

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 30 Issue 03

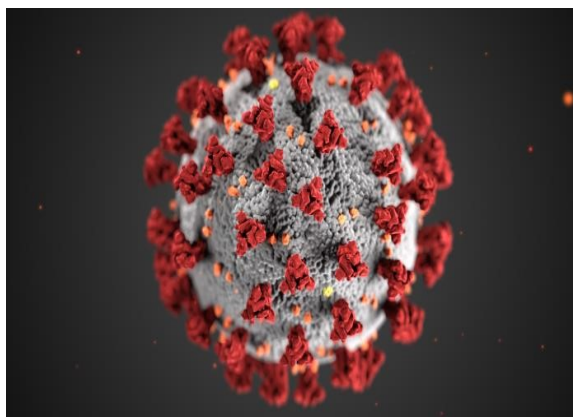
Veteran's News that needs to be Read

FALL 2020



Inside this issue:

President's Message	3
Vice President Rpt	5
VVA Nat'l News	6
POW/MIA/MI	13
Chapter Reports	14
Veteran's Healthcare	31



US Covid Cases	7.39 Million		
US Covid Deaths	210,330		
NYS Covid Cases	453,755	NYS Covid Deaths	33,122
It is what it is!		As of 10/03/2020	

IN MEMORIAM

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA Chapter # 11

Richard W. Leins

VVA Chapter #49

Michael J. Dorio

VVA Chapter #20

John V. Farley

Thomas F. Cenzi

Joseph A. DiMaria

Richard Anthony D'Imperio

VVA Chapter #72

Stephen Neftleberg

VVA Chapter #77

Robert L. Rodabaugh, Jr

Ross T. Barbarino

Gerald A. Serviss

Robert L. Rodabaugh, Jr

VVA Chapter #82

Dwight Thomas Powers

Kevin Burke

Vincent Giancone

Patrick McMahon

VVA Chapter #393

Gerald E. Harter



VVA Chapter #333

Gene Sullivan

VVA Chapter #459

Michael D. Addington

VVA Chapter #978

Jim Shoemaker

At Large Member

Carey J. Spearman

**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2021**

January 16, 2021

Other dates To Be Announced
(TBA)

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

VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM8 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	607.434.9884	gcoates@stny.rr.com
Secretary	Francisco Muñiz III	516.712.4914	secretary@nyvietnamvets.org
Treasurer	Nicholas DeLeo	585.749.2325	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	twilkinson@vva.org
Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA)	Kathleen Penfield	Kathysitka@yahoo.com
VA Volunteer Services (VAVS)	Danny Friedman	danny.ola@optimum.net

Legislative Director	Bing Markee	bingnys@aol.com
Sergeant of Arms	Bill Paton	blpaton36@gmail.com

SERVICE OFFICER PROGRAM	TELEPHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Dolores Garcia—Chief SO	716.857.3344	Dolores.Garcia1@va.gov
Norbert "Butch" Steinwandel	716-857-3404	Norbert.steinwandel@va.gov

President's Report

Ned D. Foote

I am at a loss trying to find what to write. We are still very much idle with no clue what our future is. We have not had a State Council meeting since January and for that matter we have not had a National meeting either.

So, I will focus on negative right now as there is more news than positive. Our State Council meetings are still unknown. The Tioga Downs Hotel and Casino has been closed since March. They have just opened second week of September but many restrictions. Grant has been trying to reach them for possible meeting dates for 2021 and hope to have news on that soon. If we are to get dates and many changes will sure come. We have no idea how food will go. I think we can adapt to the layout for a meeting to have social distancing but as it is right now, we could only have 50 people in a room. Casino is limited at 25%. So, Tioga is like so many other businesses may not survive these restrictions but maybe all will change.

On the National front that affects State Council and down to chapters is not a rosy picture either. Funding is main concern and after the budget was passed last April we had to go back and amend by reducing to a bare bones budget. All travel was cut to no travel. Cuts to spending within committees and the reducing of 14 positions in our staff. All of this and we still need to pull 1.6 million dollars from reserve fund. We may need to pull more for next budget season if things do not change and our reserved will dry up very quickly.

As most know the Household Goods Program stopped in March as it was deemed non-essential. Those companies we work with had to layoff 4000 employees and close all the thrift stores. We were lucky we still had some funds coming in and we did receive some funds for 3 months but that is over. But good news, this program is picking up again albeit awfully slow. Some of you have seen some trucks picking up goods and have asked why we are not receiving money. Here is the answer to that.

Yes, some employees came back but not full strength. Some stores have opened but restrictions are still in place. The goods being picked up are having problem dropping off goods. Stores are full. These stores have reduced hours and restrictions as to number of people allowed inside. Also, those folks that do buy these good have also been out of work thus may not have money to purchase.

But good news. We are seeing an increase in program and possibly some funds being sent to States and chapters. Not the amount we use to have but something. Other good news on funding at National. Our Direct Marketing Program is surpassing our expectations along with our car program. Maybe 2021 we will be back to somewhat normal, but some states will not, and some chapters will not.

On the State side we are without a funding stream. Over the years we worked with New York State to receive grant funds and started receiving 50,000 dollars for our Service Officer program. Last year we somehow were forgotten and did not receive. We made sure that this would be corrected this year and we were approved. Covid-19! No funds for us again. Now we might have been able to survive this because we set up a Foundation many years ago and that foundation worked with Tel-markers for funds and have done very well over the years and our State Council received the much

(Continue on pg. 5)



New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation

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

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

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

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

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

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

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

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

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

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

President Francisco Muñiz III

Vice President Ned D. Foote

Treasurer Grant T. Coates

Secretary Nick Valenti

Directors Sam Hall

Stan May

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

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

(Cont. from pg. 4)

needed income to run this group with meetings and such and other programs. That my friends ended last year as our Tele-marker went out of business and no more funds for Foundation meaning no funds for SC.

We have been fortunate to squirrel away funds to have in case something drastically happens. Covid-19! Our income is almost zero, but our expenses are still there. With payroll for our two employees and a part time employee is still needed. Although we have stopped taking new claims since January, we still have over 700 claims in the appeal process and could take many more years to adjudicate. So those funds saved will be used for this program and we will be good for several years, so we are good on that front. Not having meetings also have saved but we are not getting any business done. We should have had elections in June. Our chapters should have been in April, but most have not.

So, it brings up another issue. We have a constitution and must be followed with state laws and feds to have an organization. Constitution says elections, finance reports to be sent by July 15th. Well? Some chapters and states think they can have a zoom meeting or send in ballots by email. No, the constitution does not allow for that. There are many other issues within the constitution and that committee has allot of work to do for next convention as that is only time the constitution can be amended.

So, our next convention is in August, we hope, and will be in Greensboro NC. Driving distance for most of us and we hope to have a great turnout from NY. Other than elections and constitution I think a decision on our future will finally be had.

So, until we meet again, stay safe and follow protocols for this Pandemic. Things can only get better.

Vice President's Report

Grant T. Coates

Greetings to all. During these trying times, stay cautious and healthy.

2020 has been a very unusual year, to say the least. When I traveled to Vietnam in the beginning of February, the Vietnamese had instituted national mandates for battling the COVID-19 issue. Masks, social distancing, limited occupancy, tracking of health issues were all in place. The Vietnamese society had an attitude that the virus was an enemy of the country and the citizens accepted the ideal that the viral invasion was "The Enemy", and mobilized to do everything in their (the citizens and government) power to defeat the virus. 34 deaths have occurred reported by Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

The New York State Council will be meeting at Tioga Downs Casino and Hotel on January 16, 2021.

Reservations can be made now. To make a reservation, contact the hotel, directly, at (888) 946-8464 or (607) 699-3900. **Advise the receptionist that you are part of New York State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America. Bring a tax exempt form** or the full tax rate will be charged to your bill. You have the responsibility to cancel your own reservation. If you do not cancel, your credit card will be charged the fee. Reservation cutoff date is December 24, 2020, after that the full room rate will be charged.

At this time no other dates have been established for meetings. Decisions will be made in the near future for the remaining 2021 dates.

VVA NATIONAL NEWS —THE FUTURE OF VVA

John Rowan, President

Last year at the National Convention the delegates overwhelmingly supported Resolution GA-21, which charged the Officers and Directors with investigating the legal and constitutional requirements for opening up our membership to post-Vietnam veterans under a new name that would be inviting to a more-inclusive membership. All proposals were to be presented to the delegates at the 2021 Convention for their approval. This led to a lot of discussion and concerns from the membership, particularly from those who do not want to change our name. Well, they do not have to worry about that anymore.

Under the authorization of the Resolution the Officers began to investigate the feasibility of implementing it. VP Tom Burke and I attended the Student Veterans of America Convention in January. We spoke to recent veterans who are leaders of new veterans organizations, to our families and friends, and to several veterans who are on our staff. It became apparent after these discussions that new veterans are not terribly interested in taking over VVA in its present structure.

VVA is basically a century-old style of veterans organization. Like the Legion, the VFW, and other organizations created after World War I, we are based on membership dues, local chapters, state entities, and a national leadership in control. The newer organizations are often local and live on the Internet. They are usually run by Boards of both veterans and financial supporters. Interestingly, while the new veterans rely on email to communicate with each other, they still desire to get together in person.

While the newer veterans may not be interested in inheriting an older-model veterans organization, they do appreciate our government affairs/advocacy efforts and our veterans benefits program, and would like to see them continue. A new organization called Veterans Voices of America, which was founded by new veterans, including several VVA staff members, may be interested in eventually taking over these operations. If they are successful in getting off the ground, we may be able to entertain establishing a relationship with this new group to continue helping veterans, including us in our old age. One thing should be clear from our experience under the pandemic: It has highlighted our health concerns and limitations and the need to plan our future.

VVA SURVIVES

Our fundraising efforts have taken a big hit because of the lockdowns during the pandemic. As a result, we had to reduce our budget significantly. It's problematic to go anywhere, so it was not a big deal to eliminate our travel budget. However, we did have to eliminate a dozen staff. Thankfully, we were able to give them severance packages.

Thanks to the efforts of VP Burke and Treasurer Jack McManus, our assistant Contina Foster, and other staff members, we are reorganizing our staff, which will enable us to continue to serve veterans and their families.



(Continue on pg. 7)

(Continue from pg. 6)

Strong, Focused, and Recovering

Jack McManus – Treasurer

The VVA Board of Directors participated in a video conference on July 18. State Council presidents listened in to the dialogue about the events that have occurred since the last physical BOD meeting in January. Although this remote process did not allow the same level of interaction we've enjoyed in traditional BOD meetings, Board members had opportunities to ask questions and get clarifications to their and the state presidents' inquiries directly from the Officers.

Any time revenue is reduced at these levels there will be an impact on our ability to sustain programs and services. With that said, and even though we have approved a budget that reflects severe reductions in VVA's allocation of funds, an optimistic view looks out to 2021—a Convention year in which we would like to think it may be possible for our BOD and state presidents to again travel and provide in-person governance for VVA. But we all also understand that these are deeply uncertain times. A calamitous second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic or other major unforeseen economic disruption would, of course, alter our projections, which are still estimates based on a reasonable fiscal and funding recovery in the broader economy.

Given this indeterminate future, VVA is preparing for the worst as we hope for the best. In that regard—despite the precarious state of the nation's public health, as well as its economy—we expect that VVA will have adequate financial reserves to continue operating at its present level for several years.

Smaller, Leaner

While VVA is now a smaller, leaner organization, it's important that we consider this period to be a restructuring process to adapt our programs and services to the realities of a major downsizing. Will we be operating at the same levels as we did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? Definitely not, at least for the foreseeable future. However, a key factor in our budget decision making is that we are downsizing—not disappearing—despite the speculations of many. Where to make budget reductions is a contentious challenge. We all have our own ideas about where budget reductions should be made, depending on the programs and services we each feel deserve continued support. Our decision-making process has focused on VVA programs and services that are critical to our core purpose and mission. We will continue to support those programs and services at levels that allow us to remain a relevant VSO. To echo President John Rowan, VVA and (to our knowledge) AVVA are not changing names and are not going away.

Perhaps the most visible change can be seen in The VVA Veteran, which has moved from both print and online editions to an online-only version. Will a print edition ever return? Possibly. That is a future decision the BOD will make when we have a clearer understanding of what our budgets will look like in the future. A print version might return with a different design or size if that helps the publication be more revenue-neutral. Changes to our U.S. Postal Service bulk mail rates also will weigh heavily in this decision. Meanwhile, the editorial and writing staff has been very focused on maintaining the high quality of the content and articles.

One of VVA's largest cost centers is our Veterans Benefits Program, wherein we provide direct representation to veterans to gain health care and compensatory benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under this program we also provide operating grants, funded by the Veterans Support Foundation, to eligible state councils to help operate local service officer programs.

(Continue on pg. 8)

(Continue from pg. 7)

VSF is facing a funding challenge due to the pandemic's economic impact, complicated by the fact that some of our state council programs also are dealing with the realities of retiring service officers, coupled with the disappearance of matching local dollars. When any or all of these factors cause a VVA state council program to shut down, VVA has the legal and moral responsibility to handle affected veterans' VA claims, a task that mainly falls on our VVA national office staff.

The good news is that our latest estimates tell us that the reopening for our thrift store donors will allow a resumption of some level of funding to our eligible chapters and state councils in mid-October and continued funding of the participating state council VSO programs. Still, however the near future plays out economically, we are committed to supporting state council programs at existing levels regardless of outside funding. The economic benefit to the veterans we represent can have a major impact on them and their families, and knowing that VVA is standing by them in time of need is both invaluable to the veterans, and a binding commitment for VVA. We cannot, and will not, walk away from veterans, spouses, and family members we are committed to represent.

In other areas of VVA, our Government Affairs Program has been significantly downsized, including staff reductions. Despite fewer resources, Rick Weidman and Sharon Hodge, with assistance from Pete Peterson and his committee, continue to keep VVA legislative and regulatory issues out front on behalf of our members.

Our Membership Department, also downsized, continues to process new member applications, address changes, and many member inquiries, and also prepare chapter and election data and data reports. With staff reductions, and as we continue reorganization, we may change the frequency and methods of some of these activities.

Administrative services, including accounting functions, many communications channels, and the Veterans Health Council, continue to function at a high level and provide normal services to all VVA levels and members.

With every passing day it seems that the care and treatment of veterans comes under attack in some way—but VVA maintains a state of both vigilance and the willingness to respond to these challenges. Given the significant loss in talent and resources VVA has weathered in the last few months it cannot be expected that operations through this period of national crisis will be without snafus and problems. However, we can expect that the trust, flexibility, and enthusiasm from our chapters, state councils, committees, and Board of Directors, as well as the staff, will keep us strong, focused, and moving toward a national recovery.

While the economic collapse associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected VVA's programs and services in very significant ways, we are still here, and still doing our work serving veterans, and staying strong.

THE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 ISSUE OF THE VVA VETERAN

IS AVAILABLE ONLINE Go to VVA.org and link to Publication Send your E-mail to Editor of The VVA Veteran to receive automatic updates of publication.

(Continue from pg. 8)

National Hispanic Heritage Month

Minority Affairs Gumersindo Gomez – Chair

The Minority Affairs Committee would like to share with you an article that the VVA Veterans Benefits team put together concerning minority veterans. It has taken a pandemic, murders, riots, and looting to wake this country up to the issues that we have been dealing with for years.

A recent VVA press release condemned racism and recognized the plight of minority communities in the United States. Systemic racism continues to affect minority veterans, their VA benefits and health care. Minority veterans comprise 22 percent of the veteran population. Evidence shows that injustices occur both during and after their time in the military. Racial disparities in VA services are pervasive.

For example, although a majority of black veterans rate service-connection benefits as the most important measure in meeting their financial and health care needs, they remain disproportionately unaware of VA services. Surveys also indicate that minority veterans incur higher rates of exposure to combat and environmental hazards, such as Agent Orange. Furthermore, studies focused on veterans from the Vietnam War and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq show that black veterans suffer from PTSD at higher rates than their white counterparts but are less likely to be screened for it.

An increased probability of in-service disabilities and a lower likelihood of having health insurance substantiate a vital need for VA services for minority veterans. But black veterans still face disparities even after gaining access to the VA service-connection process. Studies show that when compared to other races, black veterans are significantly less likely to be granted favorable findings for PTSD service connection. Disparities in the claims development and decision process demonstrate unequal treatment and a need for more representation.

We believe that VVA is well equipped to use its resources to confront these disparities. The goal of VVA's Benefits Department is to make a significant impact on issues affecting minority veterans, as well as to provide leadership for other service organizations. Accordingly, the Veterans Benefits team proposes the following:

VVA should conduct a statistical analysis of client representation to ensure VVA is proportionally representing minorities.

VVA should urge the VA to conduct its own systematic review of disparities in service-connection decisions and failures to provide education on available benefits.

VVA should increase outreach and education programs in minority communities.

VVA should implement sensitivity training among VSOs who frequently engage with members of the minority community.

VVA is the lead organization for Vietnam veterans' issues and, as such, is uniquely qualified to be a catalyst for progress in racial disparities among veterans. During the Vietnam War the country witnessed racially charged sentiments stemming from the Civil Rights movement. VVA's founding principle, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another," should guide VVA to be a leader in implementing change.

The Minority Affairs Committee would like to thank Felicia Mullaney, the director of VVA's Benefits Program, and her team for writing this article.

Reprint form VVA Veteran September/October 2020

(Continue on pg. 11)

VAVS Committee Report

Danny Friedman

Besides Brooklyn, I've only received reports from Big Joe who sits on the Northport VAMC VAVS Committee. Northport holds monthly meetings with their VAVS Representatives, while Brooklyn VAMC holds them quarterly. Both are held via WebEx. There are no in-person meetings at either location. Both locations are slowly resuming in-person appointments and procedures. Neither location has reopened their homeless veterans' domiciliary.

As part of the Mission Act, the VA is implementing wide-spread education concerning their Caregiver Support Program (see attachment). This program, in certain instances, can provide support on several levels, including financial support, to the caregivers of service disabled veterans. The program has been expanded to include Vietnam Veterans.

I hope to receive reports from other VAVS Representatives out there.

Program of General Caregiver Support Services = Fact Sheet

The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) empowers caregivers with a wide range of resources through the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS). All caregivers who provide personal care services to Veterans enrolled in Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare have access to PGCSS.

Program features Caregivers who enroll in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers (VAMCs). In addition, caregivers can participate in support services and take advantage of VA home and community based care.

Education and training Education and training are available to caregivers in a variety of formats to help them care for themselves and the Veteran, including:

- Workshops and courses o Building Better Caregivers (BBC) provides a free, six week online workshop that helps caregivers provide better care to the Veteran and learn how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health.

- o Self-care worksheets and daily attention diaries are available on CSP's Self-Care Activities webpage. Caregivers also have access to self-care courses at local VAMCs. To learn more about VAMC self-care courses, contact your local Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC)

- Videos o Office of Rural Health Dementia Series offers a two series education video for caregivers of Veterans diagnosed with dementia. Your local CSC can help you access CSP's Tips and Tools webpage to learn more.

- o Financial management videos assist caregivers with budgeting and planning. Your local CSC can assist you in accessing videos on CSP's Caring for Your Finances webpage.

- Self-guided material is available on CSP's Tips and Tools webpage including:

- o Managing medicines o Talking with your provider

- o Caring for oneself o Caring for your finances o Plan ahead for disasters o Emergency preparedness

(Continue on pg. 11)

(Continue from pg. 10)

- Group educational calls are offered monthly by the Caregiver Support Line. During the call, caregivers can discuss self-care tips and ask questions on a variety of topics. Past presentations are also made available to Caregivers. Support services Caregivers can receive wrap-around support from both the VA and the community through the support services listed below. Learn more by contacting your local CSC, or calling the Caregiver Support Line.

- Peer Support Mentoring provides an opportunity for caregivers to receive guidance and share their experiences. Mentors and mentees communicate regularly for at least six months through email, telephone, face-to-face meetings, and letters.

- Compassionate Connections offers one-time sessions with experienced mentors for caregivers who are not ready or able to commit to a long-term mentoring relationship.

- Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA provides education, a focus on safety for the patient, and support for the caregiver through individualized sessions over the course of two to three months. Sessions may be held face-to-face, over the telephone, or over telehealth video conferencing. Home and Community Based Care Below are home and community-based services available through VA to support eligible Veterans and their caregivers. Caregivers who are interested in learning about these services should contact their local CSC for more information. Caregivers can also learn more about the following options on the VA In-Home and Services webpage:

- Respite care
- Home telehealth
- Home-based primary care
- Homemaker and home health aides
- Adult day health care centers
- Remote monitoring care
- Skilled home care
- Home hospice care

Steps for enrollment No formal application is required to enroll in PGCSS. • Contact the Northport VA Caregiver Support Program at (631) 261-4400, extension 6034 or 6973. • Complete a brief intake process. • If eligible, enroll in services that meet your needs.

Information and resources CSCs are available at each VAMC to help caregivers find the right support to meet their needs and to enroll in PGCSS. Caregivers can find their local CSC by using this locator tool. VA's CSL serves as a primary resource and referral center to assist caregivers and Veterans seeking caregiver information. The CSL can also assist with PGCSS enrollment. Caregivers can contact the CSL at 1-855-260-3274 (Toll Free Monday– Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST). Online assistance is available on CSP website. Caregivers can find numerous resources, including tips and tools, self-care guidance, educational publications, frequently asked questions, fact sheets, and more. Many online resources are open to the general public and do not require PGCSS enrollment for access. VA's Annie Caregiver Text Program is a text-messaging based service that promotes self-care for managing day-to-day stress. Contact your CSC if you would like to receive messages from Annie.

Legislative Issues: Danny Friedman has informed us that Congressman Max Rose will soon be introduced specifically seeking to add disabled veterans, regardless of vehicle occupants, to the list of exceptions for HOV lanes under federal law—this would work to prevent reduction of federal funding if states/cities pass legislation to allow disabled vets HOV access with only one vehicle occupant.

REGION II Report New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware

Ted Wilkinson—Director

What is this pandemic? It is just another hurdle for the members and another challenge for the chapters of Region 2.

Our chapters and state councils have met the challenge in many ways. In the last six months we have gained 109 new members in the Region; have held meetings and elections in parking lots and via Zoom; and I have attended the National Board meeting via RingCentral.

Chapter food pantries have been very busy; chapters have had barbeques, golf outings; and drive-thru hot dog sales.

I have stayed in contact with all four states by telephone.

VVA sent the chapters a Coronavirus Impact Survey a few months ago, and we received replies from 20 chapters in Region 2.

Question 1: How is your chapter functioning with social distance and stay-at-home requirements?

Half the chapters had no meetings in person or virtual ones, and had no plans to resume meetings. In a recent follow-up, everyone I contacted told me they are meeting with minor changes or just starting to resume.

Question 2: With coronavirus restrictions on members, what is the chapter expecting for future member participation?

Sixty percent anticipated some short-term changes and expected members would once again participate as they had before. Forty percent are struggling to get members to participate, but believe they will slowly return to previous activity levels. In a recent follow-up, everyone said there is a little improvement, but they are hoping for more.

Question 3: How have the impacts of the coronavirus affected chapter financial stability?

Half said there were no significant changes and future funding sources appeared stable; 25 percent reported short-term money challenges but expect to improve in time; 25 percent are struggling to overcome the challenges of raising money and believe finances will slowly improve. In my follow-up, I found that nothing has changed.

Question 4: Do you believe that changes in our lifestyles because of the coronavirus have created a long-term threat to your chapter's ability to remain active in your community and to be fiscally stable?

(Continue on pg.. 13)

(Continue on pg. 12)

Thirty percent said that there were few impacts from the coronavirus and VVA's financial reverses. Fifty percent said that their chapters are struggling to recover, but we will overcome the challenges and remain viable. Twenty percent said they believed their chapters will have a very difficult time getting members to participate in activities and regaining the financial capability to remain active. In a follow-up, most believed that some members will be affected in some way.

POW/MIA—Veterans Initiative Program Report

Grant T. Coates—Chair

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced on July 14 that U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alva R. Krogman, 25, who was killed during the Vietnam War, had been accounted for the preceding week.

On January 17, 1967, Krogman was a pilot assigned to the 504th Tactical Air Support Group, 7th Air Force, on temporary duty with the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron operating out of Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base. That morning he was flying an O-1 Birdog aircraft as one of two planes conducting a visual reconnaissance mission in Savannakhet Province, Laos. At approximately 8:55 a.m., Krogman's aircraft was hit by enemy fire and went down. Search and rescue operations began immediately, but ended within a few hours after one of the search and rescue aircraft also was shot down.

Krogman was not recovered; he was declared killed in action on January 31, 1967.

DPAA reports that as of August 10, there remain 1,586 missing from the Vietnam War. That includes Vietnam-1,246 (North Vietnam-443, South Vietnam-803), Laos-285, Cambodia-48, and China-7

A total of 997 Americans have been accounted for since April 30, 1975, the end of the Vietnam War. Recoveries were made in Vietnam-672, Laos-280, Cambodia-42, and China-3. In addition, 63 U.S. personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975 in Laos-9, Vietnam-53, and Cambodia-1. The grand total is 1,060.

Due to COVID-19 health issues, DPAA has not conducted field activities or disinterments since late March. The last deployed team was brought home on March 21. Unilateral operations in Vietnam began on July 21 using Vietnamese recovery teams.

Operations in Laos will resume September 1 and run through October 15, but only if entry and health restrictions lift.

June 25 marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. The Republic of Korea held a Repatriation Ceremony in Seoul for 147 remains. Korea's Ministry of National Defense Agency for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification was able to identify eight Korean soldiers through DNA. The agency also turned over to the United Nations Command six recovered U.S. remains.

July 11 was the 25th anniversary of the reestablishment of U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic relations.

(Continue on pg. 14)

(Continue from pg. 13)

The USS Oklahoma Project has made 255 identifications, with 25 more in final preparation. Efforts are being made to complete the project in the next several months. DPAA is helping U.S. Navy genealogical teams locate families to collect Family Reference Samples, which have contributed to several additional identifications.

DPAA unveiled the 2020 POW/MIA Recognition Day poster during a ceremony at its Washington, D.C., headquarters July 24. The poster can be ordered at the DPAA website.

VVA's Veterans Initiative Program needs your help. Objects taken from the battlefields of Vietnam are more than souvenirs or war trophies. Maps, after-action reports, pictures, and other military items may have stories that could help locate missing war dead. Contact the Veterans Initiative at:

*Veterans Initiative Program
Vietnam Veterans of America
8719 Colesville Rd., Suite 100
Silver Spring, MD 20910
vi@vva.org*

VVA Chapter #333

Roy Tschudy

Greetings to all from Chapter 333 in Rockland County!

As with many if not all of the chapters across the Country, Chapter 333 has been subject to to both loss along with hope moving forward.

On the matter of loss, Chapter 333 recently mourned the passing of a long time member and past board member Gene Sullivan. Gene was loved and respected by all who knew him, our thoughts and prayers for Gene and his family will always be ever present.

During the month of May under the direction of past President Jim Hennessy and myself, protective masks under Covid regulations was purchased and distributed to the members. This was accomplished via a coordinated effort and performed under strict guidelines imposed by the both of us. The need and want to ensure our members would be offered protective equipment during this crisis was our number one concern. Mission accomplished!

In addition during the month of May, Chapter 333 has continued on with our HANDCYCLE, SPORTS ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM as we purchased and then donated a special Mountain Bike for an Airforce Sgt. who unfortunately is suffering with brain cancer caused by the burn pits in Afghanistan. This particular program began in 2013 under the leadership of chapter member Marcus Arroyo and myself, to date we have purchased 14 Hand cycles for disabled veterans with either leg amputations and or spinal cord

(Continue on pg. 15)

(Continue from pg. 14)

injuries. The program expanded to include those who have suffered T.B.I. and P.T.S.D.

Inclusive of the Handcycles, other items purchased have been Mountain bikes, an Outrigger Canoe, Trike bikes, kayaks along with special gear to provide safety for the veterans. I would be remiss if I did not state that without the assistance and input from nearly all Chapter members who at one time or other has contributed their personal time and finance at fund raisers, we would not enjoy the success to date. Recipients have been throughout the entire Country from N.Y. to Alabama, Vermont, Florida and California, we are an equal opportunity care giving Chapter and humbled to do so.

Chapter 333 endeavors to continue on with our Scholarships to College students whose parents, and now for the most part are Grandparents and members of Chapter 333, a \$5,000 award divided by two. Students must submit written request as per the guidelines set forth by the Scholarship Committee. In the month of August our Chapter selected two students for such award, due to the Covid restrictions a mailing with a letter and certificate was sent to both. As mentioned earlier on the passing of member Gene Sullivan, our PATRIOTIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD was renamed to THE GENE SULLIVAN COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD. This annual \$500.00 award is for a Middle or High School student who has demonstrated his/her assistance and or patriotism via school activities or otherwise for veterans.

Our chapter has set in motion a chapter phone chain for emergency purposes, as often happens there are times when membership needs to be alerted swiftly and emails will not suffice in time. We have also now set up via a purchase during this pandemic crisis a ZOOM account, hopefully this will enable some who cannot make a monthly chapter meeting the chance to participate from the safety of their home.

At our monthly chapter meetings we are fortunate that past president Al Dagistino is a founding member and is our chapter historian. Al provides us with the stories of events from years gone by along with veterans who have either moved away or have passed on.

Our school program MEMORIES OF THE WALL led by Howard Goldin and Ed Frank both past presidents, have sadly been curtailed during this crisis. It is our hope that this vital and informational program will be able to be invoked soon as we are the living history of Vietnam.

Recently, as president I applied for and have received a \$1,200 Grant from the County of Rockland for our chapter, thanks again to Howard and Ed for the heads up on this allowance. Our chapter meetings always begin with the Pledge, our love of God and Country will never be questioned! We move on to the POW/MIA PRAYER and then a moment of silence for those who have gone before us and those who still serve and protect today. I then ask all past presidents to stand and be recognized for their work and sacrifice on behalf of chapter 333, finally, I ask our unofficial chapter photographer Cliff Fromm and joke teller to regale all of us with one of his funny ditties. Cliff is not shy by any means and always provides us with a smile and laugh, something all of us can use during these times. After Cliff, it's on to business as I assume, all the rest of our state chapters do also. Stay well, stay safe!



(Continue from pg. 15)

Thank you for attending the Chapters monthly meeting last night, for those who could not attend please know that you never need to offer an excuse or an explanation. There are some in the chapter who have underlying health conditions, the need and prudent avenue to take for them is to remain home in a safe environment. As you should be aware by now, our chapter does own a ZOOM account for such a necessity. However, it is up to each of you to accept the invitation sent in an email form. Secretary John Leighton did send the LINK to our ZOOM meeting to many if not all of the regular members this past week.

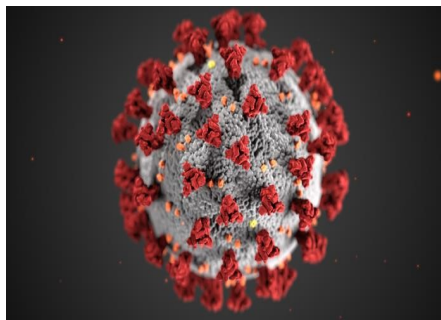
We realize that at the inception a few "bugs" may need to be worked out and we will rectify or try to as we move along on this, the need for all of us to remain in touch along with inclusion for chapter information should be a priority for our chapters continued growth. One of the items we spoke on was the request for our members to send a picture (photograph) from the time and area each has served in our military span. Our Webmaster Bob Taylor (veteran@vva333.com) stated last evening he has received only 5 pictures to date.

Putting off for tomorrow what can be done today leads to yet another day down the road followed by another day and so on, it really takes little effort and time to do so. Our historian Al Dagistino provided us with interesting information on the origins of chapter 333 along with the original plaque with the names of the chapter founders. A photo was taken by Cliff Fromm (Who better) of both Al and Lee Pelton who by the way can still recall what type of food was served that night!

Additionally, 2nd V.P. Don Pillar delivered valued information on Hepatitis C, any one wishing to learn more on Don's speech can do so by contacting him at

(weaselbait1966@gmail) A very nice piece of information on POW/MIA was also delivered by Paul Matern especially reading a detailed OPED letter written in response to an individual questioning the meaning of said flag.

The next Chapter 333 Board Meeting will be held at K&E on Thursday October 29th 7:30 PM, if any member wishes to attend with an agenda on which to direct to the board you are welcome to do so. Please keep in mind that directly after you do so, it is in the BY Laws that you may NOT remain for the entirety of said meeting. Our next monthly chapter meeting will be on November 5th again at K&E 7:30 PM. Remaining in effect until further notice will be SOCIAL DISTANCING, WEARING OF FACE MASKS (PROPERLY!!!) AND CLEANING OF OUR OWN PERSONAL SEATING AREA! Unfortunately, there will continue to be NO FOOD AND BEVERAGE UNTIL IT IS DEEMED SAFE TO DO SO. When we receive clearance to do so, both will be available prior to the start of the chapter meeting as I do not wish "US" older gentleman to chow down later in the evening for digestive purposes. Stay well, stay safe!



When you are over 70, who cares

I was standing at the bar one night minding my own business. This fat ugly chick came up behind me, grabbed my behind and said, You're kinda cute. You gotta phone number?"

I said, "Yeah, you gotta pen?" She said, "Yeah, I got a pen"

I said, "You better ha back in it before the farmer misses you."

Cost me 6 stitches...but, When you're over seventy.....who cares?

I went to the drug store and told the clerk "Give me 3 packets of condoms, please."

Lady Clerk: "Do you need a paper bag with that, sir? I said "Nah... She's purty good lookin'....." When you're over seventy.....who cares?

I was talking to a young woman in the VFW last night. She said, "If you lost a few pounds, had a shave and got your hair cut, you'd look all right. I said, If I did that, I'd be talking to your friends over there instead of you.

Cost me a fat lip, but, When you're over seventy.....who cares?

I was telling a woman in the Club about my ability to guess what day a woman was born just by feeling her breasts.

"Really" she said, "Go on then. try."

After about thirty seconds of fondling she began to lose patience and said,

"Come on, what day was I born? I said, "Yesterday."

Cost me a kick in the nuts, but, When you're over seventy.....who cares?

I went my favorite bar last night and saw a BIG woman dancing on a table.

I said, "Good legs" The woman giggled and said, "Do you really think so?"

I said, "Definitely! Most tables would have collapsed by now." When you're over seventy.....who cares?

Editor's Note: Needed to fill the empty pages that I had because someone did not send in their reports!
Thanks Roy!

STAY HOME

STOP THE SPREAD

SAVE LIVES

The Meaning of the Flag-Draped Coffin

Thanks to VP Roy Tschudy from Chapter #333

Here is how to understand the flag that laid upon it & is surrendered to so many widows and widowers: Do you know that at military funerals, the 21-gun salute stands for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776?

Have you ever noticed that the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the United States of America Flag 13 times?

You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

The 1st fold of the flag is a symbol of life.

The 2nd fold is a symbol of the belief in eternal life.

The 3rd fold is made in honor, and remembrance of the veteran's departing the ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of the country to attain peace throughout the world.

The 4th fold represents the weaker nature, for as American citizen's trusting in God, it's to Him we turn in times of peace, as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The 5th fold is a tribute to the country, for in the word's of Stephen Decatur, 'Our Country in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it's still our country, right or wrong.'

The 6th fold is for where people's hearts lie. It's with their heart that they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, & the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty & Justice for all.

The 7th fold is a tribute to its Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that they protect their country, and their flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within, or without the boundaries of their republic.

The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

The 9th fold is a tribute to woman-hood, & Mother's. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men, and women who've made this country great has been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his son's, & daughter's, for the defense of their country, since they were first born.

The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David, and King Solomon, and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity, and glorifies, in the Christian's eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Continue on pg. 19)

(Continue from pg. 18)

The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the star's are upper-most reminding them, of their Nation's motto, 'In God We Trust.'

After the flag's completely folded & tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailor's, and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades & shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for them the rights, privileges & freedoms they enjoy today.

There're some traditions & ways of doing things that have deep meaning. In the future, you will see flags folded, & now you'll know why.

Please share this with the children you love, and all others who love what is referred to as the symbol of 'Liberty and Freedom.'

Western District Report

Mike Walker

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

Western New York like the rest of the state is still kind of locked down, but that didn't stop a few chapters to get things down,

Chapter 77 had a under the stars meeting. They held it behind where they usually have their meetings only this time you had to bring your own seat. Elections were held and they now have a new president.

They also did two fund raisers. One was a fill the helmet. They social distance with the people in the cars.

They also did a chicken dinner. Only drive thru and sold 500 dinners in 3 hours.

Chapter 865 held elections, they limited the number of members they would allow in their meeting hall, let them vote and change.

Chapter 268 held elections at a park in Lockport. Like Chapter 77 it was a bring your own chair meeting.

I hope to get out to the chapters when they start regular meetings.

VVA Chapter #978 - David L. Woodburn, Chapter 978 Frewsburg, New York.

Calvin Fain – President

This has been one heck of a year between quarantines, social distancing and any other restrictions put

Continue on pg. 20)

(Continue from pg. 19)

upon us here in New York. Even though it has been a long run we have still kept in contact with our members and help them in any way possible.

As of August we started having meetings and getting things organize again.

Our local charities are still holding on and will just started donation to them again. One is the UCAN (United Christian Advocate Network). This facility provides shelter and food for the many homeless veterans in our area. We have sponsored a room for veterans only, unless the use is needed do to homeless individuals.

The holidays are starting to come and each year we assist our Blue Star Mothers with items, packing and postage. However this year we are uncertain the traditional Christmas packages will be shipped do to COVID.

Last but not lease we lost one of our loyal and dedicated members Jim Shoemaker, may you no longer suffer do to Agent Orange. R.I.P.

Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

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

VVA Chapter #32 Report

Remembrance Photos of some of their activities: All photos by Chapter member Michael O'Kane

Chapter has done many activities within their community throughout the year, hosting Holiday parties, picnics and family events for veterans at St. Albans Medical Center and Nursing Home.



VVA Chapter #32 marching proudly at the Maspeth, NY Memorial Day Parade

(Continue on pg. 21)

(Continue from pg. 20)



VVA Chapter #32 at Calverton National Cemetery
Burying one of over 100 Unclaimed Veterans from
Queen, NY

VVA Chapter #32 during one of many
Legislative visit in Albany, NY

Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Albany,
NY



Vietnam Veteran Travelling Wall in Maspeth, NY
Sponsor by VVA Chapter #32 – Queens, NY

(Continue on pg. 22)

(Continue from pg. 21)



Francisco Muñiz III, Editor of VVANYSC Interchange
Receiving VVANYSC Newspaper Award for the
Interchange/Ned Foote, President of VVANYSC with
VVANYSC Web site award at the National Convention

(L-R) Former Chapter #32 deceased
President Pat Toro,
Region II Director – Ted Wilkinson,
VVANYSC President Ned Foote, South-
ern District Director Joe Ingino at a
VVA Convention—They are all thinking
Who should we vote for at this Conven-
tion!



VVA Chapter #72 Report

Danny Friedman – President

VVA Chapter 72 has been very active this summer in spite of COVID-19.

Although we have not had any in-person meetings, we have continued to have Board and General Meetings via Zoom. We had up to 19 members on a Zoom call. This is down from the 25-30 members we would normally have but we are staying in touch with our members on a regular basis via Email and our monthly newsletters,

We were honored to have NYS Council President, Ned Foote join us for our September Zoom meeting.

We have also maintained our close relationship with the Brooklyn VAMC. Throughout the COVID-19 emergency we provided meals to the VAMC medical staff every other Friday.

Now that the VAMC has begun to resume normal functions, we have provided a pizza party for the substance rehab ward, 15-West. We also purchased \$512.00 worth of sweat pants and underwear for these veterans.

Our partnership with the Super Kids Soapbox Derby, and John Dewey High School Robotics Department
(Continue on pg. 23)

(Continue on pg. 22)

has been on hold until normal activities can resume in NYC public schools.

We have already acquired the blueprints and purchased the hardware so we are ready to go and sponsor two cars. As winter nears we are closely monitoring the status of the VAMC's homeless veterans' residence which was vacated during the COVID-19 emergency.

We will work with VAMC staff to provide clothing and pizza parties once it is repopulated.

VVA Chapter #82 Report

Richard Guevara – Vice President

During the COVID-19 pandemic, with some exceptions, Chapter 82 events were cancelled or postponed until it was safe for our membership and the general public to assemble safely. This directive was in accordance with the guidelines established by the State of New York.

At the beginning of May at a virtual showing, chapter 82 presented a plaque to an ROTC Cadet from Hofstra for his accomplishment.

On May 25th several members of Chapter 82 participated in Nassau County's Memorial Day Car Parade.

On Memorial Day Chapter 82 presented a wreath at a virtual Memorial Day Ceremony in Hicksville.

Chapter 82 resumed limited activities in September with a board meeting held on September 1st and a general meeting on September 15th following the safety guidelines established by the State of New York. These two meetings were our first since February 2020, the start of the pandemic.

On September 18th Chapter 82 participated in the Nassau County POW/MIA Night Vigil Remembrance Ceremony. Three of our members (Bob Chiappone, Bob Selby and Rich Guevara) read the names of the POW/MIA's from Nassau County. Paul Masi was the Sergeant-at-Arms for the entire ceremony.





VVA Chapter #82 Paul Masi as
Sergeant at Arms for POW/MIA Vigil

VVA Chapter #82 members attending Membership meeting under strict Covid—19 rules of temperature, social distancing, and no food!



Special Recognition of the son of deceased member Vincent Dueñas:

2020 Latino National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders

Vincent "Vinny" Dueñas shared a post: It is an absolute honor to have been named a Latino Next Generation National Security & Foreign Policy Leader by New America & Diversity in National Security Network! I am humbled to be included among fellow honorees here: <https://lnkd.in/d4PtXd9>.

This important initiative first began with the call of "Bringing More Diversity to the National Security Arena" (<https://lnkd.in/dEK6VPE>) Jayson Browder Mariana Cruz-Muñoz Juan Sebastian Gonzalez Rolando Velasquez Agustin "Augie" Dominguez Fabiana Sofia Perera David M. Kristin White #NextGenNatSec #LaLista #HispanicHeritageMonth #nationalsecurity

Major Vincent "Vinny" Dueñas is a Foreign Area Officer (FAO) with experience as the Chief of the Commander's Action Group and Executive Officer for the Inter-American Defense College. Previously, he was a Politico-Military Affairs Officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was the Deputy Army Section Chief in Chile. Before serving as an FAO, Vinny was a Signal Officer, commanding in Fort Bragg and deploying with the 101st Airborne Division o Afghanistan. Prior to

(Continue on pg. 25)

(Continue from pg. 24)

that, he was a Cavalry Platoon Leader in combat in Afghanistan with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Vinny graduated from Adelphi University and commissioned from Hofstra University in New York. He earned a master's degree in International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Vinny is a Council on Foreign Relations Term Member, a Milken Institute Military Leadership Circle member, and is on the editorial board of the FAO Association Journal. He writes about Latin America and national security topics.

Major Vincent Dueñas is the son of deceased VVA Chapter #82 member: Vincent Dueñas who was the printer for the LZ-Nassau Newsletter. Vinny, when he was young, used to play the drum to keep cadence when the Chapter marched in parades in Nassau County. Graduate of Kellenberg Memorial HS, Adelphi University (BA), Hofstra University (Reserve officer Training Corps), Armor Officer Basic Course, Signal Captain's Career Course, Defense Language Institute, John Hopkins University (MA), International Studies, Deputy Army Section Chief, Office of Security US Embassy, Chile, served in Afghanistan as Battalion Signal Officer. He is still an active military officer working out of Washington, DC.

Government Affairs Report

Joe Ingino – Chair

SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING TO CONSIDER PENDING LEGISLATION

1. S. 3282 (Cassidy/Tester) Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2020
2. S. 2558 (Sinema/Cramer) Nursing Home Care for Native American Veterans Act; A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain grants to assist nursing homes for veterans located on tribal lands.
3. S. 3643 (Loeffler/Sinema/Blackburn) VA Mission Telehealth Clarification Act
4. S.2950 (Sullivan/Manchin/Tillis/Rounds/Boozman) Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2019 (Committee Print); A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to concede exposure to airborne hazards and toxins from burn pits under certain circumstances, and for other purposes.
5. S. 4384 (Sullivan/Blumenthal) K2 Toxic Exposure Study; A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to address exposure by members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan, and for other purposes.
6. S. 4393 (Tillis) Toxic Exposure in the American Military Act of 2020 (Committee Print); A bill to improve the provision of health care and other benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes.
7. S. 711 (Tester/Moran) CARE for Reservists Act of 2019
8. S. 332 (Blumenthal) Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act of 2019 (Committee Print); A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to remove the manifestation period required for the presumptions of service connection for chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents, and for other purposes. **VVA AO-17 Convention Resolution.**

(Continue on pg. 26)

(Continue from pg. 25)

9. S. 805 (Tester/Boozman/Brown/Blumenthal) Veterans Debt Fairness Act (Committee Print); A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing of veterans benefits by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to limit the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recover overpayments made by the Department and other amounts owed by veterans to the United States, to improve the due process accorded veterans with respect to such recovery, and for other purposes.

10. S. 514 (Tester/Boozman) The Deborah Sampson Act (Committee Print)

11. S. 629 (Tester/Murray/Blumenthal/Brown) Accountability in Department of Veterans Affairs Scheduling and Consult Management Act (Committee Print)

12. S. 2216 (Peters/Blackburn) TEAM Veteran Caregiver Act (Committee Print); A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for caregiver programs, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes.

13. S. ____ (Moran/Tester/Boozman/Rounds/Sinema/Tillis/Daines/Peters/Wyden/ Lankford/Carper) Veteran Benefits Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2020

14. S. 3235 (McSally/Kaine) Veterans Posttraumatic Growth Act

ASK YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO SUPPORT TESTER/HARDER AMENDMENT IN THE FY2021 NATIONAL DEFENSE

The House and Senate Armed Services committee will soon meet to reconcile legislative differences in the House (H.R. 6395) and Senate (S.4049) version of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recently passed in both chambers.

Vietnam Veterans of America joins Congressman Josh Harder (D-10th-CA) in his push to conferees--the Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman, Armed Services Committee; Mac Thornberry, Ranking member, House Armed Services Committee; Senator James Inhofe, Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee; and Jack Reed, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee--to retain the bipartisan Harder/Tester amendment that would add three diseases, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism as service-connected conditions.

Each of these diseases has met the scientific threshold of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, to be credibly linked to Agent Orange. What remains is the addition of these conditions to the list of Agent Orange-presumptive diseases.

Our Vietnam veterans should not have to wait any longer for the recognition they deserve and the benefits they are owed.

Leave No Veteran Behind the Mission Continues America's [Aging Veteran Population and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Vietnam Veterans of America release the report, America's Aging Veteran Population and the COVID-19 Pandemic, the findings of a five-month-long investigation into the circumstances contributing to the over 1,011 fatalities in 47 State Veterans Homes. <https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL-SAVE-REPORT.pdf>

(Continue from pg. 26)

House Committee on Veterans Affairs

Veterans see delays in mailed ordered medication Congress steps in

Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers in Urging a Swift Solution to Delayed Delivery of Veterans' Prescription Drugs Operational Changes at USPS Delaying Delivery of Critical Medications

<https://veterans.house.gov/news/press-releases/chairs-defazio-takano-lead-bipartisan-group-of-lawmakers-in-urging-a-swift-solution-to-delayed-delivery-of-veterans-prescription-drugs>

Veterans bills signed into law

PL 116-154 - H.R.3504 - Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019

PL 116-155 - H.R.4920 - Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020

PL 116-153 - H.R.886 - Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Act of 2019

PL 116-146 - S.3084 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the limitation on pay for certain high-level employees and officers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

PL 116-140 - H.R.6322 - Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020

PL 116-137- H.R.4771 - VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act

PL 116-134 - S.760 - Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019

PL 116-128- S.3503 - A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to treat certain programs of education converted to distance learning by reason of emergencies and health-related situations in the same manner as programs of education pursued at educational institutions.

PL 116-120 - H.J.Res.80 - Approving the request of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a waiver under section 1703E(f) of title 38, United States Code.

VVA News Updates

Senators Push to Extend Care to 34,000 More Veterans for Agent Orange Diseases

Military.com | By [Patricia Kime](#)

Senators have ramped up efforts to add three new diseases to the [Department of Veterans Affairs'](#) list of Agent Orange-related diseases, pressing the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to include them in the final version of the national defense policy bill.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and 45 other senators sent letters Tuesday to leaders of the committees, imploring them to amend the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the VA's list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere.

House Approves Bill Ordering VA to Change Gender-Exclusive Motto

Stars and Stripes | By [Nikki Wentling](#)

WASHINGTON — The House passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to change the Department of Veterans Affairs motto to be more inclusive of women who served.

The VA motto, which has been the same for 61 years, is a quote from President Abraham Lincoln's second

(Continue from pg. 27)

inaugural address in 1865: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

The Honoring All Veterans Act would change the motto to read, "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

The House approved the bill Tuesday without objection. It was sponsored by Reps. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., and Brian Mast, R-Fla., and gained the support of Republican members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

VA completes digitization of archived Vietnam-era deck logs From Danny Friedman

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today completion of an interagency effort with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to digitize declassified deck logs to process claims faster for eligible Vietnam-era Veterans.

This enables expedited disability claims for Blue Water Navy Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today completion of an interagency effort with the [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) to digitize declassified deck logs to process claims faster for eligible Vietnam-era Veterans.

The [U.S. Navy](#) and [Coast Guard](#) deck logs within NARA contain helpful information being used to validate claims for [Blue Water Navy \(BWN\) Veterans](#) who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, to establish presumption to herbicide exposure for service-connected disability benefits.

"The team at NARA recognizes the importance of this effort making it easier for BWN Veterans to receive the benefits they've earned without burdening them with paperwork," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Since January 1, VA has processed thousands of claims and encourages every Veteran, dependent and surviving spouse who is eligible to file a claim as soon as possible."

Data contained in deck logs is used when deciding VA benefit claims. Also known as ship logs or captain's logs, information was manually inputted to chronologically document the daily activities of a navy ship or unit.

VA provided the digital images of deck logs to NARA, available in the [National Archives Catalog](#).

"Through this scanning project, VA contractors digitized declassified Navy and Coast Guard deck logs from 1956-1978 in NARA's holdings, including the log of the hospital ship USS Sanctuary which I served aboard during the Vietnam conflict," said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero. "As a Veteran from this era, I recognize the unprecedented value this provides to Veterans making these logs easily accessible online."

Digitization of all available Navy deck logs for ships that served in Vietnam were completed in Decem-

(Continue on pg. 29)

(Continue from pg. 28)

ber 2019, while Coast Guard deck logs were completed in September.

Veterans, dependents and surviving spouses may contact approved [Veterans Service Organizations](#) for assistance in filling a claim. Learn more about [Agent Orange](#) or call 800-827-1000 for more information.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law by President Trump June 25, 2019 and effective January 1, extends the presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with herbicide exposure. To date, VA has collectively awarded \$641 million to more than 22,524 Blue Water Navy Veterans or survivors.

Vietnam Veterans of America and Campaign Endorsements

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

"The federal tax code is very clear in this regard and any implication of improper activities could cause us to lose our tax exemption and not-for-profit status. As long as no VVA endorsement of a political candidate is given or implied, individual VVA members are encouraged to participate in the political process. As private citizens, we have every right to do so," said Rowan.

Vietnam Veterans of America, founded in 1978, was formed in large part to fight for and affect laws and policies to ensure that Vietnam veterans receive the help they have earned and need. With chapters and state councils nationwide, VVA is the only congressionally chartered national Vietnam veterans organization exclusively comprised of Vietnam-era veterans. VVA's commitment to all veterans is exemplified in its founding principle, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another," and continues to maintain advocacy in the veterans affairs arena as its top priority.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

The Service Women's Dispatch

Updating the SEAL Ethos with Gender-Neutral Language

Unit's major commanders and command master chiefs were in favor that it was time of updating the SEAL ethos with gender-neutral language. According to Lt. Cmdr. Mathew Stroup, a spokesman for the Naval Special Warfare Command, "the previous versions of the SEAL Ethos and SWCC Creed were written prior to the law allowing women to serve as operators in the Naval Special Warfare."

The SWCC creed which originally mentioned an "elite brotherhood of sailors" was changed to an **"elite group of maritime warriors."** The changes will ensure that all those who meet the

(Continue on pg. 30)

(Continue from pg. 29)

requirements to train to become a SEAL or SWCC are represented in the ethos or creed they live out. Lt. Cmdr. Stoup states, that this improves the posture of the naval special warfare force by ensuring they draw from the greatest pool of talent available.

[Paul Szoldraw from Task & Purpose](#), clarifies the importance of the update of the SEAL ethos with gender-neutral language by mentioning how there has yet had a female SEAL or special warfare combatant crewman, though a handful of women have attempted training since ground combat restrictions were lifted in 2016.

Advocates: Military veterans face unique stresses from pandemic

By Michael Gormley

Some veterans of wars from Vietnam to Iraq face unique underlying illnesses exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis that are pushing some to suicide, yet their plight has been little noticed during the pandemic, advocates for veterans told a legislative hearing Friday.

“Veterans have been placed in peril,” said Thomas Ronayne, director of the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency and a disabled Navy veteran. He praised the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook University for “exceptional professionalism,” but said that COVID-19 also took a toll in the 350-bed facility.

“We have lost 88 veterans in the facility to COVID,” Ronayne said. “That’s just a horrific number.”

Removal of flag honoring veterans from White House sparks anger

ALEXANDRA ALPER AND IDREES ALI

Sep 11th 2020 8:00AM

(Reuters) - A decision by the Trump administration earlier this year to move the flag honoring missing war veterans from a prominent position atop the White House to a less visible spot on the South Lawn has angered some veterans and lawmakers, who see it as disrespectful and potentially illegal.

The flag is dedicated to prisoners of war and service members who are missing in action. According to a White House video posted in June, it was relocated in a private ceremony with full military honors, months after President Donald Trump signed into law a bill requiring the flag to be flown at certain federal sites including the White House every day.

The revelations come amid growing questions over Trump's respect for the military, after a report last week by the Atlantic magazine alleging that Trump had called fallen American soldiers "losers" and "suckers" sparked outrage and controversy.

MSG Roy Benavidez Message To America

<https://youtu.be/fvLAHUur5eg> look up in YouTube

(Continue on pg. 32)

(Continue from pg. 30)

Veterans Healthcare

We are very happy to see that many of you are opting for face-to-face appointments as we gradually lift COVID-19 restrictions at our medical centers and clinics across Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

As a reminder, the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov) continues to recommend all individuals wear masks in public or when around people who don't live in the same household to stop the spread of COVID-19. **VA requires masks to be worn while on our campuses and in our facilities. This rule applies to anyone who visits our facilities - patients and their loved ones, employees, volunteers, visitors, etc.** Our goal is to ensure everyone is safe and our patients can seek care in a clean and welcoming environment.

UNAPPROVED FACE MASKS



No Neck Gaiters
Gaiter type neck fleece



No Vented Masks
Double-layered bandanna



No Balaclavas
Fleece neoprene or Other



No Bandannas
Double-layered bandanna

APPROVED FACE MASKS



Fitted N95
No exhalation valve
fitted



Poly/Cotton
Cotton-polypropylene
cotton mask



MaxAT
1-Layer Maxima AT mask



Surgical
Surgical Mask 3-Layer



Knitted
Knitted Mask



PolyProp
2 Layered polypropylene
apron mask



Cotton1
2-Layered cotton, pleated
style mask



Cotton2
2-Layered cotton, pleated
style mask



Cotton3
2-Layered cotton,
pleated style mask



Cotton4
2-Layered cotton,
Olson style mask



Cotton5
2-Layered cotton, pleated
style mask

APPROVED FACE MASKS

Army Announces Fall Deployments to Afghanistan and Korea

The Army announced that a combat brigade from the 10th Mountain Division will deploy this fall to Afghanistan.

Book Recreates Bloody Siege of an Army Special Forces Camp in 1965 Vietnam

J. Keith Saliba tells the story of the Vietnam War's 1965 siege at Plei Me in "Death in the Highlands."

The real-life setting for J. Keith Saliba's book is an isolated, heavily fortified frontier outpost in Vietnam's West-Central Highlands near the Cambodian border and the Ho Chi Minh trail, the main conduit for troops and supplies from North Vietnam.

In October 1965 the camp at Plei Me was guarded by a 12-man American Army Special Forces "A-Team," along with Montagnard fighters native to the region and a small contingent of South Vietnamese Special Forces soldiers.

But by Oct. 19 almost 2,000 North Vietnamese soldiers had crept into position around Plei Me. An equal number were deployed to ambush any relief force sent to the camp's rescue.

And so begins the battle he describes in "Death in the Highlands: The Siege of Special Forces Camp Plei Me"

Marines Weigh Closing Parris Island and San Diego to Open New Coed Boot Camp

The [Marine Corps](#) is considering a plan in which it could close its two existing boot camp locations and funnel all recruits to a new base where men and women would train together.

No More Drill Sergeant 'Shark Attack': Army Moves Toward Kinder Basic Training Start

The U.S. [Army](#) has replaced the chaotic reception recruits entering basic training have long received from shouting drill sergeants with a training event designed to create a bond with their teammates and leaders.

Day one of Army Basic Combat Training has always been a rite of passage that involved menacing groups of drill sergeants descending on terrified recruits, yelling commands and ordering trainees to perform push-ups and other exercises with packed duffel bags strapped to their backs.

"Drill sergeants were charged with the [evaluating] trainees' ability to handle stress, singling out the perceived undesirables by enveloping them in a manner that emulated a shark attack," he continued. "This activity, however, does not instill the spirit of the infantry; it betrays the innate trust between teammates and, worse, betrays the crucial bond of trust with our leaders."

Wear a mask**Social Distancing****Wash your hands**

COMMITTEES	CHAIRPERSON	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Agent Orange/Dioxin & Other Toxic Exposure	Bill Patton	bllpaton36@gmail.com
Constitution	Grant T. Coates	gcoates@stny.rr.com
Finance	Charles Tipton	ctipton237@yahoo.com
Government Affairs	Joe Ingino	biggjoe77@verizon.net
Membership	Ted Wilkinson	Twilkinson.vva.org
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 & In Justice System	Nick Valenti	nickvalenti46@yahoo.com