

# INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 29 Issue 01

Veteran's News that needs to be Read **SPRING 2019**



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Happy Passover

Happy Easter

To our VVA members, families and supporters



## IN MEMORIAM



### VVA Chapter 20

- John C. Grentzinger, Sr USMC 1943 - 2018
- James R. Hasenohr US Army 1949 - 2018
- Keith W. Lape US Army 1949 - 2018
- Combat Medic
- Robert J. Melody USAF 1935 -2018
- Lynn "Ken" Moore US Army 1943 - 2019

### VVA Chapter 140

- Robert E. Dall US ARMY 1945 - 2018

**MAY THEY REST IN PEACE**



**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2019**

January 25, 26, 27

April 19, 20 21

June 14, 15, 16

September 27, 28, 29

**On-Line INTERCHANGE** is the Bi-monthly publication of the VVA-NYSC. Comments and contributions are encouraged and can be sent to:

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of this organization. Individuals with different viewpoints and opinions are invited to submit them to the Chapter by the **deadline** of the **Third Friday of each month**. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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Francisco Muñiz III



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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

Let the 2019 season begin. Started in January and as predicted our meeting was very well attended. Again, new folks are coming along with our regulars. I think we provide much info and do have presentations.

We invited a group called Clear Path for Veterans to present their program. Gordie had asked to have them on the agenda. They gave a very good presentation and sounds like they have a really good program for our Veterans. I won't go into all they do but if interested please go to their website: [clearpath4vets.com](http://clearpath4vets.com). They need our help legislatively to receive grants to run their operation and we have said we will help if we can.

I keep needing to harp on all the importance for you to send delegates to this convention. Yes, it will be costly, but we are talking about the future of VVA which a concern for you should be. You all have ideas as to where we should go but those ideas mean nothing if you are not there to voice them. So please put funds aside for this. Remember you have many fundraises throughout the year and spend those funds on many different issues.

The one glaring issue I have and always had is raising funds under your VVA banner. The donor gives you money for your chapter to use. Then you turn around and give to someone else or another organization. Is that really what we should do? Many of you also receive Household Goods money and again I see you give the funds to others. Here is a novel idea. Use for your own organization. I'm not trying to bitch you out (or maybe I am) but let's get back to VVA. Those other groups can fend for themselves. We will not be here forever.

That statement is very real as you all have seen a very active VVA member from Chapter 20 Ken Moore just passed away. Ken has done so much for us Veterans and our State Council that he sure will be missed. We keep losing our members every day so if you think VVA will be around forever it ain't gonna happen.

Now some more business and this is your first official notice. February 28<sup>th</sup> is or has been here. That means our fiscal year has now ended and YES, reports are due. Finance report now and Election reports in April. Most of you do 990n's. Please download VVA's report and then do 990n with the IRS website. Anyone can do as no finance figures are needed. We have made this almost too simple, but we understand some still have trouble doing it. Why not ask me to help you instead of just not doing it, or letting me keep on bugging you or get your Chapter suspended? As far as Election report, most all you need to do is change the date because you have very few changes one year to the next.

This is also very important as you need these reports in to attend the Convention. For these forms you need to go to [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) and then go to the bottom of the page, link to the word RESOURCES then link to Chapter Information, Handbooks, Policies and Forms and you will find the forms.

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We keep getting many questions on the Working Groups. Please be patient and let them do their work. They should be providing answers at the National BOD meeting in April. Remember they are not making decisions they are providing info. You, the delegates, will decide where we are going. From what I understand is that some resolutions and or amendments will be coming out for discussion and vote. They will be reported out. May 17<sup>th</sup> is the date that the Amendments & Resolutions will be on vva.org and all chapters should get a copy. So, make sure your delegates get to review before convention.

April 20<sup>th</sup> is our next meeting. Yes, we know, it is Passover and Easter. We have a contract with hotel and that is only time available to us and we will go with this date. We will try to get meeting over early Saturday so you all can get back home. Reminder, if you have hotel reservations for Saturday and not staying, please cancel your room because you will be charged. This hotel fills up and I watched in January where they had to turn people away.

So, hope to see you in April and as always, any question on anything please call me (518) 338-8147 or email [nedvva@roadrunner.com](mailto:nedvva@roadrunner.com).

### Vice President Report

Grant T. Coates

The winter season for New York State has been rather unusual. Extreme shifts in temperature and rain/snow conditions are crating hardships. Reach out to known veterans and check on their safety and possible needs.

Remember convention obligations on registration and travel.

Some chapters have contacted me for assistance and interpretation of National By Laws. Feel free to contact me any time.

Contracts have been completed for the 2019 NYSCVVA meeting to be held at Tioga Downs Hotel:

January 26

April 20

June 15

Sept 28

Make reservations early. The hotel is becoming very popular and full.

### CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Grant T. Coates

The VVA calendar has the Convention starting on July 16, 2019. The opening ceremonies are on Wednesday. The Committee has determined that July 17<sup>th</sup> is the official start of the convention.

The deadline for submitting proposed constitutional amendments is March 17, 2019 ("at least 120 days

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prior to the commencement of the National Convention,” per the VVA Constitution, Article IV, Section 5). No proposals will be accepted after midnight, March 17.

The Constitution Committee will meet on April 12 during the National Board of Directors meeting in Silver Spring. During this session the committee will review all proposed amendments and prepare its report to the membership. The committee’s report will be mailed to state councils and chapters. It also will be available on the VVA website no later than May 17.

The committee will hold an open hearing at the Convention before the amendments are presented to the delegates for action. We encourage everyone to attend this hearing to learn about the amendments and voice their opinions.

Vietnam Veterans of America will conduct its election of all National Officer and Board positions during the 19th National Convention to be held July 16-20, 2019, in Spokane, Wash.

**Positions Open for Election**

VVA National President, VVA National Vice-President, VVA National Secretary, VVA National Treasurer, VVA National Board of Directors (At-large) [All Ten Seats], VVA National Board of Directors (Regional) [All Nine Seats].

The time period this election announcement covers is January 1 to March 31, 2019. Please pay special attention to the deadline of March 31, 2019. This is a 90-day window to submit a Letter of Intent.

**Term of Office** - All National Officer and Board positions are for terms of two years, beginning at the close of the 2019 National Convention, through the close of the 2021 National Convention.

**Eligibility** -Candidates for all positions open for election must be individual members of VVA in good standing.

Candidates for National Officer positions must meet the requirements to hold office as set forth in the VVA National Constitution under Article I, Section 5, Paragraph A, as revised August 12, 2017.

**To Wit:** “To qualify for election... to any of these offices a candidate must have been an individual member of the Corporation, in good standing, (1) for a continuous period of not less than twelve months immediately preceding the opening of the National Convention at which such candidate seeks election;... and (2) such candidate must have held a position as an officer or board member at the national level or as an officer at the state council or chapter level, during any continuous period of twelve months prior to the date of the opening of the National Convention.”

Candidates for At-large and Regional Board of Directors must meet the requirements to hold office as set forth in the VVA National Constitution, Article I, Section 4, Paragraph B (1 and 2) for Regional Directors, and Article I, Section 4, Paragraph B (1 and 3) for At-large Directors as revised August 12, 2017.

**To Wit:**

“To qualify for election, a candidate must have been a member of the Corporation, in good standing, for a continuous period of not less than the twelve months immediately preceding the opening of the National

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**(Continue from pg. 5) - Constitution**

Convention at which candidate seeks election.... The candidate must have held an elected position at the national, state, or chapter level, for any continuous period of twelve months prior to the date of the opening of the National Convention.”

In addition, candidates for Regional Board positions must reside within the region they wish to represent.

Letter of Intent - Prospective candidates must submit a Letter of Intent to the VVA Elections Committee postmarked no later than March 31, 2019. Starting with this election cycle, prospective candidates considering running for positions will need to include their telephone numbers, email addresses, and physical mailing addresses in the body of the Letter of Intent or on a separate sheet of paper. Prospective candidates also must include the position they seek. A prospective candidate may run for only one position. The Elections Committee will send the Candidate’s Packet by email unless otherwise requested by the candidate.

The Elections Committee will begin accepting Letters of Intent on January 1, 2019, at the following address: VVA ELECTIONS COMMITTEE, c/o Adolph Gardner, 7 Crum Road, Walkersville, MD 21793-8018

Running From the Floor - Candidates running for office must abide by certain restrictions. Those who plan to run for an elected position from the floor cannot announce their intent to run for office either publicly or privately, cannot campaign in any way or distribute any campaign materials, including on the Internet, and cannot accept any contributions prior to being approved as a candidate by the Elections Committee at the Convention. Any violation of this rule will result in disqualification.

Candidate's Packets - Once the Elections Committee has received a candidate’s Letter of Intent, the Candidate Packet will be emailed, unless requested by U.S. postal mail. These packets contain further important information, instructions, and rules regarding the conduct of the election process that are of vital importance to every candidate. Included in these packets will be all necessary forms. Candidates are required to complete the forms and return them to the Elections Committee.

All information regarding the 2019 Convention is located on the website <https://vva.org/national-convention/2019/elections/>

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ted Wilkinson, Chair

<b>VVA</b>	<b>AVVA</b>	<b>New Members in Dec</b>
INDIVIDUAL 7,500	AIND 2,489	VVA: 378
LIFEMP 73,779	ALP 6,665	AVVA: 74
IVI 2,290	ALT 23	
VPHV 504	AIVI 855	<b>Deceased Members Reported in Dec</b>
	APHV 24	VVA: 57      AVVA: 8
<b>TOTAL: 84,073</b>	<b>TOTAL: 10,056</b>	
includes 1,314		
Women Veterans		

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**Membership Totals by Region**

VVA +/-	AVVA +/-	VVA +/-	AVVA +/-
Region I 3,991 -14	306 +4	Region VI 9,401 +26	1,075 +6
<b>Region II 14,390 -6</b>	<b>1,824 +7</b>	Region VII 7,605 +17	1,045 +16
Region III 14,901 +22	1,884 +32	Region VIII 3,742 +22	328 -2
Region IV 9,052 +60	904 +5	Region IX 9,381 +9	1,217 +26
Region V 11,546 +53	1,465 -13	Living outside the US 64 -1	8 0

**Top 25 VVA Chapters in Membership**

ST	Chapter #	Total Members	ST	Chapter #	Total Members
1. MD	0172	1,031	14. MO	0317	417
2. TN	0203	853	15. IL	0299	411
3. PA	0862	810	16. OK	0751	377
4. MI	0154	793	17. WV	0628	374
<b>5. NY</b>	<b>0077</b>	<b>674</b>	18. ND	0941	354
<b>6. NY</b>	<b>0020</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>19. NY</b>	<b>0082</b>	<b>329</b>
7. FL	1036	592	NJ	0012	329
8. MD	0451	568	20. VA	0227	308
9. CA	0391	553	21. MI	0267	306
10. AL	1067	546	<b>22. NY</b>	<b>0049</b>	<b>303</b>
11. SD	1054	494	23. MI	0528	299
<b>12. NY</b>	<b>0011</b>	<b>469</b>	24. CA	0047	296
13. TX	0137	448	25. CA	0223	294

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**Western District Report**

**Mike Walker**

**VVA Chapters #20, #77, #193, #268, #459, #865, #978**

This week we found out member of Chapter 20 and a man who was a great advocate for veterans Ken Moore. Ken was known by many and will be missed.

All the chapters in Western New York are up and doing well. Now if we can get the weather to cooperate it would be great.

At the Niagara County Veterans Council it was disclosed that the they are going to start a

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so any county vet with a Purple Heart can get recognized. At this time they are figuring a way away they can find them and proving that they received the Purple Heart.

At Chapter 77 they are taking applications for the Peter Tycz scholarship.

They are trying to give out 30+ scholarships and I hope they do.

All Chapters should be sending as many members to this years Convention. The discussion of what is going to happen with VVA national is going to be decided. If you don't send members you'll have to live with what the attendees decide.

### Chapter 77 AVVA;

Lori Paton

Chapter 77 of WNY AVVA had a very productive year in 2018. Mary Lynn Bodine and I were appointed co-presidents as well as delegate and alternate for this year's convention.

Our group has increased from two active members to fourteen. Besides helping Chapter 77 with fundraising events, the AVVA began running the Paul Rudnicky food pantry in August. Through the food pantry, we have been able to help the children and grandchildren of veterans at Easter by supplying filled baskets and at Christmas with gifts. This past Christmas season, we distributed gifts to 44 children from 16 families.

We also remembered our hospitalized veterans at Christmas. The AVVA brought 58 gift bags to the Buffalo VA Hospital for distribution for those patients who were unable to spend Christmas at home. The hospital has a 20 bed nursing home on its premises called Willow Lodge. The AVVA brought hand made blankets and gift bags to the residents housed there.

For 2019, the AVVA hopes to continue and expand the work we have done for our vets and their families. We look forward to new opportunities presented to us through Chapter 77 and the community.

### Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421, #807

LAST SUNDAY FEB 3, I went to Northport VA Medical Center for the Chaplin Service Award. On February 9, I went to Museum of American Armor for the Vietnam War Medal Ceremony. February 10, I went to Stonybrook Veterans Home for the Chaplin Award Ceremony. Monday Feb. going to Northport VA Hospital. for a VSO meeting. With the Director of the Hospital. It was my honor to be at 77th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 2018. I attended the Inauguration of Thomas DiNapoli New York State Comptroller on January 13, 2019. Also it was my pleasure to be invited to the Inauguration of Mike Lipetri on January 24, 2019.

### LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Bing Markee

Governor Cuomo's State of State Report stated that he is in favor of the following Points: Support for Transgender Troops; expand PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Program expand from 16 counties to all 62, reward military experience and training with academic credit; prevent pension poaching scams. Everyone should be cognizant of the fact that these are, at this point, just proposals.

## Vietnam Veterans of America

## Region 2

*Vietnam Veterans of America**Region 2 DE·NJ·NY·PA·*

Ted Wilkinson (585) 322-6722

Twenty-five

The Membership Committee report in the November/December issue of the *Veteran* announced the following membership change. In addition, the Web Weekly on December 14<sup>th</sup> had a brief article stating:

“On October 20, 2018, VVA's National Board of Directors passed a motion to have one class of membership: Life Membership. All active and pending three-year members have been converted to life members. After October 31, 2018, all dues payments received for one-year membership will be refunded, along with instructions for renewing as a life member. Active one-year members will remain active until their current term expires and are invited to renew as life members thereafter.”

When our membership department implemented the change on November 1<sup>st</sup> the computer program would not accept members as life without a DD214 recognized and they were vanished into electron land. What appeared to be a small hic cup, turned into a major situation nobody anticipated. We could not alter the programing, so we called in the professionals. The experts worked without any success which left the membership without a way to convert more than 800 three-year members without a DD214 recorded; into a “pending” status. The ultimate decision by the VVA officers and Membership Chair was to simply convert all those “no” listing in the 214 column on the roster to “yes”; apparently meaning none of these members will be required to submit proof of service to National.

All four states in Region 2 were in attendance for the January 2019 National Board of Directors meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland. Also, in attendance were several Vietnam Veterans guests that served in Vietnam from the Republic of Korea (ROK)

2019 convention in Spokane, Washington is July 15-20; Registration is \$125.00, but the shuttle between airport and hotels is free.

Then its back to eastern USA for the 2020 leadership conference in Akron, Ohio and the 2021 convention in Greenville, South Carolina.

Veterans against Drugs committee was taken over by VVA in 2005 and has always been chaired by Dave Simmons who has done a super excellent outstanding job. I am bringing this committee up because opioids has just become the #1 cause of deaths in America. To help promote our work we have a Free Skate night once a year in Silver Spring, Maryland, and because of its success we are planning another venue during the year. The committee has started working on awareness of the human trafficking. The statistics are absolutely staggering; 1 in 4 families are affected and 1 out of every 3 runaways will end up being forced into sex trafficking. The committee had JUST ASK .org, an organization out of McLean, Virginia formed to promote awareness and to safeguard communities.

Vietnam Veterans of America

veterans against drugs committee chair: Dave Simmons 304-248-8488 email [incountryvvet@comcast.net](mailto:incountryvvet@comcast.net)

committee member: Ted Wilkinson 585-322-6722 email [yankeeted@aol.com](mailto:yankeeted@aol.com)

**VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT**

Nick Valenti

Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA) continues to thrive with their crochet squad activities and donations to local community outreach groups. Their December 2018 “Give-Away” program was again a great success. Vietnam Veterans Chapter #205 started this program decades ago and has been continued by a coalition of veterans from the many wars our Nation has been involved in since our service years.

There is a transition taking place as our Vietnam Incarcerated Veterans grow fewer and fewer. In what was billed as “Veterans’ Educational Trainings” focusing on VA benefits and employment held at Mid-State Correctional Facility held on November 8, 2018 I had the pleasure to address a large group of veterans from many eras. I enjoyed the company of such presenters as: Benjamin Pomerance, Deputy Director for Program Development, NYS Division of Veterans’ Affairs; Steven Goris, Division of Veterans’ Affairs; Vincent Scalisi, Northern NY, VA Outreach Center; Heather Caron, VA Crisis Intervention Services; Rex MacQueen III, VA Crisis Intervention Services; John Pollack, VA Healthcare; and Dr. Jeffrey Fox and Michael Willis of the Red Cross.

Once an overview of Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) was presented by John Darcy Guidance Specialist we were broken up into four groups with presenters addressing each group and answering their inquiries as they were brought forth. The questions were wide ranging. My part dealt with inquiries related to planning for release. Luckily, I had downloaded our pamphlet entitled “Planning for Your Release,” A Guide for Incarcerated Veterans provided by the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (a not-for-profit corporation). This useful guide touched on such subjects as toll-free phone numbers, housing, finding & keeping a job, health, substance abuse & Mental Health, financial help, legal help and women Veterans. Another section of the guide dealt with Federal benefits for the incarcerated veteran, for the family of the veteran, benefit payments; help seeking benefits and what to do when seeking benefits on your own. By the end of the day I left a copy of the twenty-four (24) page printout with the Social worker who had contacted me for this event. I asked him to feel free to share the information as needed.

The interests of our veterans incarcerated included inquiries about H.R. 4854 – Justice Served Act of 2018. This bill amends the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 to add as a purpose area under the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, increasing the capacity of prosecutors to address the backlog of violent crime cases involving suspects identified through DNA evidence. The Department of Justice (DOJ) must allocate a specified percentage of grant funds for such purpose, subject to limitations. Finally, a great deal of interest dealt with Veterans Treatment Courts.

Our New York State DOCCS is moving in the direction of establishing veterans’ residential units within their facilities. As of my latest information these have been established in such facilities as Groveland, Mid-State, Gouverneur, New Clinton Annex and Jamestown. This movement and the increased interest of veterans in facilities to begin their own crocheting groups to form comradery spells a healthy future for our veteran population if they can follow in the footsteps of such crocheting facilities as Auburn and Attica.

As the word gets out as to my availability, I hope to visit more facilities and make our presence better known to our incarcerated veterans.

## Central District Report

Nick Valenti

VVA Chapters #85, #103, #205, #296, #377, #480, #704, #708, #803, #827, #896, #944

The winter months of 2018 have been a busy time for many of our VVA Chapters in Central New York. I received a report from Chapter #704 President Lou Patti out of Auburn and he shared their busy schedule with me. Much of their promoting had to do with getting veterans to work together in support of Veteran interests in the community and raise money for a Vietnam Memorial in Cayuga County- their home county.

Here is a breakdown of their activities. On Saturday, September 29, 2018 they held a joint dinner with three other veteran organizations. The groups included the Carnicelli-Indelicato American Legion Post #1776, the Auburn Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1975 and the Italian American War Veterans Post #9. Guests included their local Congressman John Katko; local New York State Assemblyman Gary Finch; the City of Auburn Mayor Michael Quill; the new Cayuga County Administrator Justin Woods; and the new Director of Veterans Services in Cayuga County Jessica Strassle. At this dinner friends were reacquainted and bonds were strengthened among all four organizations in attendance. This was the sixth annual joint dinner held and its success can be measured by the increased attendance in each successive year of the dinner. VVA Chapter #704 followed this dinner with a Veterans Day Parade on November 11, 2018 at the Finger Lakes Mall just outside of Auburn. The parade was attended by veteran's groups, the National Guard, a Drum and Bugle Corps, and a number of retired military vehicles all led by a color guard made of VVA Chapter #704 members. Following the parade, a concert was held featuring the rock and roll band "Held Hostage," students from Weedsport Central School District performing a Bob Hope Show reenactment and a surprise musical arrangement from a group of musicians performing for the purpose of helping Chapter #704 raise funds for their anticipated Memorial. All contributions were made out to the Cayuga County Veterans Memorial Committee, a 501 (C)(3). Finally, the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Wreaths Across America ceremony was held on December 15, 2018. It was the largest and best attended ceremony ever held by Chapter

#704 and the Port Byron School District students. There were 34 wreath

presenters representing not only the six branches of service as well as all POW/MIA's but also seven Gold Star families. In attendance were local political figures - all of whom are veterans and our guest speaker retiring Cayuga County Sheriff David Gould, a member of Chapter #704. This ceremony was supported by the Italian American War Veterans, Ministro Ministries, American Legion Post #1324 Swietoniowski - Kopeczek, the Army National Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1975, and Saints Peter and John Episcopal Church.

The next report comes from VVA Chapter #944 out of Utica. Tom Buono, Chapter President keeps his team rolling along. On July 28, 2018 his members participated in the Honor America Parade. They had marchers and car riders. Following the parade, the Chapter met for coffee and or breakfast at Charlie's. They came dressed to represent being attired in short sleeve VVA white shirts, black pants, black shoes with their VVA windbreakers, beret and black baseball cap. On August 14, 2018 the Chapter President announced the annual Patriot Run/Walk event was a resounding success. The event was highlighted with a recognition of several Gold Sponsors. On Sunday September 30, 2018 they participated in the Gold Star Mothers and Families Day. The Chapter had a wreath-laying ceremony at 2:00 pm followed by dinner at Hart's Inn. The event represents the 14<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of the day. As President Buono said at the event "This is a very important because these Gold Star families want their sons and daughters remembered." As veterans each of us realizes the importance of the VA Clinics (Continue on pg. 12)

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that service our men and women in our individual communities. Chapter #944 donated a television to the Rome VA Clinic coffee room on Monday, October 29, 2018. What a great gift to help entertain our brothers and sisters as they receive medical care from the VA. The Utica Chapter continues to work on a Central New York Veterans Cemetery. Their committee has a mission statement and continues to work on their goal to have a Veterans Cemetery in their County.

Chapter #377 under the leadership of Gary Napieracz from Dryden has produced an end of year publication for calendar year 2018. Their publisher, Gerri Smith, has taken excerpt from her regularly published issues of the workings of #377 and compiled a 22-page report. The issue is referred to as "NAM EXPRESS." During the calendar 2018 year I forwarded a copy to everyone in Central District. Here are some of the highlights of her most recent work.

- Salvation Army ringing of the bells- 9 December 2017.
- Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day ceremony - 29 March 2018.
- Welcome Home party for Vietnam Veterans held at VFW Post #2354 - 31 March 2018.
- Patriotism Award and Flag Case presentation at Cornell University ROTC to Midshipman Andrew Scott Brown- 3 May 2018.
- Memorial Day Parade, Dryden, NY.
- Tompkins County Veterans Memorial Park cleanup- 9 June 2018.
- Annual Chapter picnic I was able to attend with my better half- Summer 2018.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute Ride-14 July 2018.
- Surprise birthday party for retiring Cortland County Veterans Service Officer Carl Bullock-17 July 2018.
- Cortland 2018 AirFest- 21 July 2018.
- Cornell University Naval ROTC ceremony- 13 August 2018.
- Quilts of Valor presentation- 8 September 2018.
- 9/11 Ceremony, Cortland, NY- 11 September 2018.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Watch- 29 September 2018.
- POW/MIA flag presentation to Lansing Town Supervisor Ed LaVigne- 4 October 2018.
- Veterans Day Parade, Ithaca, NY- 11 November 2018.
- Wreaths Across America ceremony at Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery- 16 December 2018.

The news isn't good for one of our Chapters in Central District. It appears we are going to lose the only Incarcerated Veterans Chapter left in New York State - Chapter #205 located in Auburn, New York. Despite a successful financial picture and the accomplishments of their crochet squad this Chapter has fallen on hard times when it comes to membership. Just three years ago they boasted of having twenty-five members. Since then, they have seen 11 members released, and another 11 members transferred to other facilities. They tried to

build up their membership with a core of the three remaining members. Those members have since been transferred out of Auburn Correctional.

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Remember everyone if you participating in your community tell us. Give us a chance to brag about it.

Just a quick note with respect to the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2019. The president of the United States has signed the 2019 NDAA. The act contains some provisions that pertain to service disabled veterans and their families. The reader's digest version of this act is: space permitting, veterans with service connected disabilities rated permanent and total will be able to travel on DOD aircraft; beginning January of 2020 service connected disabled veterans and their caregivers will be eligible to use base commissary stores and Morale, Welfare and Recreational facilities; improvements to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) will help prepare transitioning service members for civilian life; and a study is lined up to look at the availability of long term care options for veterans from the VA. This information was made available through Tom Buono, President of Chapter #944. Thanks Tom.

**(Continue from pg. 7) MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Twenty-five chapters attended New York State Council meetings during 2018. Sixteen chapters attended all 4 meetings, congratulations go out to:

Rochester chapter 20

Warsaw chapter 193

Queens chapter 32

Rockland chapter 333

Westchester chapter 49

Finger Lakes chapter 377

Buffalo chapter 77

Owego chapter 480

Glens Falls chapter 79

Putnam/Dutchess chapter 541

Oneonta chapter 85

Auburn chapter 704

Syracuse chapter 103

Jamestown chapter 865

Orange County chapter 140

Frewsburg chapter 978

The Membership Committee report in the November/December issue of the Veteran announced the following membership change. In addition, the Web Weekly on December 14<sup>th</sup> had a brief article stating:

“On October 20, 2018, VVA's National Board of Directors passed a motion to have one class of membership: Life Membership. All active and pending three-year members have been converted to life members. After October 31, 2018, all dues payments received for one-year membership will be refunded, along with instructions for renewing as a life member. Active one-year members will remain active until their current term expires and are invited to renew as life members thereafter.”

When our membership department implemented the change on November 1<sup>st</sup> the computer program would not accept members as life without a DD214 recognized and they were vanished into electron land. What appeared to be a small hic cup, turned into a major situation nobody anticipated. We could not alter the programing, so we called in the professionals. The experts worked without any success which left the membership without a way to convert more than 800 three-year members without a DD214 recorded; into a “pending” status. The ultimate decision by the VVA officers and Membership Chair was to simply convert all those “no” listing in the 214 column on the roster to “yes”; apparently meaning none of these members will be required to submit proof of service to National. There is an application available on our vva.org website that can be printed. Use control and click on link <https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/APPLICATION-FOR-MEMBERSHIP.pdf>

**VVA POW/MIA & VETERANS INITIATIVE**

Grant T. Coates—Chair

DPAA announce on 22 January the accounting for Roy F. Townley and Edward J. Weissenback, Air America, listed as missing on 12/27/71, in Laos. The DPAA release on accounting for George L Ritter, Air America, PA, from the same incident, indicated his recovery on 12/13/17, and ID on 9/25/18. Both Townley and Weissenback were recovered late last fall and their families were notified just before Christmas, 2018. Before that, no changes in the Vietnam War statistics had been posted since October 17th when DPAA posted the names of two Vietnam War personnel now accounted for, Ritter and LT Richard C. Lannom, USNR, TN, listed MIA on 3/1/68, NVN, recovered 12/13/17 and ID'd on 9/25/18.

According to Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency (DPAA), as of 22 January, 2019, 1,590 U.S. personnel are still missing from the Vietnam War. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,248 (VN-453, VS-795); Laos-289; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7.

Identification continues on unknown remains exhumed from the National Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl that were recovered from the U.S.S. Oklahoma. Of a total crew of 1,398, 429 (14 Marines and 415 sailors) would give their lives.

For various reasons, including wishes of the family, DPAA announcements are often delayed far beyond the ID dates and sometimes not even made.

There are 7,671 missing U.S. service members from the Korean War.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Bing Markee

**New York State Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee**

**Agent Orange extender** A.9585/S.8849 Hunter/Larkin Chapter 82 of the Laws of 2018

Extends time limitations for certain actions relating to phenoxy herbicide exposure.

EFF. DATE 07/01/20183

**Deer Management Permits**

A.4538A/S723A Ortiz/Ortt, Chapter 463 of the Laws of 2018

This bill will allow service-connected disabled veterans to only have to show proof of disability at the initial issuance of the permit. Signed: 12/28/18; effective 60 days3

**Task Force on Veterans Employment Opportunities**

A.4827-A/S926-A DenDekker/Croci, VETO Memo 280

Establishes a temporary task force to study veterans' employment opportunities.3

**New York State Silver Rose Veterans Service Certificate**

A.9586/S6606 DenDekker/Young; Chapter 332 of the Laws of 2018

Establishes the "New York State Silver Rose Veterans Service Certificate" for veterans exposed to dioxin or phenoxy herbicides during military service. Effective Date: 5/4/19 with Rules and Regulations

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### Services Available To veterans

A.1206/S.6610 Cusick/Lanza, Chapter 322 Laws of 2018

This bill would require all subdivisions of the State to inquire, when dealing with a client or customer, whether he or she or a family member is a veteran and then to inform veterans and their families of the services and opportunities made available by the Division of Veterans' Affairs. Any new forms created after the effective date of this act would contain the following questions: "Have you served in the United States Armed Forces?" and "Has someone in your family served in the United States military?" Effective Date: 2/3/19

### Interagency Coordinating Council

A.5931A/S8864 Ramos/Sepulveda, Veto 330

This measure would create an interagency coordinating council for service-disabled veterans to provide accessible, coordinated, and specialized services from multiple state and local agencies to service-disabled veterans.

### Gold Star Parent Annuity Program

A.2799-A/S.1124-B McDonald/Marchione, Chapter 356 of the Laws of 2018

This bill would provide an annual cost of living increase for recipients of the Gold Star Parents Annuity Program under the jurisdiction of the Division of Veterans' Affairs.

The measure also eliminated the limitation to \$1,000 per veterans and required the Division to post the amount of the annuity and the cost of living adjustment each year on their website.

Effective Date: 11/12/2018

### Assisted Living Facilities

A.9981-A/S.9044 Wallace/Helming, Chapter 476 Laws of 2018

Adds assisted living facilities operators to the those who would be required to advise veterans and family members of veterans, benefits they may be eligible for.

Effective Date: 12/28/2018

### Other Committees

**Agriculture** A.8926/S7319 Titone/Marchione Chapter 37 of the Laws of 2018

Convenes a working group to examining needs for standards for the designation of therapy dogs.

**Governmental Employees** A.8927/S.7314 Hunter/Croci Chapter 35 of the Laws of 2018

Chapter amendment to clarify the term veteran. This measure provides that the State Civil Service Commission shall waive the state application fees for civil service exams for original appointment for veterans

**Governmental Operations** A.8704-A/S.6856-A Magnarelli/DeFrancisco Chapter 466 of the Laws of 2018

Names "Here Rests In Honored Glory" as the official hymn of remembrance in honor of all veterans.

Composed by Dr. Donald Miller, Professor of Music at Onondaga County Community College, in honor of all American veterans. It is based on the inscription of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. Effective Date: 12/28/2018

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**(Continue from pg. 15)**

A.9886/S.7891 Bichotte/Little Chapter 409 Laws of 2018

Authorizes the division of minority and women's business development to accept the DD Form 214 issued by the U.S. Department of Defense as proof of an applicant's race and ethnicity.

Effective Date: 3/21/19

***Small Business Committee***

A.2805/S.3804 Thiele/Bailey Chapter 398 Laws of 2018

Establishes entrepreneurship assistance centers to provide assistance to primarily minority groups members, including women, individuals with a disability; dislocated workers and veterans. Requires the Department of Economic Development to establish criteria and designation of such centers.

***Transportation Committee***

A8766A/S.8246 Galef/Larkin Chapter 319 Laws of 2018

Designates "The Bear Mountain Bridge" as "The Purple Heart Veterans Memorial Bridge." This bridge is a toll suspension bridge carrying US6/US 292 across the Hudson River between Rockland/Orange Counties and Westchester/Putnam Counties. This span enable connections to the Palisades Interstate Parkway and US 9W on the west bank near Bear Mountain Inn to NY 9D on the east. Effective Date: 10/02/2018

***Ways and Means Committee***

A.3842-A/S.9044 Ortiz/Murphy Chapter 374 Laws of 2018

Establishes the military family relief fund and provides taxpayers a method by which they can contribute to the fund. Effective Date: 12/21/2018

**VVA Chapter Reports****VVA Chapter #8 Report**

John A. Reitano - Secretary

On 17 Jan 2019, members of Vietnam Veterans of America, Capital District Chapter 8, presented Stratton VAMC Director Darlene DeLancey & staff with a check for \$2000. to support their Companion Pet program.



VVA Chapter members (L to R) w/chapter cap Bob SantaLucia, VP, John Reitano, Secretary, Ray Sestak, President, & Bill Schaaf, Treasurer (gray cap).

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### VVA Chapter #72 Report

William Miller

We have funding to support a Vietnam Veterans float for the Brooklyn Memorial Day Parade. We have had floats for the last two parades. In addition we plan to have another Chapter 72 float in the Veterans Day Parade in NYC this November. I would like to point out these floats are funded entirely by private people, both members and sponsors. All the Chapters fund raising moneys goes directly to helping other Veterans in need.

Two of our prime fund-raising efforts to support our causes are the annual Bay Ridge Third Avenue Fair and the Fifth Avenue Fair. Money raised at the fair this past October was the most ever with \$2,614.50 raised. Plans have been made to set up our booth at this year's festivals. In addition we also sell pins which help raise funds as well.

In June we are planning to have fund raiser at the Greenwood Park Beer Garden in Brooklyn. We did this a couple years ago and it was very successful. One of our members, Connie Ranocchia is connected with this establishment and is most gracious in providing it to us.

Our other projects include pizza parties as well as a Christmas Party (\$212.62) for the Vets living at the Brooklyn VA Domiciliary which they greatly appreciate. We donated \$151.32 to the Domiciliary to purchase Cup'Soup Noodles and \$244.00 for hats and socks. We also provided residents with canteen books to use to purchase items in the VA Canteen and Exchange. At a baby shower for expectant mothers we also provided gifts and plan to do it again in the near future. We gave a Christmas party for the Vets on the 15<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Brooklyn VA and also have pizza parties for them. We purchased \$1111.60 worth of clothing (sweat shirts, hats, socks, etc.) in support of the VA Volunteer Service. We donated \$504.15 worth of clothing to the Bushwick Veterans shelter for homeless Veterans.

The Chapter made donations to the Fisher House (\$1000) and to Team Rubicon (\$500) and continue to support these activities. We sent \$492 worth of CARE packages to units located in Afghanistan and Iraq. We donated \$100 towards the Cayuga County Veterans Memorial.

We are planning to pass out Canteen Booklets, hats and socks to all hospitalized Veterans at the Brooklyn VA on Valentine's Day as part of honoring those Vets in the hospital for a total of \$594.

The Chapter remains active in the Brooklyn VA and the services they provide to Veterans. We work with closely with our local Congressman to insure there are no decrease in services provided by the Brooklyn VA Hospital.

### VVA Chapter #77 Report

October:

Tops markets donated 45 turkeys, plus a couple of our members chipped in purchased some also. We service All Veterans and their families from our food pantry.

Channel 2 news's Kelly Dudzik did a nice report on our food pantry. Paul Rudnicki a former Jag officer in Vietnam Started our food pantry years ago. As a result a Cub Scout troop took up a food collection and delivered 3 car loads of food here. It was nice to see these little one carrying food in.

Our AVVA has been very active, the VA hospital here has a unit called Willow Lodge it's a long term and

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hospice 20 bed unit. Our AVVA made blankets with out VVA chapter patch on them plus a few Christmas gifts. We were able to deliver these in person. We put smiles on a lot of faces.

AVVA also made up gift bags for the general population, we gave them to volunteer services that distributed them.

AVVA also gave out Christmas presents to the children of our food pantry families.

We had our annual Christmas party with over 100 attending.

In January we had our annual Peter Tyce spaghetti dinner with the proceeds going to our scholarship fund last year we were able to give out 39 , \$250 scholarships.

### VVA Chapter #82

Richard Guevara -Vice President

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS -Interchange December 2018 - February 15, 2019

Town of Oyster Bay Holiday Concert - On December 3 Chapter 82 provided the color guard at the Town of Oyster Bay Holiday Concert.

Pearl Harbor "Dropping of the Roses" Ceremony - On December 7 Chapter 82 presented the color guard at the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorating the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Bethpage High School- On December 9 Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the Bethpage Foundation's charity football game.

Scholarships - On December 18 Chapter 82 awarded five scholarships to members children and grandchildren.

On December 30<sup>th</sup> approximately 20 members paid our respects to a fallen brother at his family's viewing.

Hagedorn Little Village School - On January 3, 2019 approximately 20 members of Chapter 82 visited the Little Village School for children with special needs. We met with the staff and we were given a guided tour of the facility where we met with the staff and students to view their progress. The Chapter also made a generous donation to the school to help to support their programs.

Vietnam Veterans 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony - On February 9, 2019 Chapter 82 teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association (AFA) to recognize approximately 30 Vietnam Veterans at each event. At this event we provided the Colors and the Air Force Association presented each recipient with a specifically designed medal. Chapter 82 then formed a "welcome home line," and provided each honored guest with a beautiful photo album/scrapbook. We team up with the Air Force Association to conduct 5 to 6 such events each year. These events are sanctioned by the Department of Defense for both the AFA and Chapter 82

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Chapter 82 member (w/red cap) Edward Aulman, USMC, is being recognized at the ceremony by Congressman Thomas Souzzi, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and the members of VVA Chapter 82.

### VVA Chapter #377 Report

Harvey Baker

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Tribute Ride

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Vietnam Veterans Tribute Ride, July 13 2019. Ride forms up at the Owego Free Academy in Owego, NY, and departs at 11 am North on State Route 38 for the 100 mile ride. The first stop is in Groton, NY for food and gas before departing at 1 pm again North on Route 38, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor. The ride ends at the American Legion in Hannibal, NY.. Ride is free and open to the public. For more Info: Call Harvey @ (607) 898-3507 OR Dan @ (607) 229-8153

VVA New York State Council and VVA Chapter #377 offers Condolences to the family of Gene and Kathy Russell Barnes on the loss of their son, Derek

Derek K. Barnes, (1973 - 2019) of Cortland passed away suddenly from natural causes on February 4, 2019 at his residence. He was born on October 3, 1973 in Cortland, NY a son of Gene and Kathy Russell Barnes.

Derek is survived by his fiancée, Nicole and her son Cole, his son Harrison, parents Gene and Kathy, one brother, Brett, a niece Annie and nephew Gino. Derek was very patriotic and proud of the American Flag!

*Chapter 377 Dance Scheduled* Friday, March 15, 2019, From 7 to 10pm at the Dryden Veterans Home.

Live Band will be playing

A request went out for volunteers from Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 803 president Larry Sherman asking for help to remove 4,700 wreaths from Veterans head stones on Saturday January 19 at 10 am, at the Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira New York. Eight members from Vietnam

Veterans of America Chapter 377, participated and meet a lot of Veterans and made new friends, Hundreds of volunteers came out in the surrounding areas.

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## VVA Chapter #421 Report

J. Toronto

Oct 17, chapter is in a local Cable TV show. The discussion of veterans affairs of Staten Island.

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> the chapter had a Christmas tree trimming at the Vietnam veterans memorial in Staten island.

Nov. 12 the chapter members attended the SILLER Foundation dinner , honoring Vietnam veterans. The chapter honor guard was present. Nov 5<sup>th</sup> veterans appreciation day was held at a local high school in Staten Island. Feb 2, Legion of Honor award was presented to chapter members.

**Join us for  
11th Annual  
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor\*  
“Tribute Ride”**



**Saturday, July 13, 2019**



**The 100 mile ride is free and open to the public - motorcycles, cars, trucks, planes and helicopters welcome**

- **Ride will Begin @: 11:00 am ...**
- **@ Owego Free Academy, Sheldon Guile Blvd. Owego, NY**  
*(Register to ride between 8:00 & 10:00 AM on day of ride) (Police Escorted Ride)*
- **Ride Ends: @ American Legion  
Village of Hannibal, NY**

**Itinerary:**

- **Ride Route 38 to the American Legion Post 800, Groton, NY**  
*(stop for gas and food), and then on to the American Legion in Hannibal*

**Groton, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:  
2LT TERRENCE GRAVES, USMC**



**Throop, Home of Medal of Honor Recipient:  
SP4 ROBERT F. STRYKER, US ARMY**



**SPONSORED BY:**

**Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 377, 480 & 704  
and, Blue Knights Chapter 17**

**For more information contact:**

Harvey Baker, Chapter #377 Vietnam Veterans of America (607)898-3507  
Dan Baker – Chapter #17, the Blue Knights (607) 229-8153



**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT**

Joe Ingino - Chair

**Alfred Procopio, Jr., v. Robert Wilkie: What Does This Mean for You?**

(Washington, D.C.)--On January 29, in a 9-2 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in favor of the veteran in *Alfred Procopio, Jr., v. Robert Wilkie*, finding the intent of Congress in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 was to extend benefits to all veterans who served within the territorial waters of Vietnam, 12 nautical miles from shore.

In the meantime, VVA recommends those veterans who think they may have served on a vessel in Vietnam's territorial waters reach out to their local Veterans Service Officer to file VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim. If VVA is your representative, please go to Service Officer Locator on [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) to find your local representative. If you do not wish to work with a service officer, you may fill out the VA Form 21-0966 form and submit it to the VA.

We recommend Blue Water Navy veterans submit the VA Form 21-0966 if they have never filed an Agent Orange claim or if they have been denied an Agent Orange claim. If you are a spouse of a Blue Water Navy veteran who died from an Agent Orange-related illness, we recommend you also file a VA Form 21-0966. By submitting VA Form 21-0966, you preserve your effective date.

**VA Loses; Court Rules in Favor of Extending Benefits to Blue Water Navy Veterans**

(Washington, DC)-- "Vietnam Veterans of America applauds the U.S. Court of Appeals for overturning *Hass VS Peake* and finding Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans to be eligible for the same benefits as 'boots on the ground' and 'brown water Navy veterans,'" said John Rowan, VVA National President.

"VVA calls on President Donald Trump and VA Secretary Robert Wilke to accept the court's decision, refrain from an appeal, and move forward without delay, allowing the VA to care for these Vietnam veterans who had been wrongfully excluded by the arbitrary administrative position made so many years ago." We are a nation of change makers, a nation of those who stand for equality and freedom. And each February during Black History Month, we honor the black Americans who came before us and still serve now, standing for their dreams and rights, and making a difference for us all.

**Black History Month:** Originally founded as "Negro History Week" in 1926 by black American historian and author Carter G. Woodson, it recognized the contributions of African Americans to the country and fostered a better understanding of the black American experience. In 1976, President Gerald Ford issued the first African-American History Month proclamation, calling upon the American people to celebrate the event each February.]

**CONGRESS POISED TO HELP VETERANS EXPOSED TO 'BURN PITS' OVER DECADES OF WAR By Jennifer**

**Steinhauer**—WASHINGTON — Everywhere he went in Iraq during his yearlong deployment, Ryne Robinson saw the burning trash pits. Sometimes, like in Ramadi, they were as large as a municipal dump, filled with abandoned or destroyed military vehicles, synthetic piping and discarded combat meals... About nine years after returning home he began to suffer headaches and other health problems, which doctors attributed to post-traumatic stress. After having a seizure... he was told he had glioblastoma, an aggressive brain tumor...Of the ailments endured by the newest generation of veterans — PTSD, TBI, lost limbs and more — among the least understood are those possibly related to exposure to toxic substances in Iraq and Afghanistan, especially from those fires known as burn pits. Now, with the largest freshman class of veteran lawmakers in a decade, Congress appears determined to lift the issue of burn pits from obscure medical journals and veterans' websites to the floors and hearing rooms of Capitol Hill. Members are vowing to force the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs to deal with the issue.

Printed with permission NY Times Feb. 12, 2019

**Veterans' Groups Compete With Each Other, and Struggle With the V.A.** By [Jennifer Steinhauer](#)

WASHINGTON — For generations, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts have been as integral to American political culture as pancake breakfasts, town squares and state fairs. In advocating for veterans — among the country's most revered and coveted voters — the groups have wielded unquestioned power on Capitol Hill and inside the White House.

Now, nearly a generation after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the oldest and largest veterans' service organizations — known colloquially as “the Big Six” — are seeing their influence diluted, as newer, smaller organizations focused on post-9/11 veterans compete for money, political influence and relevance.

The newer organizations reflect cultural shifts in a smaller community of younger and increasingly diverse veterans who are replacing the older, predominantly male veterans — many of them having served because of a draft for now long-ago wars.

The scores of upstarts include Student Veterans of America, which advocates on education and job issues; Team Red, White and Blue, which promotes service and “camaraderie” events; and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, which focuses on the specific health and employment challenges those who served in those two wars face.

Leaner and more financially efficient than their predecessors, these newer veterans' organizations focus on issues such as education and job training rather than on brick-and-mortar meeting spaces for veterans to gather or on resources spent lobbying in Washington.

In addition, many officials of the newer organizations say, their goals are to integrate veterans back into civilian communities where they feel misunderstood and have lost ties, while helping civilians who have had little contact with veterans — active-duty troops make up less than 1 percent of the United States population — understand their experiences.

As older veterans die, so, too, do the V.F.W. halls, scores of which have shuttered in [recent years](#). While accurate membership numbers are hard to ascertain because many veterans pay dues to several organizations, a shrinking veteran population over all has caused memberships to fall and some groups to [restructure](#).

“The young vets are saying we need to do things differently with a different emphasis,” said Chuck Hagel, a former defense secretary and Vietnam veteran who is associated with a small organization, [HillVets](#), that helps veterans find staff jobs on Capitol Hill. “The Vietnam vet is a different kind of vet than Afghan or Iraq war vets; they were draft vets and they wanted in and out. Most veterans today are married with families, and that means new demands, new interests and new pressures.”

At times, the politically progressive leaders of some of the organizations — many from the Vietnam era — take positions that appear out of step with more socially conservative members from previous wars. This has irritated Robert L. Wilkie, the Veterans Affairs secretary, who views these as unwelcome [partisan positions](#), said several agency and veterans' group officials.

Last April, Mr. Wilkie hosted a breakfast for veterans' service organizations that included representatives not just of the traditional Big Six, but also the Independence Fund and Concerned Veterans for America, which is financed by Charles G. and David H. Koch, who have backed conservative causes.

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The Koch-supported group was instrumental in ousting the last head of the department. It has also been pushing for more health care to take place outside the V.A. system, with the first step beginning soon under a sweeping new law. Their voices were welcomed by House Republicans as they passed [the measure](#) this year. At a hearing last month on Capitol Hill, some Democrats suggested that Mr. Wilkie was ignoring the opinions of traditional organizations on this law. “A lot of V.S.O.s have talked to me about the communication within the V.A.,” said Senator Jon Tester of Montana, the ranking Democrat on the Senate veteran committee. “It’s not where it needs to be.”

Mr. Wilkie made his position clear. “Half of our veterans are now under the age of 65,” he said, “which means they have different cares, they have different interests. What I have done in my short time is actually open the aperture to the table at the Department of Veterans Affairs to bring in veterans who are not traditionally part of the system.”

The shifts, while perhaps inevitable, leave some worrying that the hard work of pressing for the complicated and expensive health care needs, and other issues, will lack a generation of new leaders.

“These smaller groups don’t do policy advocacy while the Big Six have been carrying all the water,” said Kristofer Goldsmith, an assistant director for policy and government affairs at the Vietnam Veterans of America. “The average vet has no idea what these groups are doing on their behalf. They have a free T-shirt from Red, White and Blue but don’t realize my 72-year-old boss with emphysema walks around Capitol Hill advocating for them on the G.I. Bill.”

The first large veterans’ service organizations, the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans, arose after the Civil War, with new ones forming after each conflict to serve veterans lacking services.

While there are thousands of nonprofit veterans’ organizations registered with the Internal Revenue Service, the majority of power has been consolidated among the Big Six: Disabled American Veterans; Veterans of Foreign Wars; American Legion; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Amvets; and Vietnam Veterans of America, which was developed after Vietnam veterans were turned away from other organizations.

According to a study this year by the Center for a New American Security, a nonpartisan policy research center in Washington, nonprofits that serve veterans generate about \$3.6 billion in annual revenue.

While the older organizations control roughly 68 percent of total income in this market, the recent growth has been dominated by large post-9/11 organizations, which have grown in excess of 15 percent per year, compared with the 2 percent income growth of the Big Six. The study also found that post-9/11 organizations save their money at a rate almost 2.5 times greater than pre-9/11 organizations.

A relatively new entry, the [Wounded Warrior Project](#), has set a new model for advocacy organizations, raising money from outside the veterans’ community and funding research and services rather than infrastructure. The group is widely viewed as having finally recovered from a major [spending scandal](#) in 2016.

“They figured out how to raise money from outside the vets’ community better than anyone else,” said Emma Moore, one of the authors of the Center for a New American Security report. “The Big Six are struggling with overhead. As the veteran population shrinks, how they end up dealing with the overhead of maintaining buildings and their structures is yet to be determined.”

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Through grants, the Wounded Warriors Project also marries legacy Big Six organizations with newcomers to build coalitions around issues like toxic exposure, which brings post-9/11 veterans into advocacy, and legacy groups into the future.

“Congress still listens to them,” said Phillip Carter, a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation who specializes in military and veterans’ issues, describing the continuing clout of the Big Six. “Members and staff understand the political throw weight of veterans’ groups based on their large membership and the degree to which they command public respect.”

But when it comes to forming laws, some groups are clearly on the rise, like Student Veterans of America, which played a significant role in drafting a new G.I. Bill. These groups, lacking the large governance structures of the old veterans’ service organizations, tend to be faster on their advocacy feet.

Outside Washington, the contrasts between the groups is stark. Many of the old V.F.W. halls remain outposts of fellowship over beer, while younger veterans prefer community centers with healthier and more practical assets, like Wi-Fi, child care and [yoga classes](#). In many cases, social media has replaced physical spaces as a place where veterans congregate.

Many of the new groups steer away from lobbying on Capitol Hill, and have turned instead to community services, running races and other activities meant not to connect veterans to one another as much as to the rest of the communities they have rejoined.

“The epidemic of alienation and loneliness in society writ large is magnified in the vets’ community,” said Bana Miller, a spokeswoman for [Team Red, White and Blue](#), which engages veterans in community service and physical activities.

“Many post-9/11 vets served five, 10, 15 years, and they are looking for connection and community and support,” she said. “We are key to getting people out into their communities and taking what they learned from their service, doing things together shoulder to shoulder to build deep bonds with other people.”

“Our organization is not necessarily in the advocacy space,” she added. “We work toward mental health solutions via physical and social activity.”

Traditional veterans’ organizations say this new focus does not replace theirs.

“We get bills passed,” said Kayda Keleher, the associate director of national legislative service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. “We provide financial assistance to cover bills for veterans who were attending a college that shut down. We provide scholarships and fellowship opportunities, our National Home for Children, and so much more. Those are our strengths and our legacy that will keep us around.”

The greatest demonstration of the power across the spectrum from old and new groups, as well as the Koch-backed organization that has the Trump administration’s collective ear, will be on display next year as Congress carefully examines major changes to health care services for veterans stemming from a large bill passed last year.

“Veteran organizations can be like Sears, using the same business model with diminishing returns,” Mr. Carter said. “Or, they can reinvent themselves and their business models to remain viable, and focus on issues that appeal to all generations to remain relevant.”

Printed with permission NY Times Jan. 4, 2019



### New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation

We provide grants to Vietnam Veterans of America-New York State Council, (VVA-NYSC) a veteran’s service organization that advocates for legislation at the State and Federal level of government to provide housing, education, health and mental care services to veterans and their families.

We provide funding for VVA-NYSC Veteran’s Service Officer program that assist veterans with their military disability compensation and pension claims from the Veterans Administration.

We advocate for better Federal and State veteran’s benefits and veteran preferences in government employment. VVA Chapters within New York State, assist widows, widowers, and orphans of our veterans. The organization organizes programs that enrich the lives of Vietnam veterans, as well as veterans from past, current wars, and their families.

We have an active Agent Orange committee that helps Vietnam veterans receive up to date information on prostate cancer, diabetes, and other chemically-related diseases.

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

- Listings of Veteran Job Fairs offered by county or veteran service organizations;
- Counseling for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
- Outreach programs that support returning veterans’ reentry into civilian life;

For disabled veterans, this can be even more difficult than a tour of duty.

We do this all year long, but without your gift and the gifts of other supporters, nothing can be done to help those that are so deserving of it. However, we have much more to accomplish.

We, the New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, have a mission to keep advocating for and helping these veterans. We ask you to join us in our mission to provide assistance, guidance, training, and education to all veterans of past, present, and future military conflicts.

So let us continue to work together to ensure our national heroes receive everything that they are entitled to receive for their sacrifice and service to our nation.

President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary
Francisco Muñiz III	Ned D. Foote	Grant T. Coates	Nick Valenti
Directors	Sam Hall S	tan May	

You can send your tax deductible donation, to the extent allowed by law, directly to the Foundation at NY Vietnam Veterans Foundation, 48 March Lane, Westbury, NY 11590-6302.

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