

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 29 Issue 02

Veteran's News that needs to be Read Summer 2019

MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE



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IN MEMORIAM

VVA #8

Austin A. Wilcox

VVA #20

Bernard D. Fry

Andrew N. Restivo

VVA #77

Denner Alexander Astyk, Jr.

Edward J. Briele

Roger Heymanowski

Dennis M. Pasiak

Eric George Reamer



VVA #82

Paul L. DePaoli

VVA #459

LeRoy Foster

William Tallman

VVA #944

John Joseph Jadowski

VVA #803

Lee S. McDonald

At-Large Member

William K. Crum

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE



VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2019

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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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

After all the moaning and groining about having our meeting on Easter weekend we had a very good turnout. Most know that our meetings are important, and we have very good info that comes out. This meeting we featured the working groups. Francisco on working group 2 and Nick DeLeo on working group 1 gave presentations. President Rowan followed up and provided more info we need to take to convention.

We have ended up with 68 delegates which I am pleased with. We are allowed 125 and wish we would have that many, but I will take this. Again, as this convention approaches, we all need to keep an open mind and listen to the debates on our future and then decide where we should head. There are around 5 resolutions submitted a couple of amendments on our future so we should have some lively debates. I'm hoping that we at least come away in whatever direction we choose as delegates. No Monday morning quarterbacking by those chosen not to participate in our future.

All chapters have received copy of Amendments and Resolutions. Please talk to your members and especially have a copy for your delegates. Homework is important on this.

We have some good news. Jim McDonough has returned as Director of Division of Veteran Services. Yes, the name has changed to Services as much confusion with Veteran Affairs name.

Anyway, we have had hardly any communication or relationship since Jim had left but as soon as he returned I had very long conversation with him and we are back on tract. Right off the bat an event was held at the Vietnam Veterans Museum in Albany put on by OGS—Office of General Services. This was an exhibit of 1969. Vietnam was very much involved that year and Jim asked that we participate in the opening. I agreed and we asked Nick Valenti if he would like to speak. He did and brought 3 Vets with him along with me, Sam Hall, Grant and Bing attending. Nick did an outstanding job and we have now established ourselves again. Thanks Nick.

This is very important as we need help of government officials as our funding, we have been receiving for several years to help offset our expenses in our Service Officer Program was cut. We need these funds back and we are being assured this will happen, but I'm not fully convinced that it will. We are doing everything we need to do, and Bing Markee is reminding our legislators about this all the time.

We have made a few changes to our website. We removed our Officer's pages and some others. No one including myself has not updated their page in a long time. As no one has ever asked why I could only assume that no one was really reading, and I felt we were wasting our time. We do keep front page updated as soon as we receive important news you should know. Much on Blue Water Bill. So, we do what we can and if you all do not look at site, we cannot make you. Just like this Interchange. We provide this to only around 2100 of you out of 6,000 NY members. We do what we can.

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So, hope to see you in June meeting and all delegates for convention. Shirts have been ordered as we all wear them opening day. NY started this shirt deal back in the 3 convention and you will see most states have taking this up and have shirts for their delegates. Just another thing NY has led the way on.

Again, any questions on anything please email me at nedvva@roadrunner.com

POW/MIA -Veterans Initiative Report

Grant T. Coates

• **To Date: Missing** – 1,589

• 1,589 Americans are listed by DOD as missing and unaccounted. a. Loss Locations: Vietnam – (South- 794, North – 452) 1,247, Laos – 288, Cambodia – 48, and the PRC – 7.

• Accounted: 991 since 1975 a. Recovery Locations: Vietnam – 727, Laos – 285 Cambodia – 42, PRC – 3
b. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975.

2) Chair gave a presentation on March 29th at Clear Path for Veterans, a 501(c) (3) non-profit Veteran Service Organization.

3) Received support request for assistance from Vietnam Office Seeking Lost and Missing Personnel re: V.I. case 177, September 1995.

4) Article in “ABC Spanish Daily Newspaper in Asia” titled “Vietnam, in search of the lost tomb” documenting the V.I. history.

5) Article in Cleveland Plain Dealer, 11 February titled “Diplomacy of death: Vietnam Vets return to battlefield, help find lost enemy graves.” Story based on V.I. case 143, with 3.47 minute video titled “Vietnam vet part of veterans initiative to recover enemy dead”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zug3XB7GX2Y>

6) POW-MIA Bracelet program “Remembering Our Missing Warriors” continues with committee members in schools.

7) V.I. mission planned for October 2019. Details in planning stage.

Vietnam Veterans of America

Region 2 DE.NJ.NY.PA.

Ted Wilkinson - Director (585) 322-6722

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.

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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 incountryvet@comcast.net

committee member: Ted Wilkinson 585-322-6722 email yankeeted@aol.com

Working Group I Executive Summary (Sent by Nick DeLeo)**Executive Summary – Strategic Plan for Dissolution**

This Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Strategic Plan for Dissolution (Plan) is the result of two years of investigation, analysis, and deliberation by Working Group I (WG I), and addresses the legal requirements associated with dissolution of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) National Corporation as well as the practical aspects of identifying and transferring issues important to the legacy of the VVA to other organizations that will preserve and extend the legacy of the VVA into the future.

This Plan was completed by WG I for the VVA National Corporation, and was transferred to the VVA National Board of Directors (NBOD) on April 12, 2019, for their safekeeping, information, and use.

This Plan represents the conditions and facts that existed in April 2019, but WG I is aware that organizational, financial, and legal conditions are likely to change between now and the actual date of dissolution. It will be the responsibility of the VVA NBOD for maintaining, updating, and executing the actions and legal responsibilities included in the Plan.

This Plan includes five topical areas: Corporation, Finance, Veterans Benefits Program, Membership, and Chapters and State Councils. Each topical area is divided into subtopics that include: Facts, Analysis, and Actions. The Facts section lists the information that was considered; the Analysis section lists the conclusions reached from analyzing the facts; and the Action section lists each action that needs to be taken, the allocated timeframe when the action needs to be taken, and the person or group within the VVA responsible for completing the action. WG I has determined that each of the Actions included in this Plan are mandatory, and not optional. For that reason, Actions contain the words will, shall, must, which direct that the Action be taken.

Based on current membership requirements in the VVA, the last date for a person on active duty military service to become eligible for membership was over 43 years ago on May 7, 1975. As a result, the membership is aging, and in 2018 the average age of VVA members was 72 years old. At some point in the not too distant future VVA members will likely not be able to physically perform the tasks required to effectively manage the activities necessary to continue operation of the VVA National Corporation. **(Cont. on pg. 6)**

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The VVA NBOD is directly responsible to conduct business in a lawfully compliant and responsible manner, always in the best interest of the VVA National Corporation and membership. Successful execution of this Plan is vitally important to the VVA National Corporation and will require significant attention and cooperation of the VVA NBOD on an ongoing basis.

Corporation

The Corporation section of this Plan pertains to the VVA National Corporation in general and includes: Corporate Structure, Corporation Dissolution, Asset Distribution, Constitution, Government Affairs, and Committees.

The Corporation section of the Plan is very detailed and contains numerous legal requirements that must be completed in an orderly and timely manner. The information contained in the Executive Summary section is abbreviated and should be considered for information rather than reference purposes. More detailed information is contained in Section 3 of this Plan.

Corporate Structure

The VVA National Corporation is a non-profit corporation formed under the laws of the State of New York. The VVA Constitution, as amended from time to time, establishes the structure of VVA.

As the VVA National Corporation nears the date of dissolution it may wish to adopt an amendment to the VVA Constitution to reduce the size of its NBOD and reapportion some responsibilities. For example, as funding for the Conference of State Council Presidents is removed, then the CSCP will cease functioning and the NBOD position held by the President of the CSCP could be eliminated. Further, the remaining number of NBOD could be reduced by eliminating the At-Large Directors (10) or the Regional Directors (9), or some combination of the two groups, with the remaining Directors assuming greater responsibilities. Under New York state law, there must be a minimum of one (1) member of the Board of Directors.

When the VVA National Corporation dissolves it will have a direct impact upon State Councils, Chapters, and Membership, as none of them will be bound by the structure set forth in the VVA Constitution. The VVA Constitution will cease to exist.

As a general proposition, the Law is the highest authority having a bearing upon the organization and operation of the VVA National Corporation, and the lower authorities are listed in descending order: Law, Articles of Incorporation, Congressional Charter, VVA Constitution, Special Rules of Order, Rules of Order, Board Policies, and Staff Policies.

Corporation Dissolution

As a legal entity, the VVA National Corporation's existence will be brought to an end eventually, regardless of anyone's wishes or desires. Much like an individual person, the VVA National Corporation has a life span which will be ended by its dissolution (either voluntarily or involuntarily). An involuntary dissolution would result from the failure by the VVA National Corporation to file some required government report, or perhaps an unpaid creditor would put VVA National Corporation into bankruptcy or otherwise take all of its financial assets. A voluntary dissolution would allow the VVA National Corporation to decide to control its end in a manner that will perpetuate VVA's legacy and which will continue to bestow benefits upon future generations of veterans. The VVA National Corporation can accomplish this through planning in advance for its voluntary dissolution.

Defaults by the VVA National Corporation give rise to possibilities of personal liabilities upon officers/directors of the VVA National Corporation.

Not later than one year prior to dissolution, subject to the advice of New York counsel, the VVA NBOD must commence the process of formal dissolution of VVA National Corporation by the adoption of a Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets addressing the close of the VVA National Corporation and the distribution of assets not

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previously distributed and by the filing of a Petition for Dissolution with the New York Attorney General or a New York Supreme Court. This plan should not be confused with the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Strategic Plan for Dissolution.

A Petition must be filed with either the New York Attorney General (AG) or a New York Supreme Court. Upon approval of the Petition by the AG or the Court the Plan of Dissolution must be carried out within 270 days (distribute assets and pay liabilities), “Wind up” the dissolution by filing a final Financial Report (showing no assets or liabilities), prepare a Certificate of Dissolution, and file a Petition for its approval with the New York AG.

Asset Distribution

The VVA National Corporation has both tangible and intangible assets at this time and will probably have both types of assets at the time the VVA National Corporation dissolves.

The VVA has substantial flexibility in transferring assets prior to the filing of its Plan of Dissolution, without having to be concerned about State oversight. The VVA should use that flexibility to identify its “legacy” assets, with a view toward transferring ownership (but not necessarily possession) to a successor organization or other selected organization(s) before filing the Plan of Dissolution.

For distribution of assets under a Plan of Dissolution, significant oversight by the State of New York is imposed, including filing of financial reports, affidavits, and governing documents of recipient organizations. When the VVA National Corporation dissolves, all of its remaining assets (after payment of all remaining debts) will, if not otherwise disposed of, be given to an organization which is tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), which is the usual form of charitable or religious organization, or 501(c)(19), which is the form specifically for veterans’ organizations. If the VVA National Corporation has not designated any such organization(s), the State of New York will make that determination.

Also, six years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD shall direct the finance staff of VVA National Corporation to make a comprehensive listing of the Corporation’s assets, both tangible and intangible. This list must be updated on a biennial basis (i.e., every two years) and finalized two years prior to dissolution. (Note:1 Valuations are not the focus of this effort.)

At two years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD must select the organization(s) that will receive VVA National Corporation tangible assets, along with the description of assets it desires to transfer to those organization(s). Distribution of these assets must be completed before the VVA National Corporation files its Plan of Dissolution.

Also, at two years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD will determine the amount of assets required to pay all remaining liabilities until the anticipated date of dissolution, and safeguard those assets in the Dissolution Fund or other protected status.

Constitution

The VVA Constitution establishes a structure among the National organization, the State Council, and the Chapters. If VVA National Corporation dissolves but leaves State Councils and Chapters which are active, the VVA Constitution ends along with VVA National Corporation, relieving those corporations of requirements contained in the VVA Constitution.

Currently the VVA Constitution contains no provisions for dissolution or other termination of the VVA National Corporation. Working Group I submitted a proposed amendment to the VVA Constitution to require the NBOD to actively manage the legal dissolution of the VVA National Corporation, to include adopting, updating, and implementing a strategic plan for dissolution, and to take all actions necessary to accomplish the orderly dissolution of the Corporation.

When the date of dissolution is adopted the VVA NBOD shall

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immediately have responsibility for actively managing dissolution activities, to include adopting, updating and implementing a strategic Plan for dissolution, monitoring and responding to liabilities and vulnerabilities, and all other actions necessary to bring the existence of the VVA National Corporation to an end.

Prior to each VVA National Convention after 2019, the VVA NBOD shall timely submit such proposed amendments to the VVA Constitution as may be necessary in order to carry out the Strategic Plan for Dissolution (for example, changes in the number and/or composition of the Board of Directors of the VVA National Corporation).

Government Affairs

“Government Affairs” is a broad term which encompasses not only the work of VVA officers, staff, and hired consultants/lobbyists, but also the Government Affairs Committee. The Government Affairs Committee accepts input from all of the other VVA committees and, if congressional or other action is warranted, then places the item in the hands of VVA’s Government Affairs Department, officers and staff to carry out. The work of Government Affairs in Congress is considered by the general membership as one of the most vital functions to preserve the Founding Principle, “**Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.**”

Two years before dissolution the VVA NBOD shall direct the Government Affairs staff to determine the status of each undertaking then in progress, along with the anticipated time needed to see that undertaking completed. For any undertaking which cannot be completed prior to the dissolution of the VVA National Corporation, the VVA NBOD needs to identify a successor organization(s), or another existing organization, or consider formation of a new organization of similar status, willing to continue that undertaking, and transfer to it all of VVA’s preparatory work supporting that undertaking. This action may involve coordinating with other organizations to place VVA employed personnel in direct contact with counterparts in those organizations. Transfers need to occur in a timely manner with regard to legislative calendars and sessions, such that all transfers occur not later than one year prior to dissolution.

Committees

Some committees primarily support the VVA National Corporation, and others primarily support the membership. The standing committees are adopted by the VVA Constitution and will remain in effect unless and until the VVA Constitution is amended, or the VVA National Corporation dissolves, or the VVA National President ceases to appoint chairs of the committees. Most standing committees meet for only six hours per year, three meetings a year for two hours at each meeting.

The standing committees which primarily support the VVA National Corporation may need to remain functional until the VVA National Corporation dissolves.

Beginning with the next fiscal year budget cycle, and continuing each year thereafter, prior to January 31, the VVA NBOD shall determine which committees will continue to be funded.

Additionally, as early as five years before dissolution the VVA NBOD shall determine whether individual committees should consider merging, separately incorporating, or aligning with other organizations to share information. This action must be completed not later than one year prior to dissolution.

Finance

Revenue

Historic Revenues have not substantially changed over the last few years. Total Revenue for 2018 was \$9,691,195, and the major sources of revenues were: The Household Goods Donation Programs at \$6,508,654, 67 percent, Contributions \$2,158,606, 22 percent. Other sources of revenue include: Membership Dues \$341,517, Veterans Support Foundation Grant \$261,583, The VVA Veteran magazine \$197,368, Conventions & Conferences \$134,871, Royalties \$62,958 and Other \$25,538, **Continue on pg. 9)**

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totaling 11 percent.

The VVA National Corporation's greatest financial concern is the risk of loss of critical revenues such as the Household Goods Donation Program, and contributions, which make up the largest portion of revenues. The VVA NBOD should take prudent actions to ensure revenue sources continue as long as possible and should attempt to identify new sources of revenues in case one of the main sources reduces or becomes unreliable.

Eight years prior to dissolution the CFO and National Treasurer must provide line item details of revenues instead of lump sums values to the VVA NBOD so they have more knowledge of what they are working with. On a quarterly basis the CFO and staff will need to prepare financial reports, including graphs and charts to keep the VVA NBOD completely up to date on transactions that affect the final goal of transition.

Two years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD must begin to notify the revenue sources of the intent to dissolve the VVA National Corporation or to transition to another organization, and work with those sources to sustain revenue as long as possible.

Expenses

The authority to incur expenses is implied in the Articles of Incorporation and Congressional Charter, and further defined in the VVA National Policies and Procedures. The Congressional Charter emphasizes the following right to members, "All books and records of the corporation may be inspected by any member having the right to vote or by any agent or attorney of such member, for any proper purpose, at any reasonable time."

The expense budget for VVA for Fiscal Year 2018 was \$9,300,000.

As VVA National Corporation progresses through the Plan, the needs of the organization will change, and some expenses will be reduced or eliminated, while some, such as the VVA National Officers, attorney fees, consultants and some committees might increase or decrease.

The VVA Chief Financial Officer (CFO), VVA National Treasurer and necessary staff members within the Finance Department will be crucial through the dissolution of the VVA National Corporation.

The VVA NBOD must become more actively involved in reducing expenses to meet the goals outlined in this Plan. This includes use and possible elimination of the reserve and investment funds. Beginning as soon as possible, the CFO must provide detailed expenses on a quarterly basis to enable the VVA NBOD to make sound financial decisions. The VVA NBOD will determine what details and data format will be presented to them on a quarterly basis.

The VVA NBOD must establish and fund a Dissolution Fund to ensure there are sufficient funds remaining to cover final dissolution expenses. The initial estimate for this fund is \$1,800,000, with the understanding that the VVA NBOD will need to monitor and reevaluate costs associated with dissolution and adjust the fund balance as necessary.

Feedback from the VVA membership indicates a strong interest in extending some of the VVA programs that form the legacy associated with the VVA. The VVA NBOD must establish and fund a Legacy Programs Fund to ensure there are sufficient funds available to transfer programs important to the legacy of the VVA to other organizations. Transfer of legacy programs could include funding to support the program for a given number of years, and could include transfer of certain VVA employees along with the funding necessary to support their salary for a given number of years. The initial estimate for this fund is \$3,100,000, with the understanding that this is a minimum value that will likely need to be adjusted upward, and the VVA NBOD will need to monitor and reevaluate costs associated with transferring legacy programs and adjust the fund balance as necessary.

Feedback from the VVA membership indicates a strong interest in having VVA funds available for distribution to chapters and state councils upon dissolution of the VVA National

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Corporation to carry on the legacy of the VVA at a local level. To provide funding to chapters and state councils the VVA NBOD must establish and fund a Legacy Membership Fund to ensure there are sufficient funds available for that purpose. Chapters would receive funding based on chapter membership strength, and state councils would receive funding based on state members-at-large membership strength. The initial estimate for this fund is \$3,100,000, with the understanding that the VVA NBOD will need to monitor and adjust the fund balance as necessary.

Eight years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD must establish three distinct funds: A Dissolution Fund for costs related to dissolution under New York law; a Legacy Program Fund to provide resources for transferring selected legacy programs to other organizations; and a Legacy Membership Fund for pro rata distribution to State Councils and Chapters that remain active after dissolution of the VVA National Corporation.

Contracts and Memorandums of Understanding

The contracting authority is vested in the VVA National Treasurer by VVA Policy. The National Treasurer oversees and maintains all contracts and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's). After review of all contracts and MOUs in 2018 the VVA National Treasurer found that all were currently necessary to the organization and have an escape (early termination) clause included.

Six years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD must have a corporate attorney review the escape clauses and contract language in all existing contracts and MOUs to ensure all liabilities to the VVA National Corporation are identified and the VVA NBOD must ensure all new contracts and MOUs have escape clauses before the contracts are agreed to and executed.

Three years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD will review all contracts for any necessary changes in language. The VVA NBOD will again review all contracts and MOU's to determine those that are necessary to the mission through dissolution of the VVA Corporation. Contracts and MOUs that do not meet that criterion will be terminated or allowed to expire.

Veterans Benefits Program

Based on feedback from the VVA membership the VVA Veterans Benefit Program is well supported by them and is considered by many as a premiere VVA legacy program. Working Group I believes the legal representation of claimants during the appeals process to be the primary function that needs to be preserved and transferred to another organization to preserve that portion of the VVA legacy.

Based on the lengthy claim adjudication and appeals process, intake of new claims with the VVA listed as the power of attorney must end soon. If a VVA-accredited Service Officer desires to continue as a Service Officer the VVA should assist that person in obtaining accreditation from another recognized service organization. VVA Service Officers will be required for several years to assist existing VVA claimants to transfer their power of attorney to another recognized service organization.

The VVA Veterans Benefits Department, with its attorneys and staff, will be required to continue operating for many years until the backlog of VVA claims in the Board of Veterans' Appeals system are resolved or closed. The process developed and implemented by the VVA Veterans Benefits Department has proven to be highly effective and should be considered by the NBOD as a legacy program for transfer to another organization to ensure the function continues beyond dissolution of the VVA Corporation.

Membership

The Membership section of this document pertains to issues important to the VVA membership and includes: VVA Reputation and Lasting Legacy; Support to the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America; Communications; and Membership Status.

Based on current membership requirements in the VVA, the last date for a person on active military duty to become eligible for membership was over 43 years ago on May 7, 1975. The

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membership is aging, and in 2018 the average age of VVA members was 72 years old.

VVA Reputation and Lasting Legacy

Almost every conversation Working Group I had with the VVA membership regarding the future of the VVA included the need to preserve the reputation and legacy of the VVA that has been established over the last 40 years. While the name "Vietnam Veterans of America" may not extend beyond dissolution of the VVA National Corporation, some of the most important legacy programs and services provided for veterans can continue through the organizations that the VVA distributes assets to, either before or after the filing a Plan of Dissolution.

To effectively accomplish this, the VVA NBOD must form a Legacy Committee composed of three or more current members of VVA NBOD, tasked with identifying and preserving the legacy and reputation of the VVA. The Legacy Committee would meet in conjunction with each scheduled VVA NBOD meeting to actively investigate and develop solutions relating to the legacy and reputation of the VVA, to develop Actions to be included in the Strategic Plan for Dissolution. The committee will report their progress at each scheduled VVA NBOD meeting to assist the VVA NBOD in managing and executing the Strategic Plan for Dissolution. One of the most important tasks of the Legacy Committee will be to develop evaluation criteria for distribution of VVA assets relating to legacy issues, to include: compatibility of corporate goals and objectives with those of the VVA, projected ability of the corporation to carry on a legacy item important to the VVA, demonstrated corporate performance, corporate leadership qualities, corporate financial stability, and other criteria necessary to ensure success in caring on the legacy of the VVA.

Support to the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America

At the time of the creation of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) 25 years ago, the VVA pledged its support to the new organization. In return, the AVVA pledged their support to the VVA by adopting the motto "Together Always". The majority of AVVA members are women who are spouses, former spouses, or relatives of VVA members, and there is a strong emotional connection between the two organizations.

Many VVA members have expressed the opinion that the AVVA should be considered the logical successor to the VVA. Because of the continuing close relationship between the two organizations and the projected longevity of women, the AVVA may remain active after the VVA dissolves and may provide an opportunity for VVA members to remain active in some manner with the AVVA. The AVVA has been very active in Agent Orange issues, not only as it affects Vietnam veterans directly exposed to dioxins, but the effect it may have on the children and grandchildren of those veterans. The AVVA may be a suitable organization for the VVA to transfer Agent Orange related information and educational services such as VVA Agent Orange Committee activities, Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings, and the Faces of Agent Orange Program.

• Specific Actions in this Plan relating to the AVVA include:

Distribution of VVA's memorabilia to the AVVA or an acceptable corporation or educational institution;

• Transferring all rights to the VVA name, logos, flag, website, internet domain, and email talklists, including but not limited to, all trademarks and copyrights and other intellectual property, to the AVVA, provided that the AVVA agrees to permit all existing state councils and chapters to continue their permitted uses of such intellectual property, and

• For the AVVA to begin or continue a periodic (preferably weekly) information transmittal by e-mail and social media similar to the current VVA Web Weekly to keep VVA members informed of current issues affecting veterans.

Communications

Effective communication with the VVA membership will be vital to reduce confusion

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and dispel rumors as the VVA National Corporation approaches the date for dissolving the VVA National Corporation.

As soon as practical following the 2019 VVA National Convention the VVA NBOD must effectively communicate the results of the convention to the VVA membership relating to Working Group I and Working Group II, as well as any associated actions taken by convention delegates. Additionally, five years prior to dissolution of the VVA National Corporation the VVA must establish a separate "Dissolution" section of the VVA website that includes the strategic plan for dissolution adopted by the VVA NBOD, and information specific to dissolution of VVA National Corporation as it relates to State Councils, Chapters, and individual members.

Membership Status

After dissolution of the VVA National Corporation current life members of VVA will continue to be life members until they die. If the membership cards are good for discounts or to gain preferential treatment or access, that is fine. However, the VVA National Corporation cannot make any representation of a benefit that it can't stand behind after dissolution.

Specific Actions in this Plan relating to the Membership include:

Six years before dissolution of the VVA National Corporation, the VVA will begin issuing an approximately 3-inch by 5-foot ribbon streamer that represents the green, yellow, and red design in the VVA logo suitable to be displayed on the life member's casket or urn at their funeral or memorial service. This ribbon streamer would initially be issued to all current life members, and would continue to be issued to individuals who become a life member after that date.

Two years before dissolution of the VVA National Corporation the VVA will discontinue accepting and processing new membership applications. At that same time the VVA will issue a specially designed membership card and wall certificate to each current life member recognizing them as a member of a last veteran standing organization that served veterans, active duty military, and their families for 50 years before closing.

Chapters and State Councils

The Chapters and State Councils section of this Plan pertains to issues State Councils and Chapters will encounter due to dissolution of the VVA National Corporation.

Working Group I has developed a State Council Guide and a Chapter Guide attached as Appendices D and E to this Plan that can be used as a reference by Chapters and State Councils that decide to remain active after dissolution of the VVA National Corporation.

Issues Common to State Councils and Chapters

When the VVA National Corporation dissolves, State Councils and Chapters will continue as corporations but will no longer be bound by the corporate structures imposed by Articles II and III of the VVA Constitution. State Councils and Chapters will continue to exist as separate and (in the absence of any affirmative actions) independent corporations, no longer bound by any of the rules and relationships of the VVA Constitution, Policies, and Board Motions.

When the VVA National Corporation dissolves, requirements and guidance in the VVA Constitution will no longer apply. (**Note:** 2 in states that do not require bylaws, there is in all likelihood a statutory equivalent set of regulations for operation of a corporation.)

State Councils and Chapters that desire to continue in existence will need to update their bylaws to address the following topics:

Membership requirements and processes. State Councils and Chapters that remain active will need to determine their own membership requirements, the process for granting membership, the process for determining and collecting dues (if any), and other factors specific to obtaining and

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(Continue from pg. 12)

and maintaining membership. State Councils and Chapters that remain 501(c)(19) corporations will be bound by Internal Revenue Service (IRS) membership requirements pertaining to veterans, and those that become 501(c)(3) corporations will have more flexibility regarding membership.

Meetings. Location, frequency, quorum requirements, member voting policy, notices of special meetings, conduct of meetings, and perhaps other factors relating to meetings will need to be defined and incorporated into bylaws.

Leadership. State Councils and Chapters will need to ensure that the leadership structure complies with state laws, such as the minimum number of officers and/or directors. The duties, responsibilities, and authority of officers/directors must be defined and included in the bylaws. The methods for electing, selecting, and replacing officers/directors, as well as the term of office, must be defined and included in the bylaws. If leadership will include a subset of officers/directors (example: executive board), the duties, responsibilities, and authority of that subset must be defined and included in the bylaws.

The VVA National Corporation is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of New York. For Federal income tax purposes, VVA National Corporation has been granted status under group exemption number 3202 as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. When the VVA National Corporation dissolves, it will have no further status, either corporately or for tax-exemption purposes, and State Councils and Chapters will no longer be able to claim FEDERAL tax-exemption under the VVA National Corporation's group exemption number.

Each State Council and each Chapter has its own unique tax identification number issued to it by the state in which it was incorporated; that STATE tax identification number is used for payment of taxes owed by the State Council or Chapter to that state. Each State Council and each Chapter has also applied for and received a separate FEDERAL tax identification number. STATE reports are filed under the STATE tax identification number, and FEDERAL reports (such as IRS Form 990) are filed under the FEDERAL tax identification number by each State Council and each Chapter. Being tax-exempt under a FEDERAL tax number does NOT mean that the organization is tax-exempt from STATE taxes; similarly, being "non-profit" under STATE law does NOT mean that the organization is tax-exempt under FEDERAL law.

STATE and FEDERAL taxes (and exemptions) are independent considerations.

State Councils and Chapters which desire to continue in existence after VVA dissolves will need to take affirmative steps to obtain their own separate FEDERAL tax-exemptions under Sections 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) or other applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code, unless their activities will not require or benefit from FEDERAL tax-exemption. (Note:3 It is possible that some State Councils may choose to obtain group tax-exemptions which, in turn, may be used by Chapters within their defined areas) Not later than four years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD shall assign staff members to assist continuing State Councils and Chapters with some of the legal and practical actions that will be required. As the Membership Department reduces its scope of duties, those staff members currently dealing with membership issues could assist with this process.

Not later than three years prior to dissolution each State Council and each Chapter desiring to continue in existence after the VVA National Corporation dissolves is encouraged to seek the assistance of VVA staff, and if not sufficient, a competent business attorney and/or a competent tax professional to assist in the transition. At the same time, the VVA NBOD shall advise each State Council and Chapter which desires to continue in existence after the VVA National Corporation dissolves to start the conversion process, both in terms of creating a new internal structure independent of the VVA National Corporation, and in terms of seeking its own Federal tax-exemption.

Not later than two years prior to dissolution the VVA NBOD shall direct the Constitution Committee to develop templates for bylaws, for use by continuing state councils and chapters, to

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Continue from pg. 13)

possibly standardize such bylaws to fill the void left when the VVA Constitution ceases to exist.

Bob Seal
Chairman Working Group I
Idaho State Council President

Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

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

January 24, 2019, I went to a CVBACK Veterans Meeting at Northport VA Hospital. February 8, 2019, I was invited to Stoney Brook Vets Home for Vietnam chapter 11 pin for Vets. Monday February 11, 2019, Northport Veterans Hospital for a Veterans Advisory Meeting. On March 21, 2019, Suffolk County Advisory Meeting. March 1, 2019 attend a 2019 Armor Museum Gala. They were honoring General David H. Petraeus, a decorated U.S. Army retired. April 3, 2019 was a VSO leaders meeting, to discuss the Medical Centers future space utilization plan, Dr. Cruetz. I was invited to Veterans Community Fair on April 12, 2019.

VVA Chapter #421—Staten Island

Joe Toronto

May 3, 2019 7:30PM Korean War Veterans Association Dinner Dance
May 4, 2019 All Day - Harley Davidson Grand Opening
May 18, 2019 12:00PM Kiwanis Club of Richmond County Picnic
May 19, 2019 12:00PM Fr. Capodanno Bike Blessing
May 21, 2019 11:00AM St. Adalbert Veterans Breakfast
May 29, 2019 7:30pm General meeting at Elk's Lodge at 3250 Richmond Ave.
June 24, 2019 7:30pm General meeting at Elk's Lodge at 3250 Richmond Ave.
July 22, 2019 7:30pm General meeting at Elk's Lodge at 3250 Richmond Ave.
July 28, 2019 Rolling Thunder Towkar Appice Bike Run
Aug. 26, 2019 7:30pm General meeting at Elk's Lodge at 3250 Richmond Ave

VVA Chapter #126 - Manhattan

Joseph G. Graham - President

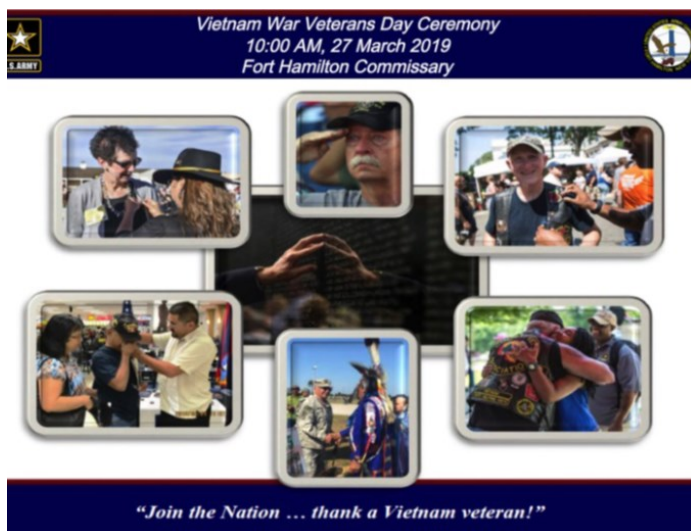
Attached you will find VVA Chapter #126 new web site (www.vva126.org) for your review. Please let me know what you think.

Vietnam Veterans (VVA Chapter members) Please send me photos of your tour in Nam for publishing on our web site. Please make sure to identify the photo WHO, WHAT, WHERE & WHEN. If you have any questions please feel free to email me at: waterproofer1124@aol.com or (917)642-3427

VVA Chapter #72—Brooklyn

Joe Piazza

Those Were The Days My Friend



VVA Chapter #82—Nassau County

Richard Guevara—Vice President

Bethpage Irish Day Parade - On March 3 Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the Bethpage Irish Day Parade.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony - On March 23, 2019 Chapter 82 teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association (AFA) to recognize approximately 30 Vietnam **(Continue on pg. 18)**

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(Continue from pg. 15)

Veterans at the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook. . 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,

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony - On April 20, 2019 we again teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association to recognize the services of Vietnam Veterans. This time the event took place at the US Armor Museum in Bethpage. We again welcomed home our Vietnam veterans and provided them with an album showing our appreciation.

March of Dimes for Babies - On April 28, 2019 Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the March of Dimes For Babies at Jones Beach. Members of the Chapter also participated at this event. This event raised approximately \$500,000 for the March of Dimes.

Heroes Among Us - On May 3, 2019 we provided the color guard at this event.

Hofstra University Army ROTC - On May 3, 2019 members of Chapter 82 provided an award to a member of the graduating ROTC class.

Bristol Assisted Living at Westbury - On May 17, 2019 members of Chapter 82 visited Veterans at the Bristol. We met with the veterans at this center and exchanged ideas, personal concerns and experiences..

Town Of Oyster Bay's Armed Forces Appreciation Day - On May 17, 2019 we provided the color guard for this event honoring all veterans of the town.

Plain Lawn Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony- On May 26,2019 the color guard and members of Chapter 82 led a procession at the Plain Lawn Ceremony honoring veterans on Memorial Day.

Nassau County Memorial Day Ceremony at Eisenhower Park - On May 26, 2019 the color guard and members of Chapter 82 participated in the annual event honoring our past military service members.

Memorial Day Ceremony at the Long Island National Cemetery - On May 26, 2019 the color guard and members of Chapter 82 participated in the annual ceremony at the National Cemetery in Farmingdale.

Hicksville Annual Parade and Memorial Day Service - On May 27, 2019 members, family and freinds of Chapter 82 led the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony. The chapter was the lead organization in promoting and organizing the event.

Cystic Fibrosis Walk - On June 2, 2019 Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the Cystic Fibrosis walk at Adelphi University.

Nassau Community College Graduation Ceremony - On June 7, 2019 Chapter 82 will provide the color guard for this event.

Northport VA Hospital - On a monthly basis members of Chapter 82

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(Continue from pg. 16)

and members of the Ladies Auxiliary visited the VA hospital where they provided entertainment and refreshments to the veterans at the facility.

Our Vietnam Stories

Tony Sparaco—Click on link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6egmnyCcOU&feature=youtu.be>



Long Island National Cemetery on Memorial Day—Pinelawn, Long Island

Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

The first quarter of 2019 has proven to be just as busy as the last quarter of 2018. Information abounds with respect to such issues as the Blue Water Vietnam Navy veterans finally getting the recognition they have waited so long for. Finally, a judgement has been made in their favor. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled 9-2 in favor of Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans. They have won their Agent Orange benefits case. Thousands of our brothers and sisters who were stationed offshore during the war and developed health problems linked to exposure to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange are now eligible for the same disability benefits as those who put boots on the ground or patrolled Vietnam's inland rivers.

The next bit of information that I shared with Central District was that Allegiant Airlines is providing our U.S. active duty military, military veterans, members of the National Guard, military reserve and their dependents select free services. Qualifying military personnel and their spouses or dependents, with valid identification, are eligible for certain discounts. Some of the services are: (1) up to three pieces of checked luggage free. Each bag must weigh under 40 pounds; (2) no charge for oversized checked baggage; (3) one carry-on bag within Allegiant size limits free; (4) free boarding pass printing at the airport; (5) free seat assignments, pending availability; and (6) up to one pet in cabin free.

VVA Chapter #20 out of Rochester, NY continues to provide us with their newsletter. Topics covered in their February issue were: VA Benefits Eligibility Updates; cautionary guidelines with respect to doing due diligence when seeking aid for benefits – don't pay for a service that is free; do research; follow recommendations and referrals of fellow veterans; and work only with certified veterans service organizations. The topic of robocalls was also discussed. Advise such as don't answer calls from (Continue on pg. 18)

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unknown numbers; never give out personal information; register your number on the “DO NOT CALL LIST;” and ask your phone company about call-blocking tools and services.

On February 9th of this year I passed on information sent to me on “Camp Lejeune Presumptive Diseases.” If you served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days from January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987 you may enroll in VA health care and receive medical services for the 15 covered health conditions. Not yet enrolled in VA health care? Apply online or call the VA at 1-877-222-8387 and inform VA staff that you served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days during the covered time period.

The most recent publication I have been sharing with Central New York Chapters is called “Bugle Blasts.” It is a publication that takes its stories from the Military Times, Department of Veterans Affairs, Army Times, Task & Purpose, AP & Navy Times, af.mil, and Military.com.

The next topic I wish to report on comes from VVA Chapter #944 out of Utica, NY. Tom Buono, Chapter President doesn’t let any moss grow underneath him. In a ceremony held at the Utica Parkway Recreation Center on March 29th twenty- seven local Vietnam Veterans were honored for their service. The ceremony honored all Vietnam War era veterans that served between November 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975.

President Buono shared a piece from a publication from Military Justice highlighting an article on the subject of “Stolen Valor.” Congress passed reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) in 2016. The topic of Stolen Valor, per the Army, was covered by the following wording: “The penalty for wearing unauthorized medals has increased from six months to a maximum of one-year confinement along with forfeiture of pay and a bad-conduct discharge. This includes wearing an unauthorized Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, or valor device. The maximum penalty for wearing any other unauthorized medal is still six months.”

VVA Chapter #944 also participated in a press conference for Congressman Brindisi on March 20th. At the conference the Congressman discussed the Veterans Advisory Committee meeting in Cortland, NY and the work he is doing for Veterans in Washington.

The February issue of the “Nam Express” was made available by VVA Chapter #377. The publication is the work of Gerri Smith with photo credits to Charles Harrington. The photos help highlight their activities which include; Wreaths Across America at Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery; the Weedsport, NY USO Show- a production put on annually by the school students for the entertainment of all Veterans as well as their families, friends, relatives, and classmates; the December Chapter #377 Christmas Party; and the Salvation Army bell ringers of Chapter #377. Anyone who wants to get a copy of the newsletter simply needs to contact Gerri at gsmith1264@comcast.net or write to her at 1264 Glatco Lodge Rd., Hanover, PA 17331.

VVA Chapter #704 has been making some major movement on their project to erect a County Memorial. Originally, they had identified twenty-seven Vietnam casualties from Cayuga County. With all the attention created by their fundraising efforts two more men have come to light. One man is from the Village of Cayuga. The second man identified was from the rural Town of Sempronius both in Cayuga County. The response to the fundraising has been very positive and a down payment on the proposed Memorial has been made.

Chapter #704 continues to work with the Quilters of the Finger Lakes - a group of women who have for years made personalized quilts for any veteran who wanted one. Though winding down on their activities they are continue to service our Veteran population. Chapter #377 has also worked closely with this dedicated group.

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The City Council presented members of VVA Chapter #704 with a proclamation in recognition of March 29th designated as Vietnam Veterans Day. This all proved to be a busy weekend as #704 and #377 participated in a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" celebration in Marathon, NY in Cortland County. The event was hosted by the 6th District American Legion Auxiliary and included a reception, parade, luncheon, band music and Veterans photo gallery.

Just a reminder of the upcoming annual Tribute Ride taking place on July 13th. Organized by VVA Chapters #377, #480, #704, and the Blue Knights it covers the 98 miles of State Route 38 that is designated the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor. Ride begins in Owego, NY and ends in Hannibal, NY.

Wanted our Central New York District Chapters to know that I was able to visit Herkimer Chapter #827 with my better half. At that meeting I took the opportunity to talk to those members in attendance on the future of VVA. Time was taken to talk about Working Group I and II. It was a great way of meeting members that I hadn't since my first visit and a great way to make new acquaintances.

I have some sad news to share with the District Chapters. We have lost Veterans Incarcerated and in the Justice System Chapter #205. This was the very last VVA Chapter in New York State. Located at Auburn Correctional Facility, Auburn, New York this Chapter was a leader inside and outside the Facility. The Current veterans' organization that has taken the torch from them is called the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGOA). Made up of veterans from wars spanning since Vietnam they are continuing all the projects and activities begun and pursued by VVA #205.

Remember, if you share your Chapter's community involvement, I will do my best to get the word out to Central District. If we don't blow our own horn no one will. My email address is nickvalenti46@yahoo.com.

VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

Nick Valenti - Chair—315-252-4535 (H)

I have some good news and some bad news with respect to Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans Chapter #205 located at Auburn Correctional Facility. First, the bad news. After approximately 36 years in existence our brothers at Chapter #205 have seen their Chapter dissolve. For the past year they have been unable to sustain enough members to submit an election report. In 2016 they showed a membership roll of some 25 members with form DD-214's showing their eligibility to be members of Vietnam Veterans of America. Since then, we have witnessed numerous releases from incarceration and transfers to other New York State Correctional Facilities. When this process ran its course, the Chapter found itself with three members. Hoping to build upon the remaining members and use them as the core for the resurgence of the Chapter they embarked on a recruitment drive. New arrivals to the facility were checked out as to their eligibility. Then the final straw - the remaining three members of the 2016 Chapter were transferred out of Auburn Correctional. Efforts to revive the Chapter failed as not enough eligible Vietnam Veterans could be identified to hold office let alone have a viable Chapter. The unfortunate but necessary decision to dissolve Chapter #205 was made on April 13, 2019.

Now the good news. The officers of Chapter #205 believed that they would not be able to sustain themselves into the future - so they planned for the inevitable. They knew their Chapter was on borrowed time. What they did was form a new organization made up of Veterans from many wars. They called themselves Veterans Group of Auburn (VGOA). They elected a President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Members included VVA Chapter #205 and Veterans of Modern Warfare (VMW) Chapter #24. With the discontinuation of Chapter #205 the VGOA finds itself as a veterans group having a membership that included veterans from Southwest Asia forging ahead with the ideas

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and plans originally laid down by VVA Chapter #205. Their legacy lives on in the hearts, minds and structure they left behind.

This is the anticipated schedule of events for calendar year 2019 as laid down by the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGOA).

MONTH	DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
March	Friday	01	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement
May	Monday	27*	8:30 AM	Vigil-Memorial Day	Chapel
June	Friday	07	7:00 PM	GMM-Banquet	School Basement
September	Monday	02*	8:30 AM	Vigil-Labor Day	Chapel
	Friday	06	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement
November	Monday	11	8:30 AM	Vigil-Veterans Day	Chapel
December	Friday	06	8:30 AM	Give-A-Way	School Basement
	Friday	13*	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement

* Activity not finalized

The scheduled December 6th Give-A-Way event invites community organizations who are given monetary donations, and crocheted items – for children and adults, all the result of the hard work of the VGOA.

With all revenue streams intact the viability of the VGOA looks promising.

The crochet squad through the years has annually made hundreds of items for the surrounding communities. They are going strong but are in constant need of yarn. The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has changed the allowable colors that can be donated to the crochet squad. The only colors currently allowable in the facility are: Shades of White; Green; Brown; and Pink. If you wish to donate these colors to the Auburn Correctional Facility crochet squad please contact me at: Nicholas C. Valenti, 14 Grove Avenue, Auburn, New York 13021, or email me at nickvalenti46@yahoo.com.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Joe Ingino – Chair

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 will extend benefits to servicemembers that served in the territorial waters off the coast of Vietnam and were exposed to Agent Orange. This was the first bill Chairman Takano introduced this Congress after a similar bill was passed unanimously in the House of Representatives last Congress but stalled in the Senate. This legislation will ensure tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans finally get the benefits they've earned and deserve. 90,000 'Blue Water' Vietnam Veterans in Line for Disability Benefits after Justice Officials Drop Appeal

VA Mission Act implementation date is June 6, 2019

A key aspect of the MISSION Act is the consolidation of VA's community care programs, which will make community care work better for Veterans and their families, providers and VA employees. When this transition is complete, the following will occur:

- * Veterans will have more options for community care.
- * Eligibility criteria for community care will be expanded, including new access standards.
- * Scheduling appointments will be easier, and care coordination between VA and community providers will

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be better.

* Eligible Veterans will have access to a network of walk-in and urgent care facilities for minor injuries and illnesses.

For more information about community care under the MISSION Act, visit

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/58621/new-eligibility-criteria-a-major-improvement-over-existing-rules/>.

Editor's Note: Will this privatize or close the VA Healthcare System

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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



Western District Report

Mike Walker

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

Memorial Day is to remember the men and woman who gave their all for the country not a day to run to a sale. It gets to me to see ads for sales on this day.

MEMORIAL DAY MAY 27TH

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE FAMILY GET TOGETHERS.
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE BBQs WITH GREAT FOOD.
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE COLD BEER.

IT'S ABOUT HONORING THE MEN AND WOMEN
THAT HAVE SERVED OUR GREAT NATION AND
HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE SO THAT
WE CAN LIVE FREE!

SO LET'S TELL THEM THANK YOU FOR WHAT
THEY HAVE DONE FOR US!

Well now that I got that off my chest I know the chapters in Western New York had a busy weekend. Everyone had parades and memorial services. We at Chapter 77 had an extra service as the Masons laid the corner stone on their monument "The Battle Within". The monument is to recognize the many veterans that came back from war with PTSD.

The passing of the Blue Water Bill by the house is the first step, now lets hope it passes the senate and get singed.

(Continue from pg. 21) Veterans Affairs

VA launches new health care options under MISSION Act

Under the new Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on new criteria. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care.

Veterans may elect to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. A Veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.
2. A Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
3. A Veteran qualifies under the "grandfather" provision related to distance eligibility under the Veterans Choice Program.
4. VA cannot furnish care within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below:

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- Drive time to a specific VA medical facility
 - o Thirty-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care services.
 - o Sixty-minute average drive time for specialty care.
- Note: Drive times are calculated using geomapping software.
- * Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility
 - o Twenty days from the date of request for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
 - o Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
5. The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.
6. VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with VA's standards for quality based on specific conditions.

The VA MISSION Act:

- * Strengthens VA's ability to recruit and retain clinicians.
- * Authorizes "Anywhere to Anywhere" telehealth across state lines.
- * Empowers Veterans with increased access to community care.
- * Establishes a new urgent care benefit that eligible Veterans can access through VA's network of urgent care providers in the community.

VA serves approximately 9 million enrolled Veterans at 1,255 health care facilities around the country every year.

Allegiant fly's from over 9 cities in New York

John (Jack) Fox

Allegiant Airline proudly supports our U.S. active duty military, military veterans, members of the National Guard, military reserve and their dependents by offering select free services.

Free services offered for U.S. military veterans and spouses or dependents of U.S. active duty or reserve military, and National Guard:

- Up to three (3) pieces of checked baggage free. Each bag must weigh under 40 lbs.
- No charge for oversized checked baggage.
- One (1) carry-on bag within Allegiant size limits free.
- Free boarding pass printing at the airport.
- Free seat assignments, pending availability.
- Up to one (1) pet in cabin free.

U.S. military veterans and spouses or dependents of U.S. active duty or reserve military, and National Guard requirements: • Must show valid credentials. • Veterans must show one (1) form of valid military (Continue on pg. 24)

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identification, including: • A State Driver's License which displays a logo or code that denotes military service • A Veteran ID Card • DD Form 214 • Dependents must show a Military Dependent ID Card
• Please note: Dependents do not have to travel with the active military personnel.
For more information visit <https://www.allegiantair.com/military-discount>

VVA Chapter #978 -Frewsburg, NY

Rev. Bob Lewis

Vietnam Vets hosted a Town Hall Meeting addressing the benefits available to spouses and survivors.

In an effort to educate and support the families of **all** veterans concerning the benefits available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) has created a program focused on bringing awareness to what is currently available to the spouse, widow, widower, and families of all veterans.

Federal benefits are constant for everyone; however, state-funded and local benefits can vary. With that in mind, the David L. Woodburn Chapter 978 of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and its AVVA members will present a **Spouses and Survivors Town Hall Meeting** on June 1, from 10am until noon at the American Legion Post #556 in Frewsburg, 9 Meadow Lane to address federal, state and locally available programs. Topics to be covered will include:

Accrued Benefits

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI)

Survivors Pension Benefits

Education and Training Assistance

VA Burial Allowances

Crisis Contact Information

DEERS Enrollment

NY State and Local Benefits and Assistance

We will also discuss how we can educate our private physicians on service related health concerns.

Presenters will include our County Executive, County Veterans Service Director, Office of the Aging Representatives, Blue Star Mothers Chapter Rep, UCAN Mission Director, Meals On Wheels and other veteran related local organizations.

Admission is free and all Veterans, their spouses and survivors /family are invited.

For further information contact Robert Lewis, 716-569-2115, VVA Chapter President and New York VVA State Council Chaplain.

VVA Chapter #268 - Lockport

Gordie Bellinger

March 4, 5, 6 - Gave Niagara Hospice a helping hand unloading trucks of Spring Bouquet of flowers, which we also delivered to homes.

March 9 - National Vietnam Veterans day the chapter set up a display of our photo collections, information on Veterans health and benefits, military items from the day, served coffee and cake. Had ninety people attend and five became members.

April - Presented our five female members the Women's Vietnam Veterans Challenge coin. **(Cont. on pg. 24)**

May 9 - We attended the Armed Forces week luncheon.

May 22 - The Chapter was invited to attend a luncheon for veterans at Newfane Central School, where third and fourth grade students served us lunch and thanked us for our service to our country.

May 28, 29 - The Chapter took part with VFW, American legion, and the Navy Marine club in Wreath Placement ceremony at nine Veterans Monuments.

Agent Orange Report

Bill Patton - Chair

On a bad day I was kneeling, trying to stop shaking. I looked up and the Platoon Sargent was standing above me I asked him what we were doing here. Without missing a beat he looked down and said were surviving, simply making it one minute at time and surviving.

Many of us are still doing that today. Please take time to read the following article, which was borrowed in part, with permission, from ARRP Magazine

Though most veterans are aware of the toxic nature of Agent Orange, an herbicide used to clear foliage in Vietnam, not everyone has kept track as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded a list of diseases that make it easier to qualify for benefits. Until the 1990s, the government recognized only one ailment - a skin condition called chloracne - as being linked to Agent Orange. But over the years, the VA list of medical conditions associated with Agent Orange has grown to more than a dozen, including some that are much more prevalent.

"There are still thousands of vets who don't realize their disease is on the list," says Bart Stichman, executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), a nonprofit that helps veterans, survivors and active duty personnel pursue service-related benefits.

The diseases now on the VA's Agent Orange list are ischemic heart disease, lung and trachea cancers, prostate cancer, multiple myeloma, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Parkinson's Disease, type 2 diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, AL amyloidosis, chronic B-cell leukemia, chloracne, early-onset peripheral neuropathy, porphyria cutanea tarda, and soft tissue sarcomas.

Several other diseases — bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson's-like symptoms — have been under consideration to be added to the list.

Once a disease is put on the list, it is easier to get disability compensation for it because the VA presumes the disease is a result of exposure to Agent Orange for veterans who served in Vietnam or its inland waterways between 1962 and 1975. The same applies to veterans who served in or near the Korean demilitarized zone between 1968 and 1971. These veterans don't need to prove that they were exposed to Agent Orange to qualify for benefits related to ailments on the list.

For veterans who qualify for disability payments and survivors who qualify for death payments, the benefits can mean tens of thousands of dollars a year in income.

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The problem, veterans advocates say, is that veterans don't necessarily make the connection between a disease they have had for years and the expanded Agent Orange list. For example, a veteran diagnosed decades ago with type 2 diabetes may not have noticed when the government later added the condition to its list of ailments linked to Agent Orange, says Linda Schwartz, special advisor on health to the Vietnam Veterans of America. If a veteran is seeing a civilian doctor who isn't well-versed in veterans' issues, she says, the doctor wouldn't necessarily associate the diagnosis with Agent Orange.

When veterans don't think to apply for disability benefits based on conditions added to the VA's Agent Orange list in recent years, they can miss out on sizable payments. David DePodesta, a 69-year-old veteran who lost sight in his right eye due to enemy shrapnel while serving with the Marines in Vietnam in 1969, was fortunate that he did pay attention to the list as it grew. DePodesta says that for many years his eye injury qualified him for a disability rating of 30 percent and a monthly payment of under \$400. After the VA in 2010 added ischemic heart disease to its list of ailments linked to Agent Orange, DePodesta — who had open heart surgery in 1988 and again in 2010 — saw his disability rating jump to 100 percent and his monthly payment jump to more than \$3,100. He also received a large lump sum payment compensating him retroactively to his first diagnosis with ischemic heart disease.

When veterans don't realize that they are eligible for disability benefits based on ailments added to the VA's Agent Orange list, their survivors also miss out on monthly payments under a program called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), which provides lifetime tax-free income to survivors of veterans who had service-related disabilities or diseases.

Stichman at NVLSP estimates that tens of thousands of survivors are unaware they are eligible for benefits because their spouses had diseases that the VA linked to Agent Orange only after their death. Survivor benefits can be higher depending on their situation, including whether they need a caregiver to assist them with everyday activities like bathing and dressing.

Even if veterans suffer from an ailment not on the VA list, they should consider applying for disability benefits if they believe it is the result of Agent Orange exposure. The VA says it encourages veterans in such cases to gather medical and scientific evidence that their ailment was caused by Agent Orange and submit it to see if it qualifies them for a service-connected disability benefit.

"If a direct link is made to Agent Orange exposure in a particular case, then service connection could still be granted," says Beth Murphy, VA Compensation Service Director.

Veterans service groups say it can be worth trying to bring such claims even though they can be difficult.

"This type of case requires a lot of medical evidence and is harder to prove but not impossible," says Felicia Mulaney, deputy director of Veterans Benefits, Vietnam Veterans of America.

Because disability claims can be complicated, Linda Schwartz at VVA says it's vital for veterans and survivors to use an accredited veteran service officer when filing such claims.

"They can't do this by themselves," says Schwartz.

The VA suggests that veterans can get help from this list of government-accredited Veterans and Military Service Organizations. Veterans and survivors also can learn more about eligibility for benefits.

One way for veterans to get started if they've never explored a link between their medical ailments and Agent Orange is to see if they qualify for a free Agent Orange exam.

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