HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY!

“This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.”
MEMORIAL REPORT
Website  http://rochestervietnammemorial.org/

Remembering our Fallen Heroes - February

Richard Francis  Dunham  2-1-1945
William Frederick  Marasco  2-4-1949
Frederick Carl  Webber  2-5-1947
Robert Waldron  Forbush, Jr.  2-5-1948
Rocky August  Burns  2-5-1951
Michael Gordon  Hoff  2-9-1945
Ronald James  Fegan  2-11-1941
John Bigelow  Moore  2-12-1937
James  Thacker  2-12-1938
Richard Albert  Smith  2-12-1945
Ernest Joseph  Grassi  2-13-1947
Graham  Hughes  2-13-1949
Russell B.  Luker  2-17-1933
Elmer Edward  Ellsworth  2-18-1948
Peter David  Matarazzo  2-20-1949
Albert Leroy  French  2-23-1928
Paul Richard  Fusco  2-23-1947
Cornelius William  Strassner  2-24-1947
Richard Eugene  Colburn  2-24-1950
George Warren  Fischer, Jr.  2-25-1945
John  Harden  2-26-1945
George Alfred  Marks, Jr.  2-27-1945
John Robert  Marsh  2-27-1949
James Richard  Dennison  2-28-1934

Memorial Tours & Presentations
Persons interested in onsite tours or presentations at schools or organizations, contact:
Chuck Macaluso
(H) 585-225-8288
chuckmac66@yahoo.com
VETERANS WALK COMMITTEE
154 Mendota Drive
Rochester, New York 14626

From:
Name: ____________________________
Address: _________________________
City/Zip: _________________________
Phone: __________________________

The Veterans Walk Committee of Chapter 20, VVA wants to thank you for your purchase of a personalized, engraved paver brick.

Each paver brick (4" x 8") can have from one to three lines of engraved information. The cost will be $50.00 per brick. Make checks or money order payable to:

VVA Chapter 20, Veterans Walk

The engraved line(s) can include any of the following information:

- Full name
- Branch of service, rank
- Dates of service (1967-1969, etc.)
- Conflict (WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, etc.)

Please print the information you would like engraved on the brick below. (Maximum of 14 letters/numbers, including spaces per line).

1. ________________

2. ________________

3. ________________

Return the completed form to the - Veterans Walk Committee, c/o Chuck Macaluso, 154 Mendota Drive, Rochester, New York 14626.
Include: Payment and "Proof of Service" for above recipient.

Please Note: Engraved bricks will be installed prior to Memorial Day and Veterans Day (twice annually).
Questions please call Chuck or Joan Macaluso as 585-225-8288
A local playwright, Spencer Christiano gave a one man show, “M.I.A.” on January 3rd-5th at the MuCCC Theater in Rochester, NY. This is the story of Lt. Col. Joseph Christiano who was missing in action, during the Vietnam War, for 46 years. His family was notified on the night of Christmas Eve, 1965.

The story was told by Spencer Christiano. He relates memories of his great uncle, from his family members and his first-hand experience traveling to Arlington National Cemetery to finally lay Lt. Col. Christiano to rest. Our Chapter 20 Honor Guard participated in the military funeral for Joe and his crew members.

Spencer Christiano’s play deals with a powerful subject matter, but the story has moments of laugh-out-loud humor. The story and recollections are accompanied by pictures of family members, newspaper clippings, and site locations. This story is one many of us may be familiar with, making the audience feel truly connected to the author and his family.

Spencer breaks the play up into three segments; Joe’s life before the war in Vietnam, the family’s recovery from his loss and their search to find him at the crash site in Laos. Spencer tells these stories by going back and forth in time, putting everything in place, as the play progresses. Between stories, he presents and displays different artifacts from Joe’s life, like his uniform, medals, trophies and songs from the early sixties. These transitions are some of the most well designed moments of the show.

This story of a family’s loss is one that we all can relate to. Although, the story is about one man, it is in a way about all veterans and a nation’s struggle to honor them. The audience leaves with tears in their eyes, especially me, and hope in their hearts that was assisted by a “hug filled reception.” The play was performed as a benefit for Chapter 20 and raised over $500 and Spencer plans on pursuing additional performances. If you would like to contact him, his phone number is (585) 519-1350. Many thanks to Spencer Christiano, from Chapter 20, on a great performance.
On January 2\textsuperscript{nd}, my wife and I as well as several other chapter members had the opportunity to attend the one-man play presented by Spencer Christiano, the great-nephew of Col. Joseph Christiano who was repatriated with his crew in 2012. This was a spectacular event that brought to life the events of Col. Christiano’s family and personal life prior to and including his military career and up to his fateful mission on December 24\textsuperscript{th} 1965. This brought tears to many of those who attended and a standing ovation was rightly presented to Spencer after the show for all that he has done to keep his Uncle’s memory alive and to honor the Veterans of the Vietnam War.

At this present time, there still has not been any reports from the Defense Prisoner of War* Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action (JPAC) and the National League of Families concerning our missing servicemen. The total number of Americans missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War still stands at 1642.

There are reports of recoveries and identification of individuals from the following wars:

- **PFC Jerry P. Craig**, U.S. Army was lost December 2, 1950 South of the Chosen Reservoir, North Korea. He was accounted for on November 19, 2013 and was buried with full military honors in Leesville, Louisiana on December 19, 2013.
- **CPL. William A. Newton**, U.S. Army was lost on November 30, 1950 near Kunu-ri, North Korea. He was accounted for on November 20, 2013 and was buried with full military honors in Kountze, Texas on December 20, 2013.
- **SFC. Joseph E. Grant**, U.S. Army was lost November 30, 1950 near Somindong, North Korea. He was accounted for on November 26, 2013 and was buried with full military honors in Inglewood, California on December 28, 2013.
- **CPL. Joe W. Howard**, U.S. Army was lost on December 1, 1950 near Kunu-ri, North Korea. He was accounted for on December 5, 2013 and was buried with full military honors in Jacksonville Florida on January 9, 2014.
- **CPL. Cletus R. Lee**, U.S. Army was lost on November 28, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on December 7, 2013 and will be buried with full military honors in Bremen, North Dakota in the spring of 2014.

Until they are all home,
We must continue to pray and have faith for they will never be forgotten.

**Current U.S. POW/MIA Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War</th>
<th>Current Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>3,346</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>73,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>7,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Storm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>3 DoD Civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1 (POW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidates’ Night - Come hear those people running for an elected position in your Chapter

Thursday April 10, 2014
Chapter Elections – Attend and vote for those people who will be governing your Chapter

Saturday, April 26, 2014
Chapter 20’s Annual Dinner
THE VETERANS CAFÉ AND GRILLE – MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

There’s a red, white and blue sign in the window of the Veteran’s Café and Grille that says simply “Welcome Home”. And in the four years that Lou Mascherino and his wife Rhonda have operated the café it has indeed become a home of sorts for vets – a combination diner, military museum and hangout for those who have served America. The walls and ceiling are crowded with hundreds of items from photos and uniforms to military patches and flags. And, if a veteran can’t afford a meal, well, they eat for free. “that’s part of our thing. We won’t ever let a veteran go hungry,” said Mascherino, who served in the Army for three years back in the 1970s.

The café opened on Veterans Day in 2009 at another location nearby in this tourist resort. A short time later, Rhonda Mascherino put an item on the back of the menu suggesting that people bring in 5-by-7 family photos of those in the military. It started as a trickle, but then over the months and years people began almost daily dropping off items from their closets and attics. “Almost every day we get something in. People come in and say I’ve got my grandfather’s uniform from World War II or I’ve got his picture,” said Lou Mascherino – nicknamed Mash.

The café opened when the Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center, a local nonprofit that helps vets tap into government and other resources, thought a small café might be a good fundraising tool. That idea really didn’t work out, but Lou Mascherino, who has worked for decades in the local dining industry, decided he wanted to go out on his own and said he would take on running the café. It was touch and go for awhile but now the café has found its niche, moving earlier this year into larger quarters.

The café works closely with the Welcome Home and Resource Center as well as other veterans’ organizations. “If a veteran comes in here, Mash will call and the first thing we find out is what their needs are,” said Kris Tourtellotte, who founded the Resource Center based in nearby Little River, S.C. “If we get a vet walking in here and he needs help, everybody helps.” The Veterans Café also helps the center and other veterans’ groups stage cookouts and other fundraisers. (Editor’s note – Kris Tourtellotte is a former Chapter 20 member who moved to South Carolina many years ago.)

###

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

June 14 1775

Oct. 13 1775

Nov. 10 1775

Aug. 4 1790

Sept. 18 1947
Since February 2 is Super Bowl XLVIII, I will use a football analogy to encourage my fellow Chapter 20 members to keep in the game concerning participation in our current Fit Vet Challenge competition. Yes, the first quarter (month of January) is over, and the results are being tabulated for all the service branch participants who joined in the January weigh-in. Even if you did not join us for the opening kick-off, there is still plenty of time to begin a new you in 2014. Yes, you can practice good, healthy eating habits coupled with light to moderate exercise and keep a 2014 New Year’s Resolution going.

Now we are starting the second quarter (February) for the 6th Annual Fit Vet Challenge. Again, you can join us, for this is a four quarter game (January thru April) so there is plenty of time to step up and get moving in the right direction. Keep in mind that no one is asking you to deny anything you like to eat… no, just eat less of it! If there is a simple pleasure that you really enjoy, certainly enjoy it. All we are asking is that you don’t “supersize” it. Think portion control; think smaller sizes, less helpings on the plate. Just try it for one day or one meal a week and see the results.

Remember, as we grow older, our metabolism changes, so too we become less active, and perhaps do less recreational activities. Do we really need to eat 3,000 to 4,000 calories per day at our age? What you don’t burn up in moving and getting around has got to go somewhere! The habit of “actively thinking” about what and how much you are eating is the GOAL.

Again, thinking about the football analogy, we need to keep getting first downs so we can stay on the field and continue to play. Small efforts will produce yardage and, in this case, good habits, better health, and less to carry around as we keep moving toward the goal line. While you have the time between plays, take a moment to read a package of anything in the cupboard that you eat, check out what an actual serving size is and see if it’s what you actually eat. For me, I know the answer is I don’t know! I have some work to do on “actively thinking” about just what a serving size is. This will help me keep the extra calories out of my daily intake. Try your own method, but try to move a little more, eat a little less, smile more and frown less while you take the field for the second quarter of our competition in February. Good luck!

FYI, I came upon the following information and want to share it with anyone who has PTSD. I’ve heard about the possible connections with cardiac risk factors and veterans with PTSD, but this is the first time I’ve seen a medical study and references to myocardial ischemia and PTSD. I would anyone to share this information with their medical professionals (VA or non-VA staff) and to alert your family members also. Sharing information is important to all in our veteran community so please pass this along as needed. Thank you!

PTSD Update 158  ➡ Study Shows Myocardial Ischemia Link

Patients with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were more likely to have myocardial ischemia on exercise treadmill testing than those without the disorder in a recent prospective cohort study. In the Mind Your Heart Study, researchers evaluated data collected from 663 participants treated on an outpatient basis at two Veterans Affairs Medical centers (VAMCs) in California between 2008 and 2010. Incidence of myocardial ischemia (reduced blood flow to the heart) was compared between patients with and without symptoms of PTSD as indicated by the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale. Evidence of ischemia was determined via exercise treadmill testing. PTSD was observed in 35% of the cohort, including...
210 patients with full PTSD and 20 with partial PTSD. Myocardial ischemia on testing was observed in 17% of patients with PTSD compared with 10% of those without.

A significant association between ischemia and PTSD remained after adjustment for factors that included age, sex, history of cardiovascular disease (CVD), obesity, sleep quality, depression and the presence of traditional cardiac risk factors. Exclusion of patients with prior CVD did not eliminate the significance of this association. The use of continuous PTSD symptom score as the predictor of ischemia also yielded a significant association with myocardial ischemia. Sensitivity analysis adjusting for peak exercise capacity during testing did not significantly alter results, nor did exclusion of patients with partial PTSD from analysis or the addition of those with partial PTSD to the non-PTSD group.

“While research continues on casual mechanisms, providers still have opportunities to intervene and prevent potentially disabling or fatal CVD events in patients with PTSD,” the researchers wrote. “….Discussing how PTSD can have a harmful impact on physical health may provide additional encouragement for patients to seek treatment. Our finding that PTSD symptom severity was linked to CVD risk also suggests that improving symptoms could lower cardiac risk, though it would be important to examine this in PTSD treatment trials.” (Source: Cardiology)

Finally, in honor of our 16th President’s birthday on February 12th, I offer the following quote: “Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere.” Abraham Lincoln.

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**VA Dental Insurance Pilot Implemented**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has implemented a comprehensive national dental insurance program for enrolled veterans and Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiaries. This three-year pilot project is the first national dental insurance program authorized by the U.S. Government for eligible VA beneficiaries.

Those eligible for the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) can purchase a policy through Delta Dental and MetLife at a reduced cost. Purchasing a dental plan does not affect a veterans’ eligibility for VA dental services and treatment.

Covered services include diagnostic, preventive, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment. Delta Dental and MetLife are offering multiple plans. Each participant pays a fixed monthly premium for coverage and any co-payments required.

Dependents of veterans, except those eligible under CHAMPVA, are not authorized to participate in the program. Those individuals may be eligible for separate dental insurance coverage offered by the carriers.

For more information about VADIP and to verify your eligibility, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

*(from the January/February 2014 issue of DAV Magazine)*
Mike General, Membership Chair

Chapter 20 Membership currently is at 570 members and AVVA is at 46 members as of 12/31/13.
We have not signed up a single member in the last month for the Chapter or Associates. Need your help in recruiting new members.

Chapter 20 Membership is open to U.S. Veterans who served active duty (other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 07, 1975, or any duty location between August 05, 1964 and May 07, 1975. Membership includes a subscription to our award-winning newspaper The BTL, and The VVA Veteran, bringing you updates on issues and legislation affecting veterans, as well as unique articles on the people, places, and history of the Vietnam experience.

Membership in the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America is open to anyone; you do not need to be a Veteran.

WE Need New Members! Membership Applications are available on our Website, in the BTL, or by contacting me. (mwgeneral@aol.com)

Recent Chapter Members

Adrian “Tuna” Fortuna
Navy Seabee
1968-69

Arnie Anderson
Army – 198th Infantry
1966-68

Ron Jones
Army
1971-82
NEW Veteran ID Card System

In 2013 the VHA’s Health Eligibility Center launched a redesigned, web-based Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) process. This new process will replace the current process through which Veterans are issued a Veterans Identification Card.

The new VHIC process will require Veterans to provide specific documentation to prove their identity and resident address. The identification and address information on these documents must match the information listed in the National Enrollment Database before the Veteran’s picture can be taken and an identification card requested.

To be eligible for a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC), the Veteran must meet the following eligibility criteria:
1 – Be eligible for VA medical benefits
2 – Be enrolled in the VA Healthcare system
3 – Provide required documentation to prove identity and current address
4 – Identification and current address information must match information in National Enrollment Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Identification (Government Issues ID – must not have expired)</th>
<th>Secondary Identification (must not have expired)</th>
<th>Proof of Address (if a bill or statement is used, the date must be within the last 30 days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-Issued Driver’s License</td>
<td>Social Security Card</td>
<td>Primary ID Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Passport or US Passport Card</td>
<td>Original or Certified Birth Certificate</td>
<td>Secondary ID Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Passport with Form I-94 or Form I-94A</td>
<td>Certification of Birth Abroad Issued by the Department of State (Form FS-545)</td>
<td>Phone Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Military ID Card</td>
<td>Certification of Report of Birth issued by the Department of State (DS-1350)</td>
<td>Electric Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Military Dependent ID Card</td>
<td>Voter’s Registration Card</td>
<td>Fuel Bill (Oil, Gas, propane)</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card</td>
<td>Native American Tribal Document</td>
<td>Credit Card Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Passport that contains a Temporary I-551 Stamp</td>
<td>US Citizen ID Card (Form I-197)</td>
<td>Checking/Savings Account Statement</td>
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<td>Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)</td>
<td>Identification Card for use of Resident Citizen in the United States (Form I-179)</td>
<td>Local Personal Property Tax Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766)</td>
<td>Canadian Driver’s License</td>
<td>VBA Corporate Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport from the Federated State of Micronesia (FSM) or the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) with Form I-94 or I-94A</td>
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<tr>
<td>School ID</td>
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</table>
Not Quite A Tax Break for Veterans

In December of 2013, Governor Cuomo signed a law that amends the real property tax law. Bill S-1199 authorizes the governing body of a school district, after public hearings and adoption of a resolution, to grant eligible veterans an exemption from their school taxes.

The new law revises Section 458-a of the real property tax law; specifically, the Veterans Alternative Exemption. New language added by the new law includes “OR SCHOOL DISTRICT” in several spots so that school taxes may be affected as well as property taxes and in §458-a, 2, D, i, the following was added: “AND SCHOOL DISTRICT TAXATION IF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN WHICH THE PROPERTY IS LOCATED, AFTER PUBLIC HEARINGS, ADOPTS A RESOLUTION PROVIDING SUCH EXEMPTION, THE PROCEDURE FOR SUCH HEARING AND RESOLUTION SHALL BE CONDUCTED SEPARATELY FROM THE PROCEDURE FOR ANY HEARING AND LOCAL LAW OR RESOLUTION CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (ii) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, SUBDIVISION FOUR, PARAGRAPH (d) OF SUBDIVISION SIX AND PARAGRAPH (b) OF SUBDIVISION SEVEN OF THIS SECTION.”

This means that veterans will only receive an exemption on their school taxes IF the school district in which their property (primary residence) conducts public hearings and then adopts a resolution to provide such exemption. Therefore, it is in each person’s best interest to contact their local school district and ask when (not if) they will be conducting the public hearings. Remember, they are not under any obligation to hold any hearings or grant any exemptions. When you talk to your school district, be prepared with facts and figures to support your position. Visit your local tax assessor’s office and find out what the average assessment is in your town, how many veterans are using the property tax exemptions and what their average percent of exemption is. These numbers, if you can get them, will allow you better state your case.

# # #

To be placed on the volunteer contact list:

Contact – Chuck Macaluso
585-225-8288 (h)
Chuckmac66@yahoo.com
Indeed we are in the post-holiday doldrums but I hope everyone had a nice Christmas and New Years. 2014......how did we ever get here? I remember as a kid thinking I’d be 50 in the year 2000 and that seemed an eternity away. I also thought I’d develop some super powers but that didn’t exactly work out either. I know I’m getting old. I was visiting a buddy in the hospital not long ago when the nurse came in and took my vitals. Then she threw a sheet over my head. Let me tell ya, if I ever get through on that Obamacare website, somebody’s going to hear about that. Be advised, they don’t waste any time when it comes to harvesting your organs either......

I went down to the VA in Canandaigua on 12/18 with several other chapter members and some wives and sang Christmas carols to the guys. They tried to bolt when I started singing but they couldn’t get away due to the fact Fred fell asleep and blocked the hallway. One old gent covered the crystal on his watch as I belted out Jingle Bells but a good time was had by all. I surely missed seeing Jim McDermott there though.......I’m still doing the veteran to veteran hospice volunteer work and that is so rewarding.

My thanks to Nancy Van Apeldoorn, Judy Belle Isle and all the ladies that make such beautiful lap blankets for the guys. They are such a huge hit, I wish you all could see the response from the guys when they receive one of these wonderful gifts. Makes quite an impression on family members too! Thank you also for the special lap robe you made for Gary Beikirch and his family....... 

I’m on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Board and a tip of the hat to Chuck Macaluso for doing such a great job leading the Board. I came on a couple of years ago and there was some controversy going on but he has things running very smoothly and in the long term, we are indeed in good shape. It is sure good, also, to see how well our Chapter meetings are attended and I want to thank Valentino, Chuck, Joe and Alan for the great job that they do and the time that they put in. This is really a great chapter to be a part of........

Received “The Eagle Speaks” from Craig McLaren (Chapter 190) who was recently transferred to the Elmore Correctional Center in Elmore, Alabama. Craig is very active in the veterans group there and as of last May, there were 186 incarcerated veterans there. They had a very successful Veterans Day event with 39 vets in attendance and 11 Department of Corrections staff and outside guests present....... 

On a personal note my son Jimmy was promoted to E-6 and he continues his Naval career at Pearl Harbor so I am understandably proud. He grew up in the Chapter and was always game for any of Kenny Moore’s schemes which made me question his judgment but all’s well that ends well. Can’t wait to visit him in Hawaii.......Kinda surprised he’s been there six months and still no address?? What’s up with that?
COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
The community Service Award recognizes a group, organization or individual who has demonstrated a strong sense of community service and who favorably recognizes and relates to the Vietnam Veterans issues.
My nomination for this award is ______________________ Because __________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

VETERAN SERVICE AWARD
The Veteran Service Award recognizes an individual who demonstrated outstanding dedication in improving the conditions of the Vietnam Veterans and /or the Community. (There may be up to 3 awards presented annually).
My nomination for this award is ______________________ Because __________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

THE ROGER ROBACH AWARD
The Roger Robach Award is given to an individual who has spent a minimum of ten years working for the betterment of all veterans in New York State.
My nomination for this award is ______________________ Because __________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

DON AND RORI MURRELL HUMANITARIAN AWARD
The Don and Murrell Humanitarian Award is given to an individual who has accomplished and extraordinary effort on behalf of active duty personnel and /or veterans and their families. (All individuals are to be considered for this award regardless of Chapter or veteran affiliation).
My nomination for this award is ______________________ Because __________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Please consider nominating those who you feel go above and beyond their normal duties and submit your nominations to the Secretary, Joe Peck at jpeck2@rochester.rr.com
You can also email Fred Elliott at felliot@rochester.rr.com for an electronic version of these nomination forms. Deadline for all nominations is March 15th 2014.
Both Sides Of The Coin by Ron Trovato

I met Steve Silver when I was in the fourth grade soon after he moved into my neighborhood in Irondequoit. He was in the third grade and somehow we ended up walking home together right after he started at my school. He lived on the next street over and he gave me a dime when we got to my street, serious money in 1959, and our friendship for the next 55 years was sealed. We became the best of friends that day and our families have remained close ever since. We grew up together, had countless meals at each other’s houses, and were raised in part by each other’s parents. I slept outdoors for the first time with Steve in his backyard and we made it until about midnight before we ended up in sleeping bags on his living room floor. I attended his Bar Mitzvah and we had lots of friends in and out of our lives those years, but the two of us had a special, deeper bond. We could sit on the steps of our respective houses after the day wound down and just be ourselves talking about kids in school, girls, teachers, the Yankees, our hopes, and our dreams. We rode our bikes everywhere, played baseball all day while raving about each other’s spectacular catches, helped out the other with chores and snuck out of our houses at night to roam the neighborhood together. It was a great way to grow up. We never had an argument, never was there a cross word between us.

I vividly recall the time I decided to join the Army. I was watching on TV President Johnsons’ speech in March 1968 when he decided not to run again for President in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive and Eugene McCarthy’s candidacy. The first person I called that night was Steve to talk about the speech and to tell him I was volunteering for the Army. I told him even before I told my mother. She reluctantly signed my delayed enlistment papers and at age 17, two weeks out of High School, the rubber met the road at Ft. Dix, New Jersey where I found myself under the firm and masochistic guidance of Staff Sergeant Whitehead. I soon found myself marching in the stifling July heat out to the rifle range singing at the top of my lungs:

“Ain’t no reason looking down,
Ain’t no discharge on the ground........
“Ain’t no reason looking back,
“Jodys got your Cadillac........”

This misery was only slightly mitigated by Staff Sergeant Whiteheads’ encouraging threats and curses which were interspersed with descriptions of the indignities our girlfriends would be suffering at the hands of the draft dodging hippie Jody while we were being shot up in Vietnam.

I was a different person, a mess really, when I came home from Vietnam and was discharged from the Army and I think Steve knew that. I was asked by my old High School history teacher to talk to his students about the war and I did so. It wasn’t easy but Steve went with me and I somehow got through it. Soon after the chaos that had become my life began hurting my family as well as others and I ended up leaving Rochester. It was a tough road for the next four years although Steve kept in touch by mail. I returned to Rochester four years later, met the girl I would eventually marry, Wendy, and worked sporadically. I was beginning to settle down and went to Brockport State College to see about attending there. The professor I talked to did not try to hide his disdain for Vietnam veterans and I left there totally discouraged but thankfully without assault charges. When I mentioned this to Steve, he convinced me to apply at Buffalo State College and we went together to the Admissions Office. There Steve acted as my advocate and life coach before the title was ever invented. The next few years were some of the best of my life and I would have had a career at the Probation Department without that sheepskin. I owe a lot to Steve, especially for his support in not giving up on college.

Steve and Ruth were married in New York City in 1976 and my brothers and I attended the wedding. We took Steve out for an unplanned bachelors’ party the night before the ceremony and hit several bars. At the time both my brothers were in a motorcycle club and I was in my drinking prime. Steve was not a professional by any means, more of a glass of wine at dinner type, yet somehow he kept up with us. The next day he was the chipper, clear eyed gracious host of one of the biggest days of his life while we all felt like ten miles of bad road. There are many valid arguments for the existence of God, this being one of the uppermost in my mind. I
had great, old school Italian Godparents, Joe and Nell Pellerito. They were hardworking, loving, salt of the
earth folks. They guided me along with my parents for much of my early life. They provided a great example
and were always there for me. I wanted the same for my sons, especially my first born, and it was no contest
in choosing Steve and Ruth. However, my choice of Jewish godparents was like clanging a foul shot off of a
basketball rim to the Catholic Church and it took a while before a compromise was reached with the priest and
he agreed to baptize my son. Jimmy got the best godparents of his generation. Over the years, Steve and Ruth
never forgot a holiday or birthday and each and every Christmas Day would bring a visit. I was able to pass
along one of the best parts of my life, real Godparents, to my son because of the dividends I was receiving
from Steve’s initial ten cent investment. Time marched on and for over thirty years my family and the Silvers
had a close relationship as we watched five boys between us grow up. Steve graduated college and went to
medical school. He did his residency at a tough hospital in the Bronx. He settled in Rochester and spent his
career in the Nephrology Unit of Rochester General Hospital. He is currently the head of the Department
there.

Steve and Ruth raised three fine sons, Benny, Aaron and Jake. They did a great job as parents and all three
boys have excelled in life. The one I got to know the best was the youngest, Jake, who played football at
Brighton High School and graduated in 2009. He could have punched his own ticket for college but joined the
Marine Corps instead and left for basic training at the end of that summer. For the next four years Jake kept in
touch. Whenever he came home on leave I’d hear from him and we would get together. He would leave
messages on my home phone and I invariably heard from him on Veterans’ Day. I lost my wife Wendy to
cancer a year before Jake enlisted. My son Jimmy and I drove her home from a hospital in Philadelphia when
she had only about two days left and we had to carry her into the house. We couldn’t get the out-of-state pain
prescriptions filled, and when I called our doctor I received the news that his license had been suspended for
allegedly taking liberties with a patient. The hospice doctor would not prescribe the meds without seeing my
wife in the office and was unmoved when I told him she could not walk. I called Steve and picked up her pain
medication a half hour later. He came over and sat with her for several hours after work that night. She left us
the next day.

I served two tours in Vietnam as an advisor to the ARVN 21st Division in the Mekong Delta. I had a thirty day
leave between the tours and when I left home the second time I realized what my choices had done to my
mother and it broke her heart. She was stoic by nature but no amount of stoicism can brace a mother for a
son leaving for war. I think I knew what Ruth was feeling when Jake left for the first of two deployments in
Afghanistan so I wasn’t taking any chances. I asked my girlfriend Joanne, whom I would later marry, to pray for
Jake and she gladly did so daily. I invited Steve and Jake out to breakfast and before we met I dug out my
Vietnam box from the attic. While we were at breakfast I gave Jake a Vietnamese coin that I had had in my
pocket when my Freedom Bird took me home for good in February, 1971. I asked him to take it with him and
keep it for good luck.

This past Christmas was my first with Joanne as husband and wife and that was so special. I had moved into
her house in Brighton and it was late on Christmas Day that I got the call I should have expected. It was Steve
asking if he and Jake, recently discharged from the Marine Corps, could stop over. As we sat in the living room,
I broke out my best whiskey and we all had a shot together. Jake looked like a million bucks and he’s got a
great life ahead of him. After our drink he pulled out his wallet; he had literally his whole life in there and it
was bulging with papers. He slowly dug through it and pulled out a piece of paper that he carefully unfolded.
He proudly showed me the coin that lifted off with me from Vietnam. Welcome Home Jake!............When you
really think of it, the net worth of the two coins mentioned above would be ten cents. The dime Steve gave me
when he was in the third grade is still a dime, and I guess the Vietnamese coin is probably worthless. But their
value is inestimable to me.
Bill Meminger was a long-time member of Chapter 20, participating in the Marching Unit and helping elsewhere until his health prevented him from doing so. Bill was also known as “Billy Bear” the Clown. He enjoyed making others smile. May he rest in peace.

Bill Meminger
April 27, 1939 - January 2, 2014
Son, Brother, Husband, Father, Veteran
Bill Meminger Remembered by Sue Oleksyn

Chapter 20 has lost a noble member—a man of deep faith, a man who loved his country, a man who humbly extended friendship, kindness, help and love to all who crossed his path. When my health permitted, going back to the 80’s, Dick and I worked on all events in Chapter 20. Bill was always there to give a helping hand—in every way he could. He had crosses to bear—severe hearing loss, a seriously damaged heart, cancer/leukemia—but you never heard that. You always felt better having seen him. With a hug, a smile and unlimited kindness, he touched all of us with his gentle way. He truly lived his faith. He loved his family with special needs so much, and he took care of them with such great love. No matter what, he did all he could for them—always with a smile. We never heard him be negative or badmouth anyone.

Two things jumped to my mind when I heard that he passed. One is when he underwent heart surgery at the VA to have a pacemaker put in (among his many hospitalizations). He came out of surgery, and the doctor said to him, “Bill, we have good news and bad news. Your surgery went very well, but your pacemaker has just been recalled. We will have to operate again.” Like everything else, he took it in stride and did what he had to do. He always had huge hurdles, but his strength and character saw him through.

The most profound memory of Bill came when we were both going through cancer. It was the second time around for us both. We would support each other. What a treasure he was. He had just gotten news that his leukemia was in remission. He had fought so hard to keep going. I said to him, “Bill, this is great news.” He got tears in his eyes and hugged me and said, “There was a little girl in the waiting room when I came out who just was diagnosed with leukemia. Her parents and she were terrified, and I knew well what she faced.” Bill then said, “Sue, if I only could, I would gladly take all of the cancer, pain and suffering on from that little girl so she wouldn’t have to go through it.” THAT was Bill.

This quiet, loving man who served his country with honor, helped others in every way he could, loved his family and his VVA Chapter 20 family with all his heart, and suffered greatly but with great dignity and faith, is now at peace with the Lord. Rest in peace, our noble friend and brother. Heaven has just received a precious angel.
Spencer Christiano is the Great-Nephew of Lt. Col. Joseph Christiano, a pilot during the Vietnam War who was shot down over Laos and MIA for 46 years. His remains have been repatriated and interred at Arlington national Cemetery.

Spencer is a published playwright, poet, journalist, and writer of short fiction. He has written, directed, designed, stage managed, and/or acted in nearly 200 plays in the Rochester area. He was the recipient of Geva Theater Center’s Young Playwright Award in 2005, and has received awards from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for Excellence in Directing, Acting, and Production Stage Management. He is MuCCC’s New Play Facilitator and Production Manager, and is an Artist in Residence. He was recently sponsored by MuCCC as an entrant for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and looks forward to winning the prize this April.
Author’s Note – While every effort was made to retain the factual integrity of the events and people mentioned in the play, it is at its core a story of searching for answers in an environment of secrecy, and remembering loved ones from memories lost to time. There exists in the story a certain amount of speculation and embellishment, the same that memory itself is so often prone to. I hope you will consider the play a personal account of an oral history; that while subject to all the flaws and inaccuracies inherent to this method of record keeping, has been collected, arranged, and divulged with the utmost respect and love for those whom it affects and involves.

(On behalf of the Chapter members who attended the Saturday afternoon performance of M.I.A., I want to thank Spencer for allowing us to know his Uncle and for bringing the Lt. Col. to life for us. – Editor)
ODDS N’ ENDS

A page written by Chapter member Fred Elliott. The opinions and/or positions expressed on this page are in no way the opinions or positions of Chapter 20. The author accepts full responsibility for the expression of his opinions and positions on the various items written about on this page.

The War (?) On Drugs Marches On – (from the on-line Stars and Stripes of December 2013.) Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan surged to record heights in 2013, increasing for the third straight year in a row and confirming the country’s status as the world’s No. 1 exporter of the opium crop. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s annual Opium Survey, published in November, two factors were behind the rise in cultivation; high opium prices and speculation due to the withdrawal of U.S. and international troops from Afghanistan. Cultivation of the crop spread to two previously poppy-free provinces, Faryab and Balkh, in Northern Afghanistan.

In an interview with Stars and Stripes, Yury Fedotov, head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, said the ability of international organizations to continue working in Afghanistan and combating the trade would partly depend on the size of the international presence after 2014, when U.S. combat troops are slated to withdraw. Whether U.S. and NATO forces remain depends on a bilateral security with the U.S., which is being held up by Afghan President Hamid Karzai. “Many of these activities are linked to the support of (the) international presence in Afghanistan,” Fedotov said. “We need to help Afghanistan to restructure its economy and ensure sustainable development after the withdrawal of foreign forces from this country.”

Eradication efforts throughout the country declined in 2013. A total of 7,348 hectares – some 18,157 acres – of verified eradication was carried out by Afghanistan’s governors, a decline of 24 percent from 2012. The major uptick in poppy cultivation this year has been an unwelcome reminder of the uncertain allegiances after U.S. troops leave the country. While the UNODC says it has programs in place that are meant to give Afghan farmers an alternative crop choice, those programs have been largely unsuccessful. (Editor’s note – In 2009, the U.S. spent some $51 BILLION at the federal and state levels on the War on Drugs; there are over 500,000 people incarcerated in the U.S. for drug offenses; Afghan and Taliban Warlords collect nearly one-half billion dollars per year from drug farming, production and trafficking – so why didn’t/doesn’t the U.S. take action while we are in Afghanistan to introduce new crops to the farmers ? Why are we allowing them to continue raising the crops that are so destructive ?)

FRAUD ALERT: Veterans should be aware of a marketing scam targeting callers trying to reach the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Call Center or GI Bill Call Center. A marketing company has established two fraudulent numbers that differ from the two official VA call center numbers by one digit. If the fraudulent number is dialed by mistake, the answering party will offer a gift card and try to obtain personal and financial information, including credit card information, from the caller. The answering party may even transfer the caller to the VA after the caller’s information is obtained.

The VA will never ask you for a credit card number or banking information over the phone. In all cases, before giving personal sensitive information over the phone make sure you know who you are taking to.

The numbers to be avoided are:
800-872-1000 (the VA National Call Center number is 800-827-1000)
888-442-4511 (the VA GI Bill Call Center number is 888-442-4551)

VA has notified law enforcement authorities to address this situation, and will provide additional information and guidance as necessary.
Filmmaker Rory Kennedy premiered her new documentary *Last Days in Vietnam* this week at the Sundance Film Festival. The film recounts the chaos surrounding the final weeks of the Vietnam War as North Vietnamese forces closed in on Saigon. Kennedy focuses on the men and women who had to decide whether to follow White House orders to get the hell out or to attempt to save as many South Vietnamese as they could before leaving.

It’s not a story that’s been widely told and Kennedy tells Fox News that it took some work to convince high-level men like Henry Kissinger and Richard Armitage to participate in the movie. She says, “There was some resistance. It took a little bit of encouraging of these folks but pretty much everyone who I wanted to be in the film agreed to be in the film.” Armitage personally led an unsanctioned operation that helped almost 30,000 men, women and children flee the country.

Kennedy also gets into the topic of why the withdrawal was so disorganized. President Gerald Ford tried to push through an appropriation that would’ve funded the evacuation of 200,000 South Vietnamese but Congress was having none of it.

Early reviews are strong but we’re probably going to have to wait until next January to see the film when it premieres on PBS’ *American Experience*.

(LastDaysinVietnam.com)
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When the simple act of placing flowers on a casket or placing stones on a headstone does not seem to be enough to honor the memory of a special someone who has passed away, one may choose to make a donation in his or her honor to commemorate the values and beliefs of the deceased. Chapter 20 VVA is committed to recognizing the sacrifices made by all military personnel in every branch of the armed forces. The memory of the deceased veteran is honored in the continuous work and service carried out by the dedicated Chapter members and associates. The monetary donations sent by individuals help make it possible to continue serving veterans and their families. The combined efforts of donors, lawmakers, members, and associates have far-reaching effects on the quality of all our lives.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20 offers several ways of commemorating a special person. One of those ways is the Memorial Walk at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk is a pathway of bricks inscribed with the names of individuals who have served their country with valor. Their names will forever remain a reminder of the dedication and tenacity demonstrated by the thousands of men and women who have served in the U. S. Armed Forces.

If you wish to make a monetary donation directly to Chapter 20 in support of all the functions and services they provide to veterans and their families, send your check or money order payable to Chapter 20, VVA:

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 20
P.O. Box 12580
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20

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Sex ( ) M ( ) F  

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Return this application, along with a copy of your DD214 to:  
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Attn: Membership

I am not a Vietnam Vet, but I want to help Vietnam Veterans and their families. Please accept my donation: _______________  
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Eligibility: Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Military (for other than training purposes) between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975 (in-country Vietnam), or between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975 (for Vietnam-era veterans)  

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$200 (ages 56-60), $175 (ages 61-65), $150 (ages 66-71), $100 (ages 72+)  

VVA is a non-profit service organization. Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.

BETWEEN THE LINES:  
Between the Lines is published monthly by Chapter 20, Vietnam Veterans of America. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Chapter 20 or the Vietnam Veterans of America, its’ officers, board of directors or the general membership. Between the Lines can be viewed on the Chapter 20 website at www.vva20.org.  

We welcome letters to the editor, poetry, original articles and suggestions. Submissions should include name and phone number and can be sent to Between the Lines, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612 or emailed to felliott@rochester.rr.com. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity and to not use materials we think inappropriate for the publication. **Deadline for submissions for each issue is the 10th of the preceding month. Exceptions may be granted by contacting the editor.**
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<td>February 4, 2014</td>
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</table>

**Monthly Membership Meetings start at 6:30 pm**

At the Italian American Sports Club, 1250 Buffalo Road, Rochester

Driving Directions to the Italian American Sports Club:

The Club is located at 1250 Buffalo Road close to the intersection of Howard Road, directly across from the stone quarry, next to the Eagles Club and the Catholic Diocese of Rochester.

From the East: Heading west on 490, exit Mt. Read Blvd. and turn left; south on Mt. Read to Buffalo Road circle, turn right, west on Buffalo Road, 1.4 miles, the Italian-American Sports Club is on the right side.

From the West: Heading east on 490, exit 33 east, Buffalo Road (Gates Center); head east on Buffalo Road; continue past Howard Road; the Italian-American Sports Club will be on the left side in about .5 mile.
Important Dates in February:

3rd (1959) – Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and the Big Bopper died in a plane crash

5th (1919) – Actor & WWII Army veteran Red Buttons Birthday

8th (1925) – Actor & WWII Navy veteran Jack Lemmon’s Birthday

9th (1945) – U.S. Troops invade Iwo Jima in WWII

12th (1809) – Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday

13th (2014) – Chapter meeting

14th (2014) – Valentine’s day – Hug a Veteran!

17th (1867) – First ship passed through the Suez Canal

18th (1919) – Actor & WWII Army Air Force Pilot Jack Palance’s Birthday

19th (1919) – Navy Distinguished Service Medal authorized

(1924) – Actor & WWII Marine veteran Lee Marvin’s Birthday – he received a Purple Heart on Saipan

20th (1962) – John Glenn orbits the Earth

22nd (1732) – George Washington’s Birthday

24th (1945) – U.S. troops liberate Manila

25th (1836) – Samuel Colt patents his revolver
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Sanfilippo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mikemo66@aol.com">mikemo66@aol.com</a></td>
<td>594-2649 h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial – Chuck Macaluso</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chuckmac66@yahoo.com">chuckmac66@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>225-8288 h</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority Affairs – Calvin Joseph</td>
<td>719-6138 c</td>
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<td>719-6138 c</td>
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<tr>
<td>POW/MIA – Joe Peck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jpeck2@rochester.rr.com">jpeck2@rochester.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>734-9046 c</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Affairs – Rosemary Rossi-Williams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pefrose@gmail.com">pefrose@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>738-6138 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Events – V. Gatto</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vgatto@rochester.rr.com">vgatto@rochester.rr.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>227-2741 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s Bureau – G. Lenyk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gnl3153@ntid.rit.edu">gnl3153@ntid.rit.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>423-0206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet Benefits – Stan Patykiewicz</td>
<td></td>
<td>247-4830 h</td>
<td>247-4830 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Walk – C. Macaluso</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chuckmac66@yahoo.com">chuckmac66@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>225-8288 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Affairs – Rosemary Rossi-Williams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pefrose@gmail.com">pefrose@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>738-6138 c</td>
</tr>
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### REGION 2 DIRECTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herb Worthington</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hworthington@comcast.net">hworthington@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>732-849-5737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION

- **Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial** 753-7275
- **VA Outpatient Clinic** 465 Westfall Rd 463-2600
- **Veterans Outreach Center** 459 South Avenue 546-1081
- **VA Vet Center** 232-5040
- **Veterans Administration** 800-827-1000
- **Monroe County Veterans Service Agency** 753-6040
- **Vietnam Veterans of America National Office** 800-882-1316
- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund** 202-393-0090
- **National League of Families**
  - POW/MIA Updates 202-223-6846
- **Richards House at VOC** 506-9060
- **The Resource Center at VOC** 546-4250
- **Stars & Stripes – The Flag Store** 546-3524
- **Persian Gulf Vets, Inc.** 385-4097
- **Operation Welcome Home** 234-4694
- **National Caregivers Support Line** 855-260-3274
- **Homeless Hotline** 877-424-3838
- **Suicide Hotline** 800-273-8255
- **Women Veterans’ Hotline** 855-829-6636

### WEB SITES / EMAIL ADDRESSES

- **Veterans Widows International Network** members@aol.com/vetwidows
- **NYS Department of Health** www.health.state.ny.us/nvyets
- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park** www.rochestervietnammemorial.org/The_Memorial
- **Operation Welcome Home** www.operationwelcomehome.org
- **VVA New York State Council** www.nyvietnamvets.org
- **Honor Flight** www.HonorFlightRochester.org

### VVA Chapter 20

- **Address:** P. O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612
- **Website:** www.vva20.org
- **Contact:**
  - **Honor Flight:** 585-482-7396
  - **info@vva20.org** 482-7396

### Miscellaneous

- **VVA Vehicle Donations** 224-8484
- **VVA Chapter 20** 30