

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 29 Issue 03

Veteran's News that needs to be Read FALL 2019



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Newly Elected VVA National Officers

President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary
John Rowan	Tom Burke	Jack McManus	Bill Meeks

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Dottie Barickman	Richard DeLong	Gumersindo Gomez	
Dennis Howland	John Margowski	Pete Peterson, Jr.	Dave Simmons
Dan Stenvold	Kerwin Stone	Sandie Wilson	

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3
"Skip" Hochreich	Ted Wilkinson	Sara McVicker
Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
Spence Davis	John Riling III	Bob Grabinxki
Region 7	Region 8	Region 9
Denis Andras	Francisco Ivarra	Dick Southern
Rex Moody,	State Council Conference, Pres	

IN MEMORIAM

VVA Chapter #20

Fry, Bernard

Gebhardt, William A., Life Member, Founding Member

Hall, Kenneth R., Life Member

Lt. Holmes, Thomas, US Army, earned his Air Medal and 18 Oak Leaf Clusters for his service (over 200 aerial missions).

Shoebridge, Kim E., USMC



VVA Chapter #459

Master Gunnery Sergeant Sanders, David P., 'Gritz', Founding Member, Helicopter pilot, awarded 7 Air Combat Medals & Air Crew Wings

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE



VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2019

September 27, 28, 29

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

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Queensbury, NY 12804

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

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Francisco Muñiz III



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President's Report

Ned D. Foote

I guess the convention would be our biggest news this time around. We had 61 delegates attended. We again had most but not by much. We also have 125 eligible to go. Maybe we will have more in two years as it will be held in Greensboro, NC. It will also be very important one and you may want to start saving funds to attend.

NY thanks all Officers and Directors who will guide us the next 2 years. They will have much work to do as the resolutions dealing with our future passed. A special congrats to Jack McManus being elected as our Treasurer. I will continue as Chair of Finance Committee and will be working close with Jack who is a former Treasurer. Many thanks to past Treasurer Wayne Reynolds who I had pleasure of working with. Unfortunately, Wayne has serious health issues and could not continue on. We wish him the best.

Now for the resolution that passed basically says that the Officers and BOD will look into the feasibility of changing our name so we can recruit our newer Veterans into our great organization. I was very surprised with the passage of this as two past conventions had a resounding no to any changes in VVA. Now the majority says maybe we should change our name.

I agree we need to come to a conclusion to where we go and perhaps, we will know at next convention if we are changing our name. For me I joined VVA in 1981 because the traditional Veteran organizations did not want me like many of you. I joined Vietnam Veterans of America and I plan on leaving as a member of Vietnam Veterans of America. So maybe in two years we can all agree what we should do, and I will keep an open mind if this is the best solution.

One more item on convention. I want to thank all VVA for awarding me the Member of Year Award. Very surprised and humble to accept this. It is nice to be recognized but I only do what I do for the love I have for Veterans and my heart and sole belong to VVA who has been my life for almost 40 years.

Now State Council business. All but two chapters has submitted both reports and both have been suspended. We will help them get their reports in. Our September meeting, we hope to have Jim McDonough, Director of NY Veteran Services. Our meetings have been well attended and we hope to grow more. Couple new guys came last meeting and they will return as the experience was not what they had thought.

So, as we grow older and many health issues crop up (I never seen so many scooters, canes and walkers at a convention) we still have many issues to take care of and as we move to helping the newer Vets let's not forget us. I'm afraid if we do not take care of ourselves no one else will.

Subject: Public affairs committee

Public affairs meeting agreed to remove the word "era" after Vietnam in line 1 Resolved, That] on page 55 under P-2

Also on page 59 under P-12, strike "2008" add "annual" Much of discussions were about programs that promote VVA in communities.



New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation

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

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

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

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

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW YORK STATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

“Bad Papers—Many veterans received less than honorable discharge as a result of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post -Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Military Sexual Trauma (NST), or a result of sexual orientation, gender or expression, pursuant to the federal Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy. These discharges were determined on the federal level and cannot be revised by the State. However, a number of State benefits require an honorable discharge. This bill would ensure that LGBT veterans and veterans with certain qualifying conditions are eligible to receive State benefits. (Passed Both Houses; A.8097/S45-B)

Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board Program— The bill will require the Division of Veterans' Services to maintain a Discharge Advisory Board Program to provide written non-binding advisory opinions to veterans of the State of New York who are appealing their character of discharge from the United States Armed Forces. (Passed Both Houses A.8095-A/S.6467)

Assisting Veterans With Military Discharge Upgrades—Local veterans' service agencies are required under this measure to assist veterans in the process of submitting an application for a discharge upgrade to the Discharge Advisory Board Program at the New York State Division of Veterans' Services. (Passed Both Houses; A.8096/S6527)

Pension Poaching Prevention Act—This legislation would prohibit any person helping veterans from charging a fee for providing assistance in seeking veterans' benefits, except when allowed by rules and regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Passed Both Houses; A.6292/S4807)

Women Veterans Coordinator—The purpose of this bill is to clarify and update the duties of the women veterans coordinator within the New York State Division of Veterans' Services. (Passed Both Houses; A.7594/S5991)

Information on Special Veterans Populations—The Veterans Health Information Program provides a list of resources for veterans, their families, and health care providers seeking information on service-connected illnesses. This legislation would expand the Program's depth of practice to include conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), brain-injury injuries, and spina bifida. Also included in this legislation is a requirement to include military background and circumstances of the veteran who are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. (Passed Both Houses; A.1804/S.2377)

Assistance for Sexual Trauma in the Military—To provide information to veterans regarding resources that are available to assist veterans who experienced military sexual trauma while on active duty or during military training, by maintaining a military sexual trauma portal on the Division of Veterans' Services website. (Passed Both Houses; A.2559-A/S.5006-A)

Listing of County and City Veterans' Service Agencies—Veterans' services exist not only in State government but on the local level as well. To better facilitate accessibility to local veterans' service agencies, this legislation would require to New York State Division of Veterans' Services to post on its website a listing of the local veterans' service agencies with the name, location, hours of operation and contact **(Continue on pg. 6)**

(Continue from pg. 5)

Information for each county and veterans' service agency in the State. (Passed Both Houses; A.4413/S.2405)

Information on Homeless Veterans—The purpose of this bill is to conduct a study to determine the number of homeless veterans in New York State in order to understand the extent of this problem. (Passed Both Houses; A.5560/S.4049-A)

Mobile Application For Searching Veterans Services—To require the New York State Division of Veterans' Services to post on its website information to the Division of Veterans' Services applicant that is available for down load. (Passed Both Houses; A.6792-A/S.4477-A)

Severely Injured Military Personnel Tax Exemption—The purpose of this bill is to establish, at local option, a real property tax exemption for severely injured members of the Armed Forces of the United States who continue their military service and have made accessibility improvement to their existing homes. (Passed Both Houses; A.7289/S.1681)

Establishing the Outdoor Rx Act—Requires the New York State Division of Veterans' Services in consultation with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Health and the Office of Mental Health to review issues relating to veterans' abilities to access state parks, lands and facilities. (Passed Assembly only; A.8094)

Peacetime Veteran- To provide those veterans who have served during peacetime to be eligible for the position of a County Veterans Service Agency director if he or she meets all other qualifications. (Passed Assembly only; A.7573)

VVA Chapter #82 Report

Chapter 82 Accomplishments June to September 2019.

Hicksville Vet Center - On June 12, Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the center's anniversary ceremony. Members of the Chapter participated in the event.

American Legion - On June 20th Chapter 82 provided the color guard for the Legion's dinner for veterans.

Burial Ceremony - On June 21st members of this Chapter attended a wake for of one of our fallen brothers. We participated in a memorial service honoring his life and service to his country.

Walls of Honor - On June 22 we provided the color guard and taps for the event honoring veterans who served or are serving in the military. Members of the Chapter were among those **(Continue on pg. 7)**

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honored at this event.

Nassau County Veterans Stand Down – on July 9 we provided security for the stand down and provided gifts to the veterans who participated.

Salute to Veterans – On July 9th we provided the color guard to this event sponsored by the Town of Oyster Bay. Members of the chapter also participated in the event. Bill Walden, a member of this Chapter, was recognized for his service to veterans.

Vietnam Veterans of America National Convention – On July 16 to July 20th four members of our chapter went to and participated at the VVA Convention.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony – On July 18 we teamed up with the Long Island Air Force Association to recognize the services of Vietnam Veterans. The event took place at the Field of Dreams. We provided the color guard and provided them with an album showing our appreciation. Members of our Chapter were recognized at this event and several others formed a welcome line for our veterans at the end of the event.

Nassau County Salute to Veterans – On August 3rd VVA Chapter President Steve Bonomi was honored as one of the county's recipients for the Distinguished Service to Veterans Award" for 2019, We provided the color guard and several of our members attended this event.

Scottish Festival – On August 24 the Chapter will provide the color guard for this event.

The Wall That Heals -On August 29 to September 1 Chapter 82 will play an integral role in bringing the Wall to Eisenhower Park. This will be a somber event honoring those service men and woman who gave their lives in Vietnam.

Nassau County Veterans Barbeque – On September 19 we will provide the color guard for this event.

Nassau County POW/MIA Vigil – On September 20 we will provide the color guard for this event. Members of Chapter 82 will participate at this vigil.

Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Ceremony – On September 21, we will again team up with the Long Island Air Force Association to recognize the services of Vietnam Veterans. The event will take place at the Cradle of Aviation. We will provide the color guard and give the honorees an album showing our appreciation. We will also welcome them home.

Kevin Gorman: Rocky Bleier's return to Vietnam gives new perspective

When Rocky Bleier surveyed the open rice paddy at Hiep Duc in the Que Son Valley last August, the Pittsburgh Steelers great tried to visualize the differences of nearly five decades.

“Jesus Christ,” Bleier said, stopping in his tracks. “You think about those guys that got killed.”

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Bleier sniffled, then started sobbing, his hands trembling.

“For what?”

Forty-nine years to the day he was wounded by gunshot and grenade shrapnel, Bleier’s return to Vietnam brought an emotional breakdown he never anticipated.

Bleier’s raw vulnerability – and the unexpected, dramatic moment that followed – was captured by a camera crew and makes for a powerful scene in the SC Featured documentary, “The Return.”

“All of a sudden, I had this overwhelming sense of emotion that I really couldn’t put a finger on of why or what took place,” Bleier told the Tribune-Review on Friday. “What I felt was this complete sense of waste – not loss, but waste. Why? Fifty-nine thousand died in Vietnam, for what? That was my justification or reason why it was overpowering. And I still feel that now.”

Regarded as one of the “grittiest players” on the Super Steelers of the 1970s, Bleier had been adamant beforehand that he carried no emotional scars – only to be moved to tears.

“You knew his demeanor going into that. He was like, ‘I don’t know if there’s anything there but we’ll see,’ ” said Jon Fish, who directed and produced “The Return.”

“As a filmmaker, we were just willing to roll the cameras and see what happens. ... When it happened, it was really powerful. It was just really powerful, and we just let it happen.”

“The Return” is scheduled to air a shortened version on SportsCenter this weekend and the full 30-minute documentary on ESPN2 at 8 p.m. Aug. 20. That coincides with the 50th anniversary of the mission by 33 men from Charlie Company 4th Battalion (Light), 31st Infantry 196th Light Infantry Brigade to recover the bodies of nine soldiers killed in an ambush. Four more soldiers died, and 25 others, including Bleier, were wounded when they emerged from a wooded trail to face enemy fire in that open field in Hiep Duc.

Bleier was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart after he was shot in the left thigh, lost part of his right foot and took shrapnel in both legs. The documentary, reported by ESPN’s Tom Rinaldi, is a moving tribute to Bleier interrupting his NFL career to serve in the Vietnam War and his courageous comeback.

“No one told me no,” Bleier said, simply.

Not that he would have listened anyway.

“How can you not admire Rocky Bleier?” Terry Bradshaw said. “He had a dream, and he wasn’t going to quit on it. That’s the kind of people you want to play with.”

The storytelling is splendid, from scenes of the Steelers winning four Super Bowls to Bleier’s touchdown catch against the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl XIII gracing the cover of Sports Illustrated.

The interviews, from Art Rooney and Joe Greene to Bradshaw and especially Franco Harris, are incredible. Fish found it amazing that almost everyone he interviewed connected to Pittsburgh is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

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While Bleier's story was a worthy subject on its own, what makes it powerful is the depth it delves into finding fellow soldiers from the Vietnam War, including one who fought for the Viet Cong. Where Bleier initially downplayed the idea, one that was a decade in the making, it gave him a new perspective.

"For people that knew the story, this is a new layer to it. For people that didn't know the story, they're blown away. That's the wonderful thing about the story," Fish said.

"Rocky Bleier now is the same Rocky Bleier who came back after being wounded to make the Pittsburgh Steelers. The essence of him then is the same as now: We're going to come back, and we're going to finish this story. You see the power and inner strength that he has, that started the story way back when. Years later, he's the same person."

Except that Bleier isn't. He admits the visit to Vietnam — something he never felt a desire to do — changed him for the better. That was especially true when, a month after returning, he was inducted into the Steelers' Hall of Honor. It made him realize how blessed he was to survive and succeed.

"That's what we all want, to be recognized for your contribution along the way," Bleier said. "It doesn't mean you need to be in the Hall of Fame or an All-Pro, just that somebody recognizes that you put time and effort in and you played on a team that allowed you to be in position to win four Super Bowls.

"It's not you. It's that conglomeration of you and the owners, coaches and players you got to be part of. Hopefully, you can look back and say, 'I made a difference in the lives of my kids, community, church, marriage' or whatever it may be. That becomes essential, that you did something worthwhile."

What is most essential to Bleier is those who watch "The Return" can make sense of the senseless by starting a conversation that will help them find their own closure toward the Vietnam War, which has touched all of our lives, whether that's through a family member or a friend.

"Unlike the majority of Vietnam veterans at that time, who came back to a hostile environment here in the States and weren't appreciated for their service — and they had nobody to talk to or talk about and had to suppress their feelings — I came back and became a story," Bleier said. "That was somewhat of a catharsis for me, that I had to talk about those feelings and everything that had taken place. And I've been telling that story for 50 years."

"The Return" tells Bleier's story in a new way, with a moment of weakness actually showing his strength.

Printed with permission: TribLive Monday, August 12, 2019 5:52 p.m. Kevin Gorman is a Tribune-Review staff writer. You can contact Kevin by email at kgorman@tribweb.com

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Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

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

I attended the Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund , June 22, 2019 they added another 260 names to the Wall of Honor. On July 28, 2019, I attended the Korean War Ceremony . On July 15 to 20, I attended the Vietnam Veteran of America 19th National Convention, in Spokane Washington. I went to Committee Meetings on Agent Orange on Dioxin , Health Care Committee. and Government Affairs Committee. On another note, I would like to congratulate John Rowan , on getting reelected National President and all the National Board of Directors that were elected to the board. I would like to congratulate Ned Foote, for receiving the Member of the Year Award. I would also like to thank Suffolk County Chapter 11 and their President Rich Kitson Officers and members for welcoming their new members from Stony Brook Veterans Home, on July 26. God Bless America and Our Troops.

VVA Chapter #11

Clarence Simpson

Chapter 11 held the Monthly meeting in July at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook NY, which has 103 resident / patients of whom are Vietnam Vets. 250 pairs of socks were donated to our vets.

Chapter 11 was instrumental with DAV in providing shuttle service between the Northport VA parking lot and each clinic for our veterans and their family. This month our chapter was a part of the ribbon cutting ceremony to begin the VA's new valet parking service.

Chapter 11 was awarded First Prize for the outstanding presentation for our Colored Guard in the Annual Fourth Of July Southampton Day Parade. Summer Concerts series kicked off its 8th Annual season.

Regrettably, Funeral services were held for Mrs. Mary Langhorn, Gold Star Mother Of PFC Garfield M. Langhorn, MOH. Suffolk County's only recipient Vietnam Veteran and hero of the Congressional Medal Of Honor.



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VVA Chapter #126

Well summer 2019 is just about half over. We all wish all our Brothers, Sisters, and their family and friends a continued happy, healthy, safe and fun filled continued summer.

National Convention:



Our three delegates to the VVA National Convention in Spoken Washington reported this convention was a resounding success for all VVA and AVVA members. It was a long week of breakout meetings, presentations, elections, and the passing and rejection of many very important resolutions and amendments. The opening ceremony to over 600 delegates recognized Native America Vietnam Veterans.

A keynote address by Gen. Wesley Clark was very deep hearted, emotional and well received. Robert Willkie, Secretary of Veterans Affairs addressed the convention and spoke of a veteran's issues that are being addressed and issues that will be addressed in the near future.

The one resolution presented by VVA 126 director Fred Gasior for Korean American Vietnam War Veterans national support, was very well received. This resolution passed with a resounding yes vote. Fred had polished up this resolution prepared by Cmdr. Kim and Barbara St. Martin Cho, and our Korean brothers were very happy and grateful with our efforts. Thank you Fred.

A resolution to change the name of the VVA was not approved.

At the 2021 Convention, the VVA officers and board are directed to investigate the requirements to change the VVA name to a post war name to entice other veterans to join. In this regard, we might have to change over to a 501 c(3).

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There is NO time limit on when or what VVA will or must close its doors. A resolution to cease business on or around 2028 was not approved. The Last Man Standing resolution was also not approved. The VVA approved putting an AVVA officer on the VVA Board.

John Rowan was re-elected President. Congratulations John!

We have a new Treasurer and Secretary due to health issues that prevented the incumbents from running. Our VVA NY State Council President, Ned Foote won an award for Lifetime Achievement to VVA. Congratulations Ned!

And last but not least Mike Moreno, our Chapter VVA 126 director and webmaster accepted the award for the Best Chapter Website of the Year. Please visit our website at www.vva126.org and say hello. We have a little of everything on our website. history, Nam pictures, stories, links, jokes and Nam era music.



Pending Bill: S.1881 - Veterans Expedited TSA Screening Safe Travel Act

Nick De Leo

Introduced in Senate (06/18/2019) 116th CONGRESS 1st Session S. 1881

To provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

June 18, 2019

Mr. Young (for himself and Ms. Duckworth) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL: To provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, **SECTION 1.** Short title.

This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Expedited TSA Screening Safe Travel Act” or the “VETS Safe Travel Act”.

SEC. 2. Availability of PreCheck Program to certain severely injured or disabled veterans.

(a) In general.—Section 44927 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) Availability of PreCheck Program to certain severely injured or disabled veterans.—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—A veteran described in paragraph (2) is eligible for security screening under the Pre-Check Program under section 44919 at no cost to the veteran if the veteran is able to meet the background check and other security requirements for participation in the program.

“(2) **VETERANS DESCRIBED.**—A veteran described in this paragraph is a veteran determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs—“(A) (i) to have had a loss, or loss of use, of a limb; “(ii) to have become paralyzed or partially paralyzed; or“(iii) to have incurred permanent blindness; and “(B) as a result of that loss, paralyzation or partial paralyzation, or blindness, to require the use of a wheelchair, prosthetic limb, or other assistive device to aid with mobility.”.(b) **Coordination on implementation.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly— (1) develop and implement a process for providing the Transportation Security Administration with access to the data needed to validate the eligibility of a veteran for the PreCheck Program

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Eastern District Report

Sam Hall

VVA Chapters #8, #49, #60, #79, #140, #333, #537, #541, #869

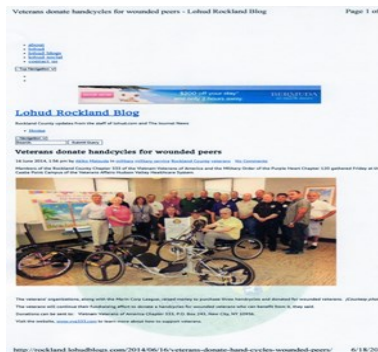
VVA Chapter #333 Report

Roy Tschudy VVA. Chapter 333 V.P.

Named committee: "Veterans Helping Veterans" have initiated beginning in 2013, a gift donation program to assist returning combat injured disabled veterans. The chapter committee has engaged with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs located in Castle Point, NY in conjunction with the supervisor prosthetic representative, and the chief of health care voluntary service.

These donations are in the form of handcycles which are used for rehabilitation and recreational use. Handcycles have been designated for a particular use; the first one to be donated to the Adaptive Sport Center at Castle Point, NY courtesy of the Military Order of Purple Heart, will be used for training purpose's. The item selected, topend speedcycle handcyle is the option of choice for training and rehabilitation by these veterans.

The second handcycle donated by VVA Chapter 333 was chosen and designated for a wounded Afghanistan veteran who suffered an above knee amputation. Sgt. Freddie Delos Santos was severely wounded in October 2008, serving as a gunner on a humvee; they took a direct hit from an enemy RPG during patrol. He has since become an avid competitive speed racer with many contest entered along with many victories.



VVA Chapter 333 is both humbled and honored to participate in this program, we look forward to both build and expand on this endeavor.

Another hand cycle presentation was made by VVA Chapter 333 on June 6, 2015 to another injured Iraqi war veteran. Retired Staff Sergeant Edwin Quiros received spinal cord injuries along with TBI (traumatic brain injury) in addition to a severely damaged right leg that has resulted in fusion of his foot and ankle. Edwin now participates in marathon races with his new cycle and actually won the first race entered!

As of this date 08/01/2019 the program has purchased and donated thirteen HAND CYCLES inclusive of one Mountain Bike, one Kayak with trailer and now an Outrigger Canoe for yet another disabled veteran. We have also provided safety gear for these veterans in the form of helmets, gloves, and other accessories. Chapter 333 HAND CYCLE PROGRAM is a success due to the members and nonmember volunteers who provide their time and effort in making another veteran's life who is in need just a little brighter.

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Dear Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 333,

Please take a few moments to read the submitted letter below. The special **HAND CYCLE PROGRAM** which Marcus and I started in 2013 has been a wonderful success, exceeding all of our hopes. As you know, inclusive of these special cycles, we decided that other sports adaptive equipment not provided by the VA such as the requested **OUTRIGGER CANOE** be available to a properly vetted veteran in need.

Via many fund raisers performed at various locations throughout the year along with chapter 333 member volunteering their time (including nonmember volunteers) this program continues in the basic principal and motto of the **VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**; "**NEVER AGAIN SHALL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER.**" We remain humbled in the knowledge that a veteran in need has now received a gift enabling him/her to return to a life with a ray of sunshine.

Thank you, from Harry Bologna,

After 22 years of military service and multiple combat deployments to the Middle East, I was medically retired due to combat injuries. On October 22, 2015, I stepped on a landmine in Afghanistan and lost both my legs. I recently met fellow SEAL and VVA, Chapter 333 member Marcus Arroyo, who explained your Handcycle and Adaptive Sports program to me. I expressed to Marcus that I don't prefer to handcycle, but I love paddling and have been interested in an outrigger canoe for some time. Marcus explained that your Chapter provides other adaptive sports equipment, and considerations can be made for my needs.

I love paddling because it is the one sport where I feel "normal." There is no advantage or disadvantage to having legs; when I am on the water, I am equal to everyone else. I cannot wait to get this beautiful Kaehele outrigger canoe on the water.

I sincerely appreciate this generous gift VVA, Chapter 333 is providing me. I also want to thank you for what you do for **ALL** our Veterans, not just me.

Again, thank you for considering me for this generous gift.

With kind regards,

VVA National Convention Summary

VVA Chapter #333 -Roy Tschudy & Howard Goldin

2019 - VVA National Convention

Spokane Washington July 16 - 20, 2019

July 16, 2019 Convention registration & credential check

New Delegates briefing -Welcome Home gathering

July 17, 2019

09:00 Opening Ceremonies

Keynote Speaker MOH Recipient Allen Lynch

Speaker: Hon. Robert Wilkie, Secretary of Veterans Affairs



(L-R) Roy Tschudy & Howard Goldin

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Discussed C-5A crash April 5, 1975 and father wounded in Cambodia (Vietnam Viet)

Secretary is a veteran

Blue water Navy Compensation will start January 1st 2020 Processing & accept claims October 1, 2019

Suicide Prevention top of his agenda—Opioid addiction 2nd on agenda—Mission Act—No budget cuts for two years

12:00 - 1:15 PM Lunch

1:00 - 2:30 pm Committee Hearings on resolutions:

Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee - Roy

Large amount of funding budgeted for research A/O

Resolved: VVA calls upon U.S. Congress & VA to recognize work already done by the Birth Defect Research for children. Strongly urge Chapters & State Councils to educate your veterans and area. Strongly urge that VVA request Congress enact legislation that will mandate that the Department of Veterans Affairs or related agencies assist of compensate affected children A/O 4

Resolved: That VVA mandates Biennial revision & distribution update of the “Self-Help guide on Agent Orange.”

A/O 6 - Dioxin Disposal Methods:

Resolved: VVA opposes Ocean Dumping of Dixon - Contaminated materials calling for immediate termination of EPA approved dumping permits and landfill storage permits atop permeable sediments and permeable bedrock. VVA supports research of existing methods of disposal or storage of same.

A/O 7 - Children’s Healthcare:

Resolved: VVA supports a comprehensive healthcare and special needs program and compensation to assist all Veterans Children and subsequent generations who have birth defects, deficiencies or disabilities reasonably associated with paternal exposure to A/O Dioxin and other toxic chemicals while in Military Service

POW/MIA - Howard - Average cost per site, per dig for POW/MIA is \$1,000,000 - DPPA (Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action)

PTSD & Substance Abuse Bob & Tom

2:30 -4:00 pm Committee Hearings on resolutions:

Membership Affairs Committee - Howard. There are 636 delegates attending this convention. There are 84,768 VVA members. Gulf War Veterans “Student Veterans of America has 160,000 membership with no dues required. All multi-media knowledgeable.

Public Affairs - Roy

Public Affairs Community Service

Resolved: VVA encourages Chapters to take the initiative to make a better community for everyone and serve as focal point to promote the interrelationship between Vietnam Vets and the Community. To accomplish this mission, VVA at the National, State & local levels should publish useful materials, including National & State Resolutions, through the media to communicate our message.

(Continue on pg. 18)

Central District Report

Nick Valenti

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

The second quarter of 2019 has seen a lot of activity among Vietnam Veteran Chapters in Central New York.

We have been informed of a fund that has been established to care for veterans from all United States military service branches who are catastrophically wounded, ill or injured from combat operations in Vietnam.

Eligibility Criteria is as follows:

- Blind /legally blind • ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) • Amputation (loss of any limb or extremities)
- PTSD (combat related) - 70% or greater VA rating • Paralyzed (paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia)
- Severe Traumatic Brain Injury (cannot function independently) • Severe illness linked to Agent Orange exposure (recognized by the VA)

Documents Required:

- Copy of DD214 • Photo ID • LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund Application
- VA rating decision letter/ or signed note from medical provider stating diagnosis

For more information, please call 760-725-3680 or contact the "Semper Fi" Fund at Vwest-coastcw@semperfifund.org

Two recent articles one by the "Times Magazine" and the second by "NHK World" - NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) covered the recent arrangement between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense for Agent Orange Clean - Up (in Vietnam).

It has been reported that a 10-year project at Bien Hoa Airport outside Ho Chi Minh City has begun. Bien Hoa was one of the main depots for storing Agent Orange during the war and was only partially cleaned at the end of the war. The dioxin contamination at Bien Hoa is thought to be four times higher than at Da Nang.

The U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs has passed eighteen (18) bills out of committee. The committee worked on suicide prevention, homelessness, and delivering justice for our Blue Water Navy veterans. All bill language can be found on the Committee Repository. Source: <https://veterans.house.gov/news/press-releases/house-committee-veterans-affairs-passes-18-bills-out-committee>

Charity Watch Alarm. Donors need to ask themselves if a particular charity they wish to contribute to is worthy to deliver on its mission. For instance, if a charity set up to aid veterans, spends more on fundraising than the cash contributions it brings in, then the answer may very well be not to donate. If the charity is not able to operate efficiently and in the black perhaps it is wiser to donate to highly rated veterans' organizations.

On May 8th of this year I had the pleasure of speaking at the New York State commemoration of

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the 1969 Vietnam War Gallery. Present at the grand opening were our New York State Council President, Vice President and members of my Chapter #704. The presentation took place on the Concourse level of the Abrams Building in Albany, New York.

My travels through Central District found my wife Pat and I attending a meeting of VVA Chapter #480 in Owego. At the meeting I had the opportunity to meet the members in attendance and we all were able to put our respective names with each face. The meeting was quite lively as the chapter was putting together the finishing touches to its annual "Joseph Kinney Memorial All Night Catfish Derby." This event is a major fundraiser for the Chapter and annually has been quite a success. The Derby not only provided a grand prize of \$3,000 it also provided a Chicken BBQ and a kids' cast-off event with camping availability for the two days long competition.

This is just a quick reminder for all Chapters in Central New York. The 11th Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor "Tribute Ride" will take place on Saturday, July 13, 2019. The 98 - mile ride is free and open to the public - motorcycles, cars, trucks, planes, and helicopters welcome.

Ride begins at 1100 hours (11:00 am) at the Owego Free Academy, Sheldon Guile Blvd., Owego, New York and ends at the American Legion Post #1552, in Hannibal, New York. The itinerary includes a gas and food stop at the American Legion Post #800 in Groton, New York. At ride's end there is food and entertainment.

For more information contact Harvey Baker, Chapter #377 Vietnam Veterans of America at 607-898-3507 or Dan Baker Chapter #17 The Blue Knights at 607-229-8153.

Sponsors of the event include Vietnam Veterans Chapters #377, #480, #704, and Chapter #17 The Blue Knights Motorcycle Club.

Gerri Smith of Vietnam Veterans Chapter #377 produces a great newsletter that everyone should find informative, and entertaining. If you would like her to email you a copy simply contact her at gsmith1264@comcast.net or write to her at 1264 Glatco Lodge Rd., Hanover, PA 17331.

The Vietnam Veterans family is growing in Dryden, New York under the leadership of their president Gary Napieracz. He enjoys keeping the interest of his Chapter on the same page as his community. As recently as a month ago there was a Patriotism Ceremony conducted by his Chapter at Sage Chapel at Cornell University. Three Cornell ROTC cadets received the award from his Chapter. The recipients were Marine Cadet Turner Brown, Airforce Cadet Kayla Cleggett, and Army Cadet Fallon Huck.

VVA Chapter #704 has reached the 82% mark in their fundraising efforts to erect a County Vietnam Memorial. In all there are 29 casualties whose origins have been traced to Cayuga County. The community response has been so strong that all funds donated have come from individuals, and businesses in our Cayuga County community. There are no government grants or revenue streams involved. Everything has been given by the citizens. What a powerful message is made when people control their own destiny.

The community activities of Vietnam Veterans Chapter #944 out of Utica, NY just keeps rolling on. Here are just a few of their activities since my last Central District Report.

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- Chapter #944 awarded (2) Notre Dame ROTC Cadets scholarships at Notre Dame High School
- The Chapter then awarded (6) Proctor ROTC Cadets scholarships at Proctor High School
- (5) ROTC Rome Free Academy Cadets were presented with scholarships.
- Chapter #944 provided a Color Guard at the Rome VA - VA2K event in support of our homeless veterans
- A Color Guard was present at the (7) Veteran Monuments in Utica, NY on Memorial Day
- A Color Guard was present at the dedication ceremony for the New York State Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Griffiss Park, Rome, New York.

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

(Continue from pg. 15) Convention Summary

**opinion of Goldin/Tschudy that Chapter 333 has successfully implemented many programs for Public Consumption and continues in said way for exposure via media and personal contacts.

In example: Annual School Teaching Vietnam Experience, Street Fairs, Fund Raisers, Pig Roast. Student Volunteer participation, cemetery flags, Megan Leavy K-9 (Rex) statue, Boulder Stadium POW/MIA Chairs Seat, VA Clinic New City Bench, N Rockland Jr. ROTC program, Veteran Scholarship program RCC, Student Scholarships for expressions of patriotism, KIA Thank You Memory Names, Chapter 333 Handcycle program. VVA Handcycle program flyer was distributed throughout the convention to many delegates. In speaking with VVA President John Rowan, he sated and acknowledged his awareness of our program and was highly impressed with the success. VVA Chapter 333 is performing in an outstanding way on all accounts regarding publicity and outreach to the public. **It is imperative that we appoint a Public Relations Chairperson who IS computer knowledgeable and will put forth articles to Region 2, Ted Wilkinson and VVA National magazine.**

Healthcare, Bob

Homeless Veterans, Thomas

4:00 - 5:30 pm committee hearings on resolutions:

Constitution Committee

No more annual Dues. There shall be only be life dues.

7:00 - 10:00 pm Regional Caucuses, all candidates made presentations

with Q&A

July 18, 2019 (Thursday)

07:30 am - 8:45 am Service Representatives breakfast (meet & greet) 09:00 Convention General Session: Announcements & VVA Awards

Speaker: General Wesley Clark USA Ref.

- o Graduated first in his class in High School
- o Graduated first in his class at West Point.

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- o Veteran of Vietnam, Purple Heart, shot four times, reflecting on his tour of duty in Vietnam.
- o Lead Commander of NA TO during ethnic cleansings in Yugoslavia ending SERB aggression
- o Spoke about his love, gratitude, respect & brotherhood for Vietnam Veterans.
- o Talked about PTSD & learn your lessons and use them in /life.

Roy presented General Clark with a chapter 333 Challenge Coin and the General stated it was an honor to receive it and will carry it forward.

10:00 am **Working Group 1** presentation re: dissolution discussion with pros and cons and a strategic plan for dissolution via PowerPoint (which is available with request made to Ned Foote). Chapter 333 is part of Region 2. There was a total of 668 Delegates from the entire Country/ N Y. had 90 Delegates present.

Cost of VVA dissolution is approximately \$1,800,000.

Date set for Dissolution 2028 has been tabled until 2021 Convention. It has also been resolved that from now and until the next convention, VVA will come up with a plan to incorporate other organizations and figure out a name change to matched that.

Legacy Program Fund currently at \$3,100,000

Average age of Vietnam Veteran is 72-} years of age. The life expectancy of a 72-year-old is now 85 years.

HC-9 (in constitution book) 9 hours of operation at VA Medical Facility. Resolved: VVA encourages all VA Hospitals and Clinics to provide weekend services and evening appointments for Veterans thru use of flexible employee scheduling. It also encourages hospitals and clinics to diligently evaluate and improve scheduling to decrease waiting time.

12:00 -13:00 lunch

13:30 -14:00 - Group 2 presentation

15:00 - Reading of Constitutional Amendments, all amendments read and voted on.

- o **HC-9** (in constitution book) 9 hours of operation at VA Medical Facility. Resolved: VVA encourages all VA Hospitals and Clinics to provide weekend services and evening appointments for Veterans thru use of flexible employee scheduling. It also encourages hospitals and clinics to diligently evaluate and improve scheduling to decrease waiting time.

- o **VB-27** Reduction of D.LC Survivor waiting period

Resolved: VVA urges Congress to pass appropriated legislation to have the waiting period for dependency & indemnity compensation reduced to 1 year.

- o **Agent Orange 10-** Amended. Ban the manufacturing, sale, and/or use of 2,4-D and Glyphosate.

Resolved: VVA will seek legislation and administrative action to Ban the manufacturing, sale, use of 2,4-D and Glyphosate Worldwide and take steps to promote legislation.

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NOTE: A/O Sprayed during Vietnam War -

The C-130s who flew and dispensed A/O have all been destroyed. All helicopters who did same have been destroyed also. The EPA states Glyphosate will not support VVA.

91 percent of all crops in the U.S.A. are sprayed with some type of chemical dioxin. Farmers are subsidized by the Government for amounts produced being paid additional. Both Farmers & producers are against ending spraying for obvious reasons.

o Veterans incarcerated and in the Justice System Committee. Resolved: To add to the activity of the veterans incarcerated and in the justice system committee program which promotes further service to inmates who face parole and release.

o **Adopted:** Korean American Vietnam War Veterans proposed VVA support Korean American Vietnam War Veterans in their legislative efforts to gain access to the VA Healthcare system especially for the diagnosis treatment and information of Agent Orange Exposure and other related illness including PTSD treatment.

July 19, 2019

07:00- 07:30 POW/MIA ceremony with update. 09:00 - 10:30 National elections by delegates

11:00 continuation of Reading of Resolutions and voting for or against

12:00-Announcements& VVA Awards.

For a closing remark, President Rowan made sure that as per the Delegates vote, VVA will continue into the future and modernize with a name change to incorporate our next ERA of Veteran's who we will *NOT ABANDON*

It is also duly noted that all four VVA-333 delegates networked with other attendees to talk about our chapter programs. Of note, the Alabama delegation donated \$100.00 towards our handcycle program.

VETERANS INCARCERATED AND IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT

Nick Valenti - Chair—315-252-4535 (H)

The Veterans Group of Auburn (VGOA) will be conducting their first official General Membership Meeting (GMM) since the Vietnam Veterans Chapter #205 was officially dissolved. They are keeping with their 2019 calendar of events as outlined in my last "Veterans Incarcerated and in the Justice System Report."

This meeting will feature a banquet which will draw a good number of veterans. The crochet squad continues to build their inventory of donated items for distribution at the annual December Give-a-Way event. Currently it is scheduled for December 6th. The Incarcerated Inmates at Auburn Correctional invite community organizations who are given monetary donations, and crocheted items - for children and adults, all the result of the hard work of the squad.

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

From the first day that I began in the position of New York State Chair for Veterans Incarcerated and in the Justice System I have noticed a shift in the inquiries of our incarcerated veterans. More and more I have questions directed to me with respect to transitioning out of corrections and back into society. The services that are asked about the most are job placement services and homeless service providers. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans - a not for profit corporation- has produced a small booklet that is intended to act as "A Guide for Incarcerated Veterans." When asked, I provide a copy of this resource to any Correctional Facility that wants one.

In New York State there are three organizations that provide employment preparation and job placement services that I am aware of. They are: The Doe Fund Inc., Brooklyn, NY 212-628-5207; Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey Inc., Astoria, NY 973-481-2300 extension 222; and Urban Youth Alliance International Inc., Bronx, NY 973-481-2300 extension 222.

If anyone is aware of other organizations that provide services such as employment preparation, job placement services and homeless services for our men and women veterans transitioning out of Corrections and back into society please contact me with the information and I will share it on a State wide basis to help get the word out.

If you would like a copy of the informational packet you can contact: National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) by writing to 333 ½ Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20003-1148 or calling 202-546-1969; or if you prefer use FAX number 202-546-2063.

Additional contact information is as follows: Toll-free: 1-800-VET-HELP; Fax 1-888-233-8582; Email: nchv@nchv.org and website: <http://www.nchv.org>.

Agent Orange Report

Bill Patton

No Decision Yet From VA on New Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases

The VA has not announced any decision on whether it will provide disability compensation for four diseases linked to exposure to Agent Orange by a scientific panel, breaking a pledge to make a decision by late June. Despite a promise in March from a Veterans Health Administration official that VA would decide within 90 days whether to add four health conditions -- bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson's

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like symptoms -- to a list of diseases presumed related to herbicide exposure, a VA spokesman said last week that none is forthcoming "We have no announcements on Agent Orange presumptive conditions at this time," a VA spokeswoman said Wednesday, three months after a hearing in which a VA official told a senator the decision was pending. During a Senate Veterans Affairs hearing March 26, Dr. Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, said it was his "hope within the next 90 days that we'll have some decisions made. In March 2016, the Institute of Medicine, an arm of the National Academies of Sciences, found evidence that two conditions, bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, are likely linked to Agent Orange exposure and that a third, Parkinson-like symptoms, should be added to the list of diseases presumed to be related to contact with the herbicide. In November 2018, the organization, the National Academies, released a report finding sufficient evidence to link high blood pressure with exposure to Agent Orange. Hypertension previously had been designated as having limited or suggestive evidence that it could be related to contact with Agent Orange. But high blood pressure is so common among older Americans that it has never been added to the presumptive list. Having a diagnosis of a disease on the VA's presumptive list allows a veteran to bypass a requirement to prove that their illness is service-connected to receive disability compensation. Instead, they only need to prove that they served in an area where defoliants were used. In late 2017, former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin said he had decided whether to add several conditions to the presumptive list, and VA sent a recommendation to the Office of Management and Budget regarding the decision. But no further action was taken. Responding to a question from Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, during the hearing, Stone said VA is working "through this right now," adding that the recommendation will go to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie for final approval.

Comprehensive report - Agent Orange Education Campaign

Roy Tschudy - VP VVA Chapter #333

A- Has your child's or grandchild health been affected by your military service?

Veterans

1. Enroll in the VA system
2. Make an appointment for Agent Orange health exam by contacting your local VA environmental health coordinator. The registry evaluation is separate from VA's disability compensation process and does not confirm exposure during service.
3. Obtain your full military records with the assistance of an accredited service officer
4. Make copies of your military records for your children, with instructions to keep them safe and pass them along to your future generations. Your families will need your records for compensation requests.
5. Talk with your children/grandchildren. Tell them where you were, what you did, and let them know of the toxic exposures associated with your service.
6. Educate your physicians. If your physicians are not in the VA health care, inform them of your military service and toxic exposures; request that your military health history be included in

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your medical records.

Families

1. File a claim for the children and grandchildren. If you believe your child or grandchild has a health issue that may be linked to your exposure while serving in our nation's armed forces, have them file a claim with the assistance of an accredited veteran's service officer. Expect these claims to be denied!!! The important thing is to get these kids registered in the VA system. The claims are filed on the VBA form 21-0304 and are sent to the VA regional office in Denver, Colorado. The children's claims are not processed with the veteran's claims and do not add to the veteran's claims backlog.
2. Educate your physicians. Inform them of your parent or grandparent's military service and toxic exposures; request that this military health record be included in your medical records.
3. Collect and protect your full medical records as well as your veteran's military and health records.
4. Register with birth defects research for children. Have your children and their children complete the birth defects registry at www.birthdefects.org. Headed by Betty Mekdeci, BDRC is an independent organization that has been tracking the health of the children and grandchildren of veterans. Telephone number: 407-895-0802.
5. Share your story to alert legislators and the media to this ongoing legacy of war. We are collecting real stories about people. If you wish to share your family's health struggles that you believe are related to military toxic exposures, send your story via email to mporter@vva.org.

My fellow Vietnam veteran's, we are now engaged in a fierce battle for the innocent victims of all wars, our children and grandchildren.

Based on the thousands of anecdotal accounts we have recorded from veterans and their families, we strongly suspect that the children, grandchildren, and in some cases, great grandchildren are manifesting a range of health issues suspected to be as a result of a parent's exposure to toxins while serving in the armed forces.

While our exploration has centered on the families of Vietnam veterans, the veterans of more recent wars also report health issues in their children.

[Http://www.facebook.com/pages/faces-of-agent-orange/187669911280144](http://www.facebook.com/pages/faces-of-agent-orange/187669911280144)

[Http://twitter.com/facesofao](http://twitter.com/facesofao)

[Http://www.youtubr.com/user/facesofagentorange](http://www.youtubr.com/user/facesofagentorange)

Visit: www.vva.org

[Www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org)

Or call: 800-565-4000x146

Committee Report

Region 2 DE-NJ-NY-PA

Ted Wilkinson - Director (585) 322-6722

VVA Total Membership as of July 2019 is 84,996 of which 1,327 are women Veterans

Membership Totals by Region:

Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V
3,934 - 6	14,527 +16	15,065 +48	9,129 +24 1	1,636 +33
Region VI	Region VII	Region VIII	Region IX	
9,511 +30	7,681 +4	3,810 +22	9,635 +55	

Top 25 VVA Chapters in Membership

State	Chapter	Total Members	State	Chapter	Total Members
1. MD	0172	1,012	14. TX	137	417
2. TN	0203	878	15. IL	299	406
3. PA	0862	827	16. WV	628	383
4. MI	0154	793	17. OK	51	373
5. NY	0077	675	18. ND	941	368
6. NY	0020	622	19. NY	0049	354
7. FL	1036	597	20. NJ	0012	347
8. AL	1067	586	21. NY	0082	325
9. CA	0391	581	22. VA	0227	320
10. MD	0451	553	23. CA	0047	314
11. SD	1054	506	24. MI	0267	312
12. NY	0011	496	25. MI	0528	310
13. MO	0317	418			

VVA-New York State Council Officers



(L-R) Pres. Ned Foote, VP Grant T. Coates, Secretary Francisco Muñiz III, Western Director Mike Walker, Central Director Nick Valenti, Southern Director Joe Ingino. Missing in photo are Treasurer Nick DeLeo, and Eastern Director Sam Hall.



Joe Ingino needs a bigger space—feels cramped in.



AVVA Pres. Kathleen Penfield presenting Pres. Foote with AVVA raffle donation to help with the VVA-NYSC Service Officer Program.



The Tres Amigos: Francisco Muñiz III, Joe Ingino and Jerry Kline from Florida

Government Affairs Report

Joe Ingino

Wait continues on additions to VA’s Agent Orange connected illnesses

“They told us they were ready to go, and we haven’t gone anywhere,” said Rick Weidman, executive director for policy at Vietnam Veterans of America. “It feels like they just don’t want to spend any money on this.” Vietnam veteran advocates feel a sense of urgency because the the young-

est who served there are in their early 60s.

Last November, researchers from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine announced they had compiled “sufficient evidence” linking hypertension, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson’s-like symptoms with exposure to Agent Orange and other defoliants used in Vietnam and surrounding countries in the 1960s and 1970s.

VA extends Agent Orange presumption to 'Blue Water Navy' Veterans Eligible Veterans may now be entitled to disability compensation benefits

INSIDE TRUMP’S VA

“No Comment”: Emails Show the VA Took No Action to Spare Veterans From a Harsh Trump Immigration Policy

The VA’s approach differs sharply from the Pentagon’s, which won an exemption for active-duty members of the military.

Top officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs declined to step in to try to exempt veterans and their families from a new immigration rule that would make it far easier to deny green cards to low-income immigrants, according to documents obtained by ProPublica under a Freedom of Information Act request.

The Department of Defense, on the other hand, worked throughout 2018 to minimize the new policy’s impact on military families.

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Burn Pit Research Expands

veterans of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan should have a greater chance of proving that exposure to toxins in burn pits made them sick. The VA is ramping up operations at its recently established Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence. Information gleaned from research at the New Jersey-based facility would be used to formulate appropriate responses to veterans' claims relating to burn pit exposure.

For the First Time Ever, a Federal Court Allows a Whole Class of Veterans to Sue the VA

As reported June 18 by Abbie Bennett for Connectingvets.com, a lawsuit seeking relief for veterans facing long wait times for disability benefits appeals was allowed to move ahead, a federal court ruled. It's the first time a class-action lawsuit against the VA has been allowed by the court. The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims last week ruled that the case could continue, which legal experts say could open up opportunities for similar cases against the Veterans Administration. Last August, the CAVC ruled that class-action suits in "appropriate cases" would be allowed against the VA, but none had risen to that level until *Godsey v. Wilkie*.

VA Privatization Bill Threatens Closure of Key Facilities

In a June 25 article for *American Prospect*, Susan Gordon and Russell Lemle recount how Republican architects of the *VA MISSION Act* want to fast-track a commission that would have expansive authority to close VA hospitals. At a June 20 House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing, legislators considered H.R. 3083, which will accelerate privatization of the VHA by changing the launch date of one of the most problematic parts of the *VA MISSION Act*—the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission. The *VA MISSION Act* mandates the creation of an Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission whose nine members are appointed by the president. These appointments are supposed to include at least three members of veterans service organizations, as well as health-care industry representatives, and other key stakeholders. At the signing ceremony for the *VA MISSION Act*, President Trump insisted he would not be bound by this provision, while simultaneously praising the legislation.

Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz III

I would like to thank all those that contributed articles for this edition of the VVA-NYSC Interchange. When you send in Committee Reports or other information to be placed in the Newspaper, please send the articles in a document format such as Word. **Do Not send PDF** files because I do not have the capability to convert these files into a document formats. If you send photos please identify the individuals in the photos.

The **DEADLINE** for the next edition of the VVA-NYSC Interchange will be **December 10, 2019**. Please send your articles early so that the newspaper could reach your E-mail box before the holidays.

The VVA-NYSC would like to congratulate President Ned D. Foote for his VVA National Life Time Achievement award. He really goes out for this organization. Also, congratulations go to National President John Rowan in having his name placed in the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame. VVA-NYSC has many members who are listed in this site. The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame was created to honor and recognize outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life. Their meritorious service to our nation deserves the special recognition that only a Hall of Fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration. Go to <https://www.nysenate.gov/honoring-our-veterans> Honoring our Veterans | NY State Senate

.Wishing everyone a Happy Labor Day, Veterans Day, Diwali, Yom Kippur, and Halloween, events. Send in your photos of your Chapter's Veterans Day activities for the next edition of the VVA-NYSC Interchange

The Wall That Heals is coming to Long Island, New York!



THE WALL THAT HEALS



Open to the public 24 hours a day from
Thursday, August 29, 2019
through
Sunday, September 1, 2019
until 3:00PM

Where: **Eisenhower Park, Field #2**
1899 Hempstead Tpke,
East Meadow, NY 11554



Opening Ceremony: Thursday, August 29th at 10:00AM
Candlelight Vigil: Friday, August 30th at 7:00PM
Closing Ceremony: Sunday, September 1st at 2:30PM

All ages welcome and encouraged.
Open 24 Hours ~ rain or shine



Heroes Among Us is proud to host The Wall That Heals, a 375-foot, three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located in Washington, DC, bearing the names of more than 58,000 service members who lost their lives in Vietnam.

Visitors will be able to create name rubbings of individual service member's names.



For more information about The Wall That Heals,
visit www.heroesamongus24.org or call (239) 834-9240.

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