

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



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NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

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Veteran's News that needs to be Read

SUMMER 2021



Inside This Issue

President's Message	3
VVA National News	5-6
VVA Chapter Report	7-31
Secretary's Report	15-21
Veteran News	31-32

IN MEMORIAM

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA #20

Roger Burkhart Russell Chimera Dain L. Davidow Norris DeFisher
Ron DiNatale Steven K. Frisbee Bill Heinrich Ronald C. Huber Louis C. Jezsik
Andrew Place George Sanford Jr Joseph Swystun Robert H. Quinn Donald Allen Young



VVA #72

Everett Barraclough Adrian Popolo

VVA #82

Allan Johnson (former member)
Joseph Laratondo



VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2021

September 24, 25, 26 2021.

DATES for 2022

January 22, April 23, June 18, Sept. 24

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

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of this organization. Individuals with different viewpoints and opinions are invited to submit them to the VVA-NYSC by the **deadline**. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

Well, well. Had our first face to face meeting since January 2020 on June 19, 2021. Had a good turnout but missed some of you that come. Most protocols have gone the wayside and we can only hope all the people around and us have been vaccinated.

The casino did have some spaces open between machines and some plexiglass, but I suspect that will change by our next meeting on September 25th. The other noticeable change was the buffet. They used a menu that you choose your lunch from, and it was brought to you. That may change come September also but then again come fall and winter we could be back to masking.

Our meeting went well. We started out with remembering our members who passed in last year and the ones we miss at State Council meetings. That being Sal Zanghi, President of Chapter 193. Then our good friend and longtime member and former State President Gordie Lane out of Syracuse followed by Ken Trautman from Queens Chapter. Gordie would always bitch about having our meeting on Father's Day weekend, so we dedicated this meeting to him. We surely will miss these guys and hope we can stop this dying of our members but that will not happen. But all, please take care of yourselves.

We did deal with business at hand. Had a good discussion on a proposed by law change to reflect on what the State Council would do when we close at some point in time. That should be in this Interchange along with our new meeting dates for 2022.

Our two fulltime Service Officers are still working our appeal claims in Buffalo. That VARO office is still closed but Dee and Butch continue to go in taking turns as we do not have capabilities to work from home. But they are moving these claims ahead as much the VA adjudicates the claims. We still will not be taking any new claims and encourage you to seek help from the other organizations or the State Division who do good work for Veterans.

We asked for show of hands who will be going to convention. Nice to see most raised their hand. A lot of us can drive to Greensboro NC come November 2 and we hope NY will have the best turnout ever. As you know we do have a shelf life which seems to be going faster than we like. We must prepare for this, and this convention will dictate our direction.

To me the most important issue is the Service Officer program. Just in NY we have over 700 in the appeal process which some have been in that appeal for 5 years. Multiply that across the country and see how many claims VVA is responsible for. Whether we go out of business in several years VVA is still responsible for these claims. So, we need to find a way for the claims for someone else to take over. It not as simple is here your organization take these It does not work that way.

So, this will be a big part of our future and many in VVA will not admit that we will go away and fight this issue and other VVA issues as best they can, but we all need to be open minded.

To finish up we only have a few Chapters who still have not sent in Finance or Election reports. I stopped asking for them and let the chips fall. Many Chapters just started meetings and now summer is upon us, and some do not meet in summer. So, we can hope come fall we are all up and running. Attend National convention with your newest NY Council shirts, (my choice of color) and let us make our remaining years the best for our Vietnam Veterans and all other Veterans from recent conflict.



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.

VVA NATIONAL NEWS: John Rowan, President/CEO**REMEMBERING**

John Rowan

Last year the world was attacked by an unseen enemy more deadly than any found on a battlefield. As a result, we lost an entire year in which normal routines were disrupted. Thankfully, the incredible introduction of effective vaccines, combined with a significant effort to get people vaccinated, may soon return us to normal life. Although this may not happen quickly enough to allow us to participate fully in Memorial Day activities this year, I urge everyone to take a moment to remember those lost in all our wars and also those lost to COVID-19.

Since March of last year the number of COVID-19 deaths has exceeded the number of those who died in World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War combined. Unfortunately, many of those who succumbed to the virus were veterans of those wars. All must be remembered.

THE CONVENTION

Yes, Virginia, there will be an in-person VVA National Convention. After considering the progress noted above, the Board of Directors has voted to re-schedule the Convention for November 2-6. In this issue of The Veteran the Convention Committees have outlined their operations. It will be the same format that we have become familiar with, but please take note of the revised deadlines for delegate registration and candidate announcements. Please do not wait to the last minute to send in your delegate registrations and hotel reservations, and I suggest that you not wait too long to make flight arrangements. Given the cutback in flights you may have a hard time getting one. I suggest you talk to a travel agent or the airlines soon. Mariann and I look forward to seeing you in Greensboro.

TOXIC EXPOSURE AND CONGRESS

In the last issue I reported that during our annual congressional testimony VVA was not the only veterans organization to highlight its concerns about the effects of exposure to toxic substances on America's military from the Vietnam War to the present day. I was pleasantly surprised to learn then that both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees had identified toxic exposure as their highest priority. Now both the House and Senate committees are moving at breakneck speed to introduce legislation to deal with these long-standing issues.

On April 28 the Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee held a hearing on more than twenty bills, half of which were about toxic exposure. Proposed legislation covers items that have been languishing in Congress for many years. For example, S.437 focuses on burn pits. S.454 would care for veterans who served in K2, the former Russian Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan that was horribly polluted. S.565, the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, will cover veterans who cleaned up the Enewetak Atoll used for atomic testing. S.657 would add Thailand to the Agent Orange-affected areas during the Vietnam War. S.810 would add hypertension as a presumptive disease for Vietnam veterans. Two bills, S.927 and S.952, will deal with those exposed to burn pits.

It is unclear which bills will be approved. Some may get merged into an omnibus bill. Please keep an eye out for our Government Affairs alerts to keep up with the legislative activity.

(Continue on pg. 6)

(Continue from pg. 5)

I am concerned that, while these are great legislative proposals, none deals with VVA's efforts to get the VA to consider the health impact of toxic exposures on the multi-generational progeny of veterans.

A STRONG COMEBACK

Jack McManus—Treasurer

VVA's financial outlook a year ago was very bleak, indeed. We didn't know if we would survive the coronavirus pandemic, and, if we did, how long until our funding stream returned. There were no encouraging words from our funding partners, and the whole nonprofit world was predicting catastrophic doom.

The VVA Finance Committee submitted, and the Board of Directors approved, a revised "survival" budget in response to the funding crisis created by the economic collapse triggered by the pandemic and its restrictions. The revised budget froze spending, reduced staffing, and ceased or slashed everything but our most critical veterans service operations.

Anticipating the need, we approved the option to partially fund the operating budget with VVA's reserve funds, which had been set aside over many years in preparation for this kind of event. We estimated we might need \$1.5 to \$2.0 million from the reserve funds, depending on the extent of funding from multiple fundraising channels—all of which depended on donor generosity in the midst of the crisis.

I am happy to say that we were able to execute the budget objectives almost exactly as planned. The largest discrepancy in the budget, in fact, was not on the spending side but in the funding recovery. An unexpected outpouring of generous donations from all of our fundraising channels made a positive difference.

Ultimately, we didn't need to go into our operating reserve funds as projected. Cash flow was phenomenal and exceeded every expectation. We kept expenses within the revised budgeted costs, and with the cooperation and participation of the entire VVA organization, we largely hit our expense projections.

The Board of Directors recently approved the FY2022 budget. It's a recovery budget as we strive to reinvigorate our veterans service and advocacy programs. We have renewed hope with an in-person VVA Convention in November. With the return of The VVA Veteran to print, we can provide updated information to you and the general public about the vital interests of veterans and their families.

If all goes well, at the Convention we will get a clear direction from the membership on how VVA will operate as the organization fades away. Despite speculation to the contrary, our highest level of governance—the National Convention and its elected delegates—has not determined the path we will follow. We need every chapter in VVA to heavily participate in this year's National Convention in Greensboro, North Carolina. This could be our last opportunity to influence exactly how VVA will fade away. The resolutions and constitutional amendments that come out of the Convention will make those decisions on behalf of the membership—not fancy speeches about our glorious past.

The future remains in our members' hands, and we need them to participate in determining its direction.

(Continue on pg. 7)

Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

Currently there are nine Vietnam Veteran Chapters in Central District. Each one plays a unique role in keeping the needs of our veterans and their families in the forefront of our struggle to promote everyone's well-being.

Vietnam Veterans of America Museum located at 1200 Davis Street at Grant Street, Elmira, New York 14901 is just one example of how our mission to tell the true story of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam is achieved. Chapter #803 has dedicated this museum to educate people solely about the Vietnam War. Inside the 1200 Davis Street building you will find a multitude of informational and historical remnants. There are displays of uniforms, equipment, weaponry, as well as an extensive library consisting of books, pictures and maps.

A testimonial display of 32 names and pictures of soldiers from Chemung County that died during combat lends to the solemn purpose of the existence of the VVA Chapter. Per the pamphlet highlighting the museum "These soldiers have earned a place that tells their story with dignity, respect and gratitude."

The museum prides itself at being dedicated to all of the men and women that have fought for our country and sacrificed for our freedoms.

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the availability of public tours and walk-ins. Please contact the Museum Director: Dennis L. Wolfe Sr. (607) 737-2760 (Main) or (607) 734-6623 (Home) before visiting. You can look them up on their Facebook url: <http://profile.to/namvetsofamericamuseum803>. They also can be emailed at VVAWarMuseum803@gmail.com or FoxMew@aol.com.

Donations for the museum can be made directly at the museum or by using the contact information above.

I have been reminded by Chapter #803 of a malignant tumor of the bile ducts within the liver or leading from the small intestine that has affected some of our returning warriors. It is a rare tumor with a poor outcome for most patients. Bile is the substance manufactured by the liver that aids in the digestion of food. Bile duct cancer originates from the cells that line the inner surface of the bile ducts.

One of the known causes is the presence of a parasite – Southeast Asia liver fluke, found in raw fish and in the water supply in Southeast Asia, which lodges itself in the bile duct of the liver liver and damages cells, and over time through a biological process, turns into cancer.

The parasite is referred to as *Opisthorchis Viverrini*. This infection predisposes for Cholangiocarcinoma, a cancer of the bile duct of the liver.

Did you serve at Camp Lejeune or MCAS New River for at least 30 cumulative days from August 1953 through December 1987? If you and your family members were there – you all are eligible for health care benefits. The VA may pay you back for your out-of-pocket health care costs that were related to 15 qualifying health conditions. Active duty, Reserve and National Guard members diagnosed with one or more of eight presumptive conditions are also eligible for disability compensation. Learn more at: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposure/camp-lejeune/>.

(Continue on pg. 8)

(Continue from pg. 7)

Civilian employees who believe they may have been impacted by past exposure to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune should work through the Department of Labor Office of Workers Compensation Programs. For more information, visit <https://www.dol.gov/owcp/>.

Need more information call Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water (CLHDW) Monday through Friday, from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Eastern. The Call Center can be reached at (877) 261-9782 or by email at clwater@usmc.mil.

Ted Wilkinson, Region 2 National Director representing Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania announced that VVA Officers will no longer pursue any name change for the organization and will continue to allow membership only to those who served in the military during the Vietnam War. Ted also published the contact information for all four State Councils that he represents. New York State Council contact hasn't changed but requires restating in light of his report. Ned D. Foote, President, New York State Council, 8 Queen Diana Ln., Queensberry, NY 12804; (814) 266-1125.

I am in receipt of correspondence from the VA outlining revised Guidelines for Donations effective January 2021. A Reader's Digest version of the revision as it affects the Canandaigua VA Medical Center is as follows:

- * All donations must go through Voluntary Service. Feel free to contact them at any time at (585) 393-7757.

- * All correspondence with a monetary donation should include the donor's name and address, where the acknowledgement letter is to be sent and what the donation should be used for.

- * If a donation is made "in memory of" provide individual's name as well as address information for an acknowledgement to the family on your behalf.

- * Make checks payable to Canandaigua VAMC or VAVS and mail to VA Medical Center, c/o Voluntary Service (135), Canandaigua, New York 14424.

- * Credit or debit card donations can be processed at www.Canandaigua.va.gov/giving/ and clicking Make A Difference E-Donate (a minimum of \$5.00 is required for on line donations).

Canandaigua VAMC Commemorative Garden has a Memorial Wall. Their Memorial is a



(Continue on pg. 10)

REGION 2 | Delaware, New Jersey,
New York, Pennsylvania

Ted Wilkinson Membership Report

Chapter	Chapter District	11 25 20 Members	02 28 21 Members	FY '21 Delegate
0 0	AT LARGE	960	893	18
1 8	ALBANY	65	63	2
2 11	SUFFOLK	521	502	11
3 20	ROCHESTER	631	618	13
4 32	QUEENS	237	239	5
5 49	WESTCHESTER	360	355	8
6 72	BROOKLYN	196	194	4
7 77	BUFFALO	682	672	14
8 79	GLEN FALLS	72	72	2
9 82	NASSAU	316	319	7
10 85	ONEONTA	41	42	1
11 103	SYRACUSE	201	200	5
12 126	MANHATTAN	109	111	3
13 140	ORANGE COUNTY	127	121	3
14 193	WARSAW	158	141	3
15 268	NIAGARA COUNTY	118	117	3
16 333	ROCKLAND	208	211	5
17 377	FINGER LAKES	95	85	2
18 421	STATEN ISLAND	266	261	6
19 459	DUNKIRK	44	46	1
20 480	OWEGO	81	79	2
21 541	PUTNUM/DUTCHESS	36	31	1
22 704	AUBURN	47	49	1
23 803	ELMIRA	243	232	5
24 827	HERKIMER	22	24	0
25 865	JAMESTOWN	152	150	4
26 869	DUTCHESS/COLUMBIA	32	32	1
27 896	ENDICOTT	43	43	1
28 944	UTICA	154	148	3
29 978	FREWSBURG	37	34	1
	TOTALS	6254	6084	135

Each Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) vote for it's first 25 members. A Chapter which has fifty (50) members shall be entitled to a second vote at the Convention. For each full block of fifty (50) members thereafter, the Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) additional vote.

(Continue from pg. 8)

granite wall located in Courtyard 1, near Building 8. Engraved expressions of sympathy, good wishes, love to a family member or close friend or acknowledgements to those men and women who have served our country, can be imprinted.

Donation levels are as follows:

20 Spaces Individual Donation = \$150.00
 Service Organization/Corporation Donation = \$300.00

If the individual is a veteran place a star following the name.

30 Spaces Individual Donation = \$200.00
 Service Organization/Corporation Donation = \$400.00

If the individual is a veteran place a star following the name.

Anyone who wants to reserve space on the wall needs to supply the information in the spaces provided (including blanks between words).

Checks are made payable to “Commemorative Garden” and mailed to Voluntary Service (135), VA Medical Center 400 Fort Hill Ave., Canandaigua, NY 12224. When the engraving is completed you will be notified. Any questions contact Voluntary Service at 585-393-7757.

VVA Chapter #944 out of Utica, New York isn't letting the pandemic slow it down. They have provided “Color Guard” duties at numerous ceremonies through the year in their community; they continue to participate in the annual “Patriot Run”; keep their members aware of hiring opportunities – so that it could be passed around by word of mouth; consistently work with the Syracuse VA Medical Center on clothing donations; work with the Masonic Care Community; purchase a flag in memory of all members who passed away over the last year for placement at the B-52 site at Griffiss Park, Rome, New York for display June 14th through June 16th during the Flags of Honor event; working on a possible trip to Washington, DC in October; continue to keep interest in Veterans Treatment Court; and are looking into “Adopt A Platoon” with the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum.

There are many other Chapter activities going on throughout Central District. I guess it's our way of helping each other out.

On May 21, 2021 I received an email from New York State Council Treasurer Nick DeLeo advising me of a Legislative alert on S.810 and H.R. 1972 “The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021.” This legislation would restore presumptive Agent Orange exposure status to members of the Armed Forces who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam. For over a decade Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) has sought this legislation. Senator Jon Testor (D-MT) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) have introduced such a bill – S.810. In the House of Representatives Rep. Josh Harder (D-CA-10) and Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN-8) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 1972 with the same title. These companion bills will add hypertension and monoclonal gammopathy as presumptive diseases to Agent Orange exposure. Access to health care and VA benefits will be available to hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans should these bills pass and become law.

A second legislative alert came to my attention that same morning from Nick. This has to do with “The Military Justice Improvement Act of 2021 introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY).

(Continue on pg. 11)

(Continue from pg. 10)

This legislation would reform the disposition of charges and convening of courts-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and increase the prevention of sexual assaults and other crimes in the military. VVA has long been vocal on the issue of sexual assault in the military. The men and women of our Armed Forces deserve to be treated with dignity and respect for proudly serving our country - Support S.1520.

Please act and contact your local Senator and House of Representative official from your area and stand in support of the passage of S.810, H.R. 1972; and S.1520.

The Purple Heart Foundation (PHF) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that raises funds to support our nation's veterans and their families. One of their fully funded activities is the PHF Scholarship Program. This program awards scholarships annually to Purple Heart recipients, their spouses, children, and/or grandchildren. Not every applicant will receive a scholarship. The amount of the scholarship may vary each year subject to funding levels. All decisions by the Purple Heart Foundation are final. Questions should be directed to; Purple Heart Foundation, P.O. Box 49, Annandale, VA 22003. Phone contact is (703) 635-3528; email address is ttomsey@purpleheartfoundation.org.

VVA Chapter #704 has teamed up with TLC a local ambulance service seeking to hire veterans who have a background in the medical field. For those veterans who wish to pursue a career in medicine as civilians TLC is hiring. The company is eager to train and hire former corpsmen and medics. Their advertising reads: "Seeking individuals looking for a career. TLC EMS is excited to announce we will be hosting an EMT Academy. We will pay you to become an EMT and help jump start your career.

We are offering:

- Guaranteed employment.
- Full time position once you complete + pass NYS written & practical exams.
- Vacation/Sick/PTO/Paid Holidays.
- Online CME Refresher.
- Uniforms.
- Flexible schedules.

Day time classes to start. We will provide on the job training."

Be sure to check your local ambulance service to see if there is a shortage of EMT's. If you miss the cut off for the most current training dates in your local area, ask if you could be put on a waiting list. If you are not interested pass this on to fellow veterans who may be in need of employment. This particular company is hiring and eager to train qualified individuals. You may have a similar situation where you live.

VVA Chapter #704 has also teamed up with Cayuga County Habitat for Humanity. This group is known for building homes and creating homeownership opportunities for low-income families. But that is not all they do. They have established a Home Repair Corps to undertake critical repairs for qualifying homes in Cayuga County. Habitat will direct seed funding recently awarded through Cayuga Foundation to help Cayuga County Veterans of all ages through the Corps. They wish to increase the number of Veterans they can help in the community.

(Continue on pg. 12)

(Continue from pg. 11)

For a veteran to participate the individual must meet the Habitat for Humanity definition of a veteran as they have outlined.

- A person who served in the active military, naval, or sea service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.
- A Reservist or member of the National Guard called to Federal active duty or disabled from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or while training status also qualify as a veteran.

They are accepting applications/referrals after their deadline and are establishing a waitlist as needed.

Remember there are household income limits based on household size.

Habitat for Humanity will coordinate with community agencies to determine the best source of funds and resources to meet identified needs.

The veteran needs they will work with are:

- Exterior Ramp / Ramp Repair / Ramp Replacement
- Exterior Railing / Rail Repair / Rail Replacement
- Other Critical Repairs (Describe special circumstances, critical repairs or services needed).
- Yard Cleanup / Landscaping / Exterior Painting
- Other Services (Food, Medical, Transportation, Job Training, etc). Describe special circumstances, critical repairs or services needed.

The contact information for Cayuga County is cayugahabitat@cayugahabitat.org Questions? Contact Tricia Kerr, Executive Director at 315-730-9543 or via above email.

If you are from another county contact your local Habitat for Humanity organization for their current activities in the Home Repair Corps targeting veterans.

The Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit (MEE) National Tour will make a stop in your town.

The goal of the National Tour is to bring community together and teach patriotism while remembering the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes. The MEE achieves this goal by bringing the local community, veterans, active-duty military and their families together through interactive exhibits, short films, and shared stories. The exhibit serves as a mobile museum, educating visitors about the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes as well as to serve as an official 'welcome home' station for our Vietnam Veterans.

There are several types of events that are supported by MEE. They are:

PRIVATE: Showcase or bring to focus the partnership between your organization / company and Wreaths Across America (WAA) to invited guests. This is NOT open to the public. This can be a fund-raising event where wreath sponsorships are being raised for participating location(s). My hometown, Auburn, New York, is a participating location.

PUBLIC: Showcase or bring to focus the partnership between your organization / company and WAA to your community and guests. Opportunity to highlight your participation in the WAA mission and bring new volunteers and sponsors.

(Continue on pg. 13)

(Continue from pg. 12)

This can be a fundraising event where wreath sponsorships are being raised for participating locations.

CORPORATE: Showcase or bring to focus the partnership between your company and WAA and highlight the mission to your employees, network of contractors, community you serve and social media following. This can be a fundraising event where wreath sponsorships are being raised for participating locations. Corporate events may be private or open to the public.

Learn more by visiting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nK6rgTEndQU>.

On June 24, 2021 I received a very interesting email from Tom Buono, President of VVA Chapter #944 in Utica, New York. Tom and his chapter members have remained active in the veteran community despite COVID-19. This particular email is of special interest. It has to do with the "Silver Rose." The significance of this symbol goes to the heart of victims of Agent Orange exposure. As some of you may recall VVA Chapter #896 dedicated a memorial at their meeting place American Legion Post #1700 at 3500 Maple Street, Endicott, New York 13760. At the time Larry Holdredge, Chapter President took the time to school me on the meaning of the Silver Rose and why his chapter was dedicating the memorial in the names of so many forgotten victims.

Finally, the battle to establish a certificate for victims of Agent Orange exposure has come to a successful conclusion. New York State will issue a "Silver Rose" certificate to eligible victims. The process is simple. Scan (or photograph) your DD-214 and medical diagnosis and upload. Here is the webpage to submit an application: <https://dmna.ny.gov/silverrose/>. If anyone needs assistance, they can contact Jim Furgal at 315-525-9659. Jim is the source of this eventful break through.

Once again, thank you Tom for sharing this information with all of us.

I have been told that on Saturday, July 17, 2021 there is a planned "Tribute Ride" on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor. The ride is sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters #377 (Dryden), #480 (Owego) and #704 (Auburn) along with the Blue Knights Chapter #17. The ride is anticipated to drive through the City of Auburn on New York State Route 38 at approximately 1:30 through 1:45 p.m.

The ride forms up at the Owego Free Academy on Sheldon Guile Blvd., in Owego, NY, and departs from there at 11:00 a.m., riding North on State Route 38 for the 100-mile ride. The first stop for the ride is at the American Legion in Groton, NY for food and gas before departing at 1:00 p.m., riding North on Route 38 (The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor).

The ride ends at the American Legion in Hannibal, NY. Food and entertainment will greet the riders upon arrival.

The Ride is free and open to the public. For more information call Harvey at (607) 898-3507 or Dan at (607) 229-8153.

VVA CHAPTER #704 Cayuga County, NY

James Bryant

YEAR IN REVIEW 2020**1) IN MEMORY HONOR ROLL**

This Honor Roll in Cayuga County recognizes the men and women who served in the Vietnam War, came home and later died as a result of their service. We honor and remember their sacrifice. They will never be forgotten.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation program honors all those who served in Vietnam, returned home and began a whole new fight. They never recovered physically or emotionally from their experiences.

The Cayuga County warriors will be honored at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and in the Town of Brutus, Centerport Aqueduct Park, Cayuga County.

2) VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Washington, D.C. headquarters asked Vietnam Veterans Chapter #704 to continue its efforts to expand participation in the "In Memory" Honor Roll. The efforts by the Chapter have gotten the attention of Washington and additional pamphlets, applications and promotional materials have been provided free of charge.

3) PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

The mission of the Hall of Honor is to collect the personal history and preserve the stories of Purple Heart recipients throughout our history from all branches of the Military. It is our mission to collect this information for all Cayuga County Purple Heart Recipients. Recipients stories are preserved and shared through exhibits, and live and videotaped interviews with Cayuga County veterans.

The Cayuga County Legislature and the Auburn City Council have passed proclamations designating their municipalities as Purple Heart communities. The 13th New York State County and 43rd (Village, Town, City) to do so.

The Purple Heart Hall of Honor is located in New Windsor, New York in Orange County in the Hudson Valley.

4) WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

We honor and remember American service members buried at home and in overseas cemeteries. The burial grounds overseas are in the following countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Philippines, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom.

Each year we take the time to pause and reflect upon the sacrifices and service of our veterans. Cayuga County pays homage to its 29 fallen from the Vietnam War, the 26 from Korean War, the 267 from World War II and the 135 from World War I and our nine (9) Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients. We especially remember our most recent fallen who answered the call to preserve and protect our nation during the Global War on Terror.

The mission is to Remember, Honor and Teach the sacrifices of our Veterans and pay it forward.

5) POPPY CAMPAIGN

Each year we have made available to the community poppies bearing the name of each of the 29 warriors killed in Vietnam. Prior to 2020 we recognized 27. With our due diligence we discovered two

(Continue on pg. 15)

(Continue from pg. 14)

more of our Cayuga County fallen. Bringing our total to 29.

Each year these poppies help Vietnam Veterans Chapter #704 raise funds for Chapter activities on behalf of all veterans in the community.

6) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

We make available one scholarship to every high school senior class in our County. The recipients of these scholarships are vetted by the local school districts. Availability is dependent upon the fundraising efforts of the Chapter and the generosity of the public.

7) CAYUGA COUNTY VIETNAM MEMORIAL

On September 19, 2020 after four years of fundraising and twenty-one (21) years of research and designing Cayuga County dedicated their Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Centerport Aqueduct Park, Town of Brutus. The memorial, when erected will tell a forty (40) year history of our country's involvement in Vietnam; it will include those men and women who returned from Vietnam War and later died because of their service in that War zone; it will have depictions of the men and women who served there as well as depictions of the equipment used by our warriors; it will have a map of Vietnam showing where our twenty-nine (29) were killed; and it will identify the burial location of each of our fallen.

8) WALL OF FACES

In an effort to connect a face and a story to each name on The Wall we collected all 29 photos. VVA Chapter #704 committed itself to finding a photo for each Cayuga County fallen warrior inscribed on The Wall to preserve their memories.

9) TRIBUTE RIDE

VVA Chapter #704 joins VVA Chapters #377 and #480 along with the Blue Knights motorcycle club for the annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Ride. This is a motorcycle, car, truck caravan traveling 98 miles through Central New York on Route 38. This route was dedicated to the men and women who served in the Vietnam War by New York State Governor Patterson in 2009.

10) ZOOM MEETINGS

VVA Chapter members conducted zoom meeting with area high school seniors at the request of their teachers when these students study the Vietnam War.

Zoom meetings are conducted with other Vietnam organization throughout the year as a means of conducting organizational business and holding meetings as part of our statewide veterans' network.

11) RADIO, TELEVISION, NEWSPAPER AND INTERNET INITIATIVES

Throughout calendar year 2020, chapter members of #704 appeared in a number of venues promoting veteran initiatives. Appearances on Bridge Street (WSYR TV9, Syracuse, NY), Public Service announcements through ARMA (Auburn Regional Media Access), The Citizen Advertiser, and WAUB radio interviews brought the veteran community closer together through a united front as veterans helping veterans became our mantra.

12) INTERCHANGE

Chapter #704 is a contributor to this New York State Vietnam Veterans on-line publication. Spreading the word on what veterans' activities are in the making and keeping informed as to what other activities other New York State Vietnam Veteran Chapters are doing in some 30 plus communities. (Continue on pg. 16)

(Continue from pg. 15)

13) VIETNAM VETERANS CENTRAL NEW YORK NETWORKING

Chapter #704 is in a close-knit networking system with eight (8) other Vietnam Central New York Chapters with a combined membership of 1,000 veterans. Each Chapter shares their local community involvement both within the Vietnam Veteran network, as well as the public activities in each of their respective communities. Whenever possible Chapters will come and support each other as much as circumstances allow.

14) VETERAN SERVICE AGENCY COOPERATION

Chapter #704 proudly works in cooperation with Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts, Italian American War Veterans, American Legion Posts, Disabled American Veterans, 40&8 and the Cayuga County Veterans Service Agency as partners, in the pursuit of enhancing veterans' quality of life.

15) VETERANS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT EVENTS

VVA Chapter #704 participates in Countywide community events related to veterans. Whether the activity is Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Veterans Day or any other related activity, we try to be there.

16) PAY TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED VETERANS

Funerals help us say goodbye to our brothers and sisters. It is a way to provide support for us, the friends and family of the veteran and the community. It brings people together who care about each other. It is our way to pay tribute to the veteran's life.

17) BEREAVEMENT CARDS TO CHAPTER FAMILIES ON THE DEATHS OF VIETNAM VETERANS

Chapter #704 makes every attempt to be in contact and send condolences to surviving family members and funeral homes servicing our departed brothers and sisters.

18) NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

The year 2020 saw four (4) members of VVA Chapter #704 nominated to the New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame. They were: Francis Edward Bell Sr. (Founder and Past President of #704); James Orman (publicly elected Cayuga County Treasurer); Louis Patti (President of Chapter #704); and Nicholas C. Valenti (Central District Director for New York State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America).

19) VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

For decades Chapter #704 has worked with the incarcerated veterans at Auburn Correctional Facility. They were identified as VVA Chapter #205. As their membership began to decline due to transfers to other facilities, deaths, and releases for those who served their sentence they reinvented themselves and formed what is now referred to as the Veterans Group of Auburn (VGoA). This group continue the comradery and programs that benefit their fellow veterans and service organizations beyond the walls of the Facility.

They continue to hold events commemorating veterans service to our country and have a crocheting squad that donated crocheted article of winter clothing to children, hospitals, service organizations and food pantries.

(Continue on pg. 17)

(Continue from pg. 16)

20) THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Vietnam Veterans of America live by one mantra “Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another.” At a time when the Veterans Administration and National Service Organizations rejected the Vietnam War Veterans it was time to form their own support network to help themselves and the men and women who would follow. Remembering our past helps us to know where we are going.

The road began in 1999 when Chapter #704 worked to

bring “The Wall That Heals” to Deauville Island at Emerson Park. It was followed by memorials to our women veterans (Emerson Park), World War I and World War II veterans (Pomeroy Park).

The Chapter has participated for over a decade in the annual “Tribute Ride” recognizing New York State Route 38 as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor (Governor Patterson).

For approximately twelve year we helped sponsor the annual “Wreaths Across America” ceremony held in all 50 states, in foreign countries and our ships at sea – Remembering, Honoring and Teaching future generations that freedom is not free and that the sacrifices of our veterans and their families cannot be forgotten.

In 2017 we were able to have “The Wall That Heals’ come to Cayuga County for a second time. More than 8,000 visitors came to remember and honor our fallen.

In 2021 the Cayuga County Vietnam Veterans Memorial will also have an “In Memory” section identifying the names of those who came back from Vietnam but died because of their service – all vetted by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation, Washington, D.C. We do what we do because we live the words of our mantra. “Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another.”

21) QUILTERS OF THE FINGER LAKES

VVA #704 has worked with a group of quilters known as the “Quilter of the Finger Lakes.” These ladies have produced hundreds of quilts for veterans in Central New York. Each quilt is handmade for each individual veteran. Our members helped gather the names of local veterans, helped set up presentation ceremonies and donated

financially in support of the quilters in their goal to provide a quilt for as many veterans as possible.

22) SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Special Olympics “Torch Run” is an annual event through Cayuga County that is gladly supported by VVA #704. The Chapter provides an honor guard for the runners at Veterans Memorial Park in Auburn, New York. Participants include the Auburn Police Department, Cayuga County Sheriff’s Department, Cayuga Community College Criminal Justice Club, and Auburn School District students.

23) AUBURN PURPLE LANCERS

VVA Chapter #704 helped recognize US Army Specialist 4 Terry Toole, killed in Vietnam on June 8, 1969 on the Auburn Purple Lancer and Carnicelli – Indelicato American Legion Post #1776 Memorial. Terry was a former member of the Junior Corps who gave his life in the service of his country in Hoa Nghia Province, South Vietnam. The Purple Lancers were a Drum and Bugle Corps that competed Nationally and Statewide from 1949 thru 1974. These men and women were taught leadership, competitive behavior, fraternity and comradeship.

(Continue on pg. 18)

(Continue from pg. 17)

24) WINTERGANZA

Planning for a downtown and county celebration of veterans in the month of December 2021 has begun. Activities include dancing in the snow cleared streets, hot cider and donuts, caroling, a special concert and an intergenerational Nostalgia Walk among other events. The month of December would be set aside as Veterans' Appreciation Month with VVA working with retailers creating a new tradition in our community that supports and helps to sustain our local merchants as well as promoting the cooperation and partnership between Veterans and our merchants throughout the County.

Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz III

As I try to finish the VVA-NYSC Nick Valenti Newspaper, I mean the VVA-NYSC On-Line INTERCHANGE NEWSPAPER! Ned Foote keeps thinking of changing name from the RAG!

Nick Valenti represents 10 Chapters in his District and he has set up 10 – three ring binders for each Chapter and that is why his report are sooooo Long! Thanks Valenti!

Here is a summary of what transpired at the recent VVA-NYSC meeting in June. First meeting held from January 2020! We have come a long way. We followed CDC and NYS Covid 19 precautions and we survived! Important information: Please send all your reports/essays for the Interchange to: VVAINTERCHANGE @AOL.COM

CONGRATULATIONS
CONGRATULATIONS

VVA-NYSC Elections Results

All position was uncontested. Ted Wilkinson, Election Committee chair, presented the candidates; delegates voted for each candidates **UNANIMOUSLY**.

The District Directors from each District vote unanimously by their District Directors. Somehow, I felt that the Southern District Director position had the votes of all the delegates present!

The following individuals were elected for a two tern position.

Officers

President: Ned D. Foote (incumbent since 2005)

Vice President: Grant T. Coates

Treasurer: Nicholas DeLeo

Secretary: Francisco Muñiz III

District Directors

Central District: Nick Valenti

Eastern District: Sam Hall (Lt. Col. Ret)

Southern District: Joe Ingino

Western District: Mick Walker

(Continue on pg. 19)

(Continue from pg. 18)

The following VVA-NYSC By-Law Article XIII – DISSOLUTION was amended by the Delegates present:

ARTICLE XIII - DISSOLUTION

The VVA-NYSC shall be organized and operated in conformity with the purposes set forth in Article III of these By- Laws and the policies and standards formulated by the Board of Directors of the National organization. The national organization, by summary action of its President, may preliminarily suspend this State Council if in the National President's reasonable belief; the actions of VVA-NYSC are detrimental to the best interests of the national Organization. Notice of preliminary suspension, and of the reasons therefore, shall be mailed to the State Council and shall be effective upon mailing or delivery of this transmittal.

In the event that VVA-NYSC is preliminarily suspended, all power of self-governance and operation of VVA-NYSC, including all voting rights of the members, Officers, and Directors, shall immediately vest in the National Organization, which is empowered to take control of VVA-NYSC assets, real and personal, and to manage the operations of VVA- NYSC until the suspension terminates. Within 45 days after preliminary suspension, the Board of Directors of the National Organization or a Committee thereof shall afford VVA-NYSC an opportunity to present evidence and arguments in its behalf in a forum and at a time and a place mutually agreed upon. If the Board or Committee finds that VVA-NYSC has made statements or engaged in conduct detrimental to the best interests of the National Organization, it may suspend (for a particular period or on condition) or revoke VVA-NYSC status.

In case of revocation of VVA-NYSC status, all State Council powers vested in the National Organization during suspension shall continue to be so vested, and in addition, the National Organization shall be authorized to take all necessary steps to dissolve the corporation status of the VVA-NYSC and to distribute all assets of the State Council remaining after the payment of debts to itself or to any veteran non-profit charitable organization such as New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, Inc., whose office is located in New York State.

Editor's Note: The above Article was placed in our VVA-NYSC By-Laws in case the State Council got rescinded by the National VVA office due to infractions.

The Constitution Committee Chair presented the following Article for discussion and vote:

(Continue on pg. 20)

(Continue from pg. 19)

**Dissolution of Article XII
Dissolution of Vietnam Veterans of America - New York State Council**

That Vietnam Veterans of America-New York State Council (VVA-NYSC) will cease to function in New York State, as an entity of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., within months after the National Office of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) (office located at 8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910) has ceased its function as a veteran service organization.

Upon the Dissolution of Vietnam Veterans of America – New York State Council (VVA-NYSC) after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation shall be distributed exclusively for educational, charitable, and scientific purposes or to promote social welfare to one or more organizations qualified tax exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3), (4), or (19) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, subject to an order of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York and which are approved by Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

The dissolving non-profit organization must file an article of dissolution with the office of Attorney General of New York.

After much discussion on the above Article XIII and hearing from two major Chapters requesting that wording should state that any monies left should be refunded to existing Chapters as per membership numbers.

The Constitution Committee Chair, Grant T. Coates, presented the following wording:

That Vietnam Veterans of America-New York State Council (VVA-NYSC) will cease to function in New York State, as an entity of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., within months after the National Office of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) (office located at 8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910) has ceased its function as a veteran service organization.

The dissolving non-profit organization must file an article of dissolution with the office of Attorney General of New York.

**The above amended Article XIII - Dissolution of Article XII
Dissolution of Vietnam Veterans of America - New York State Council**

Motion was presented by Constitution Committee, Second, voted and pass by the Delegates of VVA-NYSC present.

The VVA-NYSC By-Laws will be amended and copies will be sent to the National Office Constitution Committee and to each VVA-NYSC Chapters.

FUTURE DATES for VVA-NYSC MEETING:

We will have another VVA-NYSC meeting in September 24, 25, 26 2021.

Call the Tioga Downs Hotel and informed them that you are with VVA-NYSC veteran group to get the correct price for the evenings. Bring your Chapter's Tax Exempt form to get the Tax off the bill.

The following dates are for 2022:

January 21, 22, 23 April 22, 23, 24 June 17, 18, 19 September 23, 24, 25

MEMORIAL SERVICE

On September 25, 2021 we will have our VVA-NYSC Memorial PowerPoint presentation of all of our deceased VVA and AVVA members. Please make plans (Continue on pg. 21)

(Continue from pg. 20)

to attend the next State Council meeting with your Chapter members.

At this time, I am trying to update the PowerPoint program with the names and corrections that each Chapter has sent us. I am still picking up names from the National VVA Veterans magazine listing on the TAPS column.

It was recommended that when you send in a name of a deceased Vietnam veteran member to include the cause of death and next of kin. This will help National to document cause of death with the legislations that we need to address. Next of kin helps our State Chaplain to address a proper letter to the family. Please help us in this project.

Hope everyone had a peaceful and non-stressful July 4th Celebration.

Hope that this year we will unite and become a family of AMERICANS instead of the division that is going on now.

Chapters read what VVA Chapter #704 has accomplished in one year. Hope can you duplicate such projects! All this during a pandemic and with only 49 members!

Need your assistance in that when you send in Chapter Reports, please place the District area that your Chapter is assigned to. This helps in trying to place all Chapter Reports with the District Directors reports. Thanks

Oh, my Gosh, I am getting to be a Nick Valenti, can't stop writing!!

Veterans Incarcerated and In the Justice System Committee Report

Nick Valenti - Chair

The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to have a harming effect on our incarcerated community. One of the most recent victims is the crochet program. As a matter of policy, the current program has been suspended. Our veterans will not be allowed to accept donations until the program resumes. Unfortunately, as of 4/23/2021 no time frame is available for the resumption of the program. In keeping with the spirit of the crochet squad goals at Auburn Correctional Facility I will continue to collect donated yarn. When the suspension is lifted I will bring what I have to the facility. There is no change in the acceptable colors allowed in the facility. The colors remain all shades of **white, green, brown, pink and tan.**

Auburn Correctional has seen a change in personnel in the Veterans Program liaison. Brenda Walsh a long time go between has left and the current post is held by Daniel Zambito. I have been in contact with Dan and look forward to working with him and the Veteran Incarcerated community.

All volunteers in the New York State Corrections and Community Supervision workforce have been notified of the prohibition of cannabis when seeking entry into a Department of Corrections Facility. The memorandum outlining acceptable norms while working in a Facility are very specific. "Cannabis, like alcohol, is still considered contraband within 'facilities' and will not be permitted."

As an extension to the memorandum, it also continues to say "Visitors are not allowed to provide Veteran Incarcerated individuals with cannabis during visits, in packages, through the mail, or any other means. Any person visiting a Veteran Incarcerated individual who is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to a suspension of their visiting privileges. Additionally, violation

(Continue on pg. 22)

(Continue from pg. 21)

of these rules may result in an arrest.

If anyone wants to review the guidelines you can find them in Directive #4403 and #4750.

The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision provides a thirty (30) page guide for all volunteers to follow. The document is titled *“Division of Ministerial, Family & Volunteer Services Standards of Conduct for Correctional Volunteers & All Applicable DOCCS Policies.”*

It doesn't seem that a year has gone by and it is necessary for me to update my volunteer file, take yet another Orientation session and fill out and sign another acknowledgement of Standards of Conduct agreement if I wish to continue as a Veterans Service Volunteer. As long as I can make a difference I will continue to work with our Veteran Incarcerated warriors while maintaining the bonds we share with fellow veterans.

There is an announcement in the works that the Auburn Correctional Facility is planning to resume the Family Reunion Program in September. It appears that the New York State Department of Corrections and Community supervision (NYSDOCCS) has determined a September restart date is on the horizon.

This should open up a lot of the Correctional Facility internal workings as activities are reactivated. Our specific concern is the resumption of the crochet squads. There are other inmate initiatives across New York State that are of benefit to their surrounding communities that had to be temporarily suspended due to COVID-19. The good news is there is light at the end of the tunnel for all programs to continue to have a positive influence not just within the facilities they currently exist but to also continue to help the communities that have benefited from contributions of money, and handmade crocheted apparel.

I currently have approximately 58 skeins of yarn to deliver to Auburn Correctional once I get the word from the new liaison for the Veterans Program. The colors that are acceptable are ALL SHADES of white, green, brown, pink and tan.

If you have a facility near you and wish to contact their Ministerial, Family & Volunteer Services section, you can ask if they have a crochet squad and if donations of yarn would be allowed. If not and you want to donate some product to Auburn Correctional just contact me at nickvalenti46@yahoo.com.



(Continue on pg. 23)

POW/MIA/Veterans Initiative Report

Grant T. Coates – Chair

The POW/MIA program also sponsors the ‘Veterans Initiative’ where through the sharing of information veteran-to-veteran, America’s and Vietnam’s veterans are able to develop new sources of information to help resolve the issue of American and Vietnamese MIA.

1. To Date: Missing – 1,584

- o 1,584 Americans are listed by DOD as missing and unaccounted.
- o One US Navy officer recovered and identified, the Navy Casualty Office has been unable to reach the Primary Next Of Kin. DPAA is unable to release the name and unique circumstances involved. Until very recently, there had been no US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War since September 21, 2020.
- o DPAA announced that some identification are pending and may be announced soon but no number was given.
- o Accounted: 998 since 1975.
- o 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975
- o Total 1,061 Recovery Locations: Vietnam – 728, Laos – 288 Cambodia – 42, PRC – 3

2. At 21:30, President Rowan received a telephone call from the White House informing that at 2400, the nationally recognized POW/MIA Flag would be on display above the White House under the National Colors. The White House official said the flag went up overnight and will permanently remain atop the residence of the White House.

The Trump administration in 2020 made a decision 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.

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 properties including the White House every day.

3. DPAA Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget. Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. In addition to the budget request of \$130 million, DPAA received two Congressional Program Increases - a department reduction restoration of \$20M and an unspecified increase of \$5M, bringing this year’s budget to under \$155M.

As of 9 April, 2021, DPAA has identified 324 of the 394 Sailors and Marines missing from the U.S.S. Oklahoma, sunk on 7 December, 1941.

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

I am the Southern District Director and my name is Joe Ingino. At this time I would like to thank all the Delegates for the Southern District for having confidence in re-electing me as your Southern District Director. I am sorry that I was not able to be there at the June VVA-NYSC meeting. As you know, I am fighting a major battle within my body. I want to thank all those VVA-NYSC members for their phone calls and Get Well cards and most important for your prayers. I am determine to beat this enemy and will continue to have a positive attitude in getting well.

I will continue to do my responsibilities as District Director as well as Chair of the Government Affairs Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any assistance in regards to VVA-NYSC. Thanks for your support!

(Continue on pg. 24)

(Continue on pg. 23)

VVA Chapter #72 Report

Danny Friedman

We had a nice turnout for our April Zoom Membership meeting. A total of 19 members eventually showed up. At the time of our general elections, we had 18 which technically wasn't the 10% quorum provided for in our Chapter Bylaws. However also in keeping with our bylaws the membership present voted to waive the 10% requirement and go forward with the election. All officers with the exception of the Secretary were reelected unopposed for a two-year term. Acting Secretary Bobby Magnavito was elected replacing Acting Secretary Lenny Francavilla. Lenny has a new job which requires much travel and he has also relocated. We thank Lenny for his service and wish him well.

All three additional Board members were also reelected without opposition. We also elected two delegates (Bill and I) to our National Convention in November. There are two delegate slots still open if anyone is interested.

The National Convention will be in Greensboro North Carolina the first week of November. It will likely be deciding the future of VVA and we would like Chapter 72 to be fully represented.

We are participating in a Memorial Day motorcade as we did last year. This year it will be expanded by size and number of vehicles. There will be a float representing all participating organizations. There will be room on the float for Veterans who want to or need to ride instead of drive.

We will stop and lay a wreath at Cannonball Park (4th Avenue and 101st Street) and then continue on to the Brooklyn VAMC for a second wreath-laying and a brief ceremony.

We hope you all can make this as we continue to balance concessions to the Corona Virus with our obligations as Veterans to make sure our fallen comrades are remembered.

The flags along the path by the memorials at Brooklyn VAMC are worn. We found out the VA employee, John Orr, who donated and kept up the flags had retired. Therefore, we purchased new flags and we will be placing them about a week prior to Memorial Day.

We continue to remember veterans. We purchased clothing to be distributed by We will continue to support the Domiciliary when it is our troops overseas program held together by



our homeless and hospitalized Vet- about \$500.00 worth of new clothing.

support our adopted ward, 15-West, and restarted. We are also supporting through our Operation Troop Cheer Herb and Sandy Morales.

NY Harbor Director Parauda sent out a postcard to all Veterans registered with the VAMC advising all Veterans and spouses, and Veterans' caregivers are eligible to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine from the VA whether the Veteran is eligible for medical services or not.

We hope you all do as much as you can to get the word out to Vets you know who may not be aware of this. All they have to do is call Centralized Scheduling. Spouses and caregivers will have to bring the Veteran's Social Security Number with them.

(Continue on pg. 25)

(Continue from pg. 24)

All of us need to get vaccinated ASAP. We can get back to something resembling normal.

Our condolences/deepest sympathy go out to the family of Chapter member Everett Barraclough.

VVA Chapter #82 Report

Richard R. Guevara, Vice President <rguevara1945@gmail.com>

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Chapter 82 curtailed its activities to ensure the safety of our members and the general public. In accordance with CDC and New York State guidelines we are now resuming normal activities.

Chapter 82 has resumed its general membership meetings in April, May and June. To ensure safety and to follow CDC guidelines, attendees were required to be fully vaccinated, have their temperatures checked and wear a mask.

American Armor Museum - On February 24, 2021 Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard for a somber event recalling Tet's horrors.

Hofstra University Army ROTC – In April 2021, Chapter 82 provided an award to a member of the graduating ROTC class Nassau Veteran's Memorial Coliseum – On May 6, 2021 Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard for the Long Island Islanders hockey team's opening ceremony.

Eisenhower Park – On May 30, 2021 at the Nassau County Memorial Day Service we provided the Color Guard for the event.

On Memorial Day, May 31, 2021, members of Chapter 82 participated at a small ceremony at the Hicksville Middle School Veteran's Memorial Park by laying a wreath in honor of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense our country.

Eisenhower Park - On June 10, 2021 Chapter 82 provided the Color Guard at a Day of Remembrance Ceremony hosted by the Nassau Vet Center.

On June 27 members of Chapter 82 attended a wake for one of our fallen brothers, a former board and color guard member.



(L to R) Steve Bonom Tony Sparaco Stu Behan John Schneider Paul Masi

Western District Report

Mike Walker

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



(L to R) Jay Book, VVA Chapter #865 presenting donation to Pres. Ned Foote

Eastern District Report

Sam Hall

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



**L to R) Pres. Ned Foote, Board of Directors –VVA #333 Ed Frank and Marcus Arroyo
President Ned Foote accepting a donation check from leadership of VVA Chapter #333
Notice that is the only time you see Foote SMILE!**

(Continue on pg. 27)

(Continue from pg. 26)

VVA Chapter #333 Report

Roy Tschudy—President

A few thoughts regarding our Chapter Pig Roast this past Saturday which turned out weather wise to be hot yet with a soft breeze to make the day comfortable. The turnout of members and others was very big and even a little larger than expected, in fact we ran out of burgers at lunch time but the hot dogs kept on coming until even they ran out. Of course this also was due to many who came back for second helpings and even a few for a third! I can only assume the third timers were recently rescued from an uncharted island and have not had any food for a month! Thanks to Tom Carroll who assisted me on the grill, it was smokin hot but Tom layer that cheese on top of the burgers like he was a graduate of Chef school! We were relieved after awhile by our Chapter harmonica player Paul Mattern who is the real cook in the bunch as this was his MOS in the Army.

Breaking tradition and hoping this bit of information does not leak out, but our fearless Chinook Helicopter pilot Captain John Leighton was seen shucking corn with the noncoms! Thank you John we promise to keep this a secret, NOT! It may have been a beautiful day to be sailing on the open waters but "Admiral" Ed Frank refused the lure of the ocean and instead was cutting up tomatoes and onions for the salads, thank you Ed! Howard "Mr. Stent man" Goldin was sitting front and center peeling, dicing and helping to create an enormous salad for all. Thanks Howard! As always is the case, the volunteers who arrive early are the beneficiaries of the special Roger DuPont breakfast of Eggs & Beacon on a roll. It was reported that not one who ate of these sumptuous sandwiches needed a run to the head, miracles do happen!

The band, BEAUTY AND THE GREASE once again just like every year prior put on a fantastic show, special thanks to Don Pillar & Al Dagistino both band members & Chapter #333 members for their musical skills enjoyed by all in attendance. Chapter member Paul Mattern whipped out his his trusty harmonica for a few toots and then entertained everyone with his aria of PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN. Considering the fact that Paul worked a long career in the U.S. Postal Office he should be commended for retaining his sanity or at least parts thereof! Thank you Paul!

A special announcement at the beginning of the event made by Chapter Chaplin Marcus Arroyo respectfully acknowledging the recent loss of chapter members Gene Sullivan, Bob Taylor and the spouses of both Bruce McClintock (Wife, Jackie) and Pat Pizzimonte (Wife, Susan) may the Good Lord continue to watch over them and Bless their loved ones.

Prior to the Pig Roast, Thursday was shopping day at Costco led by our intrepid team of Rocky Graziano, Roger DuPont and Tom Carroll, Cliff Fromm, Bruce McClintock, John Palmero, Pat Pizzimonte, Pat Wallace and myself. Our group of volunteers filled seven shopping carts with an array of food including the cakes from the bakery area. While on the checkout line and Rocky holding the credit card ready to be melted after swiping in the amount of \$ for the Pig Roast, a young lady approached me stating she would like to pay for everything in our carts. Of course I kindly refused this generous offer and did thank her for it; however, she kept on insisting and then gave an explanation as to why.

The young lady, Margarite Carmody told us that her late father was a Vietnam veteran who as it turned out was a member of Chapter 333 for many years prior to his passing now 20 years. Margarite went on to say her Dad made sure she received a great education and did so from Cornell University and now is employed at Goldman Sachs where she assured us that she does VERY WELL! To make a long story short, the tab was for \$645.00! We gratefully received a most welcome and generous gift! KARMA, when a group such as ours has and continues to aspire to help others, this is a small measure of thanks in return.

(Continue on pg. 28)

(Continue from pg. 27)

We invited Margarite along with her family to our event which she accepted most graciously. After delivering the food items to K&E for storage, I immediately drove over to where we purchase our plaques and ordered a special "Thank You" plaque for Margarite from our Chapter. The plaque should be completed either this week or next so we can present same at our July Meeting! Also in attendance was our last year's Handcyle recipient along with her service dog, pictures were taken and sent to Debbie Frank for our webpage.

We did not need to ask twice for our signed up volunteers to begin serving the main course, Rocky & Roger were continuing to do what they always do, ensuring the food was properly dispensed while keeping an eye out on the guest of honor, Mr. Pig himself! We should acknowledge the gents who were there very early in the AM to roast sir Pig and then when requested, did an excellent job of cutting him up to be served, far and away **BETTER THAN ANY PREVIOUSLY BEFORE!**

With the servers in place a line began to form that resembled the Great Wall of China, every time we started to see the end of the line begin to dwindle a few of those mentioned earlier uncharted island burger busters had their plates ready for a refill! To quote Charlie Brown..."GOOD GRIEF!"

Chapter member Pat Pizzementi stepped up HUGH for the chapter selling the Bells & Whistles Shirts, doing a 50/50, putting up and taking down our tent (Which has been layed to rest) cleaning up at the end and doing so many other jobs including serving. Pat also kept up on the Hand Cycle donations and I can only say WOW! The amount donated to our Hand Cyle program was a whopping \$618.00! In fact Pat did so much one would think he was in the ARMY instead of the NAVY!

Our "unofficial" official Chapter Photographer Cliff Fromm was all over the field throughout the day taking pictures of everything, Cliff is always at the ready to get that perfect shot at the right moment. Cliff will send pictures from the event to Debbie for inclusion in our webpage, Thank you Cliffster! Towards the end of the Pig Roast our desserts became available for those in attendance, first the watermelon came out to quench the thirst of many, then after Chapter member Lee Pelton asked me in full panic mode if we were having cake (He did calm down when advised we will) two sheets of cake were devoured in a nano second, one Vanilla and one Chocolate of which our pal Lee would show no favoritism for either deciding it was only fair to have a slice of both! Gee, what a surprise!

Chapter member and Sgt. At Arms Bill Winder set up shop alongside our small Bells & Whistles tent to sell his new published book, **THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NIGHTSTICK**. Before leaving towards the end of the Billy told me he sold all but two of the copies he brought along. If any are interested in purchasing Bill's book, please visit **AMAZON BOOKS**; enter the name **WILLIAM H. WINDER** and the book should appear for purchase.

At the close, many volunteers stayed as promised to assist the team of Rocky, Roger & Tom for cleanup, this was truly a team effort on all fronts and congratulations to all who volunteered and likewise, those in attendance for making this **PIG ROAST** one of if not the most successful **PIG ROASTS** in our Chapters history. Thanks to chapter members Dom Ferrara and Pat Petrino for volunteering throughout the entire day! If I have omitted any names of those who helped out I apologize in full but do thank you very much. Please keep in mind along with your prayers Chapter member and past President Jim Hennessy and Brian Barnett.

In closing, after a long and very tough year due to Covid, it was a pleasure to have so many veterans, their families and friends attend this event. As one recently past Chapter president would proclaim at the end of every monthly meeting, **AS A CHAPTER TOGETHER WE STAND, UNITED WE FALL!** a wonderful statement that we should **ALL** keep in mind, especially supporting one another. Please continue to stay safe and stay well, I thank all of you deeply!

Last evening during our monthly chapter membership meeting, two of our Chapter elected representatives Ed Frank and Marcus Arroyo delivered a full and comprehensive report on the June **(Continue on pg. 29)**

(Continue from pg. 28)

2021 State council meeting. Thank you again for leading the entire state chapters and providing valued information for all members throughout.

As president of Chapter #333, I feel obligated to promote our good work for not only our local community but for veterans who reside elsewhere no matter their location. As can be noted via our website www.vva333.com, Chapter #333 since 2013 developed and implemented what began strictly as a HAND-CYCLE PROGRAM and since added ADAPTIVE SPORTS EQUIPMENT for military personnel whether combat related or not, for injuries sustained. In addition to this, many different types of scholarships have and continue to be provided for students along with those with military backgrounds.

In short, any who wish to learn about our magnanimous and heartfelt volunteerism/scholarships etc. may do so by visiting at our Chapter #333 website. With all due respect to other Chapter websites, I want it to be noted that the Chapter 333 site has been rebuilt and modified by a volunteer who has taken of her time to construct said site inclusive of our history, those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and a host of other well detailed items. This site was built "NOT BY A PAID PROFESSIONAL" as some others "may have", there are no HOLLYWOOD BELLS AND WHISTLES that a professional would construct as some other chapters "may have" paid for to enable their site to be a standout.

No, not us, not Chapter #333! We as a Chapter have always endeavored to provide help to others, veterans and students along with those in need. We will not now, nor ever spend funds to promote our Website when we can do a website without the frills and fancy footwork a few other chapters "may have" paid for. Please understand, this is not a condemnation of chapters who decide to have a paid professional website, rather, it is a statement of just how good our Chapter #333 site is! It is my sincere hope and wish that when consideration for voting at the National convention in November for the BEST WEBSITE, those who decide, take a moment to fully acknowledge the difference between HOLLYWOOD and LOCAL involvement.

A few other items of note, Last August 2020 VVA Chapter #333 suffered the loss of member Gene Sullivan from Agent orange effects. Gene was 70 years of age at the time of his passing and had been a member for the past fifteen years. VVA Chapter #333 has now set up a scholarship program in his name which can be viewed once again at our website. Soon thereafter in September VVA Chapter #333 lost a fairly new member Bob Taylor, again to cancer from Agent Orange related illness. Bob was 72 years at the time of his passing and along with Gene, both were Army in country Vietnam veterans. I respectfully request that both names be sent to the "TAPS" edition of THE VETERAN.

After a one year hiatus due to Covid restrictions, VVA. Chapter #333 once again rolled up our sleeves and performed another yeoman's job for the continuation of our WATCHFIRES which has dated back to 1986. Although the weather was rather uncooperative for the ceremonies performed at our four designated sites, the turnout of veterans along with supporters was more than admirable. Special thanks to our two time Silver Star Chapter member Tony Lombardi who with his "Boss" wife Gail, made the trip up from Virginia coordinating with Ed Guzman for the evening ceremony Gene Levy Park.

Kudos to all of our Chapter Watchfire commanders Ed, George, John and Tommy who ensured all of the minutia needed to have each fire site at the ready and then stood vigil along with other volunteers through a long rainy, cold night. I would be remiss not to acknowledge Chapter member Roger DuPont who was most gracious to be my special driver for the evening visiting all Watchfire sites. It should be noted because the weather kept deteriorating during Sunday with heavy cold rain downpours with access to area sites becoming more accident prone conditions, I informed each commander if they so deem to consider ending the Watchfire site earlier than the usual Midnight ending they have permission to do so.

Both the health and welfare of Chapter members, volunteers and visitors remain the number one priority

(Continue on pg. 30)

(Continue from pg. 29)

for this consideration, the success of the ceremony, the lighting and then the entire evening is considered a wonderful success! Many thanks to all who turned out for this event and who continue to hold and honor a tradition which is near and dear to our hearts. Thank you, may the Good Lord Bless each and everyone of you!



(Continue on pg. 31)

(Continue from pg. 30)

THE WALL OF FACES

A nice gesture that would only take a few moments is to Google: THE WALL OF FACES. At this site you can find over 58,000 young men who perished during the Vietnam War, leaving a "REMEMBRANCE" for any name you choose I am sure will be most appreciated by family members of these heroes. If you visit www.vva333.com you will find 46 names from Rockland County, I have always remembered my two close buddies, JAMES P. PERRONE along with a soldier in my and Jim Hennessy's company, Dewitt Studway.

Whoever you may choose to leave a REMEMBRANCE for is a small token of appreciation for the men who MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE!

VETERANS NEWS

Here's what may be in the president's third stimulus package may help nonprofits

Included in this grant program are several things that may help. This includes a \$3 billion economic development fund that will allow for nonprofits to be able to obtain loans. Also, several parts of the package are focused on improving the conditions of people. This includes those who struggle with hunger, housing, and basic necessities. That may take the pressure off of nonprofits who have been trying to fill these gaps among those in distress. All of these [conditions have gotten worse](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing nonprofits to have to expand in providing services.

The grants included in this economic development fund will be able to be used for: *"initiatives that support bottom-up economic development and enable good-paying jobs."* This will include *"state and local government entities, tribal institutions, institutions of higher education, and nonprofits."*

In the stimulus package, there is also a \$35 billion small-business lending program that nonprofits will participate in. This will be administered through the Small Business Association. This program will use \$35 billion in government funds that will generate as much as \$175 billion in both low-interest loans and venture capital for certain purposes. These will go towards those small-businesses (and nonprofits) that: *"innovate, create, and maintain jobs, build wealth, and provide the essential goods and services that communities depend on."*

In addition to that, because the government is proposing \$350 billion in emergency funding for state and local governments, this will help. The reason being that this will prevent the government from cutting funds they award to charity due to a deficit. Many of these funds go to charities that contract with nonprofits doing work on the ground. Speak with your accountant and see what you are entitled to receive from the government. Use it or it will go to waste!

National Vietnam War Veterans Day

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is March 29, marking the day U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, disestablished on March 29, 1973.

This is the fourth anniversary of the day and second year in a row events will be largely virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Veterans can stay connected and participate in virtual events.

FREE CONCERT

VVA Chapter #72 member Joe Cavanna invites you to a free concert by the Excellents (Joe's group that includes 3 Veterans) on **Tuesday, August 10th**, rain date **Friday, August 13th** at 7:30 PM at the Valley Stream Bandshell Address: Village Bandshell on the Village Green behind Village Hall at 123 S. Central Ave. There are also 2 other acts performing -The Chicklettes and Jackie Wilson's son Brook Wilson.

Please bring your own chairs or blankets for seating!

(Continue on pg. 32)

(Continue from pg. 31)

THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICE TO VVA & All VETERANS

VVA's Rick Weidman Honored

as VVA Executive Director Emeritus

"Richard F. "Rick" Weidman has led VVA's advocacy since his return to the National headquarters in 1998, fighting for change and ensuring our veterans receive the care and respect of a grateful nation," said John Rowan. "Today, I am proud to announce that Rick will retire from his position of VVA Executive Director of Policy and Government Affairs to assume his new role as Vietnam Veterans of America's Executive Director Emeritus, and VVA Associate Director Sharon Hodge will assume the position of VVA Director of Policy and Government Affairs. We are grateful to Rick for his leadership, his compassion, and his commitment to those in need."

"The finest of advocates, both technically and tactically, Rick has never wavered from the promise of combat medic, to care for those in need," noted Rowan. "In Vietnam, Rick served as a 1-A-O Army Medical Corpsman with Company C, 23rd Med, Americal Division, I Corps, 1969. In Washington, as VVA's primary spokesperson, he has driven our legislative agenda on Capitol Hill, ensuring that VVA's resolutions, adopted by our delegates at National Convention, are enacted into law, included in government policy, and implemented responsibly."

"Rick has worked with six United States Presidents, countless members of Congress, their staffs, and fellow veterans' organizations. He has led with his heart and lent his voice, ensuring that those in decision-making positions had the facts, heard the truth, and understood the plight of those who took the oath to serve our Constitution.," noted Rowan. "In keeping with VVA's founding principal, *Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another*, Rick has served as both mentor and advocate for Gulf War and Post 9/11 veterans. His tenacity has resulted in scores of significant and life-saving legislative solutions, with positive results for generations of veterans and their families," said Rowan. "VVA, veterans, and their families everywhere are better off thanks to his faithful service and advocacy."

Prior to his Vietnam service he attended Colgate University, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. Following service and a brief career in academia, Rick followed his heart, joining the VVA staff in 1979. He served where needed, focusing on growing the membership and building relationships on Capitol Hill. His early, vital input shaped VVA's foundation and future direction forever.

Veterans News (Continue on pg. 37)

THE SNEEZE

They walked in tandem, each of the ninety-two students filing into the already crowded auditorium. With their rich maroon gowns flowing and the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and Moms freely brushed away tears. This class would NOT pray during the commencements, not by choice, but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it.

The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling. They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families.

The speeches were nice, but they were routine until the final speech received a standing ovation. A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then, it happened.

All 92 students, every single one of them, suddenly SNEEZED !!!! The student on stage simply looked at the audience and said,

'GOD BLESS YOU'

(Continue on pg. 33)

(Continue from pg. 32)

And he walked off the stage...

The audience exploded into applause. This graduating class had found a unique way to invoke God's blessing on their future with or without the court's approval. This is a true story; it happened at the University of Maryland.

Isn't this a wonderful story?

GOD BLESS YOU!!!!

Government Affairs

Joe Ingino—Chair

The following legislations need your support. Please contact your Federal legislators to support the passage of these bills in the Senate and the House of Representative in Congress. VVA heartily endorses these bills. These bill is not just for Vietnam veterans but also for Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

S.437 -focuses on burn pits.

S.454- would care for veterans who served in K2, the old Karshi-Khanabad Russian airbase in Uzbekistan, which was horribly polluted.

S.565 -the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act for veterans who cleaned up the Enewetak Atoll used for atomic testing.

S.657- would add Thailand to the Agent Orange effected areas during the Vietnam War.

S.810 - would add hypertension as a presumptive disease for Vietnam vets. Two bills,

S.927 and S.952, attempt to deal with those exposed to burn pits. VVA tends to favor S.952 because it has more definitive time frames on the VA's actions. There are several other bills and more seem to be coming out every day. It is unclear which of these bills will be finally approved and some of them may eventually get merged into an omnibus bill. Vietnam Veterans of America Senate Veterans Affairs Committee April 28, 2021 3 VVA is concerned that, while these are great legislative proposals, only a few affect Vietnam veterans and our issues and none of them focus on our efforts to get the VA to deal with the health impacts on the multi-generational progeny of the affected veterans of all wars from Vietnam to the present day. Other Legislative Issues Other bills not related to toxic exposure also caught our eye. Especially one particularly important bill, S.89. This legislation requires the VA Secretary to secure medical opinions for veterans with service-connected disabilities who die from COVID-19 to determine whether those disabilities were the principal or contributory cause of death. Our Veterans Service Officers in the field had noticed several incidents of spouses and/or dependents getting denied for Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) because the VA was ascribing the veteran's death strictly to the virus. I have been in contact with the National Association of Medical Examiners and the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners for assistance in dealing with this issue. They informed me that death certificates have space for noting other contributory causes of death. When this bill is passed it must include efforts to inform the public, as well as the professionals in the medical examiner/coroners' offices, about the necessity to fully complete a death certificate. VVA's Legislative Analysis Following below is VVA's view on each of the proposed bills on today's agenda. If there are any additional bills, we will provide separate comments.

(Continue on pg. 34)

(Continue from pg. 33)

S.89 - Ensuring Survivor Benefits During COVID-19 Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Sinema (D-AZ) This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to get a medical opinion to determine if a service-connected disability was the principal or contributory cause of death in situations where a veteran's death certificate identifies COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019) as the principal or contributory cause of death, the certificate does not clearly identify any of the veteran's service-connected disabilities as the principal or contributory cause of death, and a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation is filed with respect to the veteran.

S.189 -Veterans' Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Thune (R-SD). VVA heartily endorses this bill. **S.219** - Aid and Attendance Support Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Cortez Masto (D-NV). This bill increases the amount of specified Department of Veterans Affairs benefit payments for veterans (or their survivors) that require aid at home or are in nursing homes. Specifically, the bill increases such benefits by 25% until 60 days after the end of the declared emergency period resulting from COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019). VVA heartily endorses this bill.

S.437 - Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Sullivan (R-AK). This bill would amend title 38, United States Code, to concede exposure to airborne hazards and toxins from burn pits under certain circumstances, and for other purposes.

S.444 - AUTO for Veterans Act, this bill introduced by Senator Collins (R-ME). This bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide (or assist in providing) an eligible veteran or service member with an additional automobile or other conveyance under the VA automobile allowance and adaptive equipment program. Currently, a veteran or service member with a specified service connected disability or impairment may not receive more than one automobile or other conveyance under the program. The bill authorizes the additional benefit for such veterans and service members if 10 years have passed since the person last received such benefit.

S.454 - K2 Veterans Care Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Blumenthal (D-CT). This bill establishes a presumption of service-connection for certain diseases becoming manifest in a veteran who served on active duty at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base in Uzbekistan between January 1, 2001, and December 31, 2005. Specifically, there must be a presumption of service-connection for veterans who manifest illnesses that have a positive association with exposure to jet fuel, volatile organic compounds, high levels of particulate matter, depleted uranium, asbestos, Vietnam Veterans of America Senate Veterans Affairs Committee April 28, 2021 5 or lead-based paint, as determined by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). Under a presumption of service-connection, specific conditions diagnosed in certain veterans are presumed to have been caused by the circumstances of their military service. Health care benefits and disability compensation may then be awarded. Veterans who served at K2 Air Base during the specified period are eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for an illness that has been determined by NASEM to have a positive association with exposure to jet fuel, volatile organic compounds, high levels of particulate matter, depleted uranium, asbestos, or lead-based paint.

S.458 - Veterans Claim Transparency Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Tester (D-MT). This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide the representative of a veteran with an

(Continue from pg. 35)

(Continue from pg. 34)

opportunity to review a proposed determination regarding a claim for compensation or benefits before such determination becomes final. The VA must notify the representative in writing that a proposed determination is ready for review and may not make a final determination until the review period has ended. Under the bill, a representative has up to 48 hours to review the proposed determination.

S.565 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the treatment of veterans who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of the presumption of service-connection of certain disabilities by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN).

S.657 - A bill to modify the presumption of service connection for veterans who were exposed to herbicide agents while serving in the Armed Forces in Thailand during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Boozman (R-AR).

S.731 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology projects and investments of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Tester (D-MT).

S.810 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the list of diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents for which there is a presumption of service connection for veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam to include hypertension, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Tester (D-MT).

S.894 – Hire Veterans Health Heroes Act of 2021; introduced by Senator Mike Braum (R-IN). This bill would identify and refer members of the Armed Forces with a health care occupation who are separating from the Armed Forces for potential employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S.927 – TEAM, 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, introduced by Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC). VVA support the concepts behind this bill but believe it must be viewed in comparison to S.952. It may lend itself to being combined with S.952. We are also interested in similar coverage or inclusion of veterans from Vietnam and the Gulf War, as well as exposures on U.S. bases at home and abroad. Also, we are not very fond of commissions, which tend to drag out the obvious conclusions.

S.952 - The Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and other Toxins Act "Warfighters Act, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to toxins, and for other purposes, introduced by Senators Gillibrand (D-NY) and Mark Rubio (R-FL). Vietnam Veterans of America Senate Veterans Affairs Committee April 28, 2021 7 VVA heartily supports this bill. As noted above we favorably compare it to S.927 because of its strict timetables for action. We also would like to see either a similar bill or an expansion of this bill for veterans of Vietnam and the Gulf War, as well as those exposed at U.S. bases at home and abroad.

S.976 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency
(Continue on pg. 36)

(Continue from pg. 35)

and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Tester (D-MT). VVA heartily endorses this bill. We are especially appreciative of the section lowering the requirement from ten years to five.

S.1031 – A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on disparities associated with race and ethnicity with respect to certain benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Warnock (D-GA).

S.1039 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve compensation for disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf War veterans, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Menendez (D-NJ).

S.1093 – A bill to amend Title 38 U.S. Code to establish in the Department the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Mark Rubio (R-FL). The VA must embrace a corporate culture that measures its vocational rehabilitation programs and educational initiatives by results and measure how they assist veterans in obtaining and sustaining gainful employment at a living wage. To achieve this worthy goal, the VA should institute “one-stop shopping” by creating a fourth entity, the Veterans Economic Opportunities Administration, to be headed by an Under Secretary, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. This is logical and will be cost-effective. It will eliminate duplicative programs and it will increase cooperation among and between its various divisions. The Vietnam Veterans of America Senate Veterans Affairs Committee April 28, 2021 8 VEOA would house, less than one roof, the Vocational Rehabilitation Service and the Veterans Education Service. It would grant functional control, if not the outright transfer, of VETS--the Veterans Employment and Training Service--from the Department of Labor, as well as newly federalized DVOP (Disabled Veterans Outreach Program) and LVER (Local Veterans Employment Representative) positions, which currently reside in state departments of labor. It will promote Veterans’ Preference; and it will facilitate veterans’ entrepreneurship.

S.1095 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the disapproval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of courses of education offered by public institutions of higher learning that do not charge veterans the in-State tuition rate for purposes of Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance Program, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS).

S.1096 - A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses and children of individuals who die from a service-connected disability within 120 days of serving in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, introduced by Senator James Lankford (R-OK)

S. 1520 - Vietnam Veteran of America (VVA) supports S.1520, The Military Justice Improvement Act of 2021, introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). This legislation would reform the disposition of charges and convening of courts-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and increase the prevention of sexual assaults and other crimes in the military.

Military Sexual Trauma and Sexual Harassment must be treated as crimes and adjudicated as such.

Women veterans are twice as likely as their male counterparts to develop Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and approximately one out of four women veterans report Military Sexual Trauma

(Continue on pg. 37)

(Continue from pg. 36)

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced **S. 810**, The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021. In the House of Representatives, Rep. Josh Harder (D-CA-10) and Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN-8) introduced a companion bill, **H.R. 1972**, also titled The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021.

These companion bills would **add hypertension** and monoclonal gammopathy of unspecified significance (MGUS) as presumptive diseases for Agent Orange exposure and provide access to VA benefits and healthcare for hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans.

Now it is up to **YOU** to get your federal House and Senate to support these bills in Congress!

Veterans News (Continue from pg. 32)

Agent Orange: Independent Lens | The People vs. Agent Orange | Season 22 | Episode 24 | PBS

The People vs. Agent Orange closely follows two activists as they take on the chemical industry, and demand accountability for the pernicious legacy caused by the use of Agent Orange in the Vietnam War.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-people-vs-agent-orange-szhodb/>

VVA Chapter 72 Danny Friedman—President

Good afternoon everyone, as you have heard me mention at our meetings New York Harbor is the proud host of the 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games taking place in our beautiful city August 7th- 14th.

It is also in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of 9/11. The games will be broken down into 2 participating groups to adhere to established health and safety protocols. We will be needing volunteers before the actual games begin in other capacities. Please spread the word to your neighbors, family members and please consider taking some of your own time to participate. There are many events/dates/times/locations to participate. I have attached some instructions for the VAVS volunteers registrant group but they are the same for others that wish to participate. You can also see the Instructions below. There are still some assignments that are not showing because we are still working out the times that volunteers will be needed in some instances based on the time of arrival of the veterans. By next week all should be revealed. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

NVWG Registration Instructions

1. Visit the NVWG Volunteer Registration site at <https://2021wheelchairgames.my-trs.com/>
2. Click on Register Now.
3. Choose your Registrant Group – for example, VA Employee, Youth, General etc.
4. Select your preferred volunteer event and shift from the available options and follow the prompts to complete your profile, review, and confirm your registration.
5. If you have any questions, please contact the NVWG Volunteer Team at NVWGVolunteers@va.gov.

VA May Force Employees to Get COVID Vaccines

As reported July 1 by Leo Shane III for Military.com, VA employees could be required to get the coronavirus vaccine to keep their jobs, under a plan being considered by department leadership. VA Secretary Denis McDonough said Wednesday that no decision on such a move has been made yet, and he is hopeful that new initiatives granting more leave for staffers to receive and recover from the vaccine will help boost the department's totals. However, he also emphasized that increasing the number of vaccinated employees is critical for plans to fully resume operations at VA hospitals and offices, for the safety of both other staff and visiting veterans.

Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemptions by State

Disabled veterans have many tax breaks and discounts offered to them; in most states these service members also have the option of using some form of property tax break offered on the basis of having a service-connected disability.

Not all states offer the same [tax breaks](#), and the qualifying criteria for such tax relief will also vary, but it pays to look into your options where state property taxes are concerned since qualifying veterans and their spouses (where applicable) can save literally thousands of dollars at tax time.

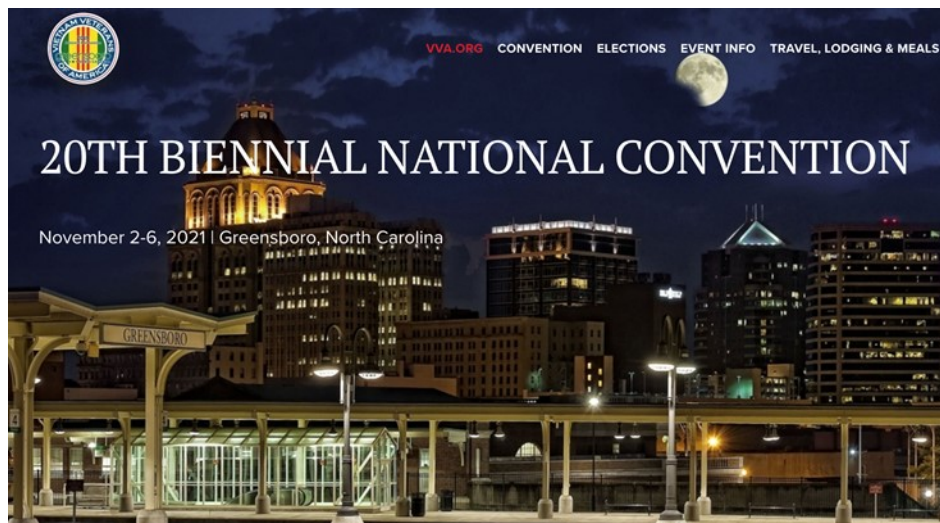
Certain property tax exemptions may focus on the disability rather than the applicant's status as a veteran; other exemptions may be dependent on having a VA-rated disability. Some states may require the veteran to register once for a certain tax benefit, others may require annual re-certification.

Not all tax exemptions or tax relief applies to all veterans or to all veterans with a disability. The qualifying criteria will vary depending on the state.

It's important to remember that tax laws are always subject to change; discuss your state's tax exemptions for the current tax year with a professional to make sure the past year's exemptions or other tax benefit will apply in the current tax year.

*The Future of Vietnam Veterans of America will be decided by the delegates at this Convention.
Be There and Be Counted!*

The room rate is \$110 and 12.75% tax (tax rate is always subject to change)





New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, Inc.

Francisco Muñiz III—President

As you are aware that New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, Inc. (NYVVF) no longer has a telemarketer to raise funds for the Foundation within New York State. There has been no fundraising since the last two years.

We have received approximately \$425 in donations from members of VVA and from previous donors. I can count in one hand on how many VVA members that have sent in donations this year. We have over 6,000 VVA members in New York State. If each one would donate once a year, a dollar donation (\$1.00) it will increase our funds to support VVA-NYSC with partial funding of our two Service Officers working from Buffalo, NY Regional Office.

Donations to human charities dwarf those to animal charities. But the money we get could be used more effectively if people weren't so sentimental about pets. Are animals worth more than the betterment of the life of a Veteran and his family?

Every year, we hear more and more stories about different scams and fraudulent practices that take advantage of the generosity of Americans, especially in times of dire need.

The first step to take to protect yourself from being taken advantage of when a potential scammer or fake charity asks you to donate.

First things first: Are they a registered public 501(c)(3) organization?

Second: What's in a name?*

Third: What are the organization's mission, goals, and history of success?

Fourth: Google it!

Fifth: Use Charity Navigator

New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation Incorporated is headquartered in **Westbury, NY**, and is a 501(c)(3) organization. EIN: **11-3173156**. Donations are **tax-deductible**. The IRS NTEE classification code is P20, **Human Service Organizations - Multipurpose** within the Human Services - Multipurpose and Other category

Since the last edition that this article appeared, we were fortunate to receive from four donors over \$400 in donations. We thank them very much for their generosity! VVA-NYSC only funding comes from the State and it amounts to \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year. As you heard at the VVA-NYSC meeting that our payroll for the coming year is about \$93,000 a year! We need these two individuals to keep abreast with processing your VA claims for compensation. That is not their salary but includes payroll taxes, training, social security and payroll expenses. Thanks for your donations, it goes for a worthy cause!

So do you think you can spare a dollar to help funding New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, Inc.?

Send donation, by check, to:

New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, Inc., 48 March Lane, Westbury, NY 11590-6302

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