March 2019
Issue 75

hello March!
Nominating Committee
by Chuck Macaluso, Chair

The Annual Meeting & Elections will be held April 11, 2015 at 6:15 PM –
The March Meeting is “Candidates Night” when they address membership.

Location: Italian American Sports Club – 1250 Buffalo Road
Driving Directions - The Club is located on Buffalo Road close to the intersection of Howard Road. Directly across the Stone quarry. Next to the Eagles Club, and the Catholic Diocese of Rochester.

From the East. Heading West bound on 490, exit Mount Read Blvd and turn left. South bound on Mt. Read to Buffalo Road circle, turn right West bound on Buffalo Road. 1.4 miles West bound on the right side North is 1250 Buffalo Rd.

From the West: Heading East bound on 490, exit 33 East bound, Buffalo Road (Gates Center). Head East bound on Buffalo Road. Pass Howard Road 1250 will be on the left North side about .5 miles.

Positions for nominations –
Five (5) – Directors

The "new" Nominating Committee will also be elected by the membership that evening. A “to date” slate of candidates was finalized by February 15th. and published in the March issue.
• In order to vote in the Annual Election, voters must be a member for at least 30 days.
• Only paid members with a DD214 on file by 28 February of previous fiscal year are eligible to vote. (For example - 28 February 2018 to vote April 2019).
• A quorum is defined as 10% of VVA 20 membership as of 28 February of the previous fiscal year. Voting for candidates will take place between 6:15 PM till 7:00 PM, after which no new ballots will be taken and votes will be tabulated.
• According to the National VVA Constitution, “Additional persons may be nominated by any member at the Annual Meeting.” These candidates will fall under the category of Floor Nominations.
• Floor nominated candidates can only receive votes from members present at Annual Meeting.( A “Special Note” stating such will be placed March and April BTL issues.)

The slated candidates for this year (as of 2/19) are as follows:

Director Positions (3)
Lynn Gursslin
Mike General
Ken Allocco
Dick Oleksyn
Mike Sanfilippo

Each candidate will address the membership at the March Membership Meeting on March 14th. stating their reasons for seeking an elected position.

Any member interested in running for any of the above mentioned positions, please contact one of the following Nominating Committee members: Chuck Macaluso 225-8288, Dan Corona 406-6108
Lynn Gurrslin, Candidate for Director

- Served in the Army 1969 – 1971
- Was in the reserves for two years
- Was the President of the Rochester Chapter, Cycles for Christ, Christian Motorcycle Association for 11 years
- Have been responsible for selling Chapter Gear for the past year
- Have been serving on the Chapter Board of Directors for the past six years
- Life Member 2011
- Honor Guard
- Marching Unit

I look forward to serving you again and am asking for your vote!

Kenny Allocco, Candidate for Director

My name is Kenny Allocco and I am running as a candidate to serve on the Board of Directors. I grew up in the Town of Greece, and I graduated from Greece Olympia High School in 1967. I entered the United States Air Force in 1968 and continued my service through 1975. I have been an active member of Chapter 20 for over 15 years. During those years I have been involved in many facets of our organization. The Honor Guard, the Marching Unit, oversight of the monthly flag raffle fundraiser, coordination of an annual fundraiser for Richards House through the VOC, assistance with the coordination of the annual fundraiser Louie’s Run, collaboration with MVP Health Care on Veterans Health Issues, and I have attended our National Convention.

Serving on the Board of Directors will allow me to continue my involvement with an organization that I am so passionate about. Ensuring my fellow veterans are aware of the services available to them is our most important mission; and we need to continue to grow in our community through education and advocacy. I humbly ask for your support this year when placing your vote.
With our Annual Dinner approaching, it’s time to think about those who serve the Chapter as well as all veterans. There are several awards given each year and we are fortunate to have many people in both our Chapter and the community who work diligently above and beyond their normal duties to serve Veterans. Consider those around you and nominate them for one or more of the following awards.

Awards

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
This Award recognizes a group, organization or individual who has demonstrated a strong sense of community service and who favorably recognizes and relates to Vietnam Veterans’ issues.
My nomination for this award is____________________________ Because______________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

VETERAN SERVICE AWARD
This Award recognizes an individual who demonstrated outstanding dedication in improving the conditions of Vietnam Veterans and/or the Community.
My nomination for this award is____________________________ Because______________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

ROGER ROBACH AWARD
This 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
This Award is given to an individual who has accomplished an 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______________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD
This Award is given to an individual, group or organization that, through their single or continuous action, has favorably benefitted Vietnam or other Veteran issues.
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, jpeck2@rochester.rr.com. Deadline for all nominations is March 9th, 2019.
Metcalf, Larry Duane  3-1-1942
Koch, Kenneth Edwin  3-4-1949
Shorack, Theodore  3-6-1929
Schieb, Ralph Eugene  3-6-1945
McFarland, Sylvester  3-8-1948
Leone, John Frank  3-9-1947
Beale, Robert B.  3-11-1939
Hockridge, James A.  3-12-1944
Carapezza, Richard Allen  3-13-1948
Bachmann, Jr., Lynn  3-15-1945
Roberts, Wallace  3-17-1928
Nadeau, Harold Bradley  3-17-1947
Malone, Richard Lee  3-18-1950
DeRue, David John  3-19-1947
Coles, Leonard Ashworth  3-20-1945
Keenan, Dennis Joseph  3-22-1943
Nederlk, Michael Alexander  3-22-1948
Kooman, Gary Roger  3-23-1946
Curtis, David Allen  3-23-1949
Covey, Jr., Elwood D.  3-29-1943
Siegwalt, Marlin L.  3-30-1937
Natale, Nicholas Anthony  3-31-1948

Memorial Tours & Presentations
Persons interested in on-site tours or presentations at schools or organizations, contact Chuck Macaluso at 585-225-8288 or Chuckmac66@yahoo.com

Friends of the Memorial
To be placed on the volunteer contact list, contact Chuck Macaluso at 585-225-8288 or Chuckmac66@yahoo.com
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).

* Due to natural wear and tear, bricks will be replaced once (free of charge) at the discretion of the committee.

Questions please call Chuck or Joan Macaluso as 585-225-8288
There are currently new reports from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the National League of Families and the DOD that two servicemen were recovered, returned and identified this month. The total number of Americans who are still missing from the Vietnam War still stands at 1590.

Mr. Edward J. Weissenback, Civilian from Oregon and Capt. Roy Francis Townley Civilian co-pilot from California were both employed by Air America Corporation. On December 27, 1971, they were part of the crew on board an Air American C123k from Udon, Airfield in Thailand heading for Xienhom district in Laos. This aircraft was on a routine resupply mission from a U.S. Agency for International Development. All Communications were lost just Northeast of Sayaboury, Laos. Search and rescue teams searched until December 31st but no signs of the aircraft and crew were found. Their remains were finally located and returned on December 13, 2017. They were identified and accounted for on December 20, 2018.

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

- Sgt. John Kalausich, US Army Air Corps was lost March 21, 1945 in Germany. He was accounted for on December 14, 2018.
- Sgt. Frank J. Suliman, US Army was lost December 1, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on January 17, 2019.
- Pvt. Winfred L. Reynolds, US Army was lost April 26, 1951 in South Korea. He was accounted for on January 23, 2019.
- 1st Lt. Howard T. Lurcott, US Army Air Corps was lost January 21, 1944 in Tarawa. He was accounted for on January 30, 2019.
- Pfc. Clifford M. Mills, US Army was lost September 18, 1944 in Germany. He was accounted for on February 4, 2019.
- Master Sgt. Charlie J. Mares, US Army was lost July 31, 1951 in South Korea. He was accounted for on February 6, 2019.
- Cpl. Carlos E. Ferguson, US Army was lost May 18, 1951 in South Korea. He was accounted for on February 7, 2019.
The following Naval and Marine Personnel were on Board the USS Oklahoma and were lost December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii:
Baker 2\textsuperscript{nd} Class, David L. Kesler, Seaman 1\textsuperscript{st} Class Frank A. Hryniewicz, Marine Corps Pvt. Waldean Black and Pvt. Ted Hall. All were accounted for on January 23, 24 and 30 of 2019.

WELCOME HOME BROTHERS
Membership Update
Mike General Membership Chair

Chapter 20 Membership currently is at 618 members and AVVA is at 40 members as of 12/31/18. Membership has been growing slow (only 2 new members in the last month), **We need your help in recruiting new members.** Don’t forget to renew on time. Don’t let your membership expire. We had 5 members who did not renew this last month and 4 members who passed away.

**Please Renew Your Membership!**

**Only Life Memberships are available $50.00**

1. **LIFE MEMBERSHIP:** $50.00

2. All 3-year members who have paid $50 will automatically become a life member.

3. All one-year members will continue as an individual 1-year member until their membership expires, one-year members will then be required to pay $50.00 to remain a member of VVA.

4. rebate will stay the same.

5. If national does not have a DD214 they will have status listed as pending until dd214 is received.

If you a renewing as a “Life Member”, please remember to include a copy of your DD-214 with your application.

When you have an address change, please notify Mike General so we can keep our Roster up to date and notify National.

**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.

Associate Membership is open to anyone; you do not need to be a Veteran.

**WE Need New Members!**

Membership Applications are available on our Website or by contacting me. ([mwgeneral@aol.com](mailto:mwgeneral@aol.com))

We are offering an “Honorary Membership” to Chapter 20 to all spouses who husbands have passed away. If you know of someone who has lost their loved one, please contact Mike General.

Mike
Member Application

For new members, print this membership form and complete, then mail with your payment and a copy of the DD214 form. Renewal members may complete and print the form and mail it with your payment. Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #20, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14692

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<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Last Name</td>
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<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>City, State, Zip Code</td>
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<td>Home Phone, Ext.</td>
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<td>Work Phone, Ext.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>MM/DD/YYYY</td>
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As of October 20, 2018, there will be one paid class of membership.

1. **LIFE MEMBERSHIP: $50.00**
2. All 3-year members who have paid $50 will automatically become a life member.
3. All one-year members will continue as an individual 1-year member until their membership expires, one-year members will then be required to pay $50.00 to remain a member of VVA.
Most of us spend a few minutes of our daily lives talking about the weather, especially here in Rochester. So with March 2019 almost upon us, I'll add my two cents about the topic. Whether or not March weather comes in roaring like a lion or goes out like a lamb, doesn't matter all that much, REALLY! 'Cause what are you going to do about it anyway. So there! But, I would add that we are heading into more fair weather than bad weather. Soon we will see the crocuses popping up, and other greenery sprouting up such as four leaf clovers just in time for St. Paddy's Day celebrations. It is also the 3rd monthly weigh in for our annual Fit Vet Challenge of this year. At the March general membership meeting you can step up on the scales to help your respective service branch with bragging rights to win this year's title. So, please come over to the weigh in area, and help your service branch become Champs! I hope to see you soon.

Articles relating to various health or benefit issues relative to our Vietnam experiences or military service in general that may have an affect on our lives today are below. Topics include Blue Water Navy legislation, a Federal Appeals Court ruling on Blue Water Navy services and benefits, and another landmark appeals ruling about benefits too. Also, a brief review of VA eye care services.

Finally, I would like to share my feelings about Ken Moore. I probably would not have been involved with Chapter #20, if not for Ken. He personally reached out to me, and he encouraged me to seek out and apply for VA services and benefits that I now have and use. Ken taught me a great deal about veteran advocacy, and he was willing to share his knowledge and experiences so I could learn too. I owe Ken Moore a debt that I will not be able to repay anytime soon. But I need to try. I can only rededicate my efforts as I believe Ken would do, and carry on advocacy for veterans. RIP Ken and thank you!

Respectfully submitted by:
Jerry McDermott, Chair Health Affairs

VA Blue Water Claims Update 62 ► Stumbling Block is Pay-go Which Needs to Go | Opinion

Last year, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act bill was one for the few substantive legislative initiatives to pass the House of Representatives unanimously. Although the bill died in the Senate, 98 Senators were willing to allow unanimous consent. The stumbling block, as it has been in previous years was the offset requirements of the pay-as-you-go. Pay-go, enacted in 2010, requires increases in new benefits be offset by a corresponding decrease in other benefits. In other words, restoring the presumption of herbicide exposure to Navy veterans who served in the bays, harbors and territorial sea of Vietnam required a reduction of benefits or a corresponding funding increase.

In 2015 Military-Veterans Advocacy proposed financing the bill with cost of living round downs. This would require annual cost of living increases to be rounded down to the nearest dollar. The most it would cost any one veteran would be $11.88 per year but would raise $1.8 billion to cover 90,000 additional veterans. Led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), with support from the Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the effort was defeated. A
similar attempt to use this offset in 2017 again drew the ire of the VFW and DAV and was crushed by then House Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-MN).

In 2016 Military-Veterans Advocacy worked closely with Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and the Judiciary Committee to forge an offset using a surcharge for foreign student visa fees. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), then Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee torpedoed that idea and the Blue Water Navy bill with it. More recently, pay-go sank another Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. Staff members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee cobbled together an offset by increasing some veterans home loan fees. In a show of bipartisan support the bill passed the House 382-0. In the Senate, however, anti-veteran elements struck back.

The VA reversed their previous support of the bill, repeating the often-refuted allegations that the science did not support the exposure. Then several VSOs attacked the PAYGO offset that they had previously approved. In a Sept. 19, 2018 letter to Senate Veterans Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson, the VFW and DAV, joined by the American Legion and the Paralyzed Veterans of America withdrew their support from the jumbo loan fee provisions of the pay-go offset. After ten weeks of opposition, these groups agreed to support the bill but only if the jumbo loan fee provisions were removed in the 116th Congress. During this VSO forced hiatus, the VA was able to convince CBO to add another $1.3 billion to their score — thrusting the cost above the bills pay-go offset. This led to holds by Senators Enzi of Wyoming and Lee of Utah. Despite many efforts to force the bills passage, including belated lip service from the VFW, the bill died in the Senate.

Unfortunately, the fate of the "Blue Water Navy" bill is typical of veteran’s legislation. Hobbled by the draconian pay-go rules, legislation to cover the victims of military toxic exposure languishes in committee. As a result, casualties of herbicides, burn pits, radiation, contaminated water supplies, PCBs and other self-inflicted wounds go without compensation or medical benefits. The change in control of the House of Representatives has brought no relief. The new Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) reenacted the pay-go provisions. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) has introduced legislation to repeal the rule. The Jayapal bill, H.R.242, has 32 Democrat supporters and zero Republican support. It is not expected to pass.

What could pass, and perhaps generate some GOP support, is an exception for veterans. Veterans believe that they have bought and paid for their disabilities by their service to the nation. Here, unlike other entitlements or other mandatory benefits, disabilities were caused by the government and flowed directly from government service. The VSOs are singularly unhelpful in this regard. The VFW, and others tout that they will oppose taking money from one veteran to pay for another's benefits. On the face of it, their position is noble, but it ignores the realities of pay-go.

The VSOs tell Congress it is their job to come up with funding then grandstand and criticize congressional funding efforts. As a result, toxic exposure victims continue to sicken and die without relief. Veterans slide into bankruptcy while trying to pay for their own medical costs as their declining years come early. This is a national disgrace. We need to keep our promise to veterans. Under current law that will not happen. [Source: The Hill | John B. Wells | January 24, 2019 +++]

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**VA Appeals Update 33 ➤ A Long-Overdue Fix**

Veterans rejected for disability benefits will have a new slate of appeals options starting next month, when federal officials will put in place an overhaul the review process with hopes of dramatically cutting down on wait times for the complicated cases. Last week, Department of Veterans Affairs officials announced they will implement new appeals modernization rules starting Feb. 19. Work on the effort has been underway for more than 18 months, since lawmakers passed sweeping reform legislation on the topic in August 2017. Under the new rules, veterans will be given three options for their benefits appeals. All three are designed to streamline the complicated existing process for cases, which can languish for years as new evidence and arguments are introduced throughout the timeline.

Now, VA leaders are hoping the most difficult reviews can still be completed in under a year in the vast majority of cases. Their target for cases which don’t go before the Board of Veterans Appeals is an average of about four months for a final decision. A successful appeal can mean potentially thousands of dollars in monthly benefits payouts for veterans who have previously been turned down for what they believe are service-connected injuries and illnesses. VA and Capitol Hill leaders hailed the changes as a long-overdue fix. “(This) is the most significant reform in veterans’ appeals processing in a generation and promises to improve the timeliness and accuracy of decisions for our nation's veterans,” said House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA). He promised close oversight of the work ahead, but also hope about the potential rewards for veterans.

Committee ranking member Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN) last week visited a regional office in his home state that will be involved in the new appeals process and left feeling confident in its success. “The VA stuff feel really good about this,” he said. “They’re worked out the hiccups they’ve had, and are ready to move ahead. Getting all the training and experience is
going to take time, but I walked away optimistic.” Veterans groups largely supported the appeals overhaul, although a few groups have expressed concerns about the new system limiting veterans options for future reviews in favor of getting faster answers.

Under the first of the three new appeals processes, veterans can file a supplemental claim where they introduce new evidence backing their case. The appeal is handled by specialists at a regional office, who render a final decision on it. In the second option, veterans can request their case be reviewed by a senior claims adjudicator instead of the regional office. Those experts will review cases for clear errors or mistaken interpretations of statute. If they find mistakes, they can mandate corrections for the cases. Finally, veterans will also be able to appeal directly to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. Those cases are expected to take the longest to process, because of the legal prep work involved. Veterans can get a direct decision or request a hearing before the board.

Portions of the new process have been implemented as pilot programs at select sites in recent months. Previously, cases involved a combination of all three options, with cases reset and repeating steps with every new submission of case evidence. Veterans with cases currently pending in the system can opt-into the revamped processes starting next month, or remain in the current system if they believe it will better benefit them. More information on the changes is available through the Veterans Affairs benefits website. [Source: MilitaryTimes | Leo Shane III | January 22, 2019 ++]

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**VA Blue Water Claims Update 63 ▶ Federal Court Rules VA Cannot Deny Benefits**

A federal court ruled 29 JAN that the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot deny disability benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans who claim exposure to cancer-causing chemical defoliants simply because those vets served in the waters off the country’s coastline, and not inland. The ruling in favor of Alfred Procopio, Jr., 73, who served on the USS Intrepid during the Vietnam War, marks a major victory for so-called “blue water” Navy veterans who have fought the department for years over the denials. VA officials have said the existing scientific evidence doesn’t justify the presumption of toxic exposure for the group and have strongly opposed legislative efforts to overturn their decision. But the 9-2 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit overturns past court opinions backing up VA, saying that Congress never intended to exclude servicemembers in the seas around Vietnam when they awarded presumptive benefits for certain illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure.

Under current department rules, the blue water veterans can receive medical care for their illnesses through VA. But to receive disability benefits — worth up to several thousand dollars a month — they must prove that their ailments are directly connected to toxic exposure while on duty. That’s not the case for other Vietnam veterans, who are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange and other defoliants known to cause serious and rare cancers. So while a veteran who served on the shoreline could receive disability payouts after contracting Parkinson’s Disease or prostate cancer, another vet who served on a ship a few miles away would have to provide evidence of direct contact with hazardous chemicals.

Advocates have said that, given the time that has passed since the war, obtaining such proof is impossible and unfair. In their ruling, the federal judges agreed. “These statutes cast no doubt on our conclusion that, by using the formal term ‘Republic of Vietnam,’ Congress unambiguously referred, consistent with uniform international law, to both its landmass and its 12-nautical-mile territorial sea,” the ruling states. If VA officials opt not to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court in the next 90 days — or if the court decides not to hear the case — the result means that up to 90,000 blue water veterans could see disability payouts as early as this year.

In a statement, VA spokesman Curt Cashour said the department is reviewing this decision and “will determine an appropriate response.” Advocates hailed the news as a major step ahead in their effort to win benefits for the aging veterans. “This is a big win,” said John Wells, retired Navy commander and the executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy, which helped file the lawsuit. “We want to work with VA on how to implement this as painlessly as possible, but making sure these veterans get all they deserve.” Bart Stichman, executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, said the decision “unequivocally rights a wrong that is a terrible injustice to all veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in the waters of Vietnam.”

Legislation that would have awarded presumptive status to the blue water veterans was blocked by a small group of senators at the end of last year, disappointing advocates who saw the legislative momentum as their best chance for a victory in years. Now, instead of granting the benefits to veterans, lawmakers may be forced to scramble new bills to cover the cost of the court-ordered awards. Congressional Budget Office officials had estimated that awarding the benefits to the blue water veterans could total about $1.1 billion over 10 years, but VA officials have insisted the total is closer to $5.5 billion. Disagreements over whether to use new home loan fees to pay for the costs stalled the previous legislation.
If the court order stands, VA will be forced to cover the costs regardless of whether an offset is agreed upon, a potential drain on the department’s annual budget. Several new bills on the issue are already pending before Congress, and the chairmen of both the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees have promised to deal with the topic quickly this year. In a statement, Senate chairman Johnny Isakson (R-GA) said that he was pleased with the court decision and would work closely with VA on the next steps. The full decision is available at the appeals court’s web site http://www.cafc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/opinions-orders/17-1821.Opinion.1-29-2019.pdf. [Source: MilitaryTimes | Leo Shane III | January 29, 2019 ++]

VA Vision Care Update 07 ► Available to All Health Care Enrolled Vets

Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible for diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic eye care services. Veterans in all Priority Groups may be eligible to receive eyeglasses and/or medically necessary contact lenses. The need for an updated eyeglass prescription at VA expense will be determined by the VA eye care provider (optometrist or ophthalmologist) for eligible in VA.

VA eye care is the third busiest service in VHA, behind primary care and mental health. Ophthalmology is the second busiest surgical service, behind general surgery, with over 76,000 cases in FY18. The most common surgical procedure performed in VHA is cataract surgery. Over 30,000 laser surgery procedures were performed in VA clinics in FY18. VA’s Ophthalmology workforce consists of over 1200 physicians located at 115 clinics.

In fiscal year 2018, VHA’s Office of Specialty Care Services provided Eye Care (Optometry and Ophthalmology) Services for a record number of over 1.81 million Veterans at about 381 VA medical facility sites located in urban, suburban, rural, and highly rural areas. VA eye care providers (optometrists and ophthalmologists) prescribed nearly 1.7 million pairs of eyeglasses that were provided to Veterans by VA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services.

Every VA Eye (Optometry and/or Ophthalmology) Clinic provides basic low vision rehabilitation care. More intensive vision rehabilitation services are available within the VA Blind Rehabilitation Services program. VA eye care providers perform essential eye and vision examinations within the VA Polytrauma/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) System of Care as well as provide brain injury vision rehabilitation services at select VA medical facilities. [Source: VAntage Point | Hans Petersen | January 22, 2018 ++]
The February WEIGH IN participation was a little less than January. 21 members participated in February vs 39 in January. For those who didn’t weigh in in February, you can still participate in the running if you weigh in in March and April. The average weight for those members who participated in the January and February weigh-in, 21 members weighing in at 198.0 for a total loss of 53.6 pounds. It’s still early and not too late if you missed February or January you can still weigh-in for March and April. We have until April to show what YOU CAN DO for a healthier YOU!!!

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<th></th>
<th># members</th>
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<td>142.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>224.3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>198.0</td>
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Last month I erroneously reported the total member and average weight as 39 members with average weight of 255.3, it should have been 39 members with average weight of 216.8.

This month, the participation was down and so was the average weight for those who weighed in.
Frank Allkofer presents $5600 check to Vietnam Veterans Memorial President Chuck Macaluso. Frank’s donation is one of largest personal donations made to the Highland Park memorial in over a decade.

Flag Drawing winner Jack Madigan

50/50 Drawing Winner, Lynn Gursslin

Gates Town Supervisor, Cosmo Giunta, introduced himself to the members. Mr. Giunta replaced Mark Assini in November, 2018
Remembering Ken Moore

Very saddened to hear of Ken’s passing. A great advocate for all things Veteran related, RIP my friend.

“Served Our Country Then, Serving Our Community Now”
*Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20*

*Brother Ralph*

Kenny passed during the Super Bowl. My friend of over 30 years is gone. We served together on VetNet at Kodak. We worked together briefly at Kodak when I was an apprentice. Then we met again at VVA. During our years at VVA, Ken was VP while I was President. When I took a break from VVA, he talked me into returning as his Treasurer. Together he and I built a handicapped ramp for Don Murrell at Don’s home when Don became wheelchair bound. (Don was the first editor of the Chapter newsletter and a veteran. Don’s wife Rori was a counselor at VOC for many years.) Kenny and I gave the Chapter “shirt-gate” when I was President. It was Ken and I who were told to remove the Chapter banner from our balcony at a VVA Convention in California. Many, many memories of Kenny. I will miss my friend.

Fred Elliott

The community has lost its Front Man of Veterans advocacy for sure. I met Ken back in the 70’s when we served in the 98th Division Committee Group US Army Reserve as basic training Instructors. I am going to miss his dry wit and wise cracks... and his bad jokes. Rest In Peace My Friend. You’re at Ease Now. Mike Sanfilippo
I am going to miss him he was a great friend and teacher. Rest In Peace my friend. Val Gatto

With great sadness I wanted to pass the word to the Honor Guard that Kenny passed on last evening. He was a good friend and an advocate for all veterans, he will be missed.
Later
Chuck Macaluso
We have lost a great Veteran advocate. I first met Ken when the mentors gathered for our first Vet Court session in January of 2009. He did an admirable job as our lead mentor and was a staunch advocate for the Vets we served.

I can honestly say, if it had not been for Ken and the other Chapter # 20 members who served as mentors, I probably would not be a member of the Chapter today. They showed me what a great organization Chapter # 20 is and continues to be.

May God Bless him on his final journey home and his family during this time of loss. Bill Auble

Tears in the eyes!

WOW!

LOVE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Todd Baxter
Operation show the love this year was even bigger than last year. My car was full and Walt Gurney's truck was full as well. The people at Richards House thank all of you who donated. And I thank you all too! It puts a tear in my eye to see how we love and want to care for our brothers and sisters. I hope I can do this again next year, and have even more to give them.

The first pic is Walt Gurney and some of the guys. The other is me, Ron Hughes, and Walt.

Thank you

Kenny Allocco

Val Gatto, Jerry McDermott and Bill Auble attended the NYSC quarterly meeting on January 26. Each NYS Chapter discussed and shared information regarding their Chapters. Val presented Ned Foote with a check for $1000 for the NYSC.
Chapter 20 partnership with MVP for stress awareness at Greece Town mall on January 25th. Cheryl, Nikki, Jerry, and Mike were there to hand out healthy and stress-free information.

A “High-5” To Two Volunteers

The High 5 Award is a symbol of recognition for exceptional performance, not just for a period of time or body of work, but for a specific assignment that is performed above and beyond the norm. Until two years ago this award pin was reserved for VA employees, but is now attainable by Volunteers, who have exhibited a level of performance that is apart from their normal volunteer assignment.

(Below): Richard Lewandowski, a long time volunteer in Rochester, receives his High 5 Pin from Heather Camnarata, for his volunteer efforts with RGPC’s Health Fitness Center.
Honorees chosen for achievement in health care
By: Rochester Business Journal Staff February 8, 2019

Thirty-two honorees—29 individuals and three organizations—have been selected as recipients of the Rochester Business Journal's 2019 Health Care Achievement Awards. This year’s group is the 17th to receive the awards. Among the winners is Peter Ziarnowski, Rochester Vet Center.

The Health Care Achievement Award recipients will be honored during a luncheon March 22 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. The event recognizes excellence, promotes innovation and honors the efforts of organizations and individuals making a significant impact on the quality of health care in our area.

“The Rochester community is fortunate to have such a strong health care industry with organizations and professionals who do amazing work every day,” said Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, publisher of the Rochester Business Journal. “We are happy to honor the accomplishments of these people and organizations who go to great lengths to make Rochester a healthier community.”

Award nominations were made by community members, who supplied biographies, testimonials and other supporting information. Winners were selected by the Rochester Business Journal.

Individuals and groups are being honored in 10 categories:

Mental Health
• Joseph Majauskas, Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic, Rochester Regional Health Eastern Division
• Michael Scharf, University of Rochester Medical Center
• Peter Ziarnowski, Rochester Vet Center
. JUST PLAIN NEAT INFORMATION........

Glass takes one million years to decompose, which means it never wears out and can be recycled an infinite amount of times!

Gold is the only metal that doesn't rust, even if it's buried in the ground for thousands of years.

Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.

If you stop getting thirsty, you need to drink more water. When a human body is dehydrated, its thirst mechanism shuts off.

Did I read that sign right?
"TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW."

In a Laundromat:
AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

In a London department store:
BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS...

In an office:
WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN.

In an office:
AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.

I woke up this morning at 8 and could sense something was wrong. I got downstairs and found the wife face down on the kitchen floor, not breathing! I panicked. I didn't know what to do. Then I remembered the local cafe serves breakfast until 11.30.
"Jesus Loves You."
Nice to hear in church but not in a Mexican prison.

Got caught having a pee in the local swimming pool today.
The lifeguard shouted at me so loudly, I nearly fell in

I woke to go to the toilet in the middle of the night and noticed a burglar sneaking through next door's garden.
Suddenly my neighbour came from nowhere and smacked him over the head with a shovel, killing him instantly.
He then began to dig a grave with the shovel.
Astonished, I got back into bed.
My wife said "Darling, you're shaking, what is it?"
"You'll never believe what I've just seen!"
I said, "That bastard next door has still got my bloody shovel."
Board Meetings

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<tr>
<td>March 5, 2019</td>
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Membership Meetings

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<tr>
<td>March 14, 2019</td>
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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.
Your business card could be here. Contact Chapter Treasurer, Alan Frisa (afrisa@rochester.rr.com), for details.
In Memory Donations

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
Rochester, NY 14612
VA Health Care Benefits
Contacts and References

E-Benefits Portal Site
https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal

Enrollment/Eligibility
http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility
Health Resource Center 1-877-222-8387 (VETS)

OEF / OIF
http://www.oefoif.va.gov

Women Veterans
http://www.va.gov/womenvet
Benefits Line 1-855-829-6636

Dental Care

Copays
http://www1.va.gov/CBO/brochures.asp
Health Resource Center 1-877-222-8387

Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Prosthetics
http://www.prosthetics.va.gov

My HealtheVet
http://www.myhealth.va.gov

Homeless Veterans Hotline
1-877-424-3838
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Public Affairs – Mike Sanfilippo guardian175@yahoo.com 594-2649 h
Social Events – V. Gatto vgetto@rochester.rr.com 227-2741 h
Speaker’s Bureau – Ken Allocco KBUD920@yahoo.com 392-9042 c
Vet Benefits – Stan Patykiewicz SNMPATYK@rochester.rr.com 247-4830 h
Veterans Walk – C. Macaluso chuckmac66@yahoo.com 225-8288 h
Women’s Affairs – Rosemary Rossi-Williams pefros@gmail.com 738-6138 c

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Nancy Rekowski nrekowski@avva.org

NYS AVVA PRESIDENT
Cherie Steers csvva@optonline.net 516-822-5938

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION
Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial 753-7275
(enter 9; enter 2 to leave a message)
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
e-mail: serviceofficer@yahoo.com
VA Veterans Benefits Hotline 800-827-1000
Women Veterans Call Center 888-829-6636
VA Medical Center in Batavia 297-1000
VA Hospital in Buffalo 716-834-9200
VA Medical Center in Canandaigua 394-2000
VA Medical Center in Bath 607-664-4000
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
National Caregivers Support Line 855-260-3274
Homeless Hotline 877-424-3838
Crisis Hotline 800-273-8255

WEB SITES / EMAIL ADDRESSES
Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park
www.rochestervietnammemorial.org/The_Memorial
VVA New York State Council
www.nvylvietnavs.org
Honor Flight
www.HonorFlightRochester.org