

# INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

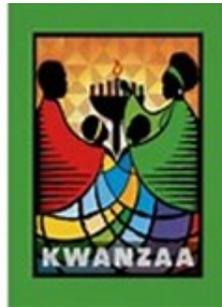
Vol. 28 Issue 04

Veteran's News that needs to be Read WINTER 2018



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Wishing all of our Members & Supporter

A Safe & Blessed Holiday Season

VVA-NYSC Officers & District Directors

## IN MEMORIAM

VVA Chapter 20.



**Mellody, Robert J. Colonel USAF**

August 14, 2018 (83) Two tours in Vietnam with 300 combat flying hours

**Waters, Daniel P**

Oct. 9, 2018 Served proudly with the USMC VVA Chapter #20 & 704

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE



**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2019**

January 25, 26, 27

April 19, 20 21

June 14, 15, 16

September 27, 28, 29

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

**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)		

<b>Legislative Director</b>	<b>Bing Markee</b>	<b>bingnys@aol.com</b>
<b>Sergeant of Arms</b>	<b>Bob Joyce</b>	<b>JBobF4/44@aol.com</b>

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 begin our new year and I don't know how many more new years VVA will have and I will say a little more on that as I might have grabbed your attention.

The Executive Board just met in December to go over what we accomplished in past year and what we want to do in new year. Our next meeting is January 26th. It has been one year since we moved our meeting site to Tioga Downs Hotel and Casino. It has turned out to be one of our best decisions we have made. The facility is beautiful the staff is great. Our turnouts for meetings have increased with more spouses coming and staying longer. We look forward to even more participation.

We have had several guest speakers and had very productive meetings. Our next meeting, we are bringing in the Clear Path organization. Gordie Lane suggested this and they sound like they are helping our Veterans. We again ask for your input on who you would like to come and address one of our meetings. I'm easily reached at [nedvva@roadrunner.com](mailto:nedvva@roadrunner.com). I know come April or May we might have some folks running for National office come and speak to us. So, jot down our meeting dates and plans to attend any and all our meetings.

I don't think I need to tell you this hotel has become very popular and fills quickly. We have a block of rooms and if you do not book a month ahead you may not get a room and we cannot help you. Our 99.00-dollar a night rate is unheard of and try to book a room yourself with the going rate and you will see the deal we have been able to make. And cannot forget Jeff Gural, the owner, who loves Veterans and has been very generous with us.

As we age, we still see some of our chapters floundering. We have closed 3 chapters in past years. One chapter who was revoked is now trying to come back but they only had 6 members and if they really want to come back, they would need to start from square one and get 25 members. Some of that revocation were due to not having any communication with our State Council and not from our end but theirs. Now because we have little communication with some of our chapters our last Veteran Incarcerated Chapter looks to be closing. They also do not have enough members and no one for officer positions this is not just happening in NY but all VVA.

Why I'm telling you this - and have been trying for the past few State Council meeting? We are in our declining years as VVA. We must plan our future and we are by establishing two Working Groups. This process takes time and many think answers should be had now to all the questions that are coming up. One thing disturbs me as I hear it too many times, "National is trying to close us down." My question is who is National? National is us - our members. Yes, we have leaders we elect but the delegates that attend conventions have the highest authority and tells our leaders what they want. Our leadership has taking the task because of our aging and we do have a shelf life because our name is Vietnam Veterans. It is the same as Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans. They now have a shelf life.

So, our two Working Groups are working hard. Working Group I is looking into how we legally shut down the organization. Legally, congressionally, financially etc. They are not saying we are closing, just getting answers on how we do that if our delegates say that they want to close VVA. The Working Group II is looking into possibility of the formation of another veteran organization to continue our motto of Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another as well our business model. **(Continue on pg. 4)**

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We have the way, the means and the ability to mentor them to our way. They are not out there forming another organization but exploring all possibilities.

There are no answers to anything from these working groups. We need to give them the space they need to do the work assigned to them. At the 2019 Convention these Working Groups will present their findings and more than likely a long discussion on the floor will take place. Again, it will be those delegates at the convention who will be making the choice of where we go. John Rowan, our officers, our BOD, the State Presidents, The Chapter presidents and all officers and directors of States and chapters are NOT making that decisions but the members who are delegates to the convention WILL be.

So now I hope you see why I want NY to have a say and to have a say you need to send your delegates. Yes, it will be expensive, but you have until now to plan. Doing Fundraising for this or take a look at how and to whom your Chapters donates monies to. Many of you receive funds from our Household goods program. Instead of giving that money to whomever, keep it to send your delegates to your organization convention. VVA-NYSC will be entitled to around 125 delegates. I would be satisfied if we have 120 present to vote. And all I ask is to keep an open mind and listen to the debate. I know several of our Chapters have discussed this and decided what they want. They might even send delegates to vote the way the Chapter said. How can you decide like that without knowing the facts and those facts are not even available yet? Those delegates will hear them, and they will have to decide. You are giving them that right to make the judgment call.

It might be a good idea to send your delegates to State Council meetings because you might hear more of what is going on. As you know Reverend Lewis is the one who helped putting together these working groups and has knowledge as to how they are working. We have Nick DeLeo who is on Working Group 1. We also have Francisco Muñiz III the chair of Working Group 2. And cannot forget the National President John Rowan. So, by attending our meetings you may go away with real facts and not fake news. And when the convention is over do not Monday morning quarterback because our direction has been made by you, the delegates.

I will keep on because I think you all care. This is a big deal and if your chapter does not participate in this issue then you have nothing to say when it all comes down. VVA National Convention will be held July 16th through 21<sup>st</sup> in Spokane, WA. See you there!

Our great State Council Treasurer, Nick DeLeo, has received a very prestigious award for his outstanding service to our Veterans for over 40 years. The Rochester Stars and Stripes banquet with over 600 attending to fundraise for the Veterans Outreach Center where Nick served many years on their BOD honored Nick with the **Edward and Jacqueline S. Harris Award for Exemplary Service to Veterans.**

**Congratulations Nick!**

The State Council is very proud of Nick and lucky to have him as our treasurer.

PS The NBOD has passed the 50 dollar life member dues. Anyone who has paid the 50 dollar 3 year option will be automatically changed to life. The 20 dollar annual dues will not be renewed at end of that year.

They must pay the 50 for life or not be a member.

## The Edward & Jacqueline S. Harris Award for Exemplary service to Veterans

Awarded to VVA - NYSC Treasurer: Dick DeLeo

Nick DeLeo proudly served in the United States Army as a Specialist 4 during the Vietnam War.

His dedication to Serve Those Who Have Served U.S. began at Penn State University when he became involved with the Veterans Club. As club President, Nick, organized volunteers to assist disabled children and one the group's projects was to plant a tree with a granite marker that paid tribute to a Vietnam veteran who was murdered and two others who sadly took their own lives.

After graduation, Nick went to work for Kodak as a Test engineer in the Copier-Printer Division. Through his work at Kodak, Nick was able to secure much needed copier services to Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) which resulted in significant savings to the fledgling agency.

Nick became active in the employee network at Kodak known as VetNet, an acronym for Veterans Network of Kodak Employees. He served as Treasurer, a member of the Board of Directors and as Vice President.

Nick joined the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 30 (VVA #20) and there he met Tom Cray, one of several Vietnam Veterans who founded VOC. Nick eventually would be selected as Secretary for VVA 20, and this began a 25 year history of leadership. Nick would go on to serve as Treasurer, Vice President, President and member on the Board of Directors.

Nick was instrumental in helping establish the Emergency Relief Foundation at VVA 20. This came about when Nick and the membership wanted to help support a member whose wife had passed and had no money to cover funeral expenses. Nick would go on to help provide assistance to other veterans experiencing financial difficulties.

Nick served as the VVA 20 representative to the Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee. As secretary, he worked diligently with Dr. Barry Culhane and other stake holders to get the memorial constructed and dedicated. The result of their work can be seen today at Highland Park and is visited by thousands annually.

Nick made a successful career transition to Harris RF Communications as a Systems Support Engineer. He brought his love of service to Harris and became involved with a veteran group known as Serving emergency Responders and Veterans Engagement (SERVE)> Nick remained in a leadership role with SERVE until he retired in 2015. But a man like Nick never really retires.

Nick was elected in 2005 as Treasurer of Vietnam Veterans of America New York State Council, a volunteer position which he currently holds. Nick continues to assist Veterans Service Officers in the processing of VA claims for Western NY Veterans.

Nick is a man who has never been satisfied with just donating his time and talent. He has financially supported VOC through the United Way's Employee Giving Program and continues to be a generous donor to the agency. Additionally, because of his support and advocacy, the VVA-NYSC Council has been a Stars & Stripes Gold Star level sponsor for the past six years and through his encouragement, they look to support VOC in other ways which allows veterans to have equal access to critically needed services.

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**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ted Wilkinson, Chair

October 2018

**VVA Membership Totals by Classification**

Individual 8,349

Life Member 72,750

Incarcerated Veterans 2,284

Permanently Hospitalized veterans 503

Total 83,886

Region I 4,005

Region II 14,396

Region III 14,879

Region IV 8,992

Region V 11,493

Region VI 9,375

Region VII 7,588

Region VIII 3,720

Region IX 9,372

Living outside USA 65

**Top VVA Chapters in Membership**

State	Chapter #	Total
1. MD	172	1,033
5. NY	20	672
12. NY	11	468
19. NY	85	328
19. N	12	328

**BOARD PASSES REDUCED MEMBERSHIP DUES**

During the October Board of Director's meeting, the Membership Affairs Committee submitted a motion to the National BOD to have only one paid-class of membership \$50.00 LIFE. The motion content:

As of October 20, 2018, there will be one paid class of membership.

1. LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$50.00 2. All 3-year members who have paid \$50 will automatically become a life member. 3. All one-year members will continue as an individual 1-year member until their membership expires, one-year members will then be required to pay \$50.00 to remain a member of VVA.

Please pass this along to all. New applications and membership forms are being created. You will be notified when then become available.

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

As this year comes to an end, I hope we all have had good year and next year be as good.

I hit most of the chapters and tried to explain what is going on with what's going on with the closing of VVA.

A few said they will still go on, others don't know what they're going to do. I also tell them to send members to the convention next year. I tell them that this is one they do want to send delegates to because it going to set what is going to happen to VVA.

Now I want to wish all a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and a very Happy New Year.

**Southern District Report****Joe Ingino****VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421, #807**

On October 19, I attended the Suffolk County Advisory Board for 2018 Suffolk County Marathon. The County Executive, acknowledged me as part of the Vietnam Veterans of America, New York State Council on October 28, 2018.

I was asked to be at the first monument at Calverton National Cemetery honoring women in the military service, past and present on October 13, 2018.

**VVA Chapter #11—Suffolk County**

Clarence Simpson

**Denise Civiletti**

The Pulaski Street School auditorium was filled to capacity Friday morning but the audience of excited sixth-graders fell silent as ceremonies got underway to commemorate the life and death of Garfield M. Langhorn Jr.

Langhorn, who would have turned 70 last month, was killed in action in Vietnam on Jan. 15, 1969. His selfless act of heroism in throwing himself on a live grenade to save the lives of wounded comrades in a Vietnamese jungle led to the posthumous award of the Congressional Medal of Honor in April 1970, the nation's highest military honor.

His memory is honored each year with an essay contest by the sixth grade students of the Pulaski Street School, the building that housed Riverhead High School in 1967 when Langhorn was awarded his diploma and left to make his way in the world. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1968 and deployed to Vietnam. On Jan. 15, 1969, his company — Troop Troop C, of the 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 1st Aviation Brigade — went on a mission to rescue two pilots of a Cobra helicopter shot down **(Continue on pg. 8)**

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by enemy fire on a heavily timbered slope, according to Langhorn's Medal of Honor citation.

A radio operator, Langhorn, 20, "provided radio coordination with the command-and-control aircraft overhead while the troops hacked their way through dense undergrowth to the wreckage, where both aviators were found dead.

"As the men were taking the bodies to a pickup site, they suddenly came under intense fire from North Vietnamese soldiers in camouflaged bunkers to the front and right flank, and within minutes they were surrounded.

"Pfc. Langhorn immediately radioed for help from the orbiting gunships, which began to place mini-gun and rocket fire on the aggressors. He then lay between the platoon leader and another man, operating the radio and providing covering fire for the wounded who had been moved to the center of the small perimeter.

"Darkness soon fell, making it impossible for the gunships to give accurate support, and the aggressors began to probe the perimeter.

"An enemy hand grenade landed in front of Pfc. Langhorn and a few feet from personnel who had become casualties.

"Choosing to protect these wounded, he unhesitatingly threw himself on the grenade, scooped it beneath his body and absorbed the blast. By sacrificing himself, he saved the lives of his comrades."

Langhorn is only one of three men from Long Island who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their service during the Vietnam War and Riverhead Town's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

How can ordinary people emulate Langhorn's extraordinary valor in their everyday lives? That is the question posed to sixth-grade essay-writers at Pulaski Street.

Winners Christopher Rodriguez, Dean Redmond and Zuleika Herrera Rodriguez and honorable mention Brooke Andresen each read their essays aloud to the packed auditorium.

"Many people think that our lives, freedom and happiness are our rights as Americans," Christopher wrote. "They are not rights but gifts that people like Private Langhorn have given us," he wrote.

"We can all be inspired to be like Private Langhorn. If we see someone being left out or teased, a part of us will feel that this is wrong. Like Private Langhorn we need to act on that feeling. It is called compassion and is a sign for us to do something... You can stand up for people who can't... Brave is not a feeling that you should wait for. It is a decision. It is a decision that kindness and doing what you think is the right thing is more important than fear, than fitting in or following everyone else. Private Langhorn inspires us to be grateful, kind and brave," Christopher wrote.

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Dean observed that Langhorn “must have felt scared to be in a country that he didn’t know and to fight with people he never met. War is scary and he must have been scared that he might die.” He expressed compassion for the soldier’s parents, sisters and girlfriend who had to cope with his loss.

Zuleika offered ways “kids like me” can help the community: by donating hair for wigs for cancer patients, by helping a neighbor with groceries or walking their dog, by reaching out to the elderly to make them feel less lonely.

“A way I helped my community with my family was by sending a huge box full of clothes, medicine, nooks toys and personal necessities for our families in Guatemala” after a volcanic eruption there in June. “By these deeds, it shows that normal people like me don’t have to wear capes to help others.”

Brooke wrote that kids could stand up to bullies. “You could even tell the bully about Garfield Langhorn and how everyone should be inspired by him,” she said. Langhorn’s bravery was a gift to the other soldiers.

“What everyone should remember throughout their lives is that every day is a gift; be thankful for the people in your life. Think of others before yourself.”

Over the 14 years since the inception of the essay contest, the number of students participating has more than quadrupled, Pulaski Street School principal David Densieski said yesterday.

“The quality of the essays and the insights were better than ever,” Densieski said. The eight-person panel of judges had a difficult task selecting three winners and an honorable mention.

Robert “Bubbie” Brown, one of the judges on hand for yesterday’s assembly, said they could have picked 15 winners this year because the essays were so good.

Former congressman Tim Bishop, who sponsored legislation to have the Riverhead post office named for Langhorn, told the students to think about Langhorn’s courage in the Vietnamese jungle that day. “Think about what kind of person does that. Think about how that person was raised. Think about the values that go into that kind of instantaneous judgment and then ask yourselves, ‘How can we learn from that?’ We should be grateful that this community produced a Garfield Langhorn, that this family produced a Garfield Langhorn,” Bishop said.

“Remember, the spirit of Garfield Langhorn is in this building. He sat in these chairs. He walked these halls and he sat in the classrooms here,” Bishop reminded them.

Bishop presented the school principal with a plaque holding the legislation naming the Riverhead post office for Langhorn, signed by President Barack Obama. The plaque will be displayed as part of the memorial to Langhorn in the school library, which was also named for Langhorn in 2011.

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Langhorn’s mother Mary, now 94 years old, traveled from her home in Virginia – where she moved to be close to her daughters a few years ago – to attend the ceremonies, as she has done every year since 2005. “I appreciate everything the Town of Riverhead and the school has done to keep Garfield’s memory alive,” she said. “The essays were wonderful.”

The Riverhead High School NJROTC participated by presenting the colors. Trumpeter Colin Van Tuyl of Greenport performed the National Anthem and Taps. Members of the L.I. Chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America attended the ceremonies, as did the Patriot Guard Riders, the essay contest judges and members of the Garfield Langhorn Memorial Committee, which sponsors the essay contest. The contest winners each got a \$50 gift card to acknowledge their achievement.

Trevor Hewitt, who along Mary Ann Harroun, Debbie Brown and Clarence Simpson, coordinated the contest and assembly ceremonies, read Langhorn’s biography to the assembly and then urged all in attendance to find ways to emulate the fallen hero’s character.

“Let us all find the courage to right a wrong, to speak for the voiceless, to protect the defenseless. Let us each remember to honor our personal responsibilities and commitments and to offer service to our country, our communities and our families,” Hewitt said.

“Twenty-year-old Garfield Langhorn gave his life to protect and preserve the lives of others. His unselfish act made him a hero. Let us all honor the life of PFC Garfield M. Langhorn by finding the hero within each of us.”



(L-R) Pres. Kitson, former Cong. Bishop, VP Clarence Simpson, Langhorn's mother Mary and his fiancée Joan Brown Smith.



VP Clarence Simpson & Mary Langhorn

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This bike was donated to one of our VJO Veterans by our Chapter 11 last weekend.

Helmet and lock were also included. Our vet is overwhelmed. Another example of Veterans Helping Veterans.

Thanks All

Clarence Simpson

Suffolk County Veterans Court Mentors, from VVA Chapter #11 - Suffolk County, Invite Nassau County Veterans Court to observe their court proceedings.



### VVA Chapter #72—Brooklyn

Danny Friedman—President

As a member of the Veteran Advisory Board I went to the Copiague Parade and unveiling of the refurbished Veterans Monument at Babylon Town Hall on November 12,2018.

Chapter 72 has had a very busy Fall. In September we donated \$500.00 to Team Rubicon to aid in their disaster relief efforts. In October, we had a large outreach and fund raising effort at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Street Fair in Bay Ridge Brooklyn.

Also in October, we donated \$500.00 each to the VVA State Councils in North and South Carolina to assist VVA members affected by disasters there, and donated \$1000.00 to Fisher House at Walter Reed. In November, we had a float and a large presence in “America’s Veterans Day Parade” up Fifth Avenue in NYC.

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Coming up in December we will be providing \$2000.00 in new clothing for Brooklyn's homeless and hospitalized veterans, and hosting a holiday party for the patients of 15 West at the Brooklyn VA Hospital. This is an activity we have hosted and funded for over 30 years.

### VVA Chapter #82 - Nassau County

Richard Guevara - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Nassau County Veterans Wall of Honor - On June 23<sup>rd</sup> Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard at the dedication of 300 new names which was inscribed on the Wall of Honor at Eisenhower Park in recognition of their military service.

Nassau County/TD Bank Fire Works Show and Concert - On June 30 Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard for the show at Eisenhower Park.

Veterans Assistance Day - On July 10, we participated in Nassau County's Veterans Assistance Day which provides needy and homeless veterans with assistance, such as clothing, food and toiletries. Legal, housing, and employment guidance is also provided. We provided security and gave each veteran a gift.

Vietnam Veterans 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony - On July 12, September 22, and November 3, 2018 Chapter 82 teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association (AFA) to recognize approximately 30 Vietnam Veterans at each event. At these events 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 8 events per year. It should be noted that this is a Department of Defense Event for both the AFA and Chapter 82.

Voices for Veterans - On August 2, we provided the Color Guard for a salute to veterans at the New Hyde Park Memorial Park.

Nassau County Salute to Veterans - On August 4, Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard at the Nassau County Salute to Veterans ceremony in Eisenhower Park.

Long Island Scottish Festival - On August 24, Chapter 82 provided the color guard at the opening ceremony of the annual Scottish Festival.

POW/MIA Memorial Ceremony - On September 6 we provided the Color Guard for the Nassau County POW/MIA Ceremony which was followed by a County Executive Veterans BBQ Picnic.

On a monthly basis the Chapter 82 AVVA Representative and members of Chapter 82 visit the Northport Veterans Hospital to entertain and provide refreshments to veterans in two wards. (Continue on pg. 13)

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In September we made a contribution to the Nassau County Assistance Fund which is used to help veterans in need with temporary financial help.

In September we also made a monetary contribution to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

On October 6 Chapter 82 provided one of the color guards at the Long Beach Irish Day Parade and Festival.

The Bristol's - On October 16 members of the Chapter visited the Bristol at East Meadow and met with several of the veterans at this nursing home. We have visited this facility on several occasions and developed a good rapport

Hofstra's Military Appreciation Day - On November 9 Chapter 82 provided the color guard at this event.

On November 7 and November 15 members of the Chapter participated at two schools (elementary and high school) to discuss our experiences in the military and to respond to any questions that they had regarding the military.

Nassau County October Fest - On November 10 we provided the color guard at the 2 opening ceremonies.

New York City Veteran's Day Parade - On November 11 members of Chapter 82 marched in the Veterans Day Parade in Manhattan

Hicksville's Veteran Day Ceremony - Representatives of Chapter 82 participated at the Veteran's Day event.

Nassau County Veterans Winter Stand Down - On November 20 we distributed several hundred winter coats to needy veterans at the Freeport Armory. We also provided security for the event.

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

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

Bethpage High School-  
On December 9 Chapter 82 will provide the color guard for the school's event.



**(Continue from pg. 5) Nick DeLeo**

Nick firmly believes in the value of paying it forward. He has dedicated his life to the concept of veterans helping veterans-that is why he continues his volunteer work-so that every veterans get the help they need to become productive community members.

Please join us in recognizing the work and accomplishments of Nick De Leo, Our 2018 Edward and Jacqueline S. Harris Ward recipient.

### Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

This has been a very busy quarter for Central District. Here are just a few joint ventures that have developed amongst our Chapters.

Watch Fire ceremony at Meyers Park, Lansing, New York was a rounding success despite the inclement weather. The rains did not stop the ceremony and Central District VVA Chapters 480 Owego, 377 Dryden and 704 Auburn pulled off a successful POW/MIA Remembrance Day. It should be recognized that there is a great deal of preparation for the ceremony as well as several days of clean up subsequent to the ceremony.

VVA Chapters 377 & 704 held a quilters presentation for some 48 veterans for all war periods in Auburn, New York. A group of Quilters from the surrounding communities who have been working together for over 10 years handmade quilts for this presentation. Since their founding these ladies have distributed more than 500 quilts, at no cost to our veterans. In recognition of their many years of volunteer service, a Certificate of Appreciation was presented to all the quilters at a joint ceremony of the Quilters of the Finger Lakes, VVA Chapter #377 headed by President Gary Napieracz and VVA Chapter #704 led by President Lou Patti. As Central District Director it was my proud duty to hand out these individualized certificates. Included in the presentation were two Certificates presented posthumously. As a special surprise to Chapter #704 the Quilters presented Chapter President Patti with a handmade quilt that had the faces of all 27 Cayuga County servicemen killed in Vietnam. The Chapter was very moved by the presentation and expressed their gratitude to the quilters.

We have been informed that Larry Holdredge, the President of VVA Chapter #896 was involved in a very serious automobile accident. He is home after a stay at Robert Packard Hospital. I'm sure our brother Larry could use a call from anyone of us wishing to uplift his spirits. He is such a hardworking Chapter President that we really need him working with us. Anyone wanting to reach Larry can call him at home 607-748-0167 or try his cell at 607-341-3366.

Chapter #704 has embarked on an ambitious venture in the establishment of a Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Memorial will have several features not seen in most memorials. The uniqueness of the design will make it stand out when viewed. Its features will include a chronology of the war beginning in 1942 to the establishment of the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. in 1982. It also will feature some 20 etchings depicting Vietnam. The 27 men killed in Vietnam will have their faces shown on the Memorial along with their originating Town, where they died in Vietnam and where they are buried. The Memorial

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Committee of 704 has also decided to include the “In Memory Program.” This program honors Vietnam Veterans whose lives were cut short as a result of their service in Vietnam. As of September 16, 2018 there were just 282 New York State Vietnam Veterans who have been registered for the program. Cayuga County has 4. This portion of the Memorial will continue to be updated as surviving family members add their Vietnam Veteran to the Memory Program.

Chapter #704 is also attempting to start an annual Veterans Day Parade in Cayuga County. They are out-reaching to local Veterans organizations, the National Guard and owners of retired military equipment asking for their participation. Following the Parade there will be an indoor concert for the purpose of fundraising for the proposed Vietnam Memorial.

Remember, try to stay in touch. I read your emails when you send them to me. I try my best to pass on what I can to the entire Central District. And I definitely want to give a loud thank you to all of the Chapters for sending me your information. My email address is [nickvalenti46@yahoo.com](mailto:nickvalenti46@yahoo.com).

## VVA-NYSC VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

Nick Valenti—Chair

On September 7, 2018 I had the pleasure of meeting with Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter #205, and Veterans of Modern Warfare Chapter #24. The group discussed their plans for the balance of the calendar year 2018. Their Veterans Day Vigil is on track for November 12<sup>th</sup>; they are continuing with their Christmas Give-Away on December 7<sup>th</sup> and have a General Membership Banquet scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup>.

The crochet squad continues to accept yarn donations. At the New York State VVA Council meeting held on September 22, 2018 donations of yarn came from VVA Chapters 978 Frewsburg and 865 Jamestown. Arrangements will be made with the Auburn Correctional Facility liaison for delivery of the donated yarn in the near future.

It was reported that Chapter #205 had successfully submitted and received an acceptance notification from the IRS on their completion of the 990-N. An election was held and new officers were installed. They are awaiting the arrival of a few more DD-214's in order to finalize their membership requirements per National VVA guidelines.

Arrangements are being made for me to attend and participate in a round table discussion and small group work shops working with incarcerated veterans at Mid-State Correctional around Veterans Day of 2018. Discussions will deal with what Veterans can do once they have been released in order to increase their rate of successful transition into society.

**VVA POW/MIA & VETERANS INITIATIVE**

Grant T. Coates—Chair

According to Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency (DPAA), as of 19 September, 1,594 U.S. personnel are still missing from the Vietnam War. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,248 (VN-453, VS-795); Laos-291; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7.

DPAA announced on 8/24/18 that CDR James B. Mills, USNR, CA, was accounted for on 8/20/18. Listed as MIA on 9/21/66, NVN, his remains were recovered in June, 2018. Earlier in the month, DPAA announced that Col Richard A. Kibbey, USAF, NY, was accounted for on 8/6/18. Listed as MIA ON 2/6/67, NVN, his remains were noted as returned on April 13, 2017. The accounting for CDR Mills and Col Kibbey brings the number still missing from the Vietnam War down to 1,594. Prior to that, and dated 7/17/18, DPAA released the name of Col Frederick M. Mellor, USAF, listed as MIA, NVN, on 8/13/65.

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

Of the 429 crew, 388 were interred at the Punchbowl as Unknowns. As of December of 2017, 100 sets of remains had been identified. Since that time, 57 more identifications have been made. For various reasons, including wishes of the family, DPAA announcements are often delayed far beyond the ID dates and sometimes not even made.

North Korea turned over 55 boxes containing the possible remains of U.S. service members on July 26 to U.N. representatives. Since that time, DPAA has assumed possession of the remains and continue the process of identification. Two identifications of remains, Army Pfc. William H. Jones and Army Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel were announced on 20 September.

There are 7,684 missing U.S. service members from the Korean War.

**2018 Veterans Initiative Program Mission report:**

25 day Mission, 10 meetings days, 24 scheduled meetings, 3 cancelled meetings

Meetings with Vietnamese National Ministries, provincial peoples committees, veterans associations and humanitarian groups associated with missing personnel from the war.

The exchange of information and future planning for increased cooperative efforts and activities relating to the efforts of locating the missing from the war, both U. S. and Vietnamese, displayed an ever increasing cohesive mutual determination to account for the missing from war in Vietnam.

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**AGENT ORANGE REPORT**

Bill Patton—Chair Bllpaton36@gmail.com

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bill Paton. My wife Lori and I live in North Tonawanda, between Buffalo and Niagara Falls. I am a member of Chapter 77 of Western New York, while my wife is co-President of the Associates of the Chapter. I did a lot of setups, pushups, etc. as the DI's said I miss spelled my name, having only one t. They enjoyed it while I'm sure you can understand, I DID NOT!

Agent Orange has affected me physically thus giving me more reason to be the Chair of the State Committee for Agent Orange. Plus, the self-need to reach out to fellow Brothers/Sisters and disseminate any information I can, that may be of help and or educational. My email will be at the end of this report should there be questions, sharing of information or just discussion.

On November 9th of this year Governor Cuomo Signed Senate Bill S6606 as described:

Senate Bill S6606                      2017-2018 Legislative Session                      **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**

Establishes the "New York State Silver Rose Veterans Service Certificate" for veterans exposed to dioxin or phenoxy herbicides during military service

This Bill was introduced by State Senator Catharine M. Young (R, C, 54 - 57th District) establish a new state military certificate to honor the sacrifices of veterans who have suffered from the effects of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange. The New York State Silver Rose Certificate will be available to current state residents or individuals who were state residents during the period when their exposure occurred.

The following from a conversation with Senator Young and a press release

“The risks and hardships of wartime service do not always end when a tour of duty is complete. No group of veterans understands this better than those who served in Vietnam and were exposed to highly toxic, tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange. Tragically, many of these courageous veterans have suffered from debilitating and even deadly health problems in the war's aftermath, ranging from cancers to nervous system, respiratory and heart disorders,” said Senator Young.

“I took up this cause after speaking with many Vietnam veterans in my district who shared the devastating health challenges they've battled as a result of their exposure to toxic herbicides. In some cases, it caused catastrophic illnesses that eventually took their lives. For others, it caused chronic conditions that impaired their ability to work and enjoy a quality of life. The New York State Silver Rose Certificate is an acknowledgement of their enormous sacrifices and a symbol of awareness of the dangers of Agent Orange.”

Veterans who have suffered from the effects of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange would be eligible to receive a New York State Silver Rose Veterans' Service Certificate under the new law. The designation may also be awarded posthumously. The measure authorizes the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs to select the color and design of the honor.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy authorized "Operation Ranch Hand," the code name for the United

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States Air Force's herbicide program in Vietnam. A number of herbicidal agents were used, including, most infamously, Agent Orange. Approximately 20 million gallons of the herbicide were used to help U.S. forces by defoliating forest areas that concealed the enemy and destroying the crops that provided their food. As many as 2.6 million U.S. service members were exposed to the chemical.

Agent Orange has been linked to increased rates of cancer, including Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, throat, prostate, lung, colon, and liver cancer, as well as Ischemic Heart Disease and acute/chronic leukemia. The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes over 40 cancers and sicknesses, including diabetes, as Agent Orange related and "service connected."

Senator Young concluded by saying that, "more than 58,000 Americans lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Yet, the real number of casualties is far higher when you factor in each veteran who has fought and died from an Agent Orange related illness. The Silver Rose Certificate is an acknowledgement of their suffering and sacrifice and a reminder of how much we owe those who have put their lives on the line for us."

The Certificate has yet to be designed along with the application and guidelines. I'm told that they have 180 days from signing for this to happen. There is no answer as of today as to when and where applications may be obtained. Should this happen before the next Interchange, I will contact our State President, Ned Foote to see how he would like to disseminate the information. While this award is in different form in other States, it's gratifying to be finally recognized on the New York State level, there is hope that the Federal level might do something similar. Someone asked me if this was comparable to receiving the Purple Heart, the answer is no. Remember this is a State Award. Any cause must start somewhere.

If you should have any questions, other than disability filings for Agent Orange illnesses as I am not, nor feel qualified to answer at this time or information that you would like to share, please contact me at my email address below or your representative to the State Council meetings.

## VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

Grant T. Coates

Following the Vietnam Veterans of America Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, California from July 21 to the 29th, I traveled to Black Lake, Michigan to teach at the United Auto Workers Veterans Conference, which was from August 19th to the 24th. Five three hour classes for over three hundred attendees were given by myself and Mokie Porter, VVA Communications Director. Rick Weidman was a speaker and Medal of Honor Recipient "Buddy" Bucha was the guest speaker.

I traveled to New York City on August 30th to attend a Book-launching Event held at the Forbes event center at 24 Fifth Avenue, NYC, along with VVA President Rowan, V-US Society Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien, V-US Society Secretary General Bui Van Nghi and H.E. Đặng Đình Quý, Head of Vietnamese Mission to the UN. A second meeting with V-US Society Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien, V-US Society Secretary General Bui Van Nghi and luncheon was held on September 1 in New York City.

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

January 26      April 20      June 15      Sept 28

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

**VVA Chapter # 32—Queens, NY****Queens Chronicles Editorial**

December 6, 2018

**Our Vietnam vets honored at last**

The late Pat Toro's dying wish was finally granted last Thursday when ground was broken for the Queens Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Elmhurst Park. It's about time. The effort to get the monument built has been going on for 10 years — longer than the time full-fledged U.S. combat forces spent in country following the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.

There are many to thank for getting the project underway, but key among them are Toro, the former president of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 32, VVA Chapter 32 President Michael O'Kane, national VVA President John Rowan and Borough President Melinda Katz, who allocated nearly \$3 million for the project in both that role and as a city councilwoman. We salute them all.

Katz, speaking at the groundbreaking, recalled the dark days of the war era when those sent there returned to "a nation that didn't seem grateful." That's putting it mildly. They were spat upon and called baby killers in certain quarters. Some World War II veterans didn't want them joining their American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts because the conflict supposedly wasn't "a real war." These were disgraceful attitudes to take toward members of the armed services who in many cases had been drafted and didn't want to be there any more than the antiwar protesters wanted them there.

They were — with some relatively rare exceptions as in every war — just doing their duty, doing it with honor. Attitudes toward returning soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have greatly improved since then. Those coming home from Iraq, Afghanistan and other faraway lands are far more likely to be lauded than lambasted. They deserve that — and the services they need from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies.

The Elmhurst monument will be subdued, akin to the national one. While some vets wanted it to have images of helicopters, M16 rifles, boonie hats and other staples of their time in Vietnam, it will not. But it will feature things like the Vietnam Service Medal, a timeline and, most importantly, the names of the 370 Queens resident skilled or declared POW/MIAs in the war.

Those who died later from illnesses the war caused also will be honored.

Until now, Queens has only had a small memorial at the edge of the borough saluting its Vietnam veterans. Now they're getting their due.

Toro would be proud.



**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Francisco Muñiz III

I want to thank all the Chapters, Committee chairs, and Officers who sent reports to be placed in the VVA Interchange Newspaper through out the year.

I am still perplexed that during open mic, there are about 30 Chapter Reports given but only about five are actually sent in to be placed in this edition. Why? Each delegate has a report in front of them, then why can't they send via E-Mail those reports. You are not representing your Chapter in a duly manner. Please cooperate.

**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates for 2019: Mark your calendar—Make Reservation ASAP**

If you were not at our last meeting or your crayon broke here are the dates for our 2019 State Council meetings. I suggest you contact Tioga Downs (607-699-3900) and make your reservations for all. It is much easier to cancel then to reserve. As you saw last meeting this hotel completely books and if you do not have your reservation in 2 weeks prior you will not get a room.

Also if you do need to cancel you must notify hotel or you will be charged. We have a good deal going here so please come. You will be generally surprised how nice this place is. Also cash can be had as one of our members wife won a large amount of money.

Dates: for Saturday meeting

January 26          April 20          June 15          September 28

You can keep your rate if you decide to come early or stay late. Check with hotel when you call.

*Wishing all the members and supporters a Festive Holiday Season.*

*Feliz Navidad Y Un Prospero Año Nuevo!*

Gracias!

**SPEEDY RECOVERY**

Is offer to Steve Bonom, president of VVA Chapter #82, of his hip replacement surgery. Also, we wish a speedy recovery to Pat Valenti, wife of Central District Director Nick Valenti., after knee surgery.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

Congratulations to Tom Harris, PTSD Chair, and his wife Anita on being named Volunteers of the year for Saratoga County

**AWARDS**

VVA-NYSC Awards were presented to Central District Director Nick DeLeo and Western District Director Mike Walker for their outstanding Service to Veterans within New York State. Congratulations

**(l -R)**

Pres. Ned Foote, Nick Valenti, VP Coates



**(l -R)**

Pres. Ned Foote, Mike Walker, VP Coates

## CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Grant T. Coates - Chair

The VVA calendar has the Convention starting on July 16, 2019. The opening ceremonies are on Wednesday. The Committee has determined that July 17th is the official start of the convention. 120 days prior to that is March 20th. The submission deadline for any proposed amendments will be Sunday March 17th at 12 midnight.

All submissions must be postmarked prior to the deadline.

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Joe Ingino—Chair

### Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs held hearing on the Status of VA

#### Isakson to VA: More Work to Be Done

Calls on VA to use legislative tools to improve VA services; work toward solution for 'Blue Water' Navy veterans

U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, today held a hearing with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie to discuss the progress of the VA's ongoing implementation of several pieces of critical veterans' reform legislation passed by Congress and signed into law in 2017-2018.

### VVA Urges Congress to Take Action

Help us Keep Our Promise to Our Afghan Military Allies

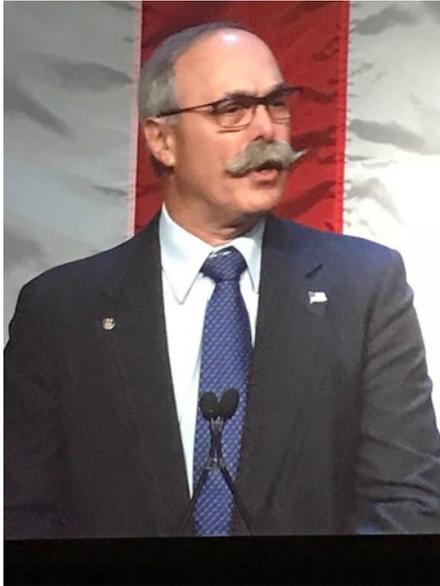
(Washington, D.C.)—"Today, Vietnam Veterans of America, along with four veterans service organizations, urged Congress to take action to grant asylum to our Afghan military allies whose lives are in danger as a result of their loyal service to our nation's military," said John Rowan, VVA National President.

"Since the founding of our nation, immigrants have played a vital role in the U.S 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," said Rowan. "After recent reports of a purge of immigrants from the military and the bureaucratic strangling of service-for-citizenship programs, the time has come for to fix this mess, once and for all."

As reported September 20 by Tara Copp for Military Times, President Trump has revealed the names of the first soldiers recovered in the 55 boxes of remains returned from North Korea: Army Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel, 32, of Vernon, Indiana, and Army Pfc. William H. Jones, 19, of Nash County, North Carolina. McDaniel's family had previously received his dog tag, which was found in the boxes of remains. It was the only dog tag recovered in this set of boxes returned from North Korea. Both soldiers died in the November 1950 Battle of Unsan, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency previously said. There are still 1,700 service members missing from that battle.

## VVA and VOC

## Nick DeLeo—Acceptance Speech



In early 1981 a Kodak colleague Chris Sayre asked me to join Vietnam Veterans of America with him. This is when I first met Tom Cray. At the second monthly meeting that lasted about 3 hours a questionnaire was provided to give input as to how each member could assist with forming what became Chapter 20. Since I was working in Test Engineering testing high speed copiers I could provide copies to Chapter 20 and VOC. It was the beginning of a long journey in serving my fellow veterans in leadership capacities at Chapter 20 and volunteering for VOC. After being recruited by Kodak in 1979 working on behalf of veterans 18 months later allowed me to become involved with several dedicated Vietnam veterans who became lifelong friends.

This was at a time when Vietnam veterans were finally being recognized for their honorable military service to our country. VVA was organizing in the early 1980's to become a formidable force within New York and in Washington, DC. One of the first major accomplishments was the VVA sponsorship of Judicial Review that allowed all veterans to retain legal counsel to challenge VA claims decisions striking down a Civil War law that limited the amount paid to legal counsel to \$10. After this came the Real Property Tax Exemption in New York for veterans to receive a military service tax benefit. Most traditional veteran service organizations actively worked against VVA legal victories due to their long established ties to politicians. Now 40 years later congress goes to VVA first with all pending veteran legislation due to VVA's due diligence and thorough understanding of veteran bills being presented before both chambers of congress.

In 1978 the VA finally recognized Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after Vietnam veterans were portrayed in the media and Hollywood as being misfits who were drug abusers and mentally unstable. Agent Orange was next recognized by the VA in 1980 as a source of medical problems being experienced by Vietnam veterans. In late 1980 VOC became part of an Agent Orange Registry to sign up veterans exposed to herbicides sprayed to remove dense vegetation during their military service in Southeast Asia. From this diverse list of Vietnam veterans VVA Chapter 20 was formed in March 1981 after about 80 veterans decided to join this new organization.

Now 38 years later due to their exposure to Agent Orange we lost Tom Cray in November 2017 to glioblastoma and Stirlin Harris in April 2018 to presumptive diseases caused by the effects of these deadly herbicides. Chapter 20's first President, Medal of Honor recipient, Gary Beikirch miraculously survived stage four colorectal cancer in 2017. VVA NY State Council President Ned Foote survived liver cancer in 2010 caused by Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion. Ken Moore, a Harris Award recipient, has stage four lung cancer from his exposure while in Vietnam. These actively involved Vietnam veterans are or were true heroes as is a very dear friend from West Nicholson, PA Rick Burkhart who has been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism that hasn't been added to the list of presumptive diseases due to cost resistance by the current administration. He filed a VA claim in 2016 that has been denied after cancer spread to his lungs. He has filed an appeal. These are a small sample of thousands of Vietnam veterans including others present tonight who have been required to prove their diseases are from exposure to Agent Orange.

Those who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and various locations

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throughout the world now have been exposed to the toxic effects of burn pits while serving their country overseas. The Toxic Exposure Act was passed earlier this year to include these most recent men and women who have unexplained diseases from breathing toxic air while honorably serving their country. A couple of weeks ago I was in my home area of Northeastern Pennsylvania and Rick Burkhart stated the next time they decide to have a war one million dollars should be set aside for each service person sent to combat and return with illnesses caused by duty in foreign countries as members of the military. It certainly would make future administrations and politicians think hard about actual expense of sending men and women to a war zone if they added in this one million dollar cost to provide care after returning home. It would prevent these veterans from having to prove their health problems were caused by their service overseas in the military.

During the past 45 year Veterans Outreach Center has provided vital services to men and women who have borne the battle and offers support to families of these brave veterans after they return home. VOC continues to operate as the oldest non-governmental agency assisting veterans in Monroe and 11 surrounding counties offering training and education opportunities. When VOC began in 1973 a group Vietnam veterans took it upon themselves to provide much needed assistance to their fellow veterans since at that time no agency was working on behalf of Vietnam veterans. Their mantra was “If we don’t look out for each other no one else will.”

This is why I continue to advocate for all veterans through volunteering to ensure they receive the care and benefits that are truly deserved. All of the Vietnam veterans mentioned tonight along with all veterans present tonight are or were the best and brightest and must never be forgotten by the United States government and every American for their service to this nation.

## VVA NEWS UPDATE

### The Full Military Honors Act of 2018

As reported by Matthew Burke for Stars and Stripes on September 16, The Full Military Honors Act of 2018 was introduced to the House Armed Services Committee earlier in the month by Rep. Mike Bishop (R-MI), Sam Johnson, (R-TX), and Tim Walz, (D-MN). The bill seeks to afford enlisted Medal of Honor recipients and former prisoners of war the right to be buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Those honors, which include an escort and a horse-drawn caisson, are currently reserved only for officers and service members killed in action. The congressmen are working to bring the legislation before the full chamber this fall.

As reported September 20 by Leo Shane III for Military Times, the fight over extending benefits to “blue water” veterans who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam is now pitting former Veterans Affairs secretaries against each other, adding to the confusion over Congress’ next steps. Last week, four former VA secretaries – Anthony Principi, Jim Nicholson, James Peake, and Bob McDonald – wrote to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, urging lawmakers not to grant presumptive illness status to roughly 90,000 blue water veterans who claim exposure to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange, saying there is insufficient proof for their cases.

On September 20, Tom Philpott, reporting for Military Update, reports that Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) met Tuesday with Robert Wilkie to try to coax the new VA secretary out of his department’s newly stiffened opposition to a House-passed bill that would extend VA health care and compensation to tens of thousands of former Sailors and Marines with Agent Orange-associated ailments. “We haven’t convinced him yet,” Brown said in a next-day phone interview. Without support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, faces a difficult decision on whether to allow a committee vote this fall on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (HR 299).

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### 50 Years Later, Marine Gunny to be Awarded MOH for Hue City Heroics

Retired Marine Sgt. Maj. John Canley will receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor, during a ceremony on Oct. 17, the White House announced Tuesday. Canley will be honored nearly a half century after his heroic actions in Hue City, Vietnam, saved the lives of Marines under his command.

### VA Releases National Suicide Data Report for 2005-2016

the VA released national-level and state-level findings from its most recent analysis of veteran suicide data, from 2005 to 2016. On average, about 20 current or former service members die each day; 6 have been in VA healthcare and 14 had not.

From 2015 to 2016, the overall current and former servicemember suicide count decreased from 7,663 to 7,298 deaths, a decrease of 365; the veteran-specific suicide count decreased from 6,281 to 6,079 deaths, a decrease of 202; and from 2015 to 2016, the veteran unadjusted suicide rate decreased from 30.5/100,000 to 30.1/100,000.

Though the data showed the rates of suicide to be highest among younger veterans (ages 18-34) and lowest among older veterans (ages 55 and older), because the older veteran population is the largest, this group accounted for 58.1 percent of veteran suicide deaths in 2016. The rate of suicide among 18-34-year-old veterans continues to increase. The report showed that the use of firearms as a method of suicide remains high, with the percentage of suicide deaths involving firearms at 69.4 percent in 2016. The "VA National Suicide Data Report 2005-2016," and the accompanying state data sheets are available at: [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/Suicide-Prevention-Data.asp](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/Suicide-Prevention-Data.asp)

### 500 Immigrant Recruits Discharged By U.S. Army In 1 Year

The enlistees had been recruited for their language or medical skills and promised a fast track to citizenship in exchange for their service.

Over the course of 12 months, the U.S. Army discharged more than 500 immigrant enlistees who were recruited across the globe for their language or medical skills and promised a fast track to citizenship in exchange for their service, The Associated Press has found.

The decade-old Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest recruiting program was put on hold in 2016 amid concerns that immigrant recruits were not being screened sufficiently. The Army began booting out those enlistees last year [without explanation](#).

Eligible recruits are required to have legal status in the U.S., such as a student visa, before enlisting. More than 5,000 immigrants were recruited into the program in 2016, and an estimated 10,000 are currently serving. The vast majority go into the Army, but some also go to the other military branches.

### Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) Increase for 2019 Passed into Law

On October 9, 2018, President Trump signed Public Law 115-258, which provides a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase of 2.8 percent, effective December 1, 2018, for veterans disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for survivors and certain other benefits.

VA compensation and DIC benefits are retrospectively paid on the first of each **(Continue on pg. 26)**

month, for the previous month. This means that the 2.8 COLA increase effective December 1, 2018, will not be included until the January 1, 2019 payment. This increase matches the COLA provided to Social Security recipients.

This COLA benefits injured and ill veterans, their families and survivors by helping to maintain the value of VA benefits against inflation. Without annual COLAs, many disabled veterans, who sacrificed their own health and family life for the good of our nation, may not be able to maintain the quality of life they deserve.

We thank Representative Mike Bost (IL), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs for introducing HR 4958, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018 and Congress for final passage of the bill on September 25, 2018.

*Can VVA count on your support on this important day?*

As fellow Vietnam Veterans and proud VVA Members, we share a critical mission: To ensure Vietnam Veterans get the benefits and care they have earned with their sacrifice and service to our nation.

**For the last 40 years, VVA has helped our nation's heroes fight the battles they face at home...**

Battles for respect and appreciation...

Battles to get the medical care and VA benefits they deserve...

Battles for their health against the long-term effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other toxic substances during war conflicts...

Battles against homelessness, PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and substance abuse.

**Your support makes that all possible.** Without Members like you, VVA simply could not fulfill its commitment to our fellow Vietnam Veterans.

#### SOME ADVICE FOR THE NEW YEAR FROM OUR HEALTH COMMITTEE CHAIR





### New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation

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

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

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

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

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



2019

Wishing all our Members

&

Supporters

A Happy, Healthy

&

A Prosperous New Year

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