



Vol. 32 Issue 03

Veteran's News that needs to be Read

FALL 2022



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Please forward your deceased members with photo, obituary, cause of death to:

Secretary@nyvietnamvets.org

membership@vva.org

Lin4456@msn.com

Rev. Phil Salois at National



IN MEMORIAM

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA Chapter 20

Louis Amarosa
Craig Wirth

VVA Chapter 77

Elwood J. Hammond
Dean E. Lilac, Sr.

VVA Chapter 193

Rock J. Gringer

VVA Chapter 421

Herman Nagora
Terry Scott

VVA Chapter 803

Frank L. Davis
Michael L. Hollenbeck
Richard Scuteri
Douglas J. Wolfe

At-Large Member

Frank A. Piertopolo

Prayer for the Deceased

Psalm 121

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help? My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; or your guardian to sleep. Behold, the guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night. The LORD will guard you from all evil; he will guard your soul. The LORD will guard your coming and going both now and forever.

Amen.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba b'alma di v'ra chir'utei; v'yamlich malchutei b'hayeichon u-v'yomeichon, uv'haye d'chol beit yisrael, ba-agala u-vi-z'man kariv, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam u-l'almei almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabah, v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam, v'yitnasei v'yit-hadar, v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'mei d'kudsha, b'rich hu, l'ela min kol birchata v'shirata, tushb'hata v'nehemata, da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya, v'hayim, aleinu v'al koi yisrael, v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru amen.

Oh Allah! Forgive those of us that are alive and those of us that are dead; those of us that are present and those of us who are absent; those of us who are young and those of us who are adults; our males and our females. Oh Allah! Whomsoever You keep alive, let him live as a follower of Islam and whomsoever You cause to die, let him die a Believer.

**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates**

February 3, 4, 5

April 28, 29, 30

June 16, 17, 18

September 29, 30, Oct. 1

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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 VVA-NYSC by the **deadline**. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

Well, I have finally missed my second State Council meeting in 17 years as President. The first time was in 2010 when I was diagnosed with liver cancer caused by Hep C from blood transfusions from my injuries in Vietnam. This time around it was cancer of lung and had two tumors needing to come out. Possibly from Agent Orange exposure or even this Camp Lejeune issue that I will address. Anyways I am on the mend and doing really good and will be back next meeting.

From what I hear Grant Coates ran a very good meeting as I knew he would. Had one of best attended ones since COVID. We did have our National President Jack McManus in attendance and answered questions. We also had John Rowan, the past National President, who is now our Southern District Director, in attendance. I do not think any traditional Veterans organization could boast having National Presidents at their meetings! So big thanks to Grant and thanks to all.

Camp Lejeune: We have been bombarded with TV ads from Law Firms who want to help you all who were at Camp Lejeune during the stated period. Not so fast. Please do not sign up with any Firm at this time. There are so many unanswered questions. These firms may charge up to 50% of awards.

Alec Ghezzi, our National Benefits Director wrote very good article in the VVA Veteran magazine, and I will highlight some.

Say you were awarded 100,000 dollars for your medical condition; the law firm may charge 50 % of that leaving you 50,000 dollars. Now if you receive VA benefits for that condition you may lose that and maybe pay back what you were given. Or Medicare, Medicaid may come after you for funds. You could end with nothing, and these law Firms are cashing in big time. I'm not saying this will happen and this might be very good for all concerned but those questions need to be answered. So, please wait. It will work out to our benefit eventually, I hope.

Our next meeting is not until February 4th. Long time but our hotel has many events going on now and we have to work on open dates. Get your reservations in now. Our BOD will meet again in December where we plan for next year. Convention will be in August in cool Orlando. Hope Francisco does not freeze there.

Participate on VETERANS DAY events in your area or in DC and have a HAPPY THANKSGIVING to all and to all a good night.

Editor's Note: Yes, he will **FREEZE** inside the hotel!





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 Francisco Muñiz III

Vice President Ned D. Foote

Treasurer Grant T. Coates

Secretary Nick Valenti

Directors Sam Hall

Stan 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.

NOTE: The Foundation has lost its fundraising contract and is in need of funds to support our Service Officer's Program. Please send donation to the above address.

PTSD COMMITTEE REPORT

Tom Harris

Well guys, again I apologize for staying off line due to this COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, if I get this virus now it probably will not have a good ending.

Anyhow, a Perfect Storm, my thoughts regarding PTSD, Aging Veterans and Covid.

As we discussed maybe five years ago PTSD and getting older can be much different than when we were in our younger years. How so, you ask?

*The National Center for PTSD reports that for most, being retired gives you more time to think about what you've been though and now there are fewer things to distract you like work, caring for family.

*Hopefully alcohol and drug abuse aren't an issue with you now.

*Chances are you're not as healthy as before. Fighting off anxiety may have been easier for you when your health was in good shape...Maybe you went to the VA support groups. You're realizing that you're not invisible anymore.

*Some veterans find that their PTSD symptoms didn't start until much later in life. (Late Onset Stress Syndrome.) Triggers like watching the nightly news are in your face bringing back memories.

One of the problems with PTSD, with some, is that our bodies response to stress (stress response) is now activated at the wrong time (like at a parade) and it just doesn't reset like it should.

One in ten (10%) of older vets like us feel depressed. The signs that you're depressed can include sadness, memory problems, anxiety, hopelessness, helplessness, and irritability. Okay, for those of us that did not experience a traumatic exposure in Vietnam we can still check off those boxes... It's called life. I call it my heebie-jeebies.

Old coping tools (lack of a better word) like denial and alcohol don't work anymore.

So, where does COVID fit in, my perspective. In early 2020 many of us went to defense four-my families defenses were (are) on full hyper-alert awareness status. Everything task outside our home went through a 'risk vs reward' test and question 'will other people I come in contact with share my concerns about getting the virus. My world did and still does revolve around caring for my toddler grandson. What I gave up is contact with the outside world for the most part. (Lucky for me I have a posse of doctors that just need to see me.) Having an anxiety disorder (such as PTSD) doesn't respond well to isolation and fear. TRUE? We need to get around our buddies, laugh, and have a beer with old friends. Not be afraid of something we can't just kick in the ass.

Add getting older to this soup and we have way too much time thinking about health problems, careers that at one time gave you a sense of purpose, your memory and cognitive thinking isn't as sharp as before. Friends, close friends are getting sick and dying. Tom Hall, National VVA PTSD Chair, once wrote, "Our ability to outrun the issues (PTSD) by applying vast amounts of focus and energy to our careers, families, and volunteer activities takes a Big Hit as a function of age.

Thus, the Perfect Storm---aging, PTSD and Covid.

What to do??? Guess if I knew a great answer I'd be giving this report in person!

*I try to get exercise, that said, I really don't enjoy just exercising. Going to a gym is a non-starter now so I try to walk the dog and keep up with my wingman.

*I really try to not watch "news" programs as much. But I'm a news junkie and re-runs of "The Rifleman" are not cutting it.

*Being part of a great organization is a real plus. Doing stuff outside yourself is very important.

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*Sounds silly but keep a 'to-do' list. Make sure you've got something on there that will make you laugh.

Again, my apologies. Hope that by the time it feels safe to come out I'll be finished grappling with a few of my own non-covid health issues. Please stay healthy and on guard.

"If you can't do what you've always done, do what matters most." (I can't remember who said this!)

You guys ROCK!

Tom h

Agent Orange Report

Bill Paton – Chair

Hopefully everyone knows that the SFC Heath Robinson HONORING OUR PACT ACT was passed by both houses and signed into law by the President. The two new presumptive are Hypertension or high blood pressure and Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) Our National President met with the Secretary of the VA Denis McDonough. Jack McManus was told that the 2 new presumptive would start to be processed the first week of 2023 as there is an education procedure for the people that are being hired.

Now let me put one myth to bed, as I've received phone calls and emails on this. Let's take High Blood Pressure as an example. Just because it is in your medical file and is a presumptive does not mean it will be automatically added to your Disability Rating. You need to see your Service Officer and file a claim, just like any other disability you've applied for. There may be some people that receive a letter requesting you to come in for an examination. Please GO. If you do not you will be turned down and receive nothing.. McManus was also told by the VA Secretary, I'm making that distinction clear. That if you file it would not affect any of your other disability ratings you have. In other words, he is saying they will not check your PTSD or Diabetes or whatever you have. Now if you have less than 100% and this will help you, then I would say go for it. But if you have a Disability Rating of 100% why would you want to add this. The amount of Monthly money would not change. And this is just my opinion, what the VA says they will do on Thursday can change on Friday.

The Camp LeJune Justice Act of 2022 was aptly explained in the last VVA Veteran on page 15. As I am not a Lawyer, don't play one on TV nor am I a Service Officer. I will offer the following advice. You have until August 10th, 2024 to file a claim. It would make sense to me to see my Service Officer, who is not going to take anywhere from 30 to 50% on a claim, for advice and when to file a claim with the government.

Everyone stay well and be safe

More Veterans are eligible for VA health care

For those that are not enrolled in the VA healthcare system or have friends that are not. The below article may be of help to getting benefits. PLEASE SHARE.

You might have recently learned that the [PACT Act](#) could impact [your care and benefits](#). But did you know it also expands health care eligibility for many Veterans? The PACT Act began one of the largest expansions of VA benefits in history.

If a Veteran you know hasn't enrolled in VA health care before, here are some details you can share to help them get the care they've earned and deserve:

Vietnam Era Veterans

Vietnam Era Veterans who served in these locations and time periods are eligible to apply for enrollment now:

Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975

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Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976
 Laos between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969
 Certain provinces in Cambodia between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969
 Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters) between January 9, 1962, and July 30, 1980
 Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977
 Bill Paton 716-208-5211 bllpaton36@gmail.com

Western District Report

Bill Paton

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

We just came back from our September State Council meeting. I'm happy to say that with the help of Jay Book from Chapter 865, Jamestown, every Chapter was represented. Jay brought Danny McGill from Chapter 459 in Dunkirk. I believe this is the first time we've had all Chapters since I've been Director and my predecessor Mike Walker also. I had met Danny and some of his fellow brothers and they have a very tight Chapter in Dunkirk. It was a very enjoyable visit.

Danny, by the way, had not been to a State meeting since 2010 when he had a medical situation. It was great to see him there. Also back was Reverend Bob from Chapter 978, Frewsburg. He's living life his way and having a good time doing it. I had a small chat with him and I have no doubt he'll continue to do just that.

As you've probably already read by now our National President Jack McManus was there for the weekend. He attended our Friday night meeting. He had some good information, which I will cover in my Agent Orange article. I'm sure he received an earful that he wasn't expecting. But that's part of the Job as a certain someone would say.

For those with interest in the Pembroke National Cemetery, Of the 7 improvements that were decided on, only one has been installed. As you exit the cemetery there are now 2 placards that say "CROSS TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP." From a contact in Congressman's Jacobs office it appears the rest of the improvements will not be installed until at least Spring 2023. I will not comment further.

Until Next time
 Bill Paton

VVA Chapter #77 Report

Tom Thompson—President

Over all we had a successful fund raising summer even though the two street concert events in N. T. were a waste of time. There were too many other events at the same time in the Twin Cities and no advertisement from the city council. Our joint car show CLASSICS ON THE NIAGARA with VVA Chapter 77 & Legion Post 264 on September 4, was a great success. The threat of rain was there at first but we prevailed with a turnout of over 200 vehicles. Thanks to all the great sponsors and membership help from both organizations.

We had great weather for the VVA golf outing held at Deerwood on September 17. The 14 foursomes seem to have a good time. Thanks to the 30 separate golf hole sponsors for helping to make this event successful.

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On October 2 we had another Chivetta's BBQ at 200 Niagara St., Tonawanda. Thanks for all the membership help. All the above fund raisers would not be successful without your participation.

On August 9-12, President Tom Thompson, Western Director & V.P. Bill Paton and Assistant Treasurer Ed Bodine represented the chapter and the state at the VVA National Leadership Conference in Greenville, North Carolina. Lori Paton the NY State and Chapter 77 AVVA President along with Mary Lynn Bodine the Chapter 77 AVVA V.P. were also in attendance at the National Leadership Conference. The Chp.77 AVVA is also holding a basket raffle and craft show at the Sikora Legion Post 1322 at 950 Payne Ave. starting 10:00 am. October 15. The AVVA raises funds to help the more unfortunate and nursing home bound veterans in Western N.Y.

The chapter has purchased a brick in honor of Ronal Bassham a long time member and dedicated veteran advocate. The brick will be placed at the African American Veterans Monument at the Buffalo Naval Park. The monument was dedicated September 24, 2022.

Norm Murray has done a nice job temporarily displaying the replacement Vietnam Wall Panel W11 that we received from the VVMF. It is displayed in the Chapter Pantry show case window. Plans are being discussed as to when and how best to display the panel on our Remembering Vietnam Monument at Tonawanda Veterans Park.

The 2022 Christmas Party will be held on December 8. More info will be on email and face book.

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America-NYS AVVA Report

Lori Paton – President

It was nice to see some new faces at the September state meeting.

Our next meeting will be on February 4, 2023. Please encourage your AVVA chapter members to attend. There are 26 chapters across NYS and I would really like to meet members from each chapter.

If anyone would like to reach out to me, my contact info is: (716) 694-4477 or (716) 418-4246. My e-mail is: greeneyedlady57@roadrunner.com.



**Eastern District Report
Sam Hall**

VVA Chapters #8, #49, #79, #140, #333, #541, #869

VVA Chapter #333 Report

Roy Tschudy

This year, VVA Chapter #333 has provided a total of 22K for scholarships to students and veterans alike. Additionally, we have implemented a 529 Educational Fund for grandchildren of Chapter members at 15K per year. Recently each member who submitted and met requirements for said fund received \$440 in their account.

VVA chapter #333 this month performed fund raisers at two Rockland County street fairs. At these sites we ensure to promote not only our Chapter but Vietnam Veterans as well. Interacting and providing education on the veterans, the war and the aftermath. There are four more pending dates in November and December!

On 9/23/2022, VVA Chapter #333 performed a ceremony in the County honoring Gold Star Families along with both an Honor Guard and Rifle Guard. Gilbert Fontaine KIA was honored posthumously at this ceremony. Seaman Gilbert Fontaine died during Operation Desert Shield, his Hometown: Nyack/Spring Valley, Died: Dec. 22, 1990. Haifa, Israel. He died at the age of 22. Stationed on the aircraft carrier Saratoga, Fontaine, an aviation storekeeper, was returning on a ferry from Christmas shore leave in Haifa, Israel, when the ferry capsized, killing 21 of the 100 sailors on board. Fontaine, 22, was rescued alive but died later in an Israeli hospital.

Recently the Chapter's Hand Cycle Sports Adaptive Program purchased and donated an Elliptical Machine for a wounded Vietnam veteran retired Navy Seal. This veteran reached out to us seeking assistance, as always has been the case we responded in the affirmative.

Since the inception of this particular program in 2013, we have purchased and donated to veterans with leg amputations, spinal cord injuries, TBI's and PTSD. Fourteen hand cycles, two trike bikes, two mountain bikes, one canoe and one kayak along with special gear when needed and requested has been donated

One of our first recipients, Susan Bettancourt, a Navy pilot, recently had a house built for her and family by the Gary Sinese Foundation.

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VVA Chapter #333 members were invited to attend a recent film festival regarding a documentary on a soldier who perished in Vietnam after his tour of duty and his then return to Vietnam. Sadly, drug use was involved. I addressed the audience on a Q & A, informing each and everyone the myth of widespread drugs, that indeed the great majority of Vietnam veterans moved on to successful careers, education and raised families.

As has been the case for the past 18 years, VVA chapter #333 Education Program on the Vietnam Experience will be doing presentations at Felix Festa Middle School and this year at Nanuet HS along with Suffern HS. Over this time period, approximately 100,000 students and staff have taken part in our program.

May 30th, Memorial Day, WATCH FIRES in four locations for 24 hours inclusive Hudson River.

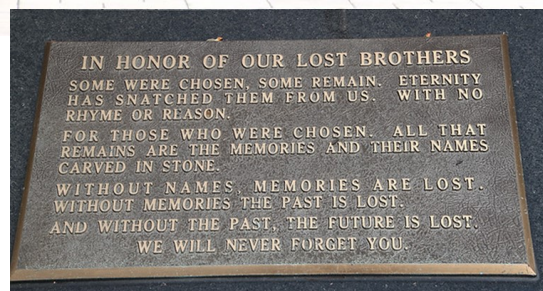
During the month of June our Chapter provided the Annual Pig Roast/Barbeque for members and their families inclusive of all others who wished to attend. Everyone who attended had a wonderful time enjoying the food, music and camaraderie.

VVA Chapter member Al Dagistino was elected as Veteran of the Year in Rockland County. There was in November a ceremony honoring 46 county members KIA.

Chapter #333 was pleased to have been included in the VVA Veteran magazine recently under the section Noted :Parting Shots.” VVA Chapter 3333 participated in the burial with full honors ton an indigent Vietnam veteran in severe weather conditions, providing a well deserved Farewell from his Brothers in Arms.

We have established a Zoom Account for members who can't attend the meeting because of Covid or have moved out to warmer areas!

In 2022, VVA Chapter #333 member, Past President & Current Sgt. At Arms Roy Tschudy was elected into the NYS Senate Hall of Fame, sponsored by Sen. Elijah Reichlin Melik. He was also the 2020 Rockland County Veteran of the Year.



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Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz III

This VVA NYSC Interchange has been the most difficult to do because of lack of response from the Chapters, District Directors, Committee Chairs, etc. It seems that most are in the "closing mentality" even though National keeps getting new Charter Chapters?

I expected to get reports from the National Leadership & Educational Conference attendees to place in our newspaper. The Conference went well and new additions of a few lectures on the benefits for senior veterans and their families. Yes, there were some repeats but it was due to the new leaderships combining up the ranks as well as new Chapters coming into existing.

At our last State Council meeting there were 23 Chapters present and each gave a verbal report on what they are doing or planning to do within the new few months. Yet, only three Chapters gave me a report to place in our newspaper. Why? You have a report in front of you, yet, you will not transmit those articles for the paper!

Hope that next issue of the VVANYSC Interchange will be easier to produce.

VVANYSC has sent donations to Puerto Rico State Council, due to Fiona, and to Florida State Council due to the devastation that Ian did to state of Florida.

Don't forget that in February we will honor our deceased members for the year with our PowerPoint presentation. Make sure you have sent in the names of your deceased Chapter members.

VVANYSC Council Saturday meeting dates for 2023 are the following:

February 4

April 29

June 17

September 30

Please make hotel reservation ASAP since the hotel is expanding its service to the community at large.

Wishing all a Happy Halloween and Thanksgiving Day! Don't eat too much!

PS I keep mentioning at each meeting that any reports that you want in the VVANYSC Interchange needs to be E-mailed to this Address: vvainterchange@aol.com It is very difficult to check all of my other emails for report. This way everything is in one E-mail. Also, please, add the District your Chapter is located on the Subject line so that I could placed the articles within their District. Please get permission for reprints of newspaper articles, or you can send a Summary of the article. Please cooperate on these issues. Thank you!

NEW YORK STATE VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

Nick Valenti - Chair

It has been a long dry spell when it comes to supporting our incarcerated brothers who find themselves residents of New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYSDOCCS). However, we are seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. After some time spent updating my volunteer file at Auburn Correctional Facilities (ACF), I will be able to deliver the needed yarn to the crochet squad developed and formed by the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA). This group of incarcerated veterans is a hybrid of two veteran groups, one known as Vietnam Veterans Chapter #205 and the second known as America Veterans Chapter #24.

The most confusing guideline in supplying yarn is to know what colors can be brought into the facility and used by the “squad” to make hats, gloves, scarves intended for adults and children and various crocheted play items intended for children. Due to so many personnel changes and shifting job responsibilities in a facility we have had to bide our time to get to know the personnel who are in charge of the activities we wish to be a part of. In the process I have refiled my volunteer papers, reacquainted myself with the facility personnel manual and updated myself on the rules and regulations governing my status. The last step is to bring my medical information up to date and that entails getting my annual TB test and providing proof of my COVID inoculation.

After multiple contacts over a period of time this is what I need to do in order to bring yarn into ACF. First, I needed to inventory the yarn by color. Second, I need to package the yarn. Third, I need to contact the Staff Advisor for the VGoA. Fourth, ask for a gate pass that would allow me to bring the yarn to the facility. Once there, the yarn will be sent to the package room for inspection. The package room sergeant will look for the band colors. Those colors, if allowed into the facility, could be fashioned into items identifying gang membership within the facility. The band colors are BLUE, BLACK, GREY, ORANGE and MULTICOLOR yarn.

Now that things are happening within the correctional facilities again, I am renewing my call for donations of yarn. It should be much easier to donate since the band colors give us less ambiguity about what we cannot donate. Remember, the goal of the yarn donations is to turn this yarn into useful items that will help those in need – homeless veterans, and needy children and adults. I can be reached at 315-252-4535 or by email nickvalenti46@yahoo.com. Remember, if no one answers the phone leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

The summer of 2022 has proven to be a very busy time for our Vietnam Veterans Chapters in Central District. The hard work of our Chapters over the years has laid the foundation for today's success and advocacy.

One of the Chapters that has been so successful is Central District is Chapter #103 out of Syracuse, New York in Onondaga County.

In Syracuse New York's State Fairgrounds, there was a parade staffed by Clear Path volunteers commemorating Armed Forces Appreciation Day on September 1st.

On September 19th there was a “Ride for Clear Path.” Clear Path evolved from a stand-alone canine service dog program to a holistic wellness center. It services some 33 counties in New York State

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Located at 1223 Salt Springs Road, Chittenango the Ride is an annual fundraising event participated by several motorcycle groups.

On September 20th at the Mattydale VFW, in Syracuse New York there was a Women's Health and Well Being open house seminar.

On September 21st the Syracuse Vet Center held their end of summer picnic in Liverpool, New York. Refreshments and hot dogs were provided and there was handicap accessibility for all attendees.

On October 15th Clear Path has scheduled a Flag Football event at their main campus.

Another Central District Chapter I hear a lot from is Chapter #377 out of Dryden, New York has kept the vision of Vietnam Veterans of America paramount in all of its community activities.

They are so active that they produce a monthly newsletter and have a photographer that gives the Chapter great coverage at all of their events. If interested in being put on an email list for issues of the newsletter just email me at nickvalenti46@yahoo.com.

The Chapter is known for its work with Cornell University ROTC program. Members of #377 foster a relationship with the cadets that encourage National Service for the men and women in the program.

In Cortland County, as part of the desire to recognize all the men and women from their County lost in Vietnam, the Chapter added another name to the casualty list of those who made the supreme sacrifice from Cortland County.

Not to overlook any conflict period and to show support for all of our brothers and sisters from all war times Chapter #377 worked with a Civil War re-enactment group ensuring a successful and entertaining show.

On July 23rd the annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Tribute Ride was held. This ride is a joint effort by Central District Chapters #480 Owego, New York; Dryden Chapter #377; Auburn, New York Chapter #704; the Blue Knights Motorcycle Club and a host of independent riders who participate to show their respect for the 58,479 who did not come back home.

On September 16th the Chapter held their 31st annual Watchfire at Myers Park, Lansing New York to honor our POW's and MIA's past and present. As always Cornell's ROTC cadets were out in force in support of this solemn ceremony.

Central District Chapter #704, out of Auburn, New York, participated in a number of annually scheduled activities this summer.

June saw the successful completion of the annual scholarship program. One scholarship is afforded to each participating Cayuga County High School graduating class. The recipient is chosen by the High School based on criteria developed by the Chapter under the guidance of a high school teacher. This year, 2022 was especially successful given that a coalition of veteran service organizations participated in order to give each of the eight (8) awardees a material amount of funds to further their education.

On July 23rd they participated in the Special Olympics Torch Run. This annual event has runners representing the City of Auburn Police Department, Cayuga County District Attorney's Office, Cayuga County Sheriff Office, as well as students from the criminal justice department of Cayuga Community College.

(Continue on pg. 14)

(Continue from pg. 13)

September saw a celebration of life ceremony at the Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the Town of Brutus on State Route 31 just outside of the village of Weedsport, New York. The family of John Marshall Snyder Jr., held a small ceremony and luncheon to recognize the loss of their brother and friend.

The attendees were moved by the facial image of John on the Memorial next to his name and the notation of where he was killed in Vietnam.

The Chapter included the "In Memory" Program in the County Vietnam Memorial. This inclusion has generated interest from families wanting to have their loved one who came back from Vietnam but died because of Vietnam on the Memorial. Originally there were only four names on our Memorial list. As of September, 2021 that grew to thirteen. As of September, 2022 that number stands at eighteen with more being proposed monthly.

Currently, the Chapter is trying to arrange a "Wall That Heals" visitation in 2023 and developing a Gold Star Mothers / Blue Star Mothers Memorial for 2024.

Chapter #803 home of the Vietnam Veterans Museum continues to stand out as a leader in preserving the memory of the Vietnam War and honoring the 58,281 men and women on "The Wall."

Central District Chapter #803 out of Elmira, New York has recognized the 12 fallen Tompkins County warriors killed in Vietnam by donating a plaque with the names inscribed.

On July 29th the Chapter successfully hosted the "Moving Wall." The occasion was highlighted by a reverent, but uplifting ceremony in tribute to Vietnam Veterans. The event took place at Eldridge Park in Elmira.

The Central District is home to many Chapters that have integrated themselves into their respective communities. One such Chapter is the Utica, New York Chapter #944.

The Chapter can lay claim to forming friendships, and working relationships from a wide array of Veterans organizations. Their meetings are well attended and enthusiasm runs deep. Their President helps them move on constructive community focused projects.

This comradery from different veteran organizations was manifested when #944 joined with Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter #490 to announce a Hometown Heroes Banner Program for the City of Utica. The mission is to place banners honoring our Veterans, either living or dead, who served in any branch of service in the United States Armed Forces.

In July 2022 Chapter #944 took part in a ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway. Participants' veteran groups included the 10th Mountain Division, Korean War veterans, a New York State Senator, Assemblywoman and County Executive. President Tom Buono of Chapter #944 provided remarks at the ceremony.

On July 29th the mayor of Utica, New York Rob Palmieri, the Utica Fire Department and Mark Sokolowski joined together to clean the Vietnam Monument on the Parkway in Utica. Chapter #944 worked to help maintain the dignity that memorial represents to the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

August 9th saw President Buono send out an email providing the latest information regarding the PACT Act with links that would allow his membership to access more information.

September was a very active month for Chapter #944. On September 12th there was a well-attended Quilts of Valor ceremony. Veterans were presented hand-made quilts.

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This was not the first such ceremony for the Chapter however, its impact made a lasting impression on all in attendance.

On September 16th the members of the Chapter participated in a POW / MIA Ceremony.

On September 25th their annual observance of Gold Star Family Day took place with the presence of Gold Star families, general public, Chapter members and numerous veteran service organizations. .

In rounding out some of Central District's veteran oriented activities I want to mention Madison County, New York and their appreciation dinner held on September 25th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM for wounded warriors, first responders, Veterans and their families. This event was held at The Maples of Madison County, at 2412 Route 20 East, Cazenovia, New York.

Thank you to all Central District Chapters for the great work done for veterans. Building bridges among veteran service organizations fosters an Americanism that will shine brightly on all of us as well as the sacrifices of the men and women of our Armed Forces.

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VVA Chapter #333 Report

Nyack St. Fair -- VVA-333 Fundraiser and WTC Memorial 091122

Cliff Fromm

VVA-333 held a fundraiser today at the Nyack Street Fair. We took solemn moments at the precise times that the Twin Towers and Pentagon were struck and the S. Tower collapsed, 8:46, 9:03, 9:37 and 9:59 to pay our respect. Our chapter president, Ray Furlong, rang a ceremonial bell three times and our attending troops gave a hand salute while Taps was played. It was truly a heartwarming moment.



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New York State Membership

Ted Wilkinson - Chair

To anyone that cares about VVA,
Ned has good reason to be upset and I am with him about this because it is getting out of control; I am one that believed it would get better but for anything that is attempted to fix makes things worse. For months I have tried to get the report situation better for the 4 states of Region II.

All 4 states know what they are doing but not so much national. 6 years without a problem of receiving report confirmations from national and entering them in my excel spreadsheet. After many, many, many etc. requests I still have not receive ONE confirmation this year. So I finally threw in the towel on the report Problem!

So I checked out a problem to me anyways is very important. National roster has some active members as being deceased. Before I even decided to respond here I like to DOUBLE-CHECK before a screw up is made so I just got off the telephone with this so called dead person .
Please feel free to call me with any questions

I'm not the one that gets paid, just one that cares

Region 2 Director-DE,NJ,NY,PA
Vietnam Veterans of America
New York State Membership Chair
Email: yankeeted@aol.com
Phone 585-322-6722

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VVA Chapter #268 Report

The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #268 gathered at the Lockport Navy Marine Club Tuesday night with four particular individuals in mind.

First off was Ashley Butcher who started Clay for Heroes back in 2012. She was looking for a way to thank veterans and with the help of other veterans, the business community and family. She began a program for veterans to help regain their love of the outdoors, hunting and firearms.

Since 2012 she's raised more than \$100,000 for veterans coming out of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to come to Niagara County and enjoy the outdoors.

"We recently went on a pheasant hunt in South Dakota," she told the audience of over 75 veterans and their families. "And this time it was a group of all-women veterans."

The veterans were more than happy to cheer on Butcher and her organization.

But it was not a mystery where Butcher got her generous nature.

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That fell to Cookie Butcher, a '77 Lockport High School graduate who was honored right after her daughter.

"I've got to thank you all for your service," Butcher said. "Community service is my way of giving back."

And so she has.

Butcher fixes up the flowers on Tri-Way Bridge, gives guidance to refurbish a buoy boat, co-founded the LockRock Armed Forces Day 5K race, and retained the dignity of Mt. Calvary Cemetery by helping to identify veterans that are buried there.

She ran the Marine Corp Marathon in honor of Nick Orchowski, a U.S. Army Military Police Officer who was injured in Bagdad in 2004.

"This is a wonderful organization," she said before getting the award. "I can't say enough about the veterans."

The third awardee was a hero in many ways.

Maureen Weber's husband Joe passed away in 1993 at the age of 50. His doctor said his glioblastoma of the brain was caused by exposure to Agent Orange, a chemical used in the Vietnam War.

Weber filed a claim with Veterans Affairs (VA) but was denied. She refiled. Denied again.

For 26-years Weber has fought court battle after court battle, but was blocked on all fronts. Then in 2019 the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in her favor and she became a member of the Agent Orange Widow's Club and was compensated for her loss.

"Don't give up," she told the crowd. "And you'll have a box-full of rejections just like me, but you keep fighting!"

Weber has used a portion of her claim to help veterans, including donating to the Veterans Memorial Monument in Lewiston where she still lives.

The final recipient of praise was Gary Walker, former president of the VVA Chapter #268, who presided when the group's membership was at an all time low.

"This is quite a surprise!" Walker said. "I didn't know anything about this."

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The membership applauded him, who saw the chapter when it was only 43 strong and today it fills a hall with 117 members.

"I appreciate it guys," he said. "Thank you."

(Continue from pg. 17)

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"I appreciate it guys," he said. "Thank you."

Reprint Permission: *LOCKPORT UNION-SUN & JOURNAL* Sept/Oct 202



Gary Walker



Cookie Butcher



Ashley Butcher



Maureen Weber

New Veterans Crisis Line Number Now In Operation

You just have to dial 988 then press 1.

You can still use the old number 1- 800-273-8255 if you wish.

Southern District Report**John Rowan****VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421****VVA Chapter #11 Report**

Clarence Simpson - Vice President

- 10/04/2022 Suffolk County Veterans Court will hold it's 12th graduation ceremony for 14 veterans whom have completed the VJO program.



- 10/04/2022 PFC Garfield M. Langhorn Day Resolution to be passed by the Town Of Riverhead, PFC Langhorn is Suffolk County's only Vietnam Veteran recipient of the Medal Of Honor (Posthumously).



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VVA Chapter #11 Report Suffolk

- 07/04/2022 VVA 11 march in the July 4th Parade in Southampton NY. Our Color Guard received 2nd Place Award by Southampton parade judges.

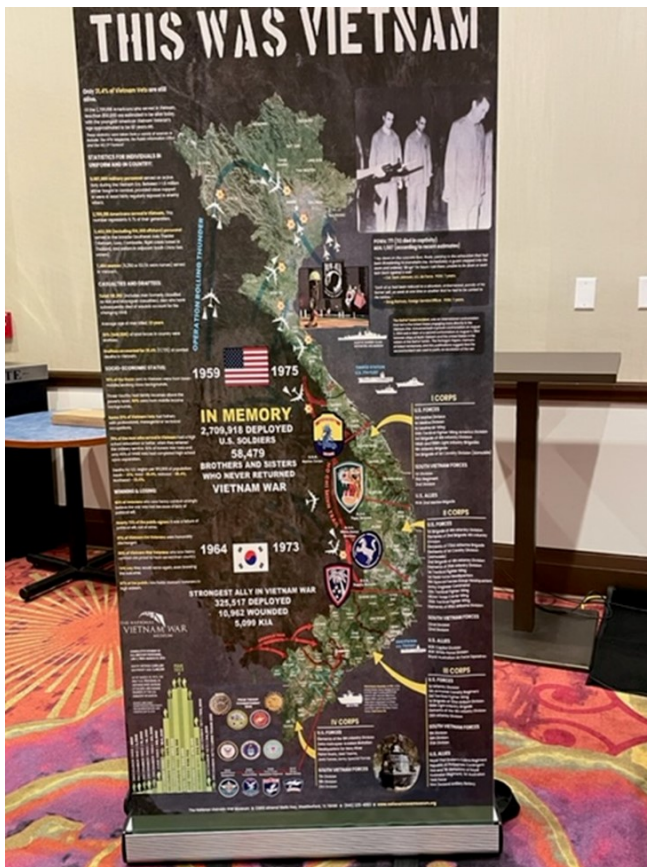


07/ 23/ 2022 VVA 11 co-sponsor of the Wounded Warrior baseball game with DAV and the town of Center Moriches NY

-10/2022 VVA 11 will resume monthly meet and greet coffee and snacks with our brother veterans at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook NY. There are 102 Vietnam veterans living at this facility.

- Visits to the Suffolk County Correction Facility has resumed this month.

- 10/14/2022 The 16th Annual PFC. Garfield M. Langhorn Pulaski Street School Essay Contest will be held for the 6th grade students. Also sponsored by VVA 11 and the PFC Garfield M. Langhorn Memorial Association.



Poster donated to VVA-NYSC by the Korean Vietnam Veterans of New York



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VVA Chapter 72 Report Brooklyn

Danny Friedman – President

VVA 72 was the lead VSO for the Kings County United Veterans' 154th Memorial Day Parade. This is the longest continuous running Memorial Day Parade in America. As lead VSO, Chapter President Danny Friedman was asked to speak at the following ceremony.

In June, we had two fund raisers which help fund our efforts to support homeless and hospitalized veterans. We provided pizza parties for the veterans in the locked rehab ward (15-West) in the Brooklyn VAMC. This was on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day. We also purchased \$1500.00 in new clothing to be distributed by VAVS at Brooklyn VAMC to homeless and hospitalized veterans.

Due to policy changes at the Brooklyn VAMC, Chapter 72 is now meeting the Argonne-Marine Park Post 107 of the VFW on Gerritsen Avenue. We still have our office at the Brooklyn VAMC but our mailing address is revised from Room 5-223, to 5-219.

Board member Paul Friedman has had 3 deployments to Kentucky with Team Rubicon for which he is a regional coordinator. He is also expecting a deployment to Puerto Rico later this month.

Chapter 72 has supported and participated in "Heroes on the Hudson", "Honor Flights", and Chapter 126' "Agent Orange Day Commemoration".

1st VP Bill Miller visited Joe Ingino at the Stony Brook veterans home and brought Joe hot dogs and French fries from Nathans in Coney Island.

VA New York Harbor Healthcare System Medical Center Director Appointment

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Timothy H. Graham as the new Medical Center Director of the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System, New York, NY. His first day will be on December 4th, 2022.

Timothy H. Graham, J.D., LL.M._

Mr. Graham has worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs for nineteen years, starting his career as a Presidential Management Fellow and Special Assistant to the Medical Center Director at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. After completing his Presidential Management Fellowship, he served in several progressive roles with VA, including Privacy Specialist in the VHA Privacy Office, Director of the VHA FOIA Office, Interim Associate Director at VA Central California Healthcare System, Associate Director at VA Northern California Healthcare System, Interim Medical Center Director at the Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System and most recently as SES Deputy Executive Director at the Washington, D.C. VAMC.

Before his career with VA, he received a Bachelor of Arts from Eastern Kentucky University, a Juris Doctorate from the University of Tulsa College of Law, and a Master of Laws, focusing on Health Law, from Widener University College of Law.

Mr. Graham has sound leadership qualities and proven experience. I am certain he will be an asset to our VISN, employees, volunteers, health care partners, the community, and most importantly, the Veterans we

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are honored to serve.

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Graham to the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System.

VVA Chapter #82 Nassau County

Richard Guevara - 1st Vice President

On August 27 our chapter participated in the Long Island Festival and Highland Games

On September 16 we hosted the Nassau County POW-MIA Vigil Remembrance Ceremony at Eisenhower Park. Our color guard participated in the vigil along with several members of the chapter. Our chapter was the host organization.

On September 23 we teamed up again with the Air Force Association to recognize the services of over 30 Vietnam Veterans. Our color guard opened the event. Our members presented the honorees with a gift in appreciation for their service to our country.

On September 29 our color guard and our members participated at the VA sponsored Vet Fest at Nassau Community College. Vet Fest is a resource-sharing event to support local veterans.

On October 1 our color guard marched at the Walls of Honor ceremony at Eisenhower Park. This event recognizes the services of U.S. veterans who served in our military.

On October 10 members of our chapter along with our color guard will team up with the Air Force Association to recognize the services of over 30 women veterans. Our color guard will open the event and our members will present the honorees with a gift in appreciation for their service to our country.

REGION 2

Delaware, New Jersey,
New York, Pennsylvania

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ted Wilkinson –Chair/

To anyone that cares about VVA,

Ned has good reason to be upset and I am with him about this because it is getting out of control; I am one that believed it would get better but for anything that is attempted to fix makes things worse. For months I have tried to get the report situation better for the 4 states of region two.

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Please feel free to call me with any questions

I'm not the one that gets paid, just one that cares

Email: yankeeted@aol.com

Phone 585-322-6722

To All of our Brothers/Sisters & Supporters of the Jewish Faith

Hope our brothers/sisters of the Jewish faith had a wonderful Rosh Shoshana, and Holy Yom Kippur and a Happy Sukkot. Sukkot, the "Season of our Rejoicing." It's a festival laden with unique mitzvahs and quality time with our community and family, all with an extra-large serving of joy.

**Life is ugly, get a Faith lift****What's happening**

The omicron variant of COVID-19 keeps changing, creating newer, more contagious variants. BA.5 seems to be the most contagious version to date and is causing most of the current COVID-19 cases in the US.

Why it matters

BA.5 is causing more reinfection in people who already had COVID-19, including earlier versions of omicron. It's also evading immunity from the vaccines.

What it means for you

The vaccines are still effective at preventing severe disease and death. To stay protected, get the booster shots you're eligible for and wear a mask in public.

Please make sure you are protected by getting the Free Vaccine for Covid 19/Omicron variant at the VA Medical Center or at any Pharmacy.

Veterans/Legislative Affairs**Health Care Eligibility Under PACT Act**

More Veterans are eligible for VA health care

You might have recently learned that the [PACT Act](#) could impact [your care and benefits](#). But did you know it also expands health care eligibility for many Veterans? The PACT Act began one of the largest expansions of VA benefits in history.

If a Veteran you know hasn't enrolled in VA health care before, here are some details you can share to help them get the care they've earned and deserve:

Vietnam Era Veterans

Vietnam Era Veterans who served in these locations and time periods are eligible to apply for enrollment now:

- ✦ Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975
- ✦ Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976
- ✦ Laos between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969
- ✦ Certain provinces in Cambodia between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969
- ✦ Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters) between January 9, 1962, and July 30, 1980

Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

Gulf War Era Veterans

Beginning October 1, 2022, Gulf War Era Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after the Persian Gulf War may be eligible to enroll in VA health care. This also includes Veterans who, in connection with service during such period, received the following awards or recognitions:

- ✦ Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- ✦ Service Specific Expeditionary Medal
- ✦ Combat Era Specific Expeditionary Medal
- ✦ Campaign Specific Expeditionary Medal

Any other combat theater award established by Federal statute or Executive Order

Post-9/11 Veterans

Post-9/11 Veterans discharged before October 1, 2013, can enroll in VA health care during a special 1-year enrollment period between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2023. To be eligible, one of the following must be true:

- ✦ They served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, or

They served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998.

What to know about VA health care

Enrollment is free, and health care may be free too.

VA health care for any illness or injury that is determined as "service connected," or related to your military service, is free. The PACT Act added more than 20 [presumptive conditions](#).

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Tell your friends to apply for VA health care in 1 of 4 ways:

[Online](#)

By calling the toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387

By mailing [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to: Health Eligibility Center 2957 Clairmont Rd., Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329

In person at their nearest [VA medical center or clinic](#)

My HealtheVet and your health care

If you're already enrolled in VA health care and have questions about what the PACT Act might mean for you, VA can help. [Sign-in](#) to your [Premium](#) account and send your doctor a [Secure Message](#). With My HealtheVet, you can also [view and organize](#) your health information, like your providers and closest [VA facility](#).

VA caregiver benefits expand to all vets on Oct. 1

By [Leo Shane III](#)

Leo covers Congress, Veterans Affairs and the White House for Military Times.

Veterans of all eras will be eligible for [caregiver benefits](#) starting Oct. 1, an expansion that is expected to add thousands of families to [the program](#) in the next year.

The move was originally scheduled to take place in 2020 but had been delayed two years as officials re-fined processing and support for the program. Currently, only veterans who served before May 1975 or after September 2001 are eligible for the benefits.

About 43,000 veterans are enrolled in the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) today. It is designed to support and compensate [full-time caregivers](#) providing at-home assistance to severely wounded veterans.

Dr. Colleen Richardson, executive director of the program, said officials expect to add about 16,000 more families over the next year.

"Our caregiver support line is ready, we will have double the number of staff on board in case anyone has any issues or concerns," Richardson said of the Saturday start date for the expansion.

Stipends vary based on where veterans live, but generally hover around \$3,000 a month for the most severely wounded individuals and \$1,800 for others in need of around-the-clock care. VA officials also provide training and medical support for eligible veterans and family members.

The PCAFC has been engulfed in controversy for much of the last year, since officials announced plans to review the cases of "legacy" participants (individuals who enrolled before Oct. 1, 2020) to ensure they still meet the criteria for receiving benefits.

Last spring, following public outcry over those potential program cuts, VA leadership announced they would re-examine changes to the eligibility rules and halt all program dismissals.

Earlier this month, officials said that all families currently in the program will be ensured participation until at least 2025, while new eligibility criteria is developed

At a press conference on Sept. 28, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said he is confident in the direction of the program but also understands the skepticism among some families.

"They're in a posture of 'trust but verify,'" he said. "And we are in a posture of wanting to walk the walk, and through execution earn that trust. It may be challenging, but we're determined to do it."

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CHAPTER MEMBER PROFILE

John Rowan **HONOREE PROFILE** **2019 VETERANS' HALL OF FAME**

US Air Force | Sergeant E-4

Sergeant John Rowan is now serving a seventh term as National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) after being re-elected to the post at the organization's 18th National Convention in New Orleans.

First elected to VVA's highest office in 2005, Sgt Rowan has remained active with VVA since the organization's inception in 1978.

A founding member and the first president of VVA Chapter 32 in Queens, New York, he has served as the chairman of VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents, for three terms on the organization's Board of Directors, and as President of VVA's New York State Council.

Sgt Rowan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1965 and went to language school where he learned Indonesian and Vietnamese. He served as a linguist in the U.S. Air Force's 6990 Security Squadron in Vietnam and at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, providing the Strategic Air Command with intelligence on North Vietnam's SAM sites to protect their bombing missions.

After his honorable discharge from the Air Force, Sgt Rowan received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Queens College and a Master's degree in Urban Affairs from Hunter College.

He retired from city service as an investigator with the City of New York's Comptroller's Office. Prior to his election as National President, Sgt Rowan served as a VVA veterans' service representative in New York City.

He lives in Middle Village, New York, with his wife, Mariann.



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Richardson said officials plan on reaching out to existing families in coming weeks to ensure they understand the recent expansion and reassure them that the moves will not hurt their benefits.

VA officials have also hired more than 300 new employees in recent months to help with the anticipated additional workload. About 120,000 new applications are expected in the next year. Richardson said based on historical trends, about one-third of applications are approved.

Information on how to apply for benefits is available on the [VA website](#).

Vietnam Veterans of America fully supports S. 344, The Major Richard Star Act.

Please contact your senators and urge them to support *The Major Richard Star Act*, which would provide concurrent receipt for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries.

Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA.



Required Medical Reexaminations Canceled

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides disability compensation benefits to eligible veterans and may require medical examinations to determine the severity of their conditions. Some conditions may change or improve over time, which may require veterans to be reexamined. In a July 2018 report, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) found claims processors did not consistently follow VBA policy that requires reexaminations of veterans be requested only when necessary. VBA has taken steps to reduce the number of unwarranted reexaminations with the creation of “batch jobs” intended to automatically cancel reexaminations meeting certain parameters. However, the OIG found that VBA carried out two batch cancellation jobs that mistakenly included reexaminations that should not have been canceled because they were required by law. This resulted in required future reexaminations being canceled,

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potentially causing veterans to receive monthly compensation benefits that are not consistent with their current levels of disability—higher or lower. After the OIG raised concerns, VBA suspended a scheduled batch cancellation job and reestablished workload controls to determine if reexaminations were necessary.

The OIG recognizes VBA's efforts to be responsive to prior OIG recommendations and to use automation, when possible, to minimize unnecessary medical reexamination requests. Since VBA took responsive action, the OIG did not further review the batch cancellation jobs. The OIG provided this memorandum to formally convey the information necessary for VBA leaders to further research the matter, assess the magnitude of the issue, and determine if additional actions are warranted. The OIG requested that VBA inform the OIG what action is taken to address the issues identified in this memorandum regarding batch cancellations involving medical reexaminations and appreciates VA's response as to planned improvements.

A Proclamation on National POW/MIA Recognition Day

From Belleau Wood to the Battle of the Bulge, Korea to Vietnam, Afghanistan to Iraq, and around the world, American patriots have dared all, risked all, and given all to defend our Nation and protect our liberties. Now and always, we honor their service, valor, and sacrifice. We also continue the righteous work of bringing home our heroes who remain unaccounted for.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we pledge to seek out answers for the families of service members still missing in action. We commit to doing all in our power to identify and recover America's missing sons and daughters. And we pay tribute to former prisoners of war — individuals who exhibited remarkable courage, love of country, and devotion to duty to protect our Nation's safety and freedoms.



VVA was represented by President Jack McManus, Vice President Tom Burke, and members of the national staff.

"We need to stay true to keeping of the POW-MIA issues alive in the public consciousness. Lest we forget, it is that awareness that will prevent the pains that too many families and veterans of our generation endured."

— VVA President, Jack McManus

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VVA Chapter #333 Report

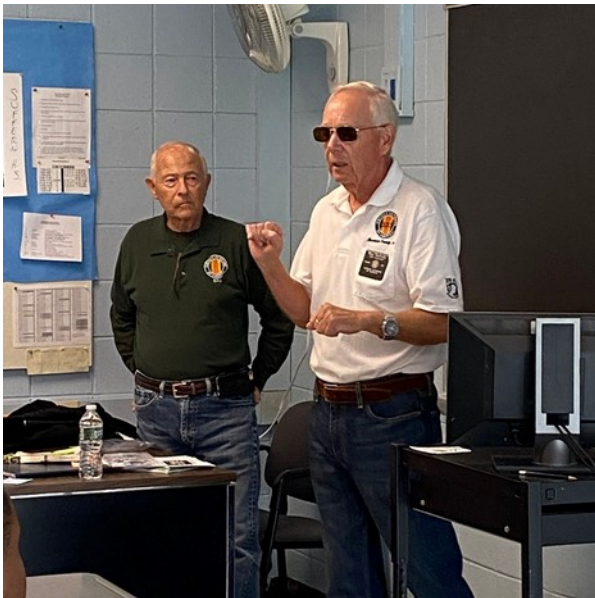
Suffern Central SD

September 30 ·

Eleventh graders in Mr. Casarella's English classes at SHS are reading "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien, a real life account of the author's time as a soldier during The Vietnam War. As an addendum to their lesson, two local Vietnam Veterans, Roy Tschudy and Howard Goldin, visited students this morning and discussed details of their experiences in Vietnam, including surviving The Tet Offensive, one of the deadliest battles of the war.

Tschudy (a former security guard at SHS) and Goldin shared moving photographs and stories with the students, who asked questions about what basic training was like, whether they had any regrets about their time as soldiers, and if they were drafted (Tschudy enlisted in the army and Goldin volunteered for the draft.) Several students also told the veterans about their own relatives who fought in the war.

While Tschudy and Goldin's time in Vietnam has had repercussions throughout their lives (both men have health issues because of their exposure to Agent Orange) their message to students was an uplifting one. "The Vietnam War taught us to be better people," says Goldin, who along with Tschudy, has returned to Vietnam several times to try to understand what the war was about and to help those who are still living with the devastation caused by it. "We're humanitarians now."



Can I Get VA Disability for High Blood Pressure Secondary to PTSD?

Yes, Hypertension can be service-connected secondary to PTSD.

The [VA Ratings for Hypertension](#) secondary to PTSD are 10%, 20%, 40%, or 60%, depending upon the severity of your Hypertension, and how your Hypertension symptoms affect your work, life, and social functioning.

For example, a veteran may have a 30% rating for PTSD but could possibly receive a 40% VA rating (lower or higher rating possible as well) for Hypertension secondary to PTSD.

[According to VA medical research](#), hypertension is one of the most common chronic condition in veterans, affecting more than 37% of the veteran population.

Considerable medical evidence has shown that reducing your blood pressure can contribute to a

(Continue on pg. 30)

(Continue from pg. 29)

significant reduction in risk for stroke among veterans.

There are a variety of hypertension secondary disability conditions as well, to include Hypertension secondary to Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), Hypertension secondary to Kidney Disease, Hypertension secondary to Thyroid, and Hypertension secondary to side effects of certain medications.

The VA PACT Site indicates if you are a Viet Nam Vet and you had previously submitted a claim for hypertension but were denied, you can go ahead and fill out a supplemental claim NOW. Go to this VA Site. It explains everything on the PACT Act.

Washington D.C.: This week the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) announced its new rule providing its beneficiaries with access to abortion counseling and to abortions in the case of rape, incest, or when the life or health of the pregnant veteran is endangered (press release and access to additional information at www.va.gov). The rule must be published in the Federal Register, opening a 30-day comment period, which is expected next week. On publication, the rule will take effect immediately.

This action has been a long time coming, the VA acknowledged that “abortion restrictions are creating a medical emergency” for veterans. The Department is committing “to prepare to provide these services in as many locations as possible.”

While the DVA regulatory change is significant, for it to endure, the new policy should be turned into law and Congress should fully fund the programs needed to enhance access to these medical services. Providing critical health care to women and minorities is basic to acknowledging the service veterans have contributed to this nation.

"Psychedelics as Medicine: A Conversation About the Future of Veterans' Mental Health Treatment"

As our country continues to grapple with record overdose deaths and rampant shortages of mental health providers, more Americans are turning to non-pharmacological treatments to address their mental health challenges. Psychedelics in particular have gained widespread popularity in recent years—especially among returning war veterans—which has pushed a growing number of cities and states to pass laws decriminalizing these substances.

Similar to the growing acceptance of cannabis use over the past decade, psychedelic use has become less taboo, which has opened up opportunities to invest in research to better understand how these substances can be used to heal those suffering from trauma. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs alone has five studies underway aimed at better understanding the potential impact of these substances, but much more is needed to understand where psychedelics fit into the larger mosaic of mental health care resources.

VA Disability: Clearer Claims Processing Guidance Needed for Selected Agent Orange Conditions

GAO-22-105191 Published: Sep 01, 2022. What GAO Found

For decades, Veterans Affairs has denied most disability claims by Vietnam veterans for 3 conditions associated with exposure to herbicides like Agent Orange. These conditions—which involve nerve damage, skin cysts, and blistering—must have manifested within 1 year of service in Vietnam for VA to presume a connection between the condition and exposure. Sources: [GAO-22-105191, VA DISABILITY: Clearer Claims Processing Guidance Needed for Selected Agent Orange Conditions](#); Pub. L. No. 116-315, § 2011, Comptroller General briefing and report on repealing manifestation period for presumptions of service connections for certain diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents and VVA Resolution AO-17 - Remove One Year Cutoff Date For Chloracne, Acute/Subacute peripheral Neuropathy, Porphyria And Cutanea Tarda

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“A Conversation with the Authors of *Our Veterans*”

The recently published book, *Our Veterans: Winners, Losers, Friends, and Enemies on the New Terrain of Veterans Affairs*, explores the physical, social, and psychological impact of military service and the problems that veterans face upon returning to civilian life. It also provides a critical examination of the roles played by advocacy organizations, philanthropies, and veteran-serving nonprofits in the larger effort to support military veterans.

The book’s authors delve deeply into the ongoing debate about the cost, quality, and effectiveness of health care delivered by both the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and private providers, proposing a new agenda that links service provision to veterans with the quest for broader social programs benefiting all Americans.

NY Health Program Officer Derek Coy and two of the book’s authors, Suzanne Gordon and Jasper Craven, discussed how VA’s increased reliance on private sector care, the evolving political landscape, and an increasingly diverse veteran population impact veterans’ health care.

The White House has endorsed the House bill, which goes beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. It also adds hypertension to the list of illnesses that Vietnam veterans are presumed to have developed because of exposure to the chemical herbicide Agent Orange. The CBO estimates that about 600,000 of the 1.6 million veterans who served in Vietnam and who already receive disability compensation also have hypertension, or high blood pressure.

The sums are significant. For example, Vietnam veterans eligible for retroactive payments due to hypertension from exposure to Agent Orange would receive retroactive payments averaging about \$13,500, while survivors would receive about \$100,000, the CBO said in a December report.



From Vietnam to the present-day, members of the U.S. military have been exposed to toxic elements—at home and abroad—that have killed more people than our enemies. What has made the situation more disgraceful is our government hid the negative aspects of these toxic substances and fought their claims with the VA for many years.

VVA applauds recent legislation as long overdue action, but the fight to honor our veterans with the benefits they earned through their service continues. And we need you by our side.

Decades of betrayal—withholding care for debilitating and often lethal health consequences—have a tragic legacy. *How many more veterans must die waiting for the care and benefits they so desperately need?*

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Countless families denied benefits—even with research linking inherited health effects to exposure during military service—leave generations suffering. *Who will join in the fierce battle for the innocent victims: our children and grandchildren?*

The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive our nation treated and appreciated the Veterans of earlier wars.

Together we will fight for veterans, their families, and our military community.

Jack McManus

Please Donate for the fight

VVA National President

Vietnam Veterans of America and Campaign Endorsements

Vietnam Veterans of America National President Jack McManus noted today that VVA may not make any endorsements of political candidates for any elected office. “VVA's Constitution and our not-for-profit tax status strictly prohibit the national organization, as well as local VVA chapters and VVA state councils, from making any such endorsements. Occasionally, confusion arises when individual VVA members — who are often very politically active — are identified as representatives of our organization. To preclude any misunderstandings, as required by our membership, we must periodically get the word out to clarify the record,” McManus said

Welcome to our inaugural newsletter. We will be distributing this document once a month to keep you up to date on the latest changes in federal regulations and how they will impact veterans. Regulatory changes will be organized by agency and include the affected regulation (CFR) along with the title of the proposed, interim, or final rule. In addition to regulatory changes, this newsletter may address changes that are informal, but administrative in nature. If you have any questions, please contact Logan Lecates, the Healthcare Regulatory & Legislative Analyst for Government Affairs at the national office (llecates@vva.org).

Department of Veterans Affairs

38 CFR 17 - Reproductive Health Services.

This interim final rule went into effect on September 9. The VA now permits abortion counseling. VA will also provide abortions, along with related care, under circumstances where life or health of the pregnant veteran would be endangered if the pregnancy were carried to term, or when the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest. This change also applies to CHAMPVA beneficiaries.

38 CFR 71 - Extension of Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Eligibility for Legacy Participants and Legacy Applicants.

This interim final rule went into effect on September 21. The change will extend eligibility for legacy participants, applicants, and caregivers by three years (until October 1, 2025). “Legacy” means veterans who were participating or who have applied to participate by September 30, 2020. The extension applies to caregiver benefits, including stipends.

Certain caregivers may also be eligible for retroactive payments. In March of this year, a federal appeals court struck down part of the VA’s old interpretation of caregiver eligibility. The new (Continue on pg. 35)

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Link to the Song [Travelin Soldier' by the Chicks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbfgxznPmZM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbfgxznPmZM>

Travelin Soldier'

Two days past eighteen
He was waiting for the bus in his army green
Sat down in a booth in a cafe there
Gave his order to a girl with a bow in her hair
He's a little shy so she give him a smile

So he said would you mind sittin' down for a while
And talking to me, I'm feeling a little low
She said I'm off in an hour and I know where we can go
So they went down and they sat on the pier
He said I bet you got a boyfriend but I don't care
I got no one to send a letter to
Would you mind if I sent one back here to you

I cried
Never gonna hold the hand of another guy
Too young for him they told her
Waitin' for the love of a travelin' soldier
Our love will never end
Waitin' for the soldier to come back again
Never more to be alone when the letter says
A soldier's coming home

So the letters came from an army camp
In California then Vietnam
And he told her of his heart
It might be love and all of the things he was so scared of
He said when it's getting kinda rough over here
I think of that day sittin' down at the pier
And I close my eyes and see your pretty smile
Don't worry but I won't be able to write for a while

I cried
Never gonna hold the hand of another guy
Too young for him they told her
Waitin' for the love of a travelin' soldier

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Our love will never end
Waitin' for the soldier to come back again
Never more to be alone when the letter says
A soldier's coming home

One Friday night at a football game
The Lord's Prayer said and the anthem sang
A man said folks would you bow your head
For the list of local Vietnam dead
Crying all alone under the stands
Was the piccolo player in the marching band
And one name read and nobody really cared
But a pretty little girl with a bow in her hair

I cried
Never gonna hold the hand of another guy
Too young for him they told her
Waitin' for the love of a travelin' soldier
Our love will never end
Waitin' for the soldier to come back again
Never more to be alone when the letter says
A soldier's coming home

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Never more to be alone when the letter says
A soldier's coming home

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standard for eligibility is a “need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury;” or “a need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired[.]” Caregiver reassessments occurring after March 25, 2022 must apply the new standard to determine stipend eligibility and amount. Retroactive payments may apply based on any increase in stipend amount using the new standard IF caregivers did NOT receive a stipend amount increase during their initial reassessment prior to March 25, 2022. Eligible individuals may receive retroactive pay dating back to October 1, 2020.

Note: This does not mean that reassessments will occur, and the current position of the VA appears to be that they do not intend to conduct new reassessments until 2025 unless they are requested by the veteran/caregiver or in cases where the caregiving situation for a veteran has substantially changed.

Environmental Protection Agency

87 FR 54415 - Designation of Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid (PFOS) as CERCLA Hazardous Substances

This proposed rule would allow the designation of PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances. The intention of the EPA is to promote the cleanup of sites contaminated with this material and to reduce exposure to these chemicals. This is relevant to veterans because of the inordinate amount of exposure to forever chemicals that we have received on deployment and while serving stateside on various military installations; the change in the rule will give us more ammunition to fight for research on forever chemicals, ideally leading to presumptives for exposure similar to Agent Orange.

Other News

Effective Jan. 1, 2023, all responsibilities for the verification of Veteran-owned small businesses will transfer from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Small Business Administration. VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization will continue to advocate and provide education, training and guidance to help VOSBs and SDVOSBs secure government contracts.

The Vietnam Veterans of America National Leadership & Education Conference

was well attended, with many new leaders in new Chapters. It was held in Greenville, South Carolina on August 9 -13, 2022.

Major new topics were added to this conference, such as, Federal Law covering children with Disabilities, Healthcare and the Aging Veteran: What you need to know about planning for the future, Native American Veteran history, Survivor Benefits Programs, VA Benefits Q & A, AVVA-The 3-R's to recovery: Rekindle-Refresh-Reactivate,, Suicide Prevention ,PTSD, Moral Injury, and the Aging Veterans, and the usual other topics on Parliamentary Procedures, By-Laws and Veteran Homeless Project.



THEIR Sacrifice | OUR Pledge



investigate



recover



identify



returned



National
POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 16, 2022 | #theirsacrifice | www.dpaa.mil



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Proclamation—National POW-MIA Recognition Day, 2022

September 15, 2022

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From Belleau Wood to the Battle of the Bulge, Korea to Vietnam, Afghanistan to Iraq, and around the world, American patriots have dared all, risked all, and given all to defend our Nation and protect our liberties. Now and always, we honor their service, valor, and sacrifice. We also continue the righteous work of bringing home our heroes who remain unaccounted for.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we pledge to seek out answers for the families of service members still missing in action. We commit to doing all in our power to identify and recover America's missing sons and daughters. And we pay tribute to former prisoners of war -- individuals who exhibited remarkable courage, love of country, and devotion to duty to protect our Nation's safety and freedoms.

Today and every day, we fly the iconic black and white flag symbolizing America's Prisoners of War and Missing in Action above the White House, at the United States Capitol, on military bases, at memorials and cemeteries, and at homes across America. It is a reminder that we have not forgotten the heroism of our POWs and MIAs and that we still hope for their return. There is no undertaking more fundamental than the rite of remembrance, and there is no act more sacred or more American than keeping the faith with those who have sacrificed so much for our Nation.

On this day of heartache and of resolve, let us offer strength to the families still waiting for the return of their loved ones. Let us extend our gratitude to Americans and international partners working tirelessly to bring home our missing service members from prior conflicts. And let us remember that freedom is never free, that democracy always requires champions, and that we owe an eternal debt to the heroes of our Armed Forces. NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 16, 2022, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Along with my fellow Americans, I salute our former POWs who overcame unspeakable indignities to return home with honor. We will work tirelessly to provide the families of those who have not yet come home the fullest possible measure of accounting. I urge all Americans to observe this day of honor and remembrance with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-seventh.



JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.



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Lerner Center For Public Health Promotion Maxwell Syracuse University

Among female veterans there is not only limited access to certain types of health care, but also negative perceptions about the care provided by the VHA, and lack of knowledge about availability and eligibility for benefits.

There are gender-specific services that women need and are unable to access through the VHA system.

Our Female Veterans Deserve Better Healthcare Mariah Brennan Nanni

Women now make up 30% of veterans from the Post 9/11 service era. This large group of women is increasingly diverse, with non-Whites comprising 32% and Hispanics comprising 13% of female veterans. Women now make up 30% of veterans from the Post 9/11 service era. This large group of women is increasingly diverse, with non-Whites comprising 32% and Hispanics comprising 13% of female veterans.¹ With women representing one of the fastest growing segments of our nation's military, we must ensure that they have access to comprehensive high-quality care. The Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) must continue to work toward improving healthcare quality and access so that women are fully supported in leading healthy lives when they separate from the military

Access to VHA Care is Not Woman Friendly

Unfriendly platforms for care make people less likely to visit their providers. This is the case with the VHA. Among female veterans there is not only limited access to certain types of health care, but also negative perceptions about the care provided by the VHA, and lack of knowledge about availability and eligibility for benefits.² These unfriendly qualities of the VHA have led to women being less likely than men to utilize Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) benefits. This underutilization is an institutional problem, and it is the VA's responsibility to create female friendly care. Female friendly care must address the changing nature of female service as well as the gender-specific healthcare services women need.

Women Have Expanded Their Role in the Military

Roles within the military have drastically changed during the Post 9/11 era. Although they are still legally sanctioned from engaging in combat, military technology has evolved to the point where combat has become an ambiguous term. Women are not on the frontline with the infantry, but are becoming increasingly exposed to combat zones. The changing nature of female military service highlights the need for increased healthcare attention for women. We know that women are at an increased risk for developing Post Traumatic Stress as a result of Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Women may be unlikely to utilize available mental health services to help treat their MST because there is a fear that they will encounter individuals similar to their perpetrators at VA facilities.³ The DoD and VA must further efforts to eliminate sexual assault within the military and establish a safe environment for female veterans to receive necessary care.

Comprehensive Reproductive Care for Women Must Be Provided

The VA provides prenatal and preconception care, maternity care services and seven days of newborn

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care for women Veterans. However, the VHA does not provide labor and delivery services on site. Pregnant women must seek out private providers or work with a Maternity Care Coordinator to determine the closest partner provider. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of women that were VHA patients with a VHA and/or private care obstetrics or gynecology visit increased by more than 100%.⁴ This creates an additional barrier that veterans must overcome in order to receive quality care. Fragmentation in care is likely to result in a loss of patient information across providers.⁵ Poor integration of care can result in women not receiving proper treatment for mental health, physical health, and pregnancy related concerns. Through the years, the proportions of VHA patients who also used any outpatient services purchased through private care was consistently higher for women than for men.⁶ This suggests that there are gender-specific services that women need and are unable to access through the VHA system. A critical gender-specific area of care that appears to be lacking within the VHA is reproductive health services and maternity care. More than 50% of female veterans who have served following September 2001 and used their VA health benefits are of childbearing age.⁷ Ensuring that these women are receiving comprehensive reproductive care must be made a priority for the VA.

The DoD and VHA Need to Take Action

The DoD and VHA should collaborate to develop a comprehensive set of services for female veterans. The DoD has a responsibility to inform healthcare providers how the changing role of women in the military impacts their healthcare needs. The VHA must make a commitment to providing female specific healthcare services so that women are not required to seek services outside of the VHA network. Finally, because women are expanding their military presence, additional research efforts should be made to assess the needs of female service members so that they can be fully supported upon separation from the military.

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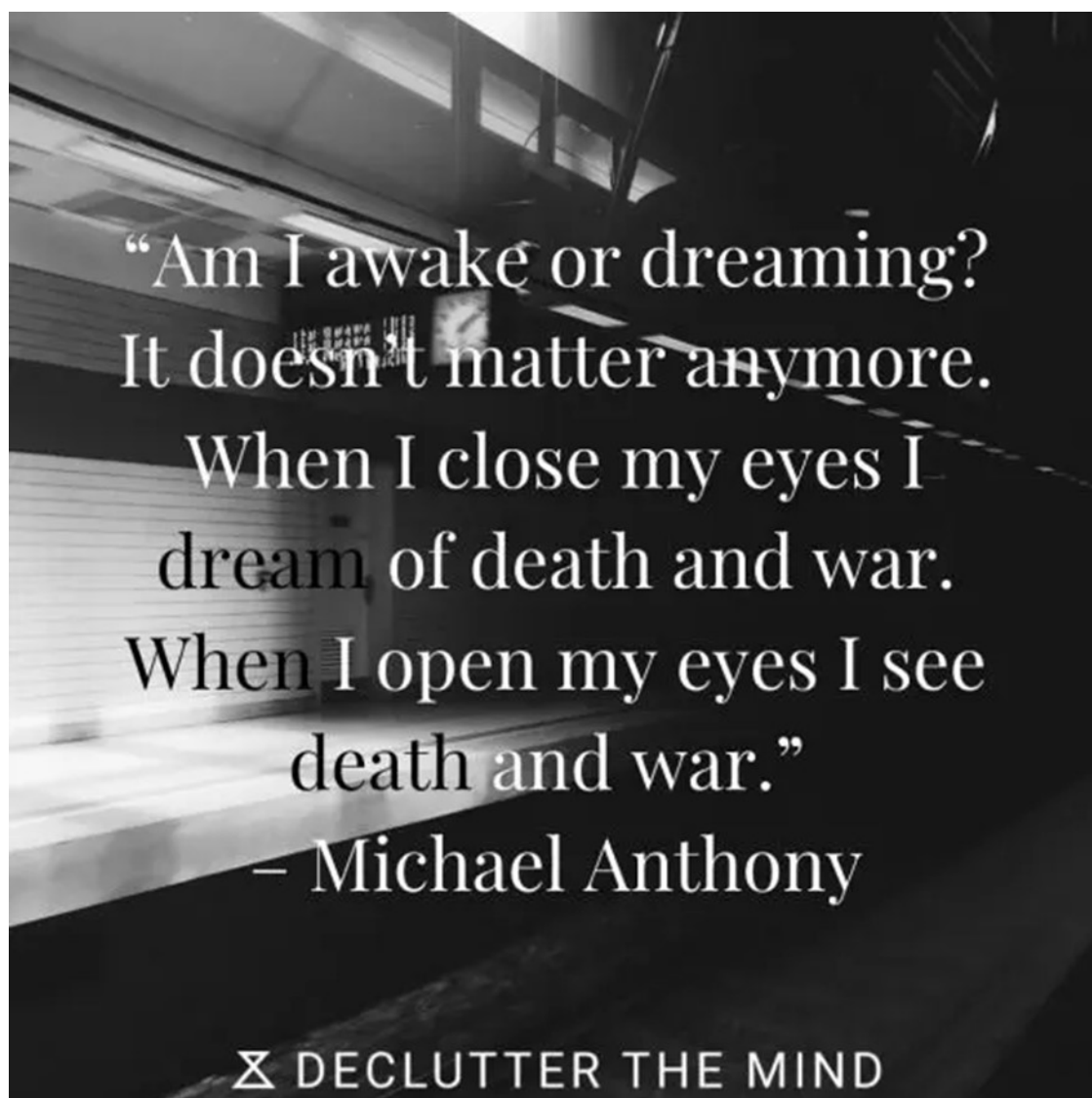
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DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health, Women's Health Services/Center for Innovation to Implementation, Women's Health Evaluation Administration Initiative. There are gender-specific services that women need and are unable to access through the VHA system.

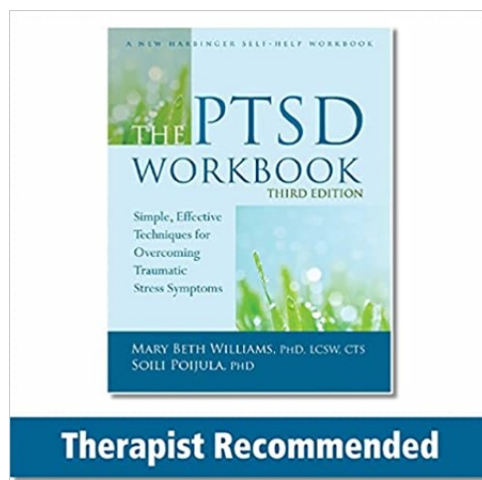
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The PTSD Workbook: Simple, Effective Techniques for Overcoming Traumatic Stress Symptoms Paperback – Illustrated, May 1, 2016

by [Mary Beth Williams PhD LCSW CTS](#) (Author), [Soili Poijula PhD](#) (Author)



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