Between The Lines

July

2020
Issue 90
DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC WE CONTINUE TO CEASE ALL GATHERINGS. TO THIS END I AM SORRY TO SAY THAT OUR JULY 7TH BOARD AND JULY 9TH MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE CANCELLED.

ADDITIONALLY, THE ANNUAL ELECTION WILL BE POSTPONED AND THE MEMORIAL SITE CLEAN UP DAY IS ON HOLD UNTIL WE ARE GIVEN THE “ALL CLEAR’ FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

THANK YOU.
VAL GATTO
CHAPTER 20 PRESIDENT
Some days life is just hard. And some days are just rough. And some days we just gotta cry before we move forward. And all of that is okay.

Live for a sunrise and a sunset where you will see colors in the sky that are stunning. Live for days when we are surrounded by our favorite people who make you realise that the world is not a cold, harsh place. Live for the little things because that is what life is about.

We choose to live by choice, not by chance. To make changes, not excuses. To be motivated not manipulated. To be useful, not used. To excel, not compete.

We choose self esteem not self pity. We choose to listen to the inner voices, not the random opinion of others. Sometimes the best thing we can do is not think, not wonder, not imagine, not obsess. Just breathe and have faith that everything will work out for the best.

Val
Hello, my fellow Vietnam veteran brothers and sisters. My name is Larry (Gunny) Strassner. I am a “Life time” member of VVA Chapter 20. I, sadly and unfortunately, have not been able to attend very many Thursday evening membership meetings due to personal scheduling conflicts. I do try to keep up with some things going on at the Chapter and nationally through the newsletter and the BTL.

I served in the US Marine Corps from 1966 to 1972. I went to “Boot Camp” at Paris Island, SC, Infantry training at Camp LeJeune and then to “Avionics School” in Jacksonville Fla.. My first permanent duty station was Marine Corps Aircraft Station, Beaufort, SC attached to Headquarters And Maintenance Squadron 32, Marine Aircraft Group 32 of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. From Dec. 1967 to March of 1969, I served with VMFA 323 (Death Rattlers) Squadron, MAG 13 of the 1st MAW in Chu Lai, Vietnam. My Military Occupational Specialty was Avionics, Aircraft Electrician for various “tail hook” jet aircraft and helicopters. My expertise was with the Phantom II F4-B. A couple of highlights of my tour in Viet Nam were being able to see two Bob Hope USO shows and participate in two “Tet” offensives. I returned stateside and was attached to VMAT-102, MCCRTG-10, 3rd MAW, Fleet Marine Force Pac, MCAS, Yuma, Arizona as a Staff Non-Commissioned Officer, helping train Marines on A4 Skyhawk aircraft. I was released from active duty in 1970 as an E5 Sergeant, transferred to active reserve with the Radio Relay & Construction Co. of the 12th Comm. Bn., FMF, USMCR training center here in Rochester, NY. I was planning on “shipping over” but promptly changed my mind just days after attaining the rank of Gunnery Sergeant E7 when they told me that I’d be going back to Nam in about a year. The rank and $5800 bonus just weren’t enough incentive, so I got out. Hence, the nick name “Gunny”.

In May of this year, I celebrate my 33rd anniversary of my 39th Birthday. I am married with three daughters and four grandkids. All of them have moved away from Rochester which gives me a super excuse to go “visit”, vacationing in the beautiful south east (Nashville, TN and Huntsville, AL) as well as the Albany area throughout the year. In 2001, I retired from Delphi Products as a Manufacturing Engineering supervisor, (formerly the Rochester Products Div. of GM) but returned to Delphi on a contract basis for the following 9 years for a total of 41 years at the same company. This experience only enhanced my record keeping experience and prepared me for future challenges.

I have also been blessed to have been able to keep quite active over the years. I basically don’t like to let grass grow under my feet. From about 1999, for about 12 to 14 years I had the pleasure of leading the design and construction of theater sets for Blackfriars, Geva, RAPA and other semi-
professional theater companies but most of all, I enjoyed doing this for the Greece Athena Middle and High School productions yearly. These were phenomenal productions where I was able to teach as well as learn from everyone around me. During the end of this time frame and beyond (about 9 years), I was privileged to be a volunteer for Honor Flight Rochester. I was on the leadership board and the director of “Ground Events” and “Speaker’s Bureau”. Believe me, this was a fulltime job and is one of the most rewarding things I’ve ever done. This too, was another record keeping and scheduling challenge. In 2018, I stepped aside from Leadership positions with HFR but still volunteer. I currently hold the offices of “Sgt. At Arms” for our American Legion Post 468 and “Quartermaster” for our VFW post 4658.

Again, keeping busy and not wanting to let grass grow under my feet (beside the fact that I was quite concerned to hear about our chapter possibly deactivating and VVA changing our name, I was hoping that I could help fill the need as VVA Chapter 20 Secretary.

Thank you,
Larry (Gunny) Strassner

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Alan J. Frisa

I like to rerun for the position of treasurer.
I have taken care of the books for the chapter for the past 10 years. I fine the job challenging and I am up for the task.
I have had the great pleasure of working with a great president Val, VP Hank, Secretary Joe we got things done, and saved money for the chapter.
Please consider me for the position of treasurer.

Was drafted in 1966 into the US Army took basic training at Ft Dicks went on to Ft Knox for armor training. I received orders for Germany where I was stationed in Schweinfurt, where I was a track mechanic. 3rd Infantry Division 2nd Battalion 64th Armor. My job was to keep the tanks running to protect the boarders from the Russians.

Thank you for your time.
Your brother
Alan J. Frisa
Knight III, Albert S. 7-1-1944
Rouse Jr., Gordon Arthur 7-3-1947
Shubbuck, Rolland Bernard 7-4-1944
Main, Richard Harold 7-5-1944
Bruce, Jeffrey Richard 7-6-1948
Petsos, Phillip Chris 7-10-1947
Brown, David Freeman 7-10-1948
Scott, Gary Arnold 7-11-1945
Bickel, Robert John 7-11-1948
Martin, Ernest T. 7-16-1939
Baker, Larry James 7-18-1942
Shaffer, William Paul 7-18-1947
Tremblay, Patrick Joseph 7-19-1949
Van Alst Jr., Harry L. 7-20-1947
Murphy, James Howard 7-24-1935
Sickles, Robert Paul 7-24-1946
Gearing Jr., William Carl 7-24-1948
Senese, Christopher Leigh 7-24-1948
Lupien, David G. 7-26-1947
Lemcke, David Earl 7-28-1947
Yatteau, Richard Franklin 7-31-1947

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
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
There are currently no new reports from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the National League of Families and the DOD on any servicemen recently recovered, returned and identified this month. The total number of Americans who are still missing from the Vietnam War still stands at 1587.

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

- Pfc. Robert D. Jenks, US Marine Corps Reserves was lost November 22, 1943 at Tarawa. He was accounted for on May 5, 2020.
- Pfc. Thomas F. Johnson, US Marine Corps Reserves was lost November 23, 1943 at Tarawa. He was accounted for on May 8, 2020.
- Pvt. Charles Andrews, US Army was lost December 4, 1944 in Hurtgen Forrest, Germany. He was accounted for on May 8, 2020.
- Pfc. Melvin D. Galland, US Marine Corps was lost November 22, 1943 at Tarawa. He was accounted for on May 19, 2020.
- Cpl. R.B. Cherry, US Army was lost November 27, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on May 20, 2020.
- Sgt. William E. Cavender, US Army was lost November 28, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on May 20, 2020.
- Sgt. Jesse D. Hill, US Army was lost December 2, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on May 21, 2020.
- Pfc. Charles D. Miller, US Marine Corps Reserves was lost November 22, 1943 at Tarawa. He was accounted for on May 26, 2020.
- Cpl. Billie Joe Hash, US Army was lost December 6, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on May 29, 2020.
- Pfc. John J. Sitarz, US Army was lost November 2, 1944 in Hurtgen Forrest, Germany. He was accounted for on May 22, 2020.
- Master Sgt. James Hart Jr., US Army was lost December 2, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on May 29, 2020.
- 1st Lt. Anthony R. Mazzulla, US Army was lost December 2, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on June 1, 2020.
- Sgt. Stanley L. DeWitt, US Army was lost December 6, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on June 8, 2020.
- Cpl. Pete Conley, US Army was lost December 12, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on June 9, 2020.
- Seaman 2nd Class, Floyd D. Helton, Metalsmith 1st Class, Leonard F. Smith, Fireman 1st Class, Louis J. Tushia and Radioman 3rd Class, Thomas E. Griffith, US Navy were all lost on December 7, 1941 on board the USS Oklahoma. They were all accounted for from May 15th to June 9th, 2020.
WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP HOPE
UNTIL THEY ARE ALL ACCOUNTED FOR.
WELCOME HOME BROTHERS AND REST IN PEACE
Membership Update
Mike General Membership Chair

Chapter 20 Membership currently is at 629 members and AVVA is at 40 members as of 05/31/20. Membership has been growing slow (only 0 new members in the last month), Need your help in recruiting new members. Don't forget to renew on time. Don’t let your membership expire. We had 0 members who did not renew this last month and members who passed away..

Please Renew Your Membership!
Only Life Memberships are available $50.00

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, Phone Number change please notify Mike General @ mwgeneral@aol.com so we can keep our Roster up to date and notify National.

Need your help in recruiting new members.
Membership Applications are available on our Website or by contacting me. (mwgeneral@aol.com)

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 are offering an “Honorary Membership” to Chapter 20 to all spouses who husbands have passed away(Must have been an Active Member). 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

Membership Application (bold fields are required.)

First Name

Last Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Home Phone, Ext.

Work Phone, Ext.

Primary Email

Date of Birth MM/DD/YYYY

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.
Happy Birthday America! As we celebrate our Nation’s birthday and our Independence Day from foreign rule, I just wonder who has 244 candles in the cupboard to use on such an enormous cake. I sure don’t! But I plan to celebrate anyway, with or without all the candles on the cake. This is such an accomplishment! Certainly, we can look back at how we as a nation started out, and try to imagine what has transpired during those 244 years. How did we arrive here on July 4, 2020? I would suggest that it took a whole lot of blood, sweat, tears and treasure to make this day happen, and even more work, more conversation, more sweat, maybe more tears too but I hope and pray no more blood. Perhaps to continue this great holiday, our nation’s birth, we need to support each other, respect each other, and think as one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. I will try to do just that! Wishing all a very healthy and Happy 4th of July!

A few articles to pass along. Covid-19 issues are still prevalent and dominate our news and daily lives, so one article deals with the VA’s preparations for the fall of 2020 anticipating needed health care for veterans. Another article deals with things that may remain after the pandemic is under control. Information dealing with low-dose CT scans that save lives for patients with lung cancer. Proposed reforms for the VA’s Survivors Benefit Program (SBP) that would include DIC reviews and possible increase in monthly payments. Finally, I want to extend my condolence to the family and friends of Mr. Anthony (Tony) Ferrarese, who passed away on June 11, 2020. Mr. Ferrarese was a US Army WWII soldier, who served in Europe. Tony was a beloved husband, father and grandfather. These things would be considered wonderful and in and of themselves, but that is not the half of it! Tony’s work, or perhaps continued service to our country is best framed in the image of a super advocate and true friend to Monroe County’s veteran population for decades. He was a tireless leader, supporter and someone you could count on to get things done for veterans, both locally and state wide. His accomplishments are too numerous to do justice here, but he will be missed. God bless and rest in peace Mr. Ferrarese!

Respectfully submitted by:
Jerry McDermott
Director Health Affairs
Cancer Screening
Update 02: Low-Dose CT Lung Scans are Saving Lives

Katherine Bennett-Wilson has smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for 50 years. So when the 66-year-old had her annual physical last May, as part of the Medicare screening process, her doctor told her she needed a low-dose CT scan of her lungs. “They saw nodules in the right upper lobe of my lung,” recalled Bennett-Wilson, who lives in South Philly. “I had to do a follow-up around six months later to see if they had gotten any bigger.” That scan, and a follow-up PET scan, showed that one nodule had grown, and she would need surgery to remove it. “It was cancer, but [my doctor] got it so early,” she said. “That’s the benefit of the screening. He caught it early at stage 1 so I don’t have to do chemo or radiation. Without that test, I never would have known I had it. It could have grown and been much worse than it was.”

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in both men and women in the United States, according to the American Lung Association (ALA), though lung cancer death rates are declining. Because smoking is the most common risk factor for getting lung cancer, screening those at risk annually is saving lives. Recent studies showed that choosing the right patients — like Bennett-Wilson — and screening them with low-dose CT scans could find cancers earlier, and improve patients’ survival overall, said Nathaniel Evans III, director of thoracic surgery at Jefferson Health, and Bennett-Wilson’s doctor. According to the American Cancer Association (ACA), lung cancer death rates dropped 51% from 1990 to 2017 among men and 26% from 2002 to 2017 among women.

That decline is a direct result of fewer people smoking, said Anil Vachani, co-director of lung cancer screening at both Penn Medicine and the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. As smoking has declined, so have lung cancer deaths, but former smokers are still at risk. “Unfortunately, lung cancer frequently presents with nonspecific symptoms. People can have tumors growing in their lungs and not have any symptoms for a long, long time,” he said, because lungs are comprised mostly of air with few pain receptors. By waiting until someone shows symptoms — coughing up blood, losing weight or pain — the cancer is usually late stage. Stage 1 lung cancer is significantly more treatable and potentially curable compared to stage 3 and 4 lung cancer.

About 10% to 15% of smokers develop lung cancer. While to some, that number may seem low, approximately 541,000 Americans living today have been diagnosed with lung cancer at some point in their lives, according to the ALA. “A quarter of the population in some parts of Philadelphia smoke,” said Evans. “So even if only 10% of them get cancer in their life, that ends up being a huge proportion of people.” Screening is recommended for smokers age 55 and older who have smoked 30 pack years — a pack a day for 30 years or two packs a day for 15 years, for example. They also need to have smoked sometime over the last 15 years. Insurance will pay for the screening. The initial scan will be covered without co-pay for those meeting the high-risk criteria who are ages 55 to 80 and have private insurance, or are 55 to 77 and have Medicare, according to the ALA.

For patients who don’t have any signs or symptoms of lung cancer, screening identifies early stage cancer “in about 4% or 5% of them,” said Evans. And if they are still smoking, patients who are screened also get counseling for smoking cessation, Evans said. That’s a great opportunity to try and help them quit, added Vachani. “At the time they’re getting screening is perhaps when they are worried about their lung health and future cancer risk,” he said. “We get them the necessary resources to think about quitting and help them quit.”

Like any diagnostic screening, there are risks, most notably, a small amount of radiation that comes with any CT scan, Vachani said. The accumulation of radiation over time can increase the risk for new cancers. There is also the risk of false positive results, which lead to more testing. Evans urges smokers who fit the screening profile to get the scan. “One of the things that prevents people from getting screening is that they’re afraid of what they will find,” he said. “We only find anything on about a quarter of the scans, and 90% of the things we find are benign. You’re much more likely to be able to get peace of mind that everything’s fine than you are to find a lung cancer. And if you have a cancer, it’s better to find out about it than not.”

Though there are causes of lung cancer unrelated to smoking — exposures to radon, secondhand smoke, environmental factors such as air pollution, and occupational exposures like asbestos — currently, the screening is not recommended for nonsmokers. “We don’t have a way of identifying nonsmokers who are high risk enough, that we could justify screening them,” Evans said. For patients who don’t have a lung cancer, quitting can decrease their risks of developing one, Evans said. “Much of the damage they’re doing to their lungs can be reversed just by not smoking anymore. For patients who smoke that do have lung cancer, smoking puts them at risk for complications no matter what type of treatment they have.”

Evans said treatment of lung cancer is much different than it was 20 or 30 years ago. “Most patients’ understanding of lung cancer is based on when their parents or grandparents might have lung cancer,” he said. “That’s not the way it is anymore. It’s hard to get people to screen for things if they think, no matter what happens, you can’t do anything about it.
anyway. The reality is, at all stages of the disease, there are new treatments every day.” [Source: Philadelphia Inquirer | Terri Akman | June 11, 2020 ++]

**COVID-19 Changes**

Some that May Outlast the Pandemic

Right now, it may feel like most people are in a perpetual state of waiting. Waiting for state restrictions to ease, waiting for news about jobs or school, waiting for news about a coronavirus vaccine… But even after things return to a more normal state — whenever that may be — it’s clear that some of the changes we’ve made will be permanent. Some of those may be positive. Others may forever remain annoying reminders of this unusual time. No one can predict the future, but here’s a look at many things that we expect to be part of our lives long after we return to a more normal state.

**No magazines in waiting rooms**

Waiting rooms are famous for their ancient issues of magazines. But now the CDC recommends that dental offices, for one, clear waiting areas of toys, magazines and other shared objects that can’t easily be disinfected. Hospitals and doctors offices are among those hopping on the trend. Bringing your own books, magazines and smartphone games may have to fill in for the foreseeable future.

**Working from home**

Some employers offered work-at-home options before the pandemic. But now, state lockdown orders make it a must-do for many more. Going forward, companies that value their employees will feel pressure to offer some kind of work-at-home technology if working from a distance is a realistic possibility.

**Social-distancing stickers**

If you’ve shopped at all during the pandemic, you’ve likely seen stickers on store floors showing how far apart from other customers to stand while waiting in a line. Expect more of these wherever lines are likely — at the entrances of popular businesses, for ordering coffee or sandwiches and when checking out at a store, for a few examples. One-way aisle traffic stickers also seem likely to stick around, guiding the flow of customers to avoid face-to-face encounters.

**Face masks in public**

Some states now require residents to wear face masks or other facial coverings when they visit stores or ride public transport. There’s no one national rule but expect to continue seeing folks wear them, from the disposable medical kind to fancier versions with sports team or pop culture logos.

**Cashless stores**

We’ve known for years that paper money, traveling from person to person, staying in circulation for years, never getting washed, can harbor thousands of microbes. Credit and debit cards, because they stay in one person’s possession, can be a safer and cleaner option — especially if they are contactless and only need to be waved in front of a reader.

**Movies at home**

With movie theaters closed, Hollywood studios have been funneling some of their big new titles, such as Pixar’s “Onward,” on to various streaming services. If brick-and-mortar theaters can return to some kind of normal operations, then some movie blockbusters surely will be reserved for the big screen. But the future of streaming video services has never looked better. There are seemingly more streaming services than ever before.

**Shaking hands**

Wave goodbye — from a socially approved distance — to the practice of handshakes and other touchy-feely greetings. Maybe substitute a wave, a thumbs-up or Mr. Spock’s “live long and prosper” **Vulcan hand gesture** from “Star Trek.”

**Plexiglass separators in stores**

Cashiers don’t want to be sneezed on these days any more than you want them to sneeze on you. Those transparent plastic barriers you’re seeing in supermarkets and other stores are likely to stay up.

**Vacationing close to home**

Disney World and Hawaii may be out of reach for a while, as flying seems fraught with issues. To quench our wanderlust, travelers are likely to rediscover local destinations, including day trips and nearby national and state parks.

**Drive-in theater revival**

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At a drive-in theater, moviegoers have always stayed socially distanced in the family car, with the exception of snack runs and bathroom breaks. Even drive-ins have had to adjust. Some are adding online ticket and concession sales. But the old-fashioned drive-in just might continue to be one of Hollywood’s hottest destinations.

**Dairy delivery**

The neighborhood milkman, delivering clanking bottles of milk to your door, is not a relic of the past. Local dairies that deliver milk, eggs, butter and more never entirely disappeared, and the coronavirus may be helping this old tradition make a modest comeback.

**Voting by mail**

Today, 28 states offer mail-in ballots as an option but only five states — Utah, Colorado, Washington, Hawaii and Oregon — conduct their elections entirely by mail. But since standing in long lines at crowded polling places seems less appealing these days, the mail-in practice may be poised to spread. Washington’s secretary of state told the New York Times that officials from every other state and Puerto Rico have spoken to her or to her election director about how to make voting by mail work.

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Gael F. Cooper | June 5, 2020 ++]

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**VA COVID-19 Preparations**

Unable to Predict what Fall Coronavirus Rebound May Bring

As lawmakers attempt to return to some semblance of “normal” business in the summer months, Congress is contemplating just how it’ll possibly plan out a budget for the next year with all the unknowns of the ongoing pandemic. The challenge is no more difficult than at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic has forced leadership to reevaluate its budget needs and re-prioritize previously existing projects. In the early days of the pandemic, VA had projected some 200,000-300,000 veterans could become infected with the virus. To date, roughly 12,000 out of the nation’s 9.5 million veterans have been diagnosed with coronavirus, according to VA data.

“We anticipated 2-to-3% of the population would be infected; we’re dealing with a fraction of that,” Richard Stone, executive-in-charge of the Veterans Health Administration, told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee 3 JUN. “We’re dealing with a tenth of that.” Of the $19.6 billion the department received from Congress in emergency supplemental funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, VA has spent roughly $1 billion on medical services. It hasn’t been often that VA has over-predicted how much funding it requires from Congress. In the days of the VA Choice Act, the department struggled to predict how much veterans would tap into community care providers, with Congress scrambling to pass additional, emergency funding.

Today, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said the department is holding on tight to that additional funding for two reasons. It’s both preparing for a potential rebound of the coronavirus in the fall and planning to reprioritize and possibly transfer funds to places with greater need. “What VA must be concerned about is its ability take care of sick people. About 20% of the positives are really sick,” Stone said. “Do we have enough beds, do we have enough equipment, do we have enough personnel to care for them? Hence the reconfiguration of the VA’s delivery system to grow by almost 4,000 beds as we went through this, and the hiring of massive numbers of people.” “VA is well-positioned to remain the backstop of the American health care system,” he added.

Stone said he couldn’t begin to predict whether the country would in fact experience a second, perhaps more severe spike of coronavirus cases in the fall. The department does, however, anticipate treating 600 veterans as inpatients for the virus through the fall. As the department prepares for the possibility of significantly more cases in the fall, it’s also balancing the need to catch up on a few VA initiatives that were delayed or stalled during the pandemic. Those projects will take some extra cash, VA said; it just needs the transfer authority to move funds from one priority to another. “We did not get all the money in the right places, Jon Rychalski, VA’s chief financial officer, said of the CARES Act supplemental funding. “We do have a real need to move some of that CARES money into the Veterans Benefits Administration, not a large amount, some into the National Cemetery Administration and some into IT as well. Those are three areas where we’re going to be short.”

- VBA, for example, is now facing a backlog of 119,000 compensation and pension exams, up nearly 5,000 in one week. The department canceled in-person compensation and pension exams in early April for veterans seeking disability benefits. Though
VA recently announced in-person exams at some facilities would resume in the next few weeks, the agency will need to pay its employees overtime to work quickly through the backlog.

- The electronic health record is another VA project that’s stalled during the pandemic, though its path forward has less clarity. Before the pandemic, the department had set July as a tentative goal for the rollout of initial EHR capabilities in Spokane, Washington. But VA took its clinicians off the project and instructed Cerner contractors working at the Spokane facility to turn the space back to the hospital in the early days of the pandemic.

  “I don’t really want to talk about this, but I have to,” said Jon Tester (D-MT) ranking member of the Senate committee, who noted VA had spent roughly $2.5 billion on EHR modernization so far. “I know you’ve been impacted by COVID, but what have we done so far?” he said. “Do we have value for the money we’ve spent, and what kind of timeline really are we on here to get this up and going? And is it going to be user-friendly enough so we don’t have send doctors and nurses to training for a month to be able to get them to understand how to use the damn record when they should be treating patients?” Wilkie described the EHR modernization as a “good news story,” noting VA and the Defense Department’s success in launching the Joint Health Information Exchange in mid-April. “We’re going to be going live on the scheduling portion in Columbus, Ohio, and then I expect Spokane and later Seattle will be up and running later this year,” he said.

[Source: Federal News Network | Nicole Ogrysko | June 4, 2020 ++]  

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**SBP Reform**

*Update 06: S.6933 | Caring for Survivors Act of 2020*

On 20 MAY, Representative T.J. Cox (D-CA-21) along with Reps. Gil Cisneros (D-CA-39), Ted Yoho (R-FL-3), Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ-2) and Jahana Hayes (D-CT-5) introduced the Caring for Survivors Act of 2020. The act would increase dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for surviving dependents and lower the threshold of eligibility to allow certain survivors to receive this benefit who currently do not meet the requirements.

The rate of compensation paid to survivors of service members who die in the line of duty or veterans who die from service-related injuries or diseases was set in 1993 and has been minimally adjusted since then. The DIC also has rules that can drastically decrease the benefits survivors receive if they remarry or if the period the veteran was disabled before their death was less than 10 years. Other federal survivor programs do not have such stringent rules for decreasing or withholding survivor benefits. The bill would make more surviving dependents of servicemembers eligible for DIC by:

- Reducing the age allowed for a surviving spouse to remarry and maintain their benefits from 57 to 55, consistent with other Federal survivor programs,
- Increasing the DIC base rate to 55% of the rate of compensation paid to a totally disabled veteran, and
- Easing the 10-year rule for eligibility and replace it with a graduated scale of benefits that begins after five years and increases by percentage until reaching full amount at the 10-year mark.

The intent of the current law is to provide DIC benefits for surviving spouses and minor children based on the length and severity of the veteran’s total disability rating. The financial status of surviving spouses, many who act as primary caregivers, can be limited for those who put their careers on hold to care for the veteran. The requirement of 10 years seems arbitrary given the severity of many disabilities and the impact on veterans and their families. “Thousands of families of veterans are being denied the benefits their loved ones earned while serving our country.

- I think our veterans’ survivor benefits should be at least as generous as the same benefits in other federal agencies and in the private sector, so I am proposing some simple changes to the current system that will make these benefits fairer and available to more surviving families,” said Rep. Cox. “We need to do whatever we can to make sure we take care of our veterans and their families.”
- “Our current law prevents many families of veterans from accessing critical benefits. The bipartisan Caring for Survivors Act of 2020 fixes this problem and puts the rules on veteran’s survivor benefits on the same footing with other federal retirement programs,” said Rep. Cisneros.
- “This is the least we can do for our nation’s heroes and their families. As a Navy Veteran, I’m committed to being a voice for our servicemembers, veterans, and their families and will always fight to get them the benefits they have earned.”

“The families of the brave men and women who sacrificed and served our nation, with some making the ultimate sacrifice in defense of America, need to be taken care of. The freedom and liberty we enjoy every day was paid for by our veterans and
their selfless service. I am proud to join Rep. Cox and my other colleagues in a bipartisan effort to do what is right to provide benefits to our nation’s veterans and their families,” said Rep. Yoho.

- “We must ensure that we honor our warriors by providing for their loved ones when they no longer can,” said Rep. Van Drew. “This is a positive change that will provide even-handed support for those families at their times of need.”

- “In speaking with veterans across my district, one of the biggest issues that I hear about is the need for improvements to the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefit at the VA,” said Rep. Hayes. “The death of a service member should never lead a family to financial hardship, and we owe it to these heroes to give their families the full benefits they have earned. It has been far too long since these benefits have been adequately adjusted. DIC must be brought in line with other federal benefits, and must compliment the times that we are living in. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on this important issue.”

This legislation also has the support of the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. “I agree with the Caring for Survivors Act of 2020 because I would like for my family to have a backup plan in the case of my untimely death,” said Danny Rueda, Post Commander for VFW Post 6742. “I also agree with this act because I’m currently seeking to receive my full 100% claim for the Veteran Affairs, and this act would benefit my family since I am currently only receiving 10% of my claim.” [Source: VFW Action Corps Weekly | T.J. Cox | May 22, 2020 ++]
Remembranceing Tony Ferrarese

Photos by Glenn Peck
Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic we continue to cease all gatherings. Our July 7th Board and July 9th Membership meetings are cancelled.

The annual election has been postponed and the Memorial Site clean up day is on hold until we are given the “all clear” from the government.
Thank you,
-Val Gatto

HONOR FLIGHT UPDATE
Due to the Coronavirus pandemic the 3 fall trips are not being schedule pending official notice from the government.
Thank you,
Steven Wendell
Boarder police have just seized 2 tons of toilet paper hidden in cocaine.

I'm trying to make protein shakes, but they keep coming out as margaritas.

I just got gas for $1.59. I ain’t gonna tell you guys where cause I see how y’all did the toilet paper

While everything is getting shut down... maybe they should pave the roads.

Everyone keeps saying there is going to be a baby boom when this is all over...... There may be a lot of Divorces and Justifiable Homicides too.

Your grandparents were called to war. You’re being called to sit on the couch. You can do this!
Thoughts and prayers going out to all the married men who’ve spent months telling the wife “I’ll do that when I get time.”

Does anyone know how long toilet paper will last if you freeze it?

All those who are panicking & buying up all the toilet paper, please do us all a favor & stock up on condoms so you don’t produce any more idiot’s.

Has anyone tried tossing a virgin in a volcano yet?
### Board Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 7, 2020</td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 4, 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1, 2020</td>
<td></td>
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### Membership Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 9, 2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 13, 2020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 10, 2020</td>
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**Monthly Membership Meetings**

**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.

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**Chiropractic Urgent Care**

**Italian American Sports Club**

1250 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, NY 14624
(585) 464-9160

**Miguel A. Llano Jr.**

Licensed Massage Therapist

Miguel A. Llano

Expertise: In sports, deep tissue, pain reduction, medical, orthopedic and chair massage

1 Lockwood Dr., Suite 110
Pittsford, NY 14534
Cell: (585) 704-5903
mllano324@ymail.com
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 Benefits Line 1-855-829-6636
http://www.va.gov/womenvet

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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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.nyvietnamvets.org
Honor Flight
www.HonorFlightRochester.org