

INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 24 Issue 04

Veteran's News that needs to be Read October 2014



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Welcome Home: We Are BACK!!!!!!!

Hope that we can establish the VVA-NYSC On-Line Interchange again.

Editor's Note: We are publishing the Interchange again to just report on Veteran's News, Committee Reports, President's Message and District Directors Reports.

CONGRATULATIONS!

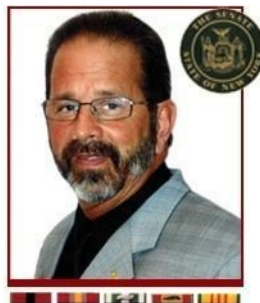
Joe Ingino, newly elected Southern District Director. All Chapters Officers from Southern District should send their E-mail to Joe ASAP. Let's keep the Communication going! E-MAIL: BIGGJOE77@VERIZON.NET

In MEMORIUM

PASTOR 'Pat' TORO, JR.

1946= - 2014

**A GREAT VVA MEMBER & LEADER
REST IN PEACE**





VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2015
 January 24th
 April 18th
 June 20th
 October 10th

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

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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President's Message

Ned D. Foote

Welcome

This is our first edition of our E-Newsletter.

Over the years we have gone from a paper version (which became too expensive) to having the "Interchange" online. After great deal of effort put in producing this resource we found very few of our members reading it.

We knew we had to find another way of reaching our members to keep them informed of what is happening in the Veterans community, our organization of Vietnam Veterans of America and our New York Council and chapters.

This was no easy task and has become more of a nightmare. We hope this first newsletter you will all receive. Francisco is working on the E-news itself and I took the responsibility to get email addresses and set up to send to all. Simple enough???

Well, we needed to get the addresses, so we sent out 5500 postcards to all of our members asking to send us your email if you would like to receive this important communication. We received around 600. Not good! We did get more from National and after months of work we have been able to have an address book of around 2,000 emails. OK how do we now send as we heard that regular email programs only allow a small amount you are able to send. As I use Outlook I can only send 99 a day. Most programs are like that. That is not what we want so I called my service provider, Time Warner and explained what we are trying to do.

They advised that we upgrade to Business class and we will be able to send 500 per hour and 3,000 a day. Perfect. So that we did at a price. OK now with Dana, our website guru, I gathered the addresses and tried to upload to my new TW. Not a chance that it will be easy. Back and forth with TW and Dana. We come to find out we need a software program to be able to send bulk mail using TW as service provider. Another expense but if it works great.

So, we sent out 500 for a test. They seem to have went but I did have 49 come back for various reasons. I believe some of your email programs are picking up this as spam. So just be patient as we work the bugs out.

We would love to hear back from you as what you think, what you would like to have in this newsletter and any other suggestions or comments you have. Please use this address: enews@albany.twcbc.com.

Thanks and we hope you enjoy!



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	Director
Francisco Muñiz III	Ned D. Foote	Grant T. Coates	Stan May	Sam Hall

Note: If you receive a phone solicitation for donation to the New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, please make a donation and information will be sent to you. If you do not want to donate, please just tell them, "No, Thanks" and hang up the phone. Do not call the NYS Attorney Office and complain about the Foundation. If not send in your donation directly to the Foundation at NY Vietnam Veterans Foundation, 48 March Lane, Westbury, NY 11590-6302. Thanks

THE DIRECTORS COMPANY
PRESENTS
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

ALMOST HOME

A NEW PLAY BY
WALTER ANDERSON
DIRECTED BY
MICHAEL PARVA

SEPTEMBER 12 - OCTOBER 12
THEACORN THEATRE

It's the turbulent sixties, and a young Marine returns home to the Bronx, shaken but hopeful for the future. Met by a mother fighting to keep the family going and a father down on his luck, Johnny finds himself caught between his parents' dreams for his future and a corrupt police captain with plans of his own. Walter Anderson's compelling new drama about the wars fought at home asks: whose dreams must be sacrificed to protect the ones we love?

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT!
SEPTEMBER 12 - OCTOBER 12, 2014

SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR
THE MARINE CORP LEAGUE
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OR CALL
212-947-8644

TICKETS \$65 & \$45
Tue, Wed, Thu 7:00 PM, Fri 8pm
Sat 2pm & 8pm, Sun 3pm

TO BUY TICKETS
ONLINE: visit telecharge.com
BY PHONE: call Telecharge at 212-239-6200
OR IN PERSON: Theatre Row Box Office
410 West 42nd Street (between 9th and 10th Aves)

The Directors Company is proud to announce casting for the world premiere of *Walter Anderson's play *ALMOST HOME*, directed by *Michael Parva*. *ALMOST HOME *will star *Joe Lisi*, *James McCaffrey, Jonny Orsini, Brenda Pressley *and Tony Award winner *Karen Ziemba*. Directed by Callaway Award nominee *Michael Parva*, *ALMOST HOME *will open Thursday, September 18 for a limited engagement through Sunday, October 12, 2014.

About the show: In the turbulent sixties, a young Marine returns home to the Bronx, shaken but hopeful for the future. Met by a mother fighting to keep the family going and a father down on his luck, Johnny finds himself caught between his parents' dreams for his future and a corrupt police captain with plans of his own. *Walter Anderson's compelling new drama about the wars fought at home asks: when long-held secrets test a family's strength, whose dreams must be sacrificed to protect the ones we love?

Walter Anderson makes his playwrighting debut with *ALMOST HOME*, having previously written five books and worked extensively as a literacy advocate. A former Marine sergeant and Vietnam veteran, Anderson went on to publish PARADE Magazine for over 30 years, serving as both Chairman-CEO and Editor-in-Chief. Artistic/Producing Director of The Directors Company *Michael Parva* has shepherded over 50 new works, including moving *Irena's Vow *from an extended Off-Broadway run to an Outer Critics Circle Award-nominated Broadway production.

Schedule & Ticketing:

ALMOST HOME will play Wednesday - Saturday at 8pm, Saturday at 2pm and Sunday at 3pm.

Tickets are \$46.25 (including a \$1.25 facility fee) and are available at Telecharge.com <<https://www.telecharge.com/home>.

POW/MIA UPDATE

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED

FOR: There are still 1,641 personnel listed by the Department of Defense as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War, a number that has not changed for several months. The number of Americans announced by DoD as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 942. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War to 1,005. Of the 1,641 total, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,275 (VN-469, VS-806); Laos-306; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7. Over-water losses on DoD's list of No Further Pursuit cases number well over 600.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ON NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY: At the national ceremony held at the Pentagon on September 19th, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel stated in part: "The United States appreciates the ongoing support of many allies and partners across the globe – many represented here today – and on behalf of the men and women of our military, I thank you. You have helped us in recovering our missing. A good example of many of these efforts is Vietnam. Vietnam has been providing an increasing amount of archival documents to support our pursuit of our missing Americans. We appreciate these efforts and will continue to build on this partnership going forward....As many of you know, earlier this year I directed the Defense Department to organize this effort into a single, accountable operation that has the responsibility for personnel accounting resources, research, and operations....resolving issues of duplication and inefficiency, while

also making that organization stronger, more effective, more transparent, and more responsive....DoD has been working closely with everyone who has a stake in this mission – including families, the veterans' service organizations that are represented here today, and I thank them, Congress, and the agencies' workforce. We've made progress in this transformation, and the new Defense Personnel Accounting Agency will achieve initial operating capability this January."

ONGOING REORGANIZATION: The work that is ongoing is led by Senior DoD civilian, Alisa Stack, who is the head of a transition team, the Personnel Accounting Consolidation Taskforce (PACT). The PACT reportedly includes government specialists in each area to be addressed, from structure of the new agency, to the number of personnel, budget requirements, interface with other departments and agencies, archival research, strategy and integration and communication with the families. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations & Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC) Michael Lumpkin both stated that communication with the families must be a very high priority consideration in how the new agency performs. Since her appointment, Ms. Stack and other PACT members, aided by The Clearing (see below) have been interviewing people, in and out of government, and appear to be focused on ensuring that a wide variety of voices are heard, responsible and irresponsible, rational and irrational, so the outcome could

be interesting.

The Clearing, an outside firm, was initially contracted for a reported \$2,000,000, and more recently, an added \$6,689,586 (yes, millions) to obtain input from family members from all wars on their experiences in dealing with various accounting community organizations. In addition to DPMO, JPAC and LSEL (specifically named in Secretary Hagel's restructure directive and by Congress), these include the Service Casualty Offices, AFDIL and DIA's Stony Beach POW/MIA team. The Clearing is reportedly also interviewing and receiving input from all US officials who wish to provide it concerning the overall mission and their own specific agency/organization. Apparently, the number of people willing to talk with The Clearing personnel is significant, and continuing; thus, the need for additional funding to keep them engaged.

The Clearing can be reached by emailing voiceofthefamilies@theclearing.com and is seeking views from all who are willing. Family members from all wars are urged to provide their views and, in light of the comparatively small number of Vietnam War family members, the League is hopeful that ALL Vietnam War families take this opportunity to remind members of PACT, The Clearing and senior DoD officials that uncertainty about Vietnam War missing men remains a significant factor for the families. The greatest uncertainty surrounds Vietnam War missing personnel, though the same can be said of a relatively small number of Vietnam War servicemen who were last known alive or in POW camps, but never (Continue on pg. 7)

Cont. from Page 6
POW/MIA Report

turned; therefore, the need for concrete answers is paramount, more so than identifications from remains recoveries of known dead from earlier wars and conflicts. This is particularly relevant to disinterment's of personnel buried as "unknowns" in American cemeteries. Their families know they perished, sadly. The League supports accounting for losses in WWII, Korean War and Cold War, as an important, though vastly different mission than ending uncertainty with answers.

Following review and approval by newly confirmed Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P) Christine Wormuth, PACT recommendations on implementation were provided to recently appointed and confirmed Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef) Robert Work. With his approval, implementation began and several timelines were announced. Incremental steps were set to begin, including naming of an Interim Director for the new Defense Personnel Accounting Agency sometime this fall. The first of many adjustments applies to the budget and to communications, with instructions to begin acting now as one agency, with the Interim Operational Capability (IOC) set for January 15, 2015. Full Operational Capability (FOC) is set to occur on January 15, 2016. Until the start-up date early next year, DPMO, JPAC and LSEL, plus all other active elements of the accounting community, have been directed to continue work uninterrupted by reorganization/transformation/consolidation plans and implementation.

Since Secretary of Defense Hagel personally directed the "complete reorganization" of the accounting

community and offered assurance to the League of his personal engagement, it is to him the League will look for confirmation that he is satisfied with the prospects for success of the reorganized community. Several interim briefings have been given, though without details or specifics in which we have keen interest. Another conference call briefing is scheduled for September 26th with recently confirmed Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Christine Wormuth. Hopefully, the briefing from USD(P) Wormuth will provide specifics. Also, hopefully, the PACT will become more transparent and consult knowledgeable, responsible current and former officials, as well as the League and the major national veteran organizations, before plans are finalized. Valid input into the process can help assure acceptance by those most directly impacted, the Vietnam War POW/MIA families and family members of US personnel lost in earlier wars and conflicts.

JPAC OPERATIONS: On August 26th, JPAC hosted POW/MIA Consultations with the Lao that were underwhelming in terms of results achieved, but important in that views were exchanged, and the US request for renewed cooperation by Laos on archival documents was not rejected. Little progress was made on other requests by both governments. The lack of positive Lao responsiveness was somewhat predictable, based on uncertainty within the Lao leadership brought about by the recent untimely death of the Lao Ministers of Defense and Public Security. Another probable reason was the lack of US dependability with on-again, off-again

field operations due to budget fluctuations, sequestration and revised JPAC operational plans. Field operations are now ongoing with a larger team, but not yet the full number allowed of 53 US personnel operating in-country at the same time. Operations in Cambodia have been sporadic at best, and only one field operation occurred in 2014, postponed twice in 2013. The Stony Beach Cambodia specialist is permanently in-country and conducts investigations when and where needed. There are no identified sites currently awaiting recovery; therefore, no JFAs are scheduled in Cambodia until early 2015. For the first time in over 20 years, technical level talks are not being held with Cambodia in FY2014, ending September 30th, but plans are being considered for senior level discussions with Cambodia's POW/MIA Committee leadership before the end of the calendar year. Another series of field operations took place in Vietnam from August 5th to September 7th that included a Joint Forensic Review (JFR), and it was a busy year in Vietnam with regularly scheduled, implemented joint operations. DIA's Stony Beach is still engaged, but on a rotating TDY schedule that is unacceptable and needs to be made permanent, especially with the ever-increasing, broadening military-to-military cooperation. On September 23rd, JPAC hosted annual Technical Talks with Vietnamese counterparts.





THE VETERANS HEALTH ALLIANCE OF LONG ISLAND ALONG WITH THE LONG ISLAND STATE VETERANS HOME AND FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE ARE EXCITED TO PRESENT A CONFERENCE FOCUSING ON CARING FOR THE AGING VETERAN AND THEIR CAREGIVER

When: Saturday October 25th 2014

8:00am – 3:00pm

Where: Farmingdale State College, Roosevelt Hall

2350 Broadhollow Rd, Farmingdale, NY 11735

Did you know that the average age of NYS Veterans is 62 years old?

Long Island is home to a high percentage of WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam Veterans, some of whom are dealing with health challenges, financial distress, and obstacles related to benefits. In addition, those that provide care to veterans, whether an older spouse, or an adult child, face their own variety of challenges.

This conference will feature keynote speeches by local experts and workshops on the following topics:

Accessing NYS Veterans Homes

VA Services for Older Veterans - Aid and Attendance Benefits - Assisted Living - "Aging in Place" using community resources - Caregivers Needs - Legal Issues - Wellness - "When a Veteran Passes Away"

Pre-Registration Required – Please call Debra Scales 516-489- 2322 ext. 1250

Or Register On-line at <http://tinyurl.com/agingvets2014>

***A light breakfast and lunch will be served**

VETERAN'S NEWS

VVA supports H.R. 5484 the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2014

Legislative Alert – Ask your Representative to Support H.R. 5484 the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2014

Representative Dan Benishek, (MI-1), has introduced H.R. 5484, the Toxic Exposure Research of 2014 formerly H.R. 4816, the Toxic Exposure Research and Military Family Support Act of 2014, VVA strongly supports this bill, which reflects positively on one of our foremost legislative goals. Not only would it help achieve a measure of justice for the innocent victims of the use of toxic substances in times of war, but it offers unlimited possibilities for scientific research into the effects of these toxic chemicals.

This comprehensive legislation will construct a common mechanism and procedures that will encompass all past and future toxic wounds, as needed.

VVA urges you to go to our Legislative Action Center site at <http://capwiz.com/vva/home/> and Take Action NOW by entering your zip code and sending the prepared letter to your U.S. Representative, asking them to please join their colleagues Brownley, (CA-26), Conyers, (MI-13) Honda (CA-17) and Rahall (WV-3) to co-sponsor H.R. 5484, the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2014.

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

VA Lays Groundwork for Private Health Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to outsource issuance and administration of the "Veteran's Choice Card," which will allow veterans to seek health care from private providers outside the Veterans Health Administration network of 950-plus hospitals and clinics. A third-party administrator will manage the creation and distribution of the Veteran's Choice Card, which vets can use to obtain services from private sector clinicians and hospitals. The card will contain the veteran's name, an identifying number that is not a Social Security number, and VA provider contact information. Veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA health facility will be allowed to seek private care.

House Passes Veteran Bills

The U.S. House of Representatives passed four veterans related bills: (1) [H.R. 3593](#) would direct the inclusion of an outside entity to assist in the management of VA's major facility construction efforts; (2) [H.R. 5404](#) would extend a number of expiring current authorities and critical programs at both VA and the Department of Labor; (3) [H.R. 4276](#) would require VA to provide reports to Congress on the pilot program for assisted living services for veterans with traumatic

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brain injury; and (4) [S. 2258](#) would authorize a cost-of-living adjustment for disabled veterans receiving disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. S. 2258 will be sent to the president to be signed into law.

Yoga May Help Vets with PTSD

A new study has found that yoga may help soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The new study is the first of its kind to provide scientific support for the benefits of yoga's breathing techniques for PTSD patients in a randomized and controlled (though small) long-term study which monitored effects of yoga over the course of the year. The study focused on the effects of sudarshan kriya yoga, a practice of [breathing-based meditation](#) which has a balancing effect on the autonomic nervous system. An abstract of the report is available on the [Journal of Traumatic Stress website](#).

IG Now Says Waitlist Led to Vets Deaths

In a stunning reversal, the Department of Veterans Affairs' acting inspector general now says that long wait times at VA health care facilities in Phoenix did contribute to a number of veterans' deaths. Acting Inspector General Richard Griffin made the statement Sept. 17 in a hearing before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Testimonies from and an archived webcast of the hearing are available on the (<http://veterans.house.gov/hearing/scheduling-manipulation-and-veteran-deaths-in-phoenix-examination-of-the-oig%E2%80%99s-final-report>) House Committee on Veterans Affairs website. An additional oral statement by Inspector General Griffin is available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (<http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/statements/VAOIG-statement-20140917-oralgriffin.pdf>) Office of Inspector General website. The OIG's final report, 'Review of Alleged Patient Deaths, Patient Wait Times, and Scheduling Practices at the Phoenix VA Health Care System' is available (<http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-14-02603-267.pdf>) online. A statement by Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is available (<http://veterans.house.gov/press-release/chairman-miller-statement-on-new-revelations-regarding-va-oig-review-of-phoenix-va>) online.

VA Caregiver Program Excludes Many

The unprecedented package of caregiver benefits includes training to help to ensure patient safety; cash stipends to partially compensate for caregiver time and effort; caregiver health coverage if they have none, and guaranteed periods of respite to protect against burn out. However, most family members who are primary caregivers to severely ill and injured veterans are excluded.

(<http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2014/09/hobbled-va-caregiver-program-dims-chance-of-expansion/>) Read the entire 'Military Update' story on the Military Advantage.

Discharge Upgrades May be Possible for Vets with PTSD

As many as 80,000 veterans who suffered from post-traumatic stress and received Other Than Honorable discharges can use evidence of their PTSD to petition service boards to upgrade the bad paper discharge.

Read more: <http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2014/09/80000-vets-with-ptsd-could-gain-discharge-upgrades/#ixzz3Ep5tGFsy>

MilitaryAdvantage.Military.com

Central District Director**Nick Valenti**

The following is what has been shared with me by Central District Chapters:

No Report - Chapters 085 Oneonta; 103 Syracuse.

Chapter 205 Auburn Correctional Facility - VVA Chapter #205 has partnered with Chapter #24 Veterans of Modern Warfare. Jointly, they put out a monthly newsletter. Their June and July newsletters were shared with me. The newsletter is shared with members of both organizations. In June the Chapters celebrated "Juneteenth." This event commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery in the state of Texas in 1865. The VVA motto of "Never Again will one generation of veterans abandon another" meshes well with the VMW motto "Veterans, Family, Community."

Chapter 377 Dryden –

May 18 - installed flag bunting on 27 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor signs on Route 38.

May 22 & 23 - Landscaped six of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor signs on Route 38.

July 4 - Provided a color guard for the 4th of July parade in Candor, New York.

July 26 - Organized and participated in the 6th Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Route 38 Tribute Ride.

August 16 - Participated in a fund raiser for the annual Veterans Day ceremony and Parade in Ithaca, New York.

September 19 - Organized and will participate in the 24th Annual POW/MIA Watchfire at Meyers Park, Town of Lansing, N.Y.

No Report - Chapter 480 Owego

Chapter 704

June 14 - Provided a color guard for Flag Day ceremony in conjunction with local Knights of Columbus Council.

June 28 - Held a joint Dinner Cruise with American Legion Post 1776 for members and significant others.

July 4 - Provided a color guard for the July Parade in the Cayuga County township of Owasco, New York.

July 26 - Provided a color guard in the City of Auburn, New York for the 6th Annual Vietnam Veterans Highway of Valor Route 38 Tribute Ride.

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August 16 - Sponsored and participated in the 6th Annual Class "C" Stand Down with Pointman Ministries at Case Mansion in the City of Auburn, New York.

No Report - Chapters 708 Rome; 803 Elmira; 827 Ilion.

Chapter 896 Endicott

May 26 - Participated in the Binghamton, New York Memorial Day Parade.

May 31 - Fundraiser at Sam's Club.

June 14 - Assisted Johnson City Elks with Flag Day ceremony at the stadium.

June 21st & 22nd - Annual Bass Tournament.

July 19 - Fundraiser at Sam's Club.

September 6 - Fundraiser at Sam's Club.

No Report - Chapter 94

Eastern District Directors Report 09/12/14

Sam Hall

My report begins with my attendance at the funeral service for a board colleague, friend, and veterans advocate, Pat Toro. Our organization at both the National and State level was well represented. He will be missed.

On July 29th I represented President Ned at the VHA Region Two Management Administrative Council Meeting (MAC) conducted in Albany, NY. The meeting was mandated by VA Central Office in the wake of the negative press and issues that the VA had encountered. They were looking for issues that the various Veteran Service Organizations (VSO'S) had identified as needing to be addressed within the respective VAMC'S and CBOC's across Region Two.

On August 5th – August 10th I attended the VVA National Leadership Conference in Wichita, KS. I attended the following training sessions: Opening Ceremony with Key Note Speaker Pat Williams, General Manager of the NBA Orlando Magic. His talk on leadership was inspiring and well received., The Power of MyHealthVet & EBenefits, Flag Protocol and Misconceptions, Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting – How To, Beating Stress, Ask A “Top Gun” Service Officer, (they obviously didn't want the real top guns because they didn't request either Ben Weisbroth or Dee Garcia), the VVA Advanced Service Officer Training, Health and Wellness and Alternatives for Pain Management, VVA Awards Banquet, and the closing ceremonies.

All of the sessions that I attended were conducted in a very professional manner and provided a lot of different perspectives on the subject matter. The most difficult part of the training is deciding on which

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of the training sessions to attend because there are at least three (3) sessions running concurrently. The real education however, comes from listening to the side meetings and conversations taking place in the hallways.

It's amazing how much misinformation and confusion exists among our VVA membership on a national level. After spending time at the Leadership Conference it makes one appreciate the proactive and professionalism of our State Council inclusive of our delegates and officers. Our chapters can be proud of the contributions that they make for both their membership and nonmember VVA Era veterans.

VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT 09/12/2014

Sam Hall – Chair

All Benefit applications forwarded to a regional office are being date stamped and forwarded to a contractor for scanning. The packets are then returned to the respective Regional Office for processing.

DIC Claims are being automatically processed upon receipt by the VA Pension Center if the death certificate clearly indicates that the veteran died of a service connected disability or if the veteran has been rated 100%, permanent and total for ten (10) years. The same action is taking regarding the death / burial benefit.

As the Vietnam Era Veterans are starting to become retirement age the VA has seen a significant increase in requests for service-connected disabilities and Medical Health Services.

If you have submitted a claim don't hit the panic button or get all stressed out if the ebenefits program does not reflect what you think it should. Your best bet is to continue to work thru your accredited Veterans Service Officer.

Remember to take any percentage increase for a service-connected disability that you may have received to your local tax assessor for an increase in the veteran exemption on real property that you may be entitled to.

At our age we should all be completing a Paper Safe!!!!

VVA Chapter #20 Makes Donation to the Service Officer Program



VVA Chapter #20 Member/Delegate Jerry McDermott presents a check to Pres. Ned D. Foote of \$1,000 for the Service Officer Program of VVA-NYSC.

Hope that some of the other Chapters within VVA-NYSC will follow their lead in helping to fund this special program.

COMMITTEES	CHAIRPERSON	E-MAIL ADDRESS
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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
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Women Veterans	Women Veterans	
Special Events	Special Events	