Ann Pesano as Legion of Honor member. They were inducted at VVA State Council annual service in Cape May on September 18,2022.

Color Guard had also presented the colors at the Memorial POW/MIA Day and Gold Star Mothers' ceremony.

October 5, 16 Chapter members had attended the New Jersey Memorial Gala that had honored our AVVA member Maj.Gen Sharon Bannister.

President's Message (continued)

October 22 Mike Q, Dick Furlong, Bob Siemer had signed up 4 new members at the Middletown Veterans Affairs membership drive for Veterans of township that has 1750 Veteran. The following groups were in attended, VFW2179, VFW 2179 Aux, American Legion Post 515, VVA Chapter 12, Tinker Dorn Marine Corp, S.A.L of American Legion Post 338, American Legion Post 338, and American Aux.

Sparkie and his committee have been very busy the last 2 month with our Veterans Speaker Program in a number of schools.

Great job to you and the committee.

On Veterans Day Dolores and I had attended the 40 Anniversary of the dedication of the Wall, Vietnam Veteran of America held the Massing of Color at the Wal l.

On November 5, I had the honor of being a one of the guest speaker at the annual Field of Flag ceremony at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Middletown. This year they had honored Vietnam Veterans, each of their 5800 flags represented 10 veterans that gave there all.

Nov 6, myself and chapter member Bob Siemer marched in the Middletown Veterans Day parade as Veterans and as Middletown Veterans Affair members.

Thanks for another Great Year as we continue to grow, believe we are 406 in membership. Just a note this May we will be celebrating our 41St anniversary as a Chapter.

Special thanks to Ernie and Rich Gough for the information that they brought back from the Monmouth County veterans meeting. They had learned that our Naval Station Earl sailors are on hard time, there are 300 active-duty sailor station with no Commissary or mess halls on their base and with the cost of living going to the sky.

They are being helped by a small food bank setup by the Red Cross, which is simply not enough during the holidays. We as a Chapter had donated \$1000.00 for a base dinner which was held on Tuesday November 22.

Ernie and I reached out to our fellow Veterans group from VFW Post 2179, VFW Post 2226 the American Legion Post 515 and had cartel together which we all donated \$1000 each for a total \$4000.00. I had purchased \$4000.00 in Shop Rite gift card and their Corp office donated \$200.00 totaled \$4200.00 in gift cards

On Monday the officers from all groups met Base Chaplain and Base Commander, at Church Annex where the red cross had their food pantry, each day they log their name before shopping for their needs and leave.

But today they had met our Veterans Cartel as they were leaving the pantry they were stopped by us and were given 2 X \$25.00 Shop Rite gift cards each .,

This was a great job in showing our support to those that are serving!

Our own Little Italian Pilgrim, Ernie DiOrio was able to have Manalapan Wegmans donated 23 Full Turkey meals from soup to nuts he drove 20 miles to Keyport and had delivered to a Housing apartment building for those were in needs.

Special thanks for the Wonder Bar of Asbury in hosting Vincent Pastore benefit on Nov 10, where proceed will be come to Chapter 12, This was the second time that he gave process to the Chapter.

Bob Siemer and I were able to help a Korea / Vietnam Veteran get in and out of his house in Belford. Our Brother veteran was taken for \$9000.00 for new front porch which didn't happen.

Received a call from his neighbor that he was fallen to the ground trying to get in and out each, was there some thing that we could do?

Within two days, I called a friend Michael Moran contractor and he was able to put in temporary stairs. Thanks Mike



The Colonel

Dolores and I at the Wall in DC for VVA National Massing of the Colors from 33 states on Veterans Day.



Presentation of award to Base Commander of Cape May Coast Guard station at Four Chaplains ceremony



GROUP PICTURE OF 4 CHAPLAINS Ceremony



Dribs and Drabs

By Bob Hopkins

It's been awhile since I did a membership update.

As of November 16 we have 407 members. Broken down, it's 359 veterans and 48 Associate members. Despite the passing of several members over the recent past, we continue to grow! Amazing, particularly considering our advancing age. We are the largest Chapter in New Jersey and in the top 20 countrywide.

The Chapter continues to support both veteran and civilian organizations and individuals. We recently donated \$1,000 to aid service families stationed at Earle Navy base. The donation was matched by \$1,000 from 3 other veteran organizations and gift certificates to Shop Rite were purchased and presented to the base Commander for distribution to the families. They have no commissary on base and no cost of living adjustments. We once vowed to never forget another generation of vets. That includes aiding active duty personnel where and when needed.

The fundraiser at the Wonder Bar in Asbury Park was well attended. The crowd was larger than last year and Vinnie Pastore of The Sopranos fame brought his band and posed for photos with Chapter members.

Don "Sparky" Davison coordinated the School Program which finished with a flourish in November as we visited several schools. Don even got us to the right school at the right time on a couple of occasions! Progress, not perfection!

Dennis "The Colonel" Beauregard brought a request to the Chapter from the Florida State Council for monetary help in the ongoing recovery from two recent hurricanes. We immediately authorized a generous donation. We have several Chapter members living in Florida, either full or part time, affectionately and informally known as Chapter 12 South.

Anne Carreiro of Quilts of Valor has presented dozens of homemade quilts to our members at Chapter meetings and other events. She hopes to have each and every member eventually receive one of these beautiful quilts. The program is coordinated by Greg Kucharewski who also heads up our Play Hook-e fishing program targeted at disabled and PTSD vets. The Chapter monetarily supports Quilts of Valor.

Dennis Champ continues to lead Chapter members in our Guitar Program, aimed at vets with PTSD. Guitars are provided by the Chapter, although several members have purchased their own. If interested, contact Dennis at 732-239-6288. Even if you've never played a guitar, you're more than welcome.

Dribs and Drabs (continued)

These are but a few of the things the Chapter is involved in. We encourage all Chapter members to get involved, at whatever level they feel comfortable. The fellowship is wonderful and the Chapter has been incredibly responsive to the needs of its' members, their families, and outside agencies and individuals. We are well respected and often cited for our commitment to veterans and the community.

Enjoy the upcoming holidays. Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah.

Middletown Day for membership drive for VVA Chapter 12 and VFW 2179 membership



Chapter 12 and Chapter 800 donated a 5 ft wreath to the Memorial



Field of Flags

Field of flags dedication ceremony honoring the veterans of the Vietnam war. Dennis Beauregard our president. Of chapter 12 Denis was the guest speaker and gave a great speech on Vietnam. He was excellent.



Veterans Day celebration at Veterans Memorial Middle School in Brick, New Jersey. Ernie Diorio and Dave Drummon set up a display for a living museum station on Vietnam at the school.



Commissary shopping privileges for Veterans

Learn about your eligibility to shop at Defense commissaries



The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has been hard at work spreading the news to Veterans about their ability to shop at [commissaries](#). Working with Veteran Service Organizations to promote, inform and gather feedback amongst the Veteran community about this privilege has proven effective. Engaging with Veterans, DeCA has learned that while many are now utilizing this benefit, others still are unaware. [Verify your eligibility](#) for this exclusive benefit.

Commissary shopping privileges are available to the following groups:

- Veterans with any service-connected disabilities documented by VA
- Veterans who are Purple Heart recipients
- Veterans who are former prisoners of war
- Individuals assessed, approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans under VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Check installation access policies

Contact the installation where you intend to shop; inquire about their current policies regarding installation access.

How Your Commissary benefits you

A shopping environment that exclusively serves the military community, with a workforce that understands your needs and strives to save you even more

Prices that can save our customers thousands of dollars per year on their purchases, on average, when compared to prices at commercial stores

[Commissary Store Brands](#) that offer just as much quality as national brands, if not more, and even greater savings

The convenience of using [CLICK2GO](#) for online shopping and curbside pickup

Opportunities to save even more with [digital coupons](#) and our [sales flyer](#).

Find your commissary location, here: <https://www.commissaries.com/shopping/store-locations/find-a-store>.



Missing In America Project

AFTER ACTION REPORT

BG William C Doyle Veterans Cemetery

Wrightstown, NJ

JUNE 16, 2022

The Sept 8 ceremony began at 1100 hrs. at Monmouth County Sheriff's Office in Freehold and culminated at the shelter area of BG William C Doyle Cemetery for a 1330 hr. ceremony. We interred 15 veterans and 1 spouse. The ceremony was attended by various members of other VVA chapters, representatives of Manalapan Veterans Advisory Committee, Sons of the American Legion, AUSA, members of many VFW and American Legion Posts. Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder Riders, Jester Highway Riders, American Legion Riders, Elks Riders, HOG Riders, Knights of Inferno Firefighters, Leatherneck Nation, Policy Unity Tour Riders, Rolling Thunder, and Nam Knights were all represented. As always, we were honored to have the participation of the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Color Guard, Manalapan Police Color Guard, and Ocean County Sheriff's Color Guard along with their three-volley gun salute. Fourteen local police departments were in attendance along with two fire departments and 1 first aid squad. We were honored to have many of our Monmouth County Commissioners, Assembly Reps Scharfenberger and Flynn, DAR Reps and dignitaries from Earl Naval Weapons Station. Acting Chaplain Bob Hopkins gave the memorial speech as well as the closing remarks. We would like to thank Jacqueline Ryan Home for Funerals for their continued cooperation, the Covered Bridge Senior Community wood shop for making the urns and Home Depot for donating the wood and supplies. Thank you should also be extended to the staff at the BG William C Doyle Cemetery, whose dedicated cooperation was invaluable. Lastly, the success of our ceremony would not be possible without the participation of our many dedicated chapter members.

For the Committee
Richard Gough





Missing In America Project

www.miap.us

**BG William C Doyle Veterans Cemetery
Wrightstown, NJ**

JUNE 16, 2022

CREMAINS REPORT

November, 2022

November has been more of a clean-up month. That is when we concentrate on those cremains pending information to finalize their journey to Arnytown. We are currently working on 13 cremains in various stages of that journey.

4 cremains are waiting pick up at the funeral home. Paperwork is complete but the funeral home director/owner recently suffered a heart attack so we are respectfully waiting for her recovery.

5 cremains have been approved as qualified veterans. We are currently waiting for information on next of kin locations.

1 cremain is paperwork complete but is awaiting permission from his next of kin. Original notification was made but they wanted other family members permission. Follow-up phone calls and messages have resulted in no return calls or "still waiting for the family" excuses.

1 spouse cremain is located at a defunct funeral home which was foreclosed on and sold to Westwood Investments. They cannot resell without disposing of the cremains and records. We are currently acting as go between for a local funeral home to take possession of the cremains and records which will allow us to not only take possession of the veteran's spouse but access to all the cremains to check on veteran's status.

1 cremain, George Ehlinger, a WWI veteran has been denied due to "unavailability of records" (1973 fire) We have uncovered at least 5 sources of documentation of his veteran status but unfortunately none of which is acceptable to the National Personnel Records Center. After following up on 3 other avenues of confirmation, we will request a waiver from DMAVA.



Missing In America Project

www.miap.us

BG William C Doyle Veterans Cemetery Wrightstown, NJ

1 cremain, Robert W Miller, a Vietnam Era Veteran, served on the USS Simon Lake in the Navy as a fireman from 1963 to 1967. We have been working on his qualification for 4 years now. We also have at least 10 sources of documentation as to his veteran status. However, neither the National Personnel Records Center nor the FBI could find any information on him because "his name was too common. As a last resort, Congressman Chris Smith attempted to intercede but was advised of the same result. All government departments require a service number. Through the Freedom of Information Act, we are currently waiting for a copy of the USS Simon Lake ship's logs for 1966/1967 in hopes that they will provide his service number. If not, we will request a waiver.

We are currently waiting for responses from 5 different funeral homes that we have requested appointments for to sit down and discuss our program. That will explain our submission to purchase for 4 bottles of Alieve and Advil. We are constantly banging our heads against their doors.

Our current end of year status is 131 Veterans or Spouses interred and 28 returned to families.

For the Committee

Rich Gough





PUBLISHED IN THE FORUM, A FUNERAL DIRECTORS MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

Funeral Homes' Help Sought in Identifying Veterans' Remains

Published September 2, 2022

Veterans/Military

A New Jersey chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America is seeking the help of the state's funeral homes in identifying unclaimed cremated remains of U.S. service veterans and eligible family members in an effort to provide a dignified burial in a state veterans cemetery.

The Vietnam Veterans of America Shore Area Chapter 12 in Oakhurst wants funeral homes to allow the chapter's members to have access to any unclaimed cremated remains in their buildings in order to determine if any are honorably discharged veterans or family members eligible for burial in [Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery](#) in Arnetown.

No veteran deserves to be forgotten for his or her sacrifice to this great nation," said chapter member Rich Gough. "No person should be forgotten by their family. All too often, families never realized that their loved one was left on a shelf."

Under an [expanded New Jersey law signed in 2021](#), funeral homes can allow a qualified veterans organization to receive the cremated remains of veterans or eligible family members if those remains have not been claimed by a relative or friend within one year after cremation.

Gough said the time commitment for funeral homes is minimal. Once his group is granted access to the unclaimed cremated remains, members catalogue the remains, marking them with a location number. They then provide an Excel spreadsheet with the name, date of death and assigned location number.

"We then do all the investigation including acquiring any death certificates needed," Gough said. "The only time required by the funeral home is when we perform the inventory, on occasion," provide additional information they may have in their files and finally to turn over the cremains determined to be veterans or spouses and accept a copy of our records required by law."

The accumulation of unclaimed cremated remains is an oft-repeated concern of funeral homes, which are required by state law to hold the remains for a year before arranging disposition. Some homes, however, hold the remains for much longer, leading to storage issues. Gough's group aims to alleviate some of that problem by identifying and arranging for interment of the remains of veterans and their eligible family members.

Funeral Homes' Help Sought in Identifying Veterans' Remains

(continued)

While it is difficult to estimate how many unclaimed veterans remains are in the state, Gough said that in the funeral homes where they have been allowed to catalogue the remains, between 16 and 20 percent of the inventory are veterans.

The chapter's effort to find unclaimed remains of veterans began in 2011, Gough said, when a committee was formed to explore the issue. In August 2012, the first three remains were found at Ely Funeral Home in Neptune. With an improved search process, an addition 15 sets of veterans remains and two remains of eligible family members were uncovered at Ely.

To date, the chapter has found and interred 113 remains of veterans and their spouses and returned 27 to family members.

Gough said the chapter has been allowed to inventory the remains in 15 funeral homes in the state. With hundreds of funeral homes, the chapter's work is far from over. All the chapter needs is cooperation from funeral homes in accessing the remains they are storing.

The mission is not done for glory or recognition, Gough said.

The honor of knowing that we have been responsible to see a veteran complete the full circle of his or her life's journey and the family's, if any, gratitude of bringing closure to their loved one's life is all the gratification we need," Gough said.

Funeral homes looking to participate in the program should contact either Rich Gough at 732.350.7926 or Ernie Diorio at 732.254.5552. The chapter currently covers Monmouth and Ocean counties, but the members can assist any funeral home that contacts them

Recipients of the Quilt of Valor



On November 10th Wonder Bar in Asbury Park had an event honoring veterans called "Gangster Squad." It was hosted by Vincent Pastore a/k/a "Big Pussy" from the Soprano's. Ernie D'Orio presented a plaque to the proprietor of Wonder Bar for holding the event, which was greatly appreciated...And a good time was had by one and all.

Sent from my iPhone

Allen Saltzman



"Play HOOK-e" From PTSD

By Greg Kucharewski

NJSP TROOPERS ASSISTING TROOPS **FISHING & QUILTS OF VALOR**



Veterans and their families had a chance to go fishing for blackfish on Saturday, October 22, 2022, at the Marine Service Bureau Point Pleasant Station NJSP Troopers Assisting Troops (TAT) invited veteran men and women to participate in the 5th Annual Play HOOK-e from PTSD outdoor event to honor veterans for their service. Troopers from TAT, and various NJSP Units came to volunteered and partner with our "Play HOOK-e from PTSD" program to help veterans enjoy a day near the water with their family and friends. Organizers Mike Doherty, TAT, and Sgt. Rob Frake's team of Trooper Volunteers/Interns, along with Dave Gillespie's crew from Smoking 55 BBQ did a great job of planning the event and feeding everyone. For an added treat attendees were served Good Humor Ice Cream from Tom Gesior TG & Sons Ice Cream.

During lunch, veterans had an opportunity to enjoy friendly conversation while eating the delicious, homemade prepared food. A special ceremony by Quilts of Valor was conducted by Rebecca's Real Quilters to honor four recipients, Trooper Evgueni Brusov, US Air Force, Karen Noe, US Army, Tom Corbutt, US Army and Don Marantz, US Army.

While fishing the canal many veterans and children caught blackfish on green crabs donated by Jersey Hooker Outfitters. We appreciate the support from Bay Head Yacht Club, MA 22, Jersey Shore Surf Casters, Brielle Bait and Tackle, Grump's B & T, Betty and Nick's, The Reel Seat, Pell's Fish and Sport and Gabriele's B&T, Mullers Bakery, German Butcher, Jersey Shore Restrooms, Richard's Rentals and friends and family that contributed to support our veterans.

Operation HOOK IT



Summer 2022

Another successful mission we thank Eric Chamberlain and all the MA 22 volunteers, contributors, and boat captains for making this possible for our veterans.

Since June 2022, MA Deuce Deuce, Toms River, NJ surpassed the 2021 record of 251 veterans on boats and fishing from shore to over 460 veterans this year. I spoke to Eric Chamberlain, Event Chairman, Operation Hook It and we calculated all the veterans that were assigned to fish on boats, and Play HOOK-e from PTSD surf fishing, and shore events increased veteran participation. Congratulations to Eric and his team for coordinating all the trips for our veteran men and women.

The Fish Hawks Saltwater Anglers Club helped with this effort and took veterans out fishing during the summer for blowfish. The membership of the Fish Hawks really supported our warriors. Many more volunteer boat captains, private/party/charter captains and fishing clubs helped with this effort along with individual veteran advocates that provided their time, fuel, and support.



Mr. Ken Rylak, Chairperson of the Annual Youth Seminar, Fish Hawks Saltwater Anglers Club received the 2022 Youth Education Award at the JCAA Sportsman of the Year Dinner located at the Captains Inn, Forked River, NJ. Mr. Rylak was honored

organizing and reaching out to Joint Base McGuire Officials to enroll children whose parents are deployed or stationed at Joint Base. The Youth Seminar is a day of teaching Veteran and Active-Duty Military Children fishing techniques at learning stations.

Since 2009, over 450 children have participated in the program and each child received a tackle box and rod & reel combo to take home.



EARLE NAVAL FISHING PEIR

We appreciate the time and effort of Sean Moley took to work with Naval Weapon Station Earle Moral, Welfare, and Recreation officials to extend pier access to disabled veterans that receive less 100 percent compensation.

Call to apply for a 2023 application 732-866-2448.

MWR FISHING PROGRAM IS NOW OPEN TO ALL DAVs!
Starting Monday, October 10, 2022, MWR will open its
Fishing program to all authorized DAVs. You must have
a Veterans Health Identification Card to apply.
Applications will be processed at BLDG C-29,
Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
For more information please call 732-866-2448

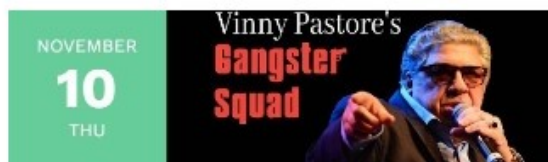


NOW OPEN TO ALL DAVS!
Pier fishing will close December 31, 2022



Sean Moley will distribute loaner rods and reels at for veterans and active-duty personnel at Earle Fishing Pier. We thank Roy H, Vietnam War Veteran, and custom rod crafter for his contribution to keep the Play HOOK-e from PTSD program self-renewing with new equipment. For more information about contact MWR 732-866-2448

Thank You **Wonder Bar Asbury Park**



Vincent Pastore's Gangster Squad
Benefit for the Veterans

at the Wonder Bar

Event Details
Vinny Pastore and The Gangster Squad 2nd Annual
Benefit for the Veterans

We thank everyone for coming out to support VVA Chapter 12 at the Wonder Bar. We also thank Vinny Pastore's Gangster Squad, Killer Joe, Joe Sernio, Bobby "T" and Debbie DeLisa for making this a very successful night for our veteran men and women.



DAR presentation 11/12/22



Toms River Elk's presentation Veterans Day

Rebecca's Reel Quilters
Stitching the hearts of our veterans
 View Quilts of Valor photos [here>>](#)



Over 70 QOV were presented since 2017 at VVA 12 meetings and events.



Art Therapy every 3rd Saturday phone Ashley to register 201-579-0041

Mobile Sportfishing Permit

Free Mobile Sportfishing Permit



All eligible disabled veterans can apply for an IBSP 2023 Mobile Sportfishing Permit to drive on the beach. Veterans must supply the following: Form DD 214 Honorable Discharge, Valid NJ Driver License and Registration, Veterans ID Card proof of service-connected disability. If you plan to fish on the beach you must register for a Free NJ Saltwater Recreational Registration Card. [Register>>](#) It is suggested new beach drivers take a beach safety driving course. NJBBA offers a beach driving course at: [NJBBA Driving>>](#) For more information about permits and hours contact: Island Beach State Park, 732-793-0506.

NEW JERSEY VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL VIETNAM ERA MUSEUM & EDUCATIONAL CENTER

VVA CHAPTER 12 REPORT DATED 11.30.2022

Submitted by Richard L. Magovern NJ State Liaison

UPCOMMING EVENTS

12.31.22 Exploring the Vietnam Era

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Roger Harris, a Marine who served in Vietnam and is featured in the Ken Burns documentary.

Watch on website NJVVMF.ORG

12.14.21 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

11:30 AM- 2:00 PM at the Memorial

This Organization co-ordinates an annual pilgrimage from Maine to the Arlington National Cemetery. They stop at the Memorial to place a wreath at each of the 366 panels listing the names and dates of those New Jersey residents killed in Vietnam.

THE MEMORIAL.

09.25.22 NEW JERSEY RUN FOR THE FALLEN

MILITARY AND SUPPORT CREWS RUN ONE MILE FOR
EACH

NEW JERSEY SERVICE MEMBER WHO DIED DURING THE
GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

10.05.22 24TH ANNUAL SALUTE TO PATRIOTISM GALA

PRIMARY FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THE YEAR

10.27.22 SCHOLAR SERIES FEATURING LARRY BERMAN

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MODERATED CONVERSATIONS
VIA ZOOM AT NJVVMF.ORG

11.11.22 VETERAN DAY CEREMONY

THIS WAS THE NEW JERSEY OFFICIAL VETERAN DAY
CEREMONY, HELD INSIDE DUE TO RAIN, WHICH
GOVERNOR MURPHY ATTENDED AND MADE REMARKS

All are encouraged to tune in to the very successful, informative and poignant THIRD THURSDAY VET CHATS held at 7:30 PM via ZOOM on the website NJVVMF.ORG. These chats are our guys talking to us, PLEASE LISTEN.

The current exhibit THERE AND BACK is still in place. No matter how we each got there or back it is a graphic reminder of things almost for-

CONGRATULATIONS MAJOR GENERAL SHARON BANNISTER

This year at the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and Museum's Gala one of our Associate Members was honored, Major General Sharon Bannister.

General Bannister has had a distinguished career in the United States Air Force. She is currently serving as Director of Medical Operations of the office of The Surgeon General of the United States Air Force.

General Bannister is also a Dentist, Periodontist, which is what her position upon her entrance into the USAF. She has distinguished herself throughout her career and achieved her rank and position now. General Bannister has another story and position. She is a Gold Star Family member. Her Dad, Captain Stephen A. Rusch, an USAF F4 Weapons Systems Officer along with his Aircraft Commander, Captain Carter Howell were shot down and killed while on a bombing run over the Ho Chi Minh Trail March 7, 1972.

Besides her military responsibilities, General Bannister volunteers at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, DC. There she helps visitors, veterans, and the families of the 58,281 fallen whose names are on The Wall.

We presented General Bannister with a gift of roses from our Chapter.
You can see a picture of the presentation with this article. Let us all
thank her for her amazing service to our country.



From: Chapter 12, Vietnam Veterans of America t

To: our Sister in Service and Great Friend.

Dear Sharon (General)

Congratulations on being an Honoree at the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation Salute to Patriotism Gala 2022. You are a true Patriot and have shown that in all you do as an Air Force General Officer and as a person. Thank you for your service to our country and for the person you are. You have been an inspiration and true role model to all you have touched in your career, your family, and private life. Your work with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington, DC, shows how much you care about Vietnam Veterans and truly honors the sacrifice and memory of your Father.

Captain Stephen A. Rusch.



New 988 Veterans Crisis Hotline: VA announced veterans now have the option to **Dial 988 then Press 1** to connect with caring, qualified responders for 24/7 crisis assistance. “During a crisis, every second counts,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This new, shorter number makes it easier for veterans and those who care about them to reach life-saving support without having to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care.” While [Dial 988 then Press 1](#) is a new option for contacting the Veterans Crisis Line, the original number, 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, remains available, and individuals can make contact via chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or by texting 838255.



Dear Veteran,

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities specifically pertaining to the respiratory, auditory and mental disorders body systems. The proposed updates to the rating schedule for these conditions will enable VA to incorporate modern medical data and terminology to provide Veterans with more accurate and consistent decisions. Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated. Updating the rating schedule allows Veterans to receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge relating to their condition.

By incorporating modern medical data in the assessment of disabilities and how they impact earning capacity, Veterans will receive evaluations which more accurately compensate them for their service-connected disabilities. Proposed updates include:

Modernizing the evaluative rating criteria for sleep apnea, using developments in medical knowledge to evaluate it based on its responsiveness to treatment, bringing the rating criteria for sleep apnea more closely in line with the stated purpose of the rating schedule.

Evaluating tinnitus (ringing in the ears) as a symptom of the underlying disease which causes it, rather than as a stand-alone disability.

Evaluating mental health conditions based on a more robust and holistic approach that assesses how impactful the disability is to cognition, interpersonal relationships, task completion, life activities and self-care. Additionally, the proposed evaluation criteria include a 10% minimum evaluation for having one or more service-connected mental health conditions and will no longer require "total occupational and social impairment" to attain a 100% evaluation.

No change to a Veteran's current rating would occur due to these proposed changes. If the proposed changes are finalized, Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation, but no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the Veteran's disability is shown to have occurred. The public has 60 days to provide comments to VA regarding the two proposed updates via the Federal Register notices located [here](#) and [here](#).

Thomas J. Murphy Director, Northeast District

Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits

4th Annual Flame Out - A Walk to Extinguish RSD/CRPS



**Sunday, September 18, 2022
Joe Palaia Park, Oakhurst, NJ**

RSDSA Walk a Success

The day dawned bright, with moderate temperatures and humidity, typical of late summer.

Sunday, September 18, was a perfect day for the Fourth Annual Flame Out Walk to Extinguish RSD/CRPS. The event was held at Joe Palaia Park in Ocean Township, N.J.

This year's walk was dedicated to Stephanie Theresa Smith, who succumbed to the ravages of this disease on October 4, 2021, at age 46. Her parents, Diana and Peter, offered to match up to \$10,000 in donations, in her memory.

The venue, set in a 240 acre park, with well laid out trails, paved to accommodate wheelchairs and bikes, wound through open fields and forested settings. The walk route was one and three quarter miles.

The sign in area was set up by volunteers, many of them members of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 12, the primary sponsor of the event. Coffee, tea, water, snacks, rolls and pastries greeted the participants, donated by local businesses. Ice cream pops, also donated, came at the end of the walk.

A total of 83 people signed in for the walk. Those unable to physically participate were provided with a sitting area.

Five RSD/CRPS Pain Warriors took part in the walk, leading the assembled after brief introductions and welcoming speeches by the Hopkins and Smith families. Prior to the walk, Dr. Michael Cooney of Calmare Therapy NJ/USA, a sponsor of the event, provided information on treatment options.

The walk was a success, both financially and in raising awareness of this insidious disease. It also provided a venue for networking and support services. At last count, \$40, 500 had been collected, easily topping the \$30,000 goal and more than doubling last year's amount. Plans for next year's walk are already underway.

Special thanks to our Chapter members who either donated to and/or walked in the event.
VVA

Chapter 12 has been the primary sponsor of the walks and an early advocate of the Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Association.

If you would like to volunteer to be part of the planning committee for next year, contact Linda or Bob Hopkins at 732-531-2574.





POW/MIA REPORT

September 2022

At present, more than 81,500 Americans remain missing from WW2, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf Wars, and the El Coronado Canyon. Out of the more than 81,500 missing 75% of the losses are located in the Indo-Pacific, and over 41,000 of the missing are presumed lost at sea (i.e. ship losses, known aircraft water losses, etc. Below are the numbers of missing as of August

World War 2 72,293 North Korea 5 Americans

Korean War 7,530 South Korea 7 Americans

Vietnam War 1,582

Cold War 126

Gulf Wars 5

El Coronado Canyon 1

Total POW/MIA 's 81,537

Report Submitted by"

Bucky Grimm, POW/MIA Committee

Chapter needs to recruit AVVA members to carry on our Legacy.



ASSOCIATES OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
8917 Colesville Rd • Silver Spring • MD • 20910 www.avva.org

NEW MEMBER:

State/Chapter: 12 At-Large? ☐
Name: _____ Phone: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Email: _____

RENEWAL:

Membership #, if known: _____ State/Chapter: _____ At-Large? ☐
Name: _____ Email: _____
Mailing Address: _____

DUES

☐ Annual Membership \$20 ☐ Life Membership Full payment \$100
☐ Life Member Time Payment Option: \$25 down / \$25 monthly until paid in full

VVA Dual Membership:

☐ Life Membership: \$50

PAYMENT METHOD

DO NOT SEND CASH

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____
Card holder's signature: _____

Make your check payable to **AVVA**

Remit this application and payment to:

AVVA • PO Box 49029 • Baltimore • MD • 21297-4929



Hello my fellow men and women Vets!

My name is Dennis Champ I am giving guitar lessons for Veterans at two locations. These lessons are free, if you don't have a guitar I can supply one for you.

On Tuesdays I am at the Manalapan Community Center 114 RT 33 at 11:30.

On Thursdays at 10 AM at the Jackson ELKS Lodge East Veterans Highway, Jackson.

If you are interested you can contact me anytime at dsclnc1953@gmail.com or 732-239-6288. You are never too old to learn, come on out and have some fun and meet other Vets. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Thanks, Dennis

Agent Orange Zone

Filing a VA claim for disability compensation

Disability compensation benefits are a monthly, tax-free payment to Veterans who were injured, sustained a long-term illness or experienced a worsening medical condition during their military service.

In addition to compensating Veterans whose disabilities incurred while serving in the military, Veterans may also be granted compensation for specific post-service medical conditions that arose because of their military service. Known as presumptive disabilities, these conditions may not have arisen in service but may be granted as service-connected because its occurrence can be linked directly to military service.

VA recently added new medical conditions to a growing list of presumptive disabilities, which you can view [here](#). These conditions can be presumed to have occurred because of an exposure to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and service in the Gulf War.

How to file a claim for disability compensation

The COVID-19 pandemic has not halted the claims process. Veterans can still file claims, and VA is still processing them. VA recommends filing a claim online, but it can still be done in person or through the mail. To get started, visit the [VA disability compensation webpage](#) and follow the steps listed below.

Step One: Prepare documents before starting your application

Gather any [evidence](#), documentation and/or required forms that support your claim before beginning your application. This might include:

- A completed [Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits Form \(VA Form 21-526EZ\)](#),
- Private medical records related to your condition, and/or
- Military personnel records

You must include both the required and (if necessary) supplementary documents or your application will be voided. In some cases, you may need to turn in [one or more forms](#) to support your claim.

Step Two: File your claim

There are three ways to file a claim: online, in person (with a VA representative, or with a Veterans Service Organization) or through the mail. Online applications are simple and easy to complete. You can access the application by visiting the [Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits webpage](#), then sign into your VA.gov account (or create a new account at the [ID.me website](#)). You can save your progress online for up to one year before the application expires.

If you do not have access to a computer or internet device, VA also accepts printed disability claim applications that can be filed either in person or through the mail. In person applications can be submitted to your local VA regional office. Visit [VA.gov/find-locations](#) to find a VA regional office in your state. If you wish to mail your application, please do so by sending it to the following address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

Step Three: VA will review your claim and notify you of its decision

VA [may require a few months](#) to make a decision on claim applications. The time it takes to review your application depends on three factors:

- The type of claim filed
- How many injuries or disabilities claimed and how complex they are, and/or
- [How long it takes VA to collect additional evidence](#) needed to decide your claim. This evidence may include service treatment records, service personnel records, private and federal treatment records, and [compensation and pension exams](#).

Once your disability claim application has been reviewed and all required documentation has been received, VA will decide on your claim and send you a notification letter of its decision. The notification letter will include specific details regarding the decisions made on your claim. You can expect to receive your notification letter 7 to 10 business days after a decision is made. Please contact a [VA call center](#) if it does not arrive within this period.

Step Four: After you receive a decision

You may ask for a second review if you are not satisfied with VA's decision. Veterans who filed a claim on or after February 19, 2019, may choose from three application review options. The first, a [Supplemental Claim](#), allows you to add new and relevant evidence (that VA doesn't already have). The second, a [Higher-Level Review](#), asks for a senior reviewer to examine your case. This option does not allow you to edit or add to your current application. And lastly, a [Board Appeal](#) requests a Veterans Law Judge with the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review your application.

If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after submitting a request to have your decision reviewed, please visit the [VA Decision Reviews and Appeals website](#).

For more information

Life comes with plenty of challenges, but ensuring the wellbeing of you and your family should not be one of them. Visit [VA.gov](#) to learn more about VA benefits and services.

If you wish to learn more about the claims process, visit the [Vantage Point](#) blog platform to keep up to date on disability claims and benefit eligibility requirements.

For more general information on the VA disability compensation and the process, [click here](#). For more on eligibility, [click here](#). You can also watch this [video series](#) produced by the Office of Information and Technology (OIT).

To request additional help filing a disability claim, learn more about [accredited representatives](#) or contact a VA regional office near you to speak with a counselor by calling 800-827-1000.



**New Pilot VAVS Program
“Courtesy Transportation”**

**VA New Jersey Health Care System is seeking contributions of Uber
gift cards for Veterans
in need of transportation assistance.**

**Uber services will be offered to Veterans that are not eligible for
beneficiary travel and have no means of transportation home.**

Uber gift cards are now available nationwide.

**Any questions regarding this special need, please contact Voluntary
Service at
908-604-5814.**