

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



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NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

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Veteran's News that needs to be Read FALL 2018



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Congratulations 2017–2019

President Ned D. Foote
Vice President Grant T. Coates
Treasurer Nick DeLeo
Secretary Francisco Muñoz III

Eastern District Director Sam Hall
Central District Director Nick Valenti
Southern District Director Joe Ingino
Western District Director Mike Walker

Thanks for your support

IN MEMORIAM

VVA Chapter 20.

Juil Ralph Robinson Jr.

30 November 1947 - 10 July 2018

US Army



VVA Chapter 193

Ray Steele

Jan. 2, 1947 - July 5, 2018

US Marine

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE



VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2018

June 29, 30, Jul 01

September 21, 22, 23

Make your Hotel Reservation Early

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

VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM

8 Queen Diana Ln
Queensbury, NY 12804

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.

NEWSPAPER STAFF

EDITOR:

Francisco Muñiz III



VVA-NYSC ON-LINE INTERCHANGE EMAIL ADDRESS: VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM Phone: 516.712.4914

OFFICERS	NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
President	Ned D. Foote	518.338.8147	Nedvva@roadrunner.com
1st Vice President	Grant T. Coates		gcoates@stny.rr.com
Secretary	Francisco Muñiz III	516.712.4914	secretary@nyvietnamvets.org
Treasurer	Nicholas DeLeo		ndeleo52@yahoo.com

DISTRICT DIRECTORS	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
CENTRAL DISTRICT DIRECTOR	Nicholas Valenti	nickvalenti46@yahoo.com
EASTERN DISTRICT DIRECTOR	Sam Hall	Sammyjh49@yahoo.com
SOUTHERN DISTRICT DIRECTOR	Joe Ingino	biggie77@verizon.net
WESTERN DISTRICT DIRECTOR	Mike Walker	mw12345@verizon.net

Liaisons	NAME	E-MAIL
Region II Director	Ted Wilkinson	Yankeeted@aol.com
Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA)	Kathleen Penfield	Kathysitka@yahoo.com
VA Volunteer Services (VAVS)		
Legislative Director	Bing Markee	bingnys@aol.com
Sergeant of Arms	Bob Joyce	JBobF4/44@aol.com

SERVICE OFFICER PROGRAM	TELEPHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Dolores Garcia—Chief SO		Dolores.Garcia1@va.gov
Norbert "Butch" Steinwandel	716-857-3404	Norbert.steinwandel@va.gov

President's Report

Ned D. Foote

We had our elections last June and thank you all for your vote of confidence you have giving our officers and directors. I think we do a pretty good job and wish to continue serving you all.

We had another good turnout and this new hotel with the casino seems to be working out well. Many more spouses are coming along, and it is a good getaway weekend for all. During this meeting Francisco asked again for support for Interchange as he is having a problem of people, chapters, directors to submit something to this publication. It cannot be a one man doing it all and needing to find material to print. We/He has won numerous awards for this publication and only receive more if you all help, so please, send your chapter reports or anything else you want published for others to see.

Next, I gave a presentation on how to do a 990N for your Financial Annual Reports. I took the time to present this as I was going to do the Power Point at Leadership. Why do we think this important? It is for VVA-NYSC because we will have 5 Chapters facing suspension for failing to submit Finance reports and some for failure to send Election reports. For all VVA Chapters, we have 282 chapters facing suspension. Come on guys, this is not rocket scientists. We cannot have made these reports any easier. No one needs to sign them; no finances need be reported, and you have from February 28 to July 15 to do it. Election reports mostly is never different from one year to the next. How hard would it be to change the date and send???

Grant gave a very good presentation on the POW/MIA issue that he is passionately involved with. Thanks Grant. We are looking for more speakers on subjects you maybe interested in hearing, but we run out of topics and ask for your help. Please email me what you would like the SC present.

So, you see we are doing very well but one main negative is the lack of communication. I send emails a lot to chapter contacts. Also Press Release on website. I ask questions of chapters a lot as there are things I need to know about. But other than 2 or 3 chapters I get nothing. Yes, communication is two ways and I hear a lot, we never hear from National or SC. You do, maybe the chapter contacts just do not share info with you and you need to ask them what is going on.

Leadership Conference has been had for 2018. Not a good turnout for NY or Eastern part. I know very expensive and going out to Convention will be the same. But there is a very big reason you need to start raising funds to send delegates. That convention will be dealing where VVA is going. With the average age of us being 71/72 we need to say what our future VVA holds and you all seem to have an opinion but none of that matters if you are not there to voice your opinion and vote on it. You cannot Monday morning quarterback this. Decision will be made, and you will have to live with it, but, also please keep an open mind and listen to all the discussions.

One last thing. I asked, beg, brow beat for those of you who do not receive this to send me email address. Yes, I know, if they do not receive this Newspaper, they do not know I'm asking, so I'm asking you who, do know, who doesn't but wants it to send to me their E-mail address. Send E-Mail to:

nedvva@roadrunner.com.

No, I will not sell it as some of you claim. You almost daily give your email out to whomever, but your own organization just wants to send our publication to you, you are reluctant to do???????

I hope your summer was great and now let's get everyone back to VVA. Even as we age we still have much to do and a short time to do it. Our newer Veterans are still counting on us and we cannot let them down. Not like our older generation of Vets did to us.

Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñoz III

VVA-NYSC would like to extend their condolences to our VVA members on the loss of their family members:

Frank Tobani— VVA Life member—his brother Art Tobani was a Marine who served from 1961 to 1964 and was part of the contingent that was due to ship out to Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was a Vietnam era veteran and was separated from the Marines in late August 1964

Edward DeRosa VVA Chapter 72 member on the passing of his dearly beloved mother Mary C. DeRosa

May They Rest In Peace

VVA Service Officer Dee Garcia

Dee Garcia, our Chief Service

Officer in Buffalo has been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from our National VVA benefits program.

This is only the second year this award has been made and to be recognized by National for her contributions helping our Veterans achieving positive results on their claims. We congratulate Dee and we are so lucky we have her.

I think we always new her greatness and now our National organization does too!

Thanks Dee for all you do.

Ned D. Foote—President, NYSC/VVA

Dear Mr. Foote,

I just want to let you know what a good job Ms. Garcia has done and is doing representing me and my family. I was active duty in the Marine Corps from 1990-1994 and spent about half my enlistment overseas to include Desert Storm, off the Coast of Bosnia and a few Months in Somalia (0313).

Since Ms. Garcia is a Marine it is easy to speak freely to her with no worries of what she might think. She makes you feel very comfortable and at ease with Veteran issues. She gets it and understands. There are no words to explain how thankful I am to have a person like Ms. Garcia fighting to help us. As Veterans who experience situations that are extremely stressful and difficult to handle. It is nice to have an organization like yours to assist Veterans who don't know much about the VA of any other Veterans organizations. I requested your name from Ms. Garcia so I could personally let you know how I feel. Please continue what you do for all of the Veterans. Semper Fi!!

God Bless you and Ms. Garcia

Sincerely,

Steve Armenia

Cpl USMC-1990-1994—2nd Light Armored Infantry Battalion/now called LAR

CHAPTER SUSPENSION

Due to not adhering to VVA Constitution, the following Chapters are under suspension:

VVA 140, VVA 205, & VVA 869



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.

Membership Report

Ted Wilkinson, Chair

Monthly and Yearly Growth Percentages

New York State VVA			
Monthly	April-18	May-18	% +/-
Growth	6,040	6,041	0.01%
Yearly	May-17	May-18	% +/-
Growth	5,941	6,041	1.7%

National VVA			
Monthly	April-18	May-18	% +/-
Growth	83,472	83,591	0.2%
Yearly	May-17	May-18	% +/-
Growth	81,246	83,591	2.9%

New York State AVVA			
Monthly	April-18	May-18	% +/-
Growth	632	634	0.3%
Yearly	May-17	May-18	% +/-
Growth	570	634	6.0%

National AVVA			
Monthly	April-18	Dec-18	% +/-
Growth	9,570	9,822	2.6%
Yearly	May-17	May-18	% +/-
Growth	9,282	9,822	5.5%

An Original Rosie The Riveter, Who Worked The Production Line Until Age 95, Visits Chula Vista Where It All Began

Elinor Otto was a mother in her 20s when she picked up a riveting gun for the first time at Rohr Aircraft Corp. in Chula Vista during World War II.

One of the original Rosie the Riveters, Otto, now 98, returned for the first time Saturday to the place where she began her nearly 70-year career on the aircraft production line.



Western District Report**Mike Walker****VVA Chapters #20, #77, #193, #268, #459, #865, #978**

Western New York is quiet for the summer. A lot of the chapters will have no meetings for the months of July and August. Members want to have the time for family and do things while the weather is warm.

I'd like to congratulate Niagara County Chapter 268 for reaching the 100 members. This is a chapter that looked like it was going to be closed down, but with the efforts of past president Mike Walker, no relation to me, and treasurer Gordy Bellinger they brought it back to life. Last month I had the honor to present Gordy with an National Achievement Medal.

The latest in lawsuit with DOD is they want a meeting and talk about what we want in the week of July 23. They were told that some of the people they want to talk to is going to be at the Leadership Conference at that time. As of now I haven't heard of a change in the time.

I hope everyone is having a great summer and hope to see you at the meeting in September .

**VVA David L. Woodburn Chapter #978—Frewsburg, NY
Local Official Receives National Award**

Greg Carlson, Director of Chautauqua County Veterans Service Agency, has been awarded the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) National Achievement Medal. The medal was presented by Robert Lewis, President of the David L. Woodburn VVA Chapter in the Town of Carroll. The accompanying citation reads in part: "Greg's tireless efforts on behalf of not only Vietnam Veterans but all veterans and their families, brings hope to those often forgotten by a busy society. An Afghanistan veteran, Greg has walked his mile in our boots. Greg exemplifies the VVA motto "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another". The citation is signed by John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America. Chautauqua County Executive, George M. Borrello attended the ceremony and spoke of the hard work both Greg and the Veterans Services staff do for our county's veterans population.

Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

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

I would like to thank Ned Foote State President for putting me in for the Achievement Award. Also like to thank John Rowan National President for this award.

I visited Chapter 126 in Manhattan, Chapter 72 in Brooklyn, and Chapter 11 in Suffolk. I was invited by Steve Bellone for Armed Forces Day. I was invited also to Nassau County

dedication for 300 new names on the Wall of Honor. I was invited to attend a Pin Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War.

I would to thank all those who put their trust in me to be reelect me as Southern District Director. I also would like everyone to contact their Senators to pass the Blue Water Navy Bill passed.

The House has passed H.R. 299 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Act 2018.

God Bless America and keeps the troops in your prayers

Joseph Ingino biggie77@verizon.net

VVA Chapter 72—Brooklyn, NY

Danny Friedman - President

Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day Ceremonies:

March 24th - NYC Vietnam Veterans Memorial

March 27th - Brooklyn VAMC

March 29th - Fort Hamilton

We also threw a pizza party for the 15 West rehab ward at Brooklyn VAMC on March 23rd.

Participated in VAVS Quarterly Meeting at Brooklyn VAMC on April 23rd.

Participated grand opening of a new homeless veterans domiciliary at Brooklyn VAMC campus on May 7th.

Participated/donated \$1000.00 for first ever women veterans' baby shower at Brooklyn VAMC on May 8th.

Memorial Day Activities:

Participated in special Memorial Day program at the William McKinley Junior High School on May 9th.

Participated in special Memorial Day program at Brooklyn VAMC on May 23rd.

Marched/had a float for Brooklyn's 151st Memorial Day Parade, followed by memorial ceremony and wreath laying on May 28th.

Participated in Press Conference sponsored by Congressman Dan Donovan on June 1st, concerning reduction of services at Brooklyn VAMC.

Annual fund raising and community awareness event conducted at Bay Ridge's 5th Avenue Street Festival on June 3rd.

Opened up Chapter 72's Monthly General Meeting on June 19th, to other veterans' groups and veterans' advocates to discuss reduction of services at Brooklyn VAMC and formulate strategy going forward (also attended by VVA National President John Rowen, VVA NYS Secretary Francisco Muñiz, III, and NYS VVA

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Southern District Director Joe Ingino. We formed a work group which met on June 27th, and sent a letter on June 28th to NY Harbor (includes Brooklyn VAMC) Director and VISN 2 Director requesting a Town Hall Meeting (see attachment).

June 27, 2018

Joan E. McInerney
VISN 2 Network Director
NY/NJ VA Healthcare Network
130 West Kingsbridge Road, Building 16
Bronx, NY 10468

Martina A. Parauda
Director
NY VA Harbor Healthcare System
Brooklyn Campus
800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Dear Ms. McInerney and Ms. Parauda:

This letter is being sent on behalf of the members of VVA Chapter 72, as well as representatives of several other veterans' organizations and veterans' advocates who are noted in the "Cc" section. Elected officials who have expressed interest in this matter are also copied.

We have been increasingly concerned over a series of actions by Brooklyn VAMC since 2015, leading to diminished services to Brooklyn veterans. There are over 41,000 veterans residing in Brooklyn, many of whom depend on Brooklyn VAMC to meet their medical needs. Any reduction of services in Brooklyn dramatically affects the quality of life for these veterans as well as the many veterans in Staten Island and Queens who also depend on Brooklyn VAMC.

Therefore we are respectfully requesting both of you to schedule and attend a Veterans Town Hall Meeting on the Brooklyn Campus no later than the week of July 9, 2018. We request you be prepared to address the following issues:

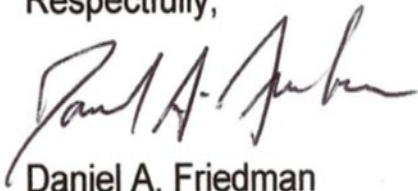
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- What are the long-range and immediate plans for Brooklyn VAMC?
- What are the current and projected staffing levels for Brooklyn VAMC compared to pre-2015 staffing levels?
- What are the proposed and final budgets for Brooklyn VAMC from 2015 to present?
- Why wasn't the 12 West surgical ward reopened after 15 months as promised by the director?
- Why was a memo sent out in February, 2018, concerning the "transfer of patients with acute surgical conditions in need of Critical Care to the NY campus"?
- Why are ambulances being diverted from Brooklyn campus to NY campus?
- What are the numbers for in-patient surgeries at Brooklyn VAMC for the years 2014, to present?
- Why was the Brooklyn lab staffing and services mostly transferred to NY campus?
- What are the actual events concerning the Brooklyn ENT Clinic?
- How are the needs of veterans, specifically homeless veterans, being met since the closure of the Chapel Street clinic and homeless veterans' clinic?
- What are the plans to replace PTSD staff who have recently left Brooklyn VAMC?
- Will VA commit to complete transparency with us, your primary stakeholders, in all matters concerning budget, staffing, and services to veterans at Brooklyn VAMC?

Your cooperation and attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. We look forward to an amiable resolution of these issues.

Respectfully,



Daniel A. Friedman
President, VVA Chapter 72

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VVA Chapter 82 – Nassau County

Steve Bonom—President



This year we have provided 30 to 35 Color Guard requests. 14 of which were home basketball games at the Nassau County Veterans Memorial Coliseum for the Long Island Nets who are the “G” league of the New York Nets.

The Chapter has partnered with the Dept. of Defense for the 50th anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War.

We have joined with the Long Island Air Force Association (AFA) at a special ceremony honoring 30 Vietnam Veterans. At this event we present the Colors and than specially designed medals are presented to the recipients. Than the Chapter forms a “Welcome Home Line” and we present each recipient with a beautiful Photo album scrapbook. We will be doing eight of these events this year.

On December 7th of each year we do another event with the AFA and that is at the Air Power Museum at republic airport. the “Flight of the Roses”. This is a memorial flight by Navy SNJ trainer plane that carries roses that represent the years since the Bombing of Pearl Harbor. We present the Colors then we line the tarmac as the plane takes off. We have done this event with the AFA for several years. This year the chapter was honored as our name was put on a permanent bronze plaque at the museum as one of the sponsors of the AFA. Also on this Plaque was electro engraved photo of chapter 82’ Color Guard.

Chapter members have visited 4 retirement homes and have met with veterans of all eras. We provided the veterans with Hats and shirts of their branch of service and special craft kits. We plan on visiting 12 more retirement homes in the next few months.

Chapter 82 participates in 2 veteran stand downs a year in which we provide needy and homeless veterans with clothing, toiletries, food items, veteran services such as legal, financial housing and service officers are available. Our next stand down is July 10th.

Recently Chapter 82 participated in a 50th anniversary commemoration event sponsored by Congresswomen Kathleen Rice

We provided a Color Guard and handed out over 250 Vietnam bracelets to the Veterans that attended.

Members of Chapter 82 visit local High Schools and meet with students to discuss the Vietnam War.

Chapter 82 has members that volunteer to drive veterans to 2 facilities using either county cars or DAV vans.

At the last POW/MIA Vigil and veterans BBQ Chapter 82 set up a tent and raised over \$6,000.00 in 3 hrs to aide the victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas.

On short notice we provided a Color Guard to the American Legion and Kiwanis in a combined dinner honoring 100 veterans from Fort Hamilton and St. Albans veterans retirement homes.

The President of Chapter 82 sits on two veterans advisory boards of 2 congresspersons. The President of Chapter 82 also is on the selection committee of Congressman Tom Suozzi for students applying to military academies.

And our President is a strong advocate of the Blue Water Navy Bill HR 299 and he received a call from Congressman Tom Suozzi from Washington the afternoon that the bill passed the house with a vote of 382 to 0. and was thanked by the congressman who was one of the over 300 cosigners to the bill.

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Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

This report is being made to highlight the great successes of those VVA Chapters who send me information on their activities so that I can share them with their fellow brothers and sisters in Central New York.

Let me start with Utica Chapter #944, and their President Tom Buono.

On May 10th the Chapter presented Proctor High School ROTC Cadets with Scholarship Awards and Certificates.

On May 22nd the Chapter presented Notre Dame High School ROTC Certificates and Scholarship Awards to the cadets.

On May 23rd the Chapter placed flags on Veterans graves at St. Mary's Cemetery in the afternoon. At evening time the Chapter proceeded to place flyers/applications for their annual VVA Patriot Run/Walk event.

On May 24th Rome High School ROTC Certificates and Scholarships were presented to the cadets by the Chapter.

On Friday May 25th the members of the Chapter visited the Oxford Veterans Home. Carpooling, the members were dressed in their white VVA polo shirts and black baseball caps. Located in Oxford, New York the Chapter along with MOPH presented donations.

An announcement was made about the Watchfire conducted by VVA Chapter 103 at the Syracuse fairgrounds scheduled for Sunday May 27th.

On May 28th the Chapter Color Guard scheduled attendance at a wreath laying ceremony at American Legion Post #229 on Herkimer Road, Utica. The Color Guard also announced that later in the afternoon they would be lining up for the Memorial Day Parade in Utica.

The next Chapter I would like to mention is Endicott Chapter #896 and their President Larry Holdredge along with AVVA person in charge Suzanne Holdredge. On May 18th they held a very memorable and well attended dedication of a Silver Rose Monument at their meeting location at American Legion Post #1700 in Endicott. The ceremony was attended by myself and VVA Chapter #704 Chaplin Jerry Fulmer. Jerry stood in and did the Invocation and Benediction while I spoke on the exposure to Agent Orange and other dioxin based chemical defoliants used in Vietnam. The monument is meant to bring greater and continued awareness of the effects of Agent Orange exposure. In attendance were Senator Fred Akshar, Assemblywomen Donna Lupardo, Broom County Executive Jason Garnar, Mayor of Endicott John Bertoni; Mayor of Binghamton Richard David, and Mayor of Johnson City Greg Deemie.

A Watchfire conducted on May 27th under the auspices of Syracuse VVA Chapter #103 was the largest and most heavily attended event I have had the pleasure to attend and participate in. Invited by President Gordie Lane at our last New York State Council meeting in Tioga Downs I was impressed by the size of the crowd and the fun people were having. There was food, beverages, memorabilia, ice cream and music, a wonderful time for all who attended. The main band "Held Hostage" asked me to participate when they came to the song their leader Tom Collier wrote entitled "Show Me The Way Back Home" a song he wrote about his brother returning from Vietnam. Tom wrote the song with the intention to increase awareness of the extreme psychological challenges our Veterans experience as they transition back to civilian life. And to honor all Veterans.

I joined the band on stage, spoke about the song, held a moment of silence for our POW's/MIA's and then lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. According to a Facebook post there was an estimated crowd of))

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some 25,000 people at the Watchfire. This event truly helped service members, their families, friends and the civilian community remember those who haven't returned home and who made our country stronger through their service and sacrifice.

Chapter 377 out of Dryden, New York under the leadership of Gary Napieracz on May 3rd presented their annual Patriotism Award to a member of the Cornell University ROTC Brigade. The award is given to a R.O.T.C. student who is nominated by their peers and cadre for best demonstrating patriotism in their activities and conduct. The recipient was U.S. Naval R.O.T.C. Midshipman Andrew Scott Brown.

It is that time of year when I again announce the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor "Tribute Ride." This will be the 10th year of the ride and is scheduled for Saturday, July 14th. The 100- mile ride is free and open to the public - motorcycles, cars, trucks, planes and helicopters welcome. Ride begins at 11:00 AM at Owego Free Academy, Sheldon Guile Blvd., Owego, New York. Registration to ride is between 8:00 & 10:00 AM on the day of the ride. This is a Police Escorted Ride. Ride ends at America Legion Post in Hannibal, New York. Sponsors are Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 377, 480 & 704 and the Blue Knights Chapter 17. Need additional information? Contact Harvey Baker - VVA Chapter #377 at 607-898-3507; Dan Baker - Chapter #17, the Blue Knights at 607-229-8153. You can also see them at www.Cyberspokes.com.

Auburn VVA Chapter 704 was kept busy in the months of May and June with several activities aimed at the High Schools in Cayuga County.

Upon completion of a very successful Poppy Campaign a committee of VVA members visited eight (8) area high schools and presented a scholarship to a senior from each of the schools. Each recipient was chosen by the school district and needed to exemplify citizenship, leadership and character throughout his or her high school career.

Under the leadership of Lou Patti the Chapter also participated in the unveiling of a NASCAR sponsored by Lowe's Home Improvement. The race car will bear the name of Staff Sergeant Frankie Phillips IV. Frankie was a member of the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division based out of Fort Bliss, Texas. He was killed in action in 2013 nearing the end of his tour in Afghanistan. Team Lowes Racing competed in the Coca Cola 600 on May 25th. The car was driven by professional race car driver Jimmie Johnson. Frankie's mom Cherie was present at the unveiling and works for the Lowe's Store in Auburn, New York. She and her family have reside in Cayuga County.

A Color Guard and flag pole duties were provided by the Chapter at a ceremony at the grave site of SP4 Robert F. Stryker who was killed on November 7, 1967 in Vietnam. Robert is a recipient of the Medal of Honor for his heroism that day and the Chapter along with other local veteran organizations annually pay our respects at his grave site. Chapter Chaplain Jerry Fulmer provided the Invocation and Benediction while President Lou Patti took charge of the Color Guard and flag pole ceremony. As is the custom, this ceremony is always conducted on the Sunday before Memorial Day. This year it was May 27th at Pine Hill Cemetery in Throop, New York.

If any Chapter would like to add their activities to this quarterly report just email me at nickvalenti46@yahoo.com or write to me at 14 Grove Avenue, Auburn, New York 13021. **(Continue on pg. 14)**

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VVA Chapter 896

Larry Holdredge—President

Art Belles and I attended State council meeting for the first time in a while. I attended a flag day ceremony at an invitation from the Johnson City Elks. It was held at the Rumble Pony Stadium in Binghamton. Very windy day !

I was invited to attend an American Legion County meeting as a delegate. Unfortunately I was unable to attend due to illness.

Sue and I attended the Memorial Service for John Bannister who passed away earlier in the month. It was a nice service.

BURY ME WITH SOLDIERS

Pvt. Charles Fink, 99th Infantry Brigade (Light)

Msgr. Fink put pen to paper to pay tribute to U.S. troops who served in Vietnam. Today, his deeply felt words are read at the funerals of his fellow veterans nationwide.

I've played a lot of roles in life;

I've met a lot of men;

I've done some things I'd like to think

I wouldn't do again.

And though I'm young, I'm old enough

To know someday I'll die,

And think about what lies beyond,

Beside whom I would lie.

Perhaps it doesn't matter much;

Still, if I had my choice,

I'd want a grave 'mongst soldiers

When at last death quells my voice.

I'm sick of the hypocrisy

Of lectures by the wise.

I'll take the man, with all his flaws,

Who goes, though scared, and dies.

The troops I knew were commonplace;

They didn't want the war.

They fought because their fathers and

Their fathers had before.

They cursed and killed and wept — God knows

They're easy to deride —

But bury me with men like these;

They faced the guns and died.

It's funny, when you think of it,

The way we got along.

We'd come from different worlds,

To live in one no one belongs.

I didn't even like them all;

I'm sure they'd all agree.

Yet I would give my life for them,

I hope. Some did for me.

So bury me with soldiers, please,

Though much maligned they be.

Yes, bury me with soldiers, for

I miss their company.

We'll not soon see their like again;

We've had our fill of war.

But bury me with men like them

VVA Veterans Initiative

Ted Wilkinson

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 416 from Gardendale, Alabama gives donation to the Veterans Initiative committee at the VVA Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, California.



Pictured is POW/MIA - Veterans Initiative chairman Grant Coates receiving check from VVA Chapter 416 president Ron Becker.

They Came Here to Serve. But for Many Immigrants, the Army Isn't Interested.

A growing number of recruits who have joined the Armed Forces on the promise that enlisting would lead in becoming American citizens have had their dreams ended.

A number of foreign born recruits from South America, Central America and even China have joined the US military and have taken the oath to uphold the Constitution have suddenly been discharged. They are informed that they are unsuitable for service. They joined through a special program created to recruit immigrants with valuable language. They are all of sudden being terminated before they can qualify for citizenship.

More than 10,000 troops have joined the military through the program — almost all of them in the Army. At its start, the Army touted its foreign recruits, [holding naturalization ceremonies](#) with top brass

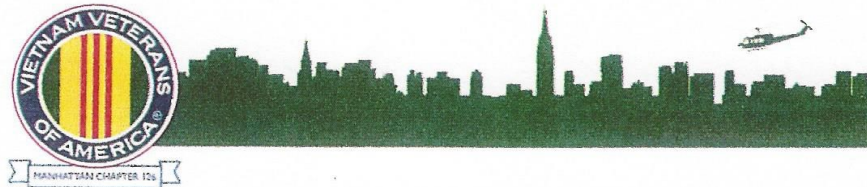
Now, many could be deported even though they have a family who are citizens of the USA.

Vietnam Veterans of America calls on the Department of Defense to stand up for immigrant recruits, troops, veterans, and families for the good of national security.

VVA President John Rowan, stated that “since the founding of our nation, immigrants have played a vital role in the United States military, and they’ve been a tremendous part of what makes America great – one only needs to see the number of immigrants whose names are etched into the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.”

Over the past 13 months, there have been a series of disturbing reports about immigrant service members, veterans, and families facing broken promises, uncertainty, and threats of deportation. The hampered Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest program has left the military short on critical positions, including doctors and translators. The threat of deportation of military spouses while their husbands and wives deploy is a serious threat to readiness and the mental well-being of troops and their families.

VVA Chapter 126—Manhattan



"Serving the men and women veterans of the US Armed Forces in the NYC metro area"
VVA #126 Angel Almedina Chapter
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc
www.vva126.org

Summer 2018

Request for Donation/Ad

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Angel Almedina Memorial Chapter #126 (Manhattan), is requesting donations from your company/organization to help us celebrate our 35th Anniversary event slated for this coming September 14, 2018.

The Chapter has decided to celebrate this very proud moment in our history with a Dinner Dance aboard the Hornblower "Hybrid" boat including a three-hour evening cruise on the lower Hudson, East River and New York Bay. Several public officials, celebrities, and other notables are sure to join us on this date.

The history of our chapter includes involvement and advocacy for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at 55 Water Street; the revival of the United War Veterans Council that developed the Veterans Day Parade, Fleet Week events, and other activities throughout the year; advocating for keeping the VA Medical Center on East 23rd Street open; a Clothing Recycling program; annual Holiday Party for Veterans, family and friends. In addition, many of our members have given their time and resources throughout the years to meet the needs of all Veterans in NYC at hospitals and activities including advocating for the newly formed the Department of Veteran Services, a NYC Agency for Veterans in New York City. We are now working to have a car donation program, and to place an office and staff at the VA Medical Center on East 23rd Street in Manhattan to fund activities there that will help further meet all Veteran's needs.

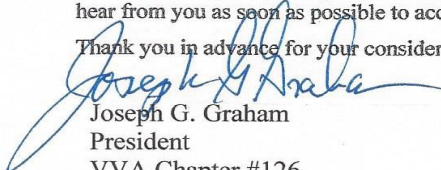
We are inviting your participation with one or more of the several options available that your company is able to contribute. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law; VVA#126 is a 501(C)19 not for profit organization and will provide a letter for tax purposes if requested.

Here are the options for giving:

- A Monetary donation
- Journal Ad
- Product(s) produced by your company
- Items for raffle prizes

The Veterans of Chapter #126 would be very proud to count on your support and call you our friends. To follow up with your participation choices please contact **Joseph G. Graham 917-642-3427** We need to hear from you as soon as possible to accommodate your gift(s) and give you journal credit.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.


Joseph G. Graham
President
VVA Chapter #126

AGENT ORANGE REPORT

Walter Schmidt—Chair

THE PLEASURES OF SHOWERING IN LONG BINH

BY DAVID WILLSON

A MACV memo arrived on my desk in the USARV Inspector General Office where I was working in the fall of 1967. It warned of a serious danger: Soldiers were shaving in the shower units and then discarding their used razor blades. Several soldiers had incurred serious injuries—in one case a life-threatening injury—getting tangled up with the blades. Some blades had been stuck between the 2x4s used in the construction of these tiny frame buildings. The memo even suggested that careless soldiers were unknowingly doing the work of Viet Cong infiltrators.

The memo went on to warn that it was especially dangerous to shower in the dark in these units: Unfriendly creatures might lie in wait to nibble on the tender parts of soldiers. The memo ended with the threat of an automatic Article 15 for anyone caught shaving in a shower unit. There would be security inspections after dark of random shower units. What a friendly reception those folks will get, I thought.

I don't recall that Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* was mentioned, but the image of Janet Leigh in the shower appeared in my head and stuck there. It occurred to me during every Long Binh shower I took thereafter—with me as Janet Leigh, an incongruous and darkly comic image, but scary, too.

It so happened that I was one of those soldiers who often showered after dark. I worked long hours, so often it was dark before I had the opportunity to visit a shower unit. In the evening there was no crush or line for showering. I'd strip down to my olive drab boxers; carry my ditty bag containing a bar of Ivory soap, some shampoo, and a razor; and head out in my flip-flops across the boardwalk over a sea of red laterite mud that was between me and the shower unit of my choice. Oh, I also threw a stiff, none-too-well-laundered olive drab towel over one shoulder and carried with me a fresh, clean pair of OD boxers. There would be security inspections after dark of random shower units. What a friendly reception those folks will get, I thought.

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The water was provided in an ingenious arrangement, similar to what I'd encountered a few years earlier when I was a Boy Scout attending BSA gatherings. In that version, a platform was erected of tree limbs of substantial size and in the crux at the top there was placed a 55-gallon drum filled with water. A hole in the side had a hose coming out of it and there was a sprinkler on the end of the hose. There was some canvas wrapped around near the half-way point, but privacy was at a premium. Another method was the same sort of tree limb set-up but with a large water-filled canvas bag with a hose.

The U.S. Army outdid the BSA. We got to shower in real buildings, brand new ones. There were several barrels on top of these solid little wooden structures. The barrels were brightly colored, often in a festive orange. Not the expected OD.

After we received the terrifying memo about the dangers of showering, most of us scoffed and continued to shower and shave as had been our habit. I suppose a few soldiers gave up showering as too darned risky, not something they wanted to do to make their return home to the Land of the Big PX less likely.

Not me, though. I persisted in my nightly shower. When I arrived at the shower unit after my journey on the boardwalk, I entered the little building, felt around for the hooks on the wall of the unit, and hung up my towel, clean boxers, and ditty bag. I removed my OD boxers of the day and put them on the bench that was next to the door. I then found the toggle switch and turned on the water, if water there was.

It took some time, but usually water began with a trickle and then, if I was lucky, a flood of water came out of the shower nozzle. I had no idea how long it would continue, so I grabbed my shampoo and got going right away. More than once I'd gotten my head lathered, then the water quit. But usually the water was warmish and plentiful. It made me happy to have all of this water coursing down my six-foot frame to wash my 138-pound body.

After I'd shampooed and rinsed, I lathered up my face, got out my razor, and shaved by touch. I'd gotten good at that. That took only a couple of minutes. I was always glad to be rid of the whiskers, sparse as they were.

I never thought about it at the time, but the water left the building through slats in the floor and went out into the red laterite soil that surrounded that building and all the other buildings in the compound. I also tuned out the ever-present smell of mildew, which was a major part of living in Vietnam. I did not think much about the possibility of spiders, snakes, and scorpions or other tropical denizens, but I never was barefoot. The flip-flops gave me the illusion of safety.

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The barrels containing the herbicides had been reused by the ever-frugal Army to contain and dispense water to us at Long Binh. They took no great care to clean the barrels as it was well-known that the stuff only harmed trees and not people. Above the little shower units were placed hundreds of these barrels into which was pumped the defoliant-soaked water of Long Binh.

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Reprint with permission: The VVA Veteran On Line

AGENT ORANGE: THE TOXIC BATTLEFIELD COMES HOME, May/June 2012

Three Private Civilians Have Been Shaping Policy at the VA From Mar-a-Lago

By MOLLY OLMSTEAD

AUG 08, 2018

A new [report from ProPublica](#) found that three civilian men operating out of Mar-a-Lago and led by the chairman of Marvel Entertainment have been shaping the Department of Veterans Affairs at the highest levels during the Trump administration, working behind the scenes to push for projects, benefit their own interests, and push out people within the department's leadership who opposed them.

In documents and interviews, ProPublica found that the three men had been part of the daily leadership of the agency, actively reviewing and weighing in on regular policy and personnel decisions.

Ike Perlmutter, the Marvel chairman, regularly talks to President Trump on the phone and acts as his go-to adviser on veterans issues, ProPublica reported. After Trump asked Perlmutter for help during his transition,

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Perlmutter offered to be an outside adviser, choosing the VA as his focus because he fought for Israel in the 1960s before moving to the U.S. Perlmutter, 75, then brought on two of his friends: Bruce Moskowitz, 70, a Palm Beach doctor, and Marc Sherman, 63, a lawyer. None of the three have ever served in the U.S. government or military.

WORKING GROUP II REPORT

Francisco Muñoz III—Chair

Working Group II had a great presentation at the Leadership & Education Conference in Palm Springs, CA. I wished that more VVA members had attended this conference because we need their support and input on the future of VVA and the development of a new veteran organization.

Unfortunately, many who attended thought that Working Group II was going to name the new veteran organization along with its new leadership. That was not our mandate from VVA National.

Working Group II mandate from the VVA's National Officers and Board of Directors was: Working Group II will determine the feasibility of **forming, chartering, funding** and/or **empowerment** of a new veterans' organization to **perpetuate our legacy** and **assure the tomorrow of all veterans** which will be communicated to the general membership for approval at a convention.

Check tap #10 on your conference book for our input and talking points.

We outlined what type of leadership was needed to lead the new veteran organization; the differences of an organization classified as a 501 (C)-3/(C)-19; described the many different methods of funding a non-profit tax deductible veteran organization; how to empower the new leadership, its members in establishing this organization; how to perpetuate our legacy and assure the tomorrow of all veterans.

Outline for the PowerPoint presentation:

#1 LIGHTS OUT? or Preserving Our Legacy? - Why Not Both?

#2 MISSION / VISION

Lead in the feasibility of forming, chartering, funding or empowering of a new veteran organization to perpetuate our legacy and assure the tomorrow of all veterans.

#3 OUTREACH

Modernize - Inform - Inclusion - Listen - Be tolerant

#4 Lead

Example - Times - Define Goals - Guide

#5 FORMATION:

Never Again!? It has been 27 years since the Gulf War started - DO WE ABANDON ? - our organization has morphed from its original name and missions to what it has become today...Vietnam Veterans of America. We chastised the existing veteran's organizations as being too stodgy. They did not want us, so now in 2018 as victims of our own success and like the "older organizations"- we too are facing the same criticisms...Lights Out? Legacy?...Are veteran organizations the new dinosaurs? We face several decisions...just fade away? Did we make a difference? Do we care about the future generations? What can we do? Try this one on...The Vietnam Veterans of America Legacy Foundation

OUR FUTURE - THEIR FUTURE THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA'S LEGACY FOUNDATION

(Continue on pg. 25)

(Continue from pg. 24)

#6 CHARTERING:

How To Exist - How - Core Mission - Why - Legislative History - Why Not Both

#7 FUNDING:

Handoff Mechanic\$ - New Method\$ - Define Need - Why

#8 EMPOWERMENT

To operate by itself and with enthusiasm, Responsibility and Ownership, Working independently toward common objectives, Passing on our knowledge and assets to the new organization

#9 PERPETUATE *OUR LEGACY*

Keep? - *Protecting Benefits* - *Advocacy* - Grass Roots - Services For Incarcerated Veterans - External Focus - Information & Communication - Activism - Not Keep? - The Vet Is the War - VSO Focus

#10 ASSURE TOMORROW

Membership Requirements - Activities\$ - History - Reputation & Relevance - How Shall We Accomplish

By now, you must be saying to yourself - I should had been there to hear the presentation and to give my input because I do not understand this PowerPoint presentation. Yes, you had to be there!

We then had a Question & Answer session on Saturday morning, where over 200 VVA & AVVA members wanted to give their input on our presentation. Questions like "What is the standing of AVVA in all of this?"

The officers, board and membership need to write up new Constitutional amendments for the closure of VVA and the formation of a new veteran organization that is inclusive of era veterans from all wars/conflicts. The organization needs to be totally inclusive of all veterans of diverse ethnicity, gender and religion. But most importantly, the officers of this new organization need to establish a new name for the organization that will not have an 'END' like Vietnam Veterans of America. We have just a few years to accomplish this task. We need the cooperation of every Chapter, State Council, and National Officers to be involved in this process.

If you have any questions or concerns, positive input only, please E-mail Working Group II at the following E-mail address: VVAWorkingGroup2@AOL.CO

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL AWARDS



L-R) Pres. Rowan, Pres. Foote & Joe Ingino



(L-R) Pres. Rowan, Richard Johannes, Pres. Foote

Government Affairs Report

Joe Ingino

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held legislative hearing on August 1, 2018, on nine pending bills before the Committee. VVA testimony at the hearing focused on our support for H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which passed the House on June 25, 382-0.

For over a decade, Vietnam Veterans of America has sought legislation to restore presumptive Agent Orange exposure status to members of the Armed Forces, who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam. With passage of H.R. 299 in the House by a vote of 382-0 on June 25, 2018, we are approaching our goal. The bill will now go to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee for further consideration.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) has introduced companion bill S.422. The bill has 50 cosponsors in the Senate. When enacted into law, "Blue Water" veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam, veterans who served near the demilitarized zone in Korea, and certain veterans who served in Thailand will again be eligible for compensation for service-connected, disabilities related to their exposure to Agent Orange.

VVA believes Congress should recognize that these veterans were exposed to Agent Orange and should authorize presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure.

The Department of Veterans Affairs during their testimony presented by the Undersecretary for Benefits, Paul R. Lawrence, opposed passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veteran Act because there's still no credible scientific evidence to support extending Agent Orange-related benefits to shipboard personnel who never went ashore in Vietnam or patrolled its rivers. Without such evidence, he said, it would be wrong, and would create a disastrous precedent, to award VA benefits. VA also is opposed to paying for the provisions of this bill by increasing the cost that some veterans must pay to access their home loan benefits. Veterans will either have to finance the VA funding fee with interest, or pay up front with cash. This means fewer veterans will buy homes or will buy homes using non-VA options, potentially opening them to predatory lenders.

Robert Wilkie confirmed by the Senate as new VA Secretary by 86-9 vote

Robert Wilkie took the oath of office Monday to become the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs and take over a department riddled by poor morale among employees and political infighting at the top.

Standing next to Russia's Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump openly questioned his own intelligence agencies' conclusions that Moscow was to blame for meddling in the 2016 U.S. election to Trump's benefit and seemed to accept Putin's insistence that Russia's hands were clean.

Putin said he did indeed want to Trump to win — because of his policies — but took no action to make it happen.

"I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Put was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today," said Trump, repeatedly denouncing the special counsel investigation into Russian interference efforts, which intelligence officials warn are ongoing.

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VVA: Mission Act Falls Short

“In light of the June 4 Government Accountability report on the Veterans Choice Program, we are concerned that *The VA Mission Act*, the \$55 billion spending package, which awaits the president’s signature, will fall short of accomplishing its intended goals,” said John Rowan, VVA National President.

“While we applaud aspects of the bill which serve the needs of our veterans today, of grave concern is the GAO’s finding that the Veterans Health Administration and the VA Medical Centers are not able to respond to the needs of the Choice Program because of ‘inadequacies of networks, geographic distribution, and insufficient numbers of community providers,’ ” noted Rowan.

“Allocating a mere 120 days for the development of regulations to guide the implementation of this massive and complicated overhaul is irrational and unrealistic,” said Rowan. The illusive “oversight” promised with Choice is still not in place. The VA’s antiquated IT infrastructure does not allow communication with organizations within the VA, let alone outside entities, such as the community providers described in *The Mission Act*.

Eligible Veterans Can Seek Refund for Taxes on Disability Severance

The Defense Department has identified more than 130,000 veterans who may be eligible for a refund for taxes paid on their disability severance payment, a DoD tax expert said.

Veterans who are eligible for a refund for taxes paid on their disability severance payment can submit a 1040X Amended U.S. Individual Tax Return for their reimbursement. Army Lt. Col. David Dulaney, the executive director for the Armed Forces Tax Council, said the Defense Department has identified more than 130,000 veterans who may be eligible for the refund.

SUICIDE: For over two weeks after the tragic death of Anthony Bourdain, CNN aired a town hall about suicide as well as the season finale of Bourdain’s show, “Parts Unknown.” All network media went all out on another major star suicide of Kate Spade.

Yet, there are 22 suicide a day by veterans and there is no out cry about in the news or news print nor is there promotion of the support that is out there for them. Why? Are veterans less value members of society?

Veterans call the national suicide prevention hotline number, **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and then “Press 1” to reach highly skilled responders trained in suicide prevention and crisis intervention.

COMMITTEES	CHAIRPERSON	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Agent Orange/Dioxin & Other Toxic Exposure	Walter Schmidt	waltsdorsal@gmail.com
	Bill Patton Co-Chair AO	bllpaton36@gmail.com
Constitution	Grant T. Coates	gcoates@stny.rr.com
Finance	Charles Tipton	ctipton237@yahoo.com
Homeless Veterans	Tom Kelly	dsdba53@yahoo.com
Membership	Ted Wilkinson	yankeeted@aol.com
POW/MIA & Veterans Initiative (VI)	Grant T. Coates	gcoates@stny.rr.com
PTSD & Substance Abuse	Tom Harris	bkrdad@aol.com
Veterans Affairs	Sam Hall	Sammyjh49@yahoo.com
Veterans Health Care & Aging Veterans	Tom Harris Jerry McDermott	bkrdad@aol.com jmcdermott@murphynolan.com,
Veterans Incarcerated Committee	Nick Valenti	nickvalenti46@yahoo.com