Nominating Committee

March Meeting (3/12) will be “Meet the Candidates for 2020”
The Annual Meeting & Elections will be held April 9, 2020 at 6:15 PM –

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 –
Four (4) Executive & Three (3) Directors & Up to (6) New York State Council Representatives

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 2020 to vote April 2020).
• 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 6:30 PM till 7:15 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 2/20) are as follows:

**Officer Positions (4)**
President Val Gatto
Vice-President Hank Wallace
Treasurer Alan Frisa - Richard Pearce
Secretary (no candidate to date)

**Director Positions (3)**
Fred Elliott
McDermott

**State Council – (6)**
Nick Deleo
Val Gatto
Jerry McDermott
Bill Auble
Each candidate will address the membership at the March Membership Meeting on March 12th, 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

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**President: Valentino Gatto**

I have been a member of Chapter 20 since 2007. In 2009 I was elected to the Board of Directors and my responsibilities included the coordination and sale of Chapter 20 related apparel, commonly referred to as “Chapter Gear.” Also, in 2009 I became a member of the Chapter 20 Honor Guard and Marching unit and was appointed Assistant Commander for both units. In 2010 I was elected as a Chapter 20 delegate to the New York State Council and coordinator of social events for the Chapter. In 2011 I was elected to the position of Vice President. In 2012 I was elected president. In the 10 years that I served the chapter along with the Board of Directors we made many changes and resolved many issues. I will continue to better serve the chapter and its members. I will strive for the success of the chapter in helping our members and our community.

As President of Chapter 20 I am involved with the community and most of all Chapter 20 members to make sure they are getting the proper help and benefits they deserve. I also represent chapter 20 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Greater Rochester and the Veterans Memorial Council of Rochester and Monroe County.

For me it is an ongoing process dealing with everyday issues for the chapter and a multitude of phone calls and e-mails. I am committed to work closely with the Board members to discuss and resolve issues that are important to the wellbeing of the chapter. I have been lucky to have a Board that works so well together. Through the years as your President we made very good progress in resolving many issues that directly affect the future of the chapter. Every day I work diligently to preserve the integrity of the chapter and the special place we have in the Rochester community. As president of Chapter 20, not only do I have the honor of representing our organization at many events, but also I am doing everything I can to ensure that we are on a financial footing that allows us to continue to be a meaningful part of Monroe County and a voice for all veterans. I am asking for your vote and together we will make Chapter 20, a Chapter second to none.

If re-elected, I will continue to work with the executive committee, the Board of Directors, the membership and the community to keep the chapter going for many years to come.
HANK WALLACE

I grew up in North Florida before going to the Military Academy, graduating into the Army in 1960. Served for four years including one year in the 173th Airborne in Vietnam. Used the GI Bill for two years at SUNY Binghamton for an accounting degree. Worked several jobs before getting a job at RIT (NTID) teaching deaf kids accounting. Along the way was able to complete a CPA from NYS. After my wife passed, I became a part of VVA. And have become part of the leadership and board, including the commander of Marching Unit and Vice-President. I would be honored if re-elected. My thanks for your consideration.

Jerry McDermott, Director

I am a US Army veteran. I enlisted for 3 years starting in March 1968, and I completed my third year in March 1971. I served one year in Vietnam, from March 69 through March 70, in I Corps with a Field Artillery unit of 8 inch and 175mm self-propelled howitzers. Battery C, 2nd Battalion 94th Artillery.

I am a Life Member of VVA, and have been a Chapter #20 member since 2007. I am running for my fifth term as a member of the Board of Directors. I currently chair the Health Affairs Committee, and also chair the Financial/Audit Committee. I have been a delegate to the NY State Council quarterly meetings as Chapter representative since 2009. I would like to continue as one of your Chapter # 20 delegates to NYS Council. Since 2008, when I first joined the BOD, I was appointed to the position of VA/Volunteer Service representative, first as the deputy representative. In 2012 I was named representative by VVA National to the VA Canandaigua Medical Center, (now called Finger Lakes Health Center) and have attended their quarterly meetings on behalf of Chapter #20 regularly. I have been elected by the VAVS reps to their governing committee and I am serving my second 3-year term in that position. I also serve as a Monroe County Veterans Court mentor again, after a 3-year absence, helping other veterans involved with the legal system.
One of my reasons for running again for election, is there is still more to accomplish for our fellow veterans and their families. I can still help and contribute by staying involved. My experience and contacts built up through these past many years can come into play now more than ever. As we age and may have need of more health services or benefits, I would like to pass along that needed information to our membership. I would like to be able to continue the path that Chapter #20 members have allowed me to take. I want to continue to expand my efforts to educate, advocate and inform as many veterans and their families within our community about their earned benefits through their honorable service to our great country. I am asking for your vote and your support in the April election. I am grateful and appreciate the support that you have given me in the past. Thank you all, and Welcome Home!

Position of Treasurer

I like to rerun for the position of treasurer. I have taken care of the books for the chapter for the past 8 years. I find 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
Ron Trovato

I am a two tour Army Vietnam Vet having served with the Vietnamese 21st Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta from April 69 to February 71. I returned to Rochester after living in Tampa for several years and graduated from Buffalo State College in 1978. I worked at the Post Office for nine years and then was hired as a Probation Officer by Monroe County where I worked for 23 years. I met Tom Cray at the VOC in 1976 and was interested in veterans affairs ever since. As an original member of Chapter 20, I wrote tasteless articles of dubious value for the Forward Observer and BTL. My first wife Wendy was very active in the Chapter and my boys grew up as part of the Chapter. I have served 19 years on the Board of Directors and chaired the Veterans Incarcerated Committee for 31 years, a position I recently gave up. Presently I do hospice work with veterans and a bereavement group through Lifetime Care as well as being active with Celebrate Recovery, a Christ centered recovery ministry at Browncroft Community Church. The Chapter has been a big part of my families life since we first organized in 1979 to get certified for the Agent Orange lawsuit and it helped raise my boys and was a tremendous support when I lost my wife Wendy so I have much to be thankful for. I feel it is important to have vets on the Board with a link to the past and a common sense approach to dealing with issues we face today, especially the future of our organization as a last man standing Chapter. I would like to continue to serve you on the Board and hope to be with you when we eventually close out what has been one of the most important influences on my entire life.

CANDIDATE’S BIO FOR FRED ELLIOTT

I served in Vietnam from January to December of 1967 with the Army’s 9th Infantry and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. In 1983 I joined VVA, becoming a Life Member in 1987. I have served as Chapter President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director as well as a National At-Large Director. Currently, Region 2 Director, and National Vice President.

I have been a delegate to many National Conventions, the Convention Rules Chair twice and the Convention Resolutions Committee Chair. Over the past years, I have served on several National Committees: Constitution, Healthcare, Homeless Veterans Task Force, Government Affairs, Membership, and as the Vice Chair of the Finance Committee.

Chapter 20 is fast approaching a critical time in its existence. We, the Chapter Board of Directors, and you, the Members, will need to decide on the direction of the Chapter for the remainder of our time as an
organization. As the National organization continues to debate the issue of the future of VVA, we need to do the same at the Chapter. I would like to be a part of that process as a Chapter Director and feel that I bring many useful tools to the Board based on my experiences within VVA.

I thank you for your vote for me, Fred Elliott, as a Chapter Director.

Richard G Pearce  
Candidate for Treasurer of Chapter 20

Shortly after I finished my first college degree, I was asked by our government to go on an all-expense paid trip to Southeast Asia. I did not know where in Vietnam or with whom I would be serving. Imagine my surprise when my name was called to join the First Cav. I served a 12-month tour and was released from the Army the day after I landed in California. Four weeks later I was married.

Two years later I joined the Army reserves for a short time to earn some extra money. 19 years later, I retired as an E-8.

I live in Chili with my wife. We will celebrate 50 years of marriage this year. We have 2 sons and four grandchildren.

I have only been a member of Chapter 20 for 4 years. I have joined the Marching Unit, the Honor Guard and the Finance Committee. Last May, I was at the memorial for a school tour and went to Rush Henrietta Junior High for a discussion with the members of the Eighth-grade class.

I want to be Treasurer of the Chapter because I have two degrees, one in Business and one in Accounting, I have 30 years of accounting experience in business. I have been an Accounting Manager, a Regional Controller and a Financial Analyst.

I have built Accounting systems to include one with Quickbooks, the same software Chapter 20 is currently using. I have put together budgets as part of my duties. I have worked with outside accounting companies for annual audits, and I have worked part time doing individual tax returns.

As you can see, I am very well qualified to help and support Chapter 20 in one of the most critical functions in the Chapter.

Thank you for your consideration.
Remembering Our Fallen Heroes
Born in March

Website – http://rochestervietnammemorial.org/

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).

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:

- Pvt. Pearl F Barrow US Army was lost November 20, 1944 in Hurtgen Forrest, Germany. He was accounted for on January 16, 2019.
- Cpl. Arthur C. Ramirez, US Army was lost December 6, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for on January 22, 2019.
- Pfc. Royal L. Waltz, US Marine Corps was lost November 20, 1943 in Tarawa. He was accounted for on February 4, 2020.
- Cpl. Oscar E. Koskela, US Marine Corps was lost June 18, 1944 in Saipan. He was accounted for on February 4, 2020.
- Pfc. James W. White, US Army was lost July 2, 1944 in Burma. He was accounted for on February 11, 2020.
- Pvt. James J. Cansier, US Army was lost December 19, 1944 in Hurtgen Forrest, Germany. He was accounted for on February 11, 2020.
- Fireman 2nd Class Joseph W. Carrol, Martin D, Young Fireman 1st Class Dan E. Reagan, Seaman 1st Class Joe R. Nightingale, Warren C. Gillette Seaman 2nd Class Cecil H. Thornton Hospital Apprentice 1st Class John M. Mulick, MMC Lada Smisek and FCC Daniel F. Harris, US Navy was lost on board the USS Oklahoma on December 7, 1941. They were accounted for from January 27th to February 11th 2020.
- Fireman 2nd Class William P. Kubinec, US Navy was lost on board the USS West Virginia on December 7, 1941. He was accounted for on January 27th 2020.

WE WILL BE NEVER GIVE UP HOPE
UNTIL THEY ARE ALL ACCOUNTED FOR
WELCOME HOME BROTHERS
Using the analogy of a football game for the 12th Annual Fit Vet Challenge, we are beginning the 2nd half, 3rd quarter. Yes, there will be four months to play, two down, and two to go. Or perhaps I should say, shed those unwanted pounds, but for now it is anyone’s game to win, or rather loose! So, be a good sport, come over and get weigh in, and support your branch of service for bragging rights. The prize is of course being labeled the biggest losers! Now, what are you WEIGHTING for?

Some information that I want to share deals with the following health/benefit issues. Information about depression and anxiety disorders, (like anyone whoever served in the military would be subject to that). More news about prostate cancer and how it affects different races within the military. More info about the Agent Orange new presumptives, the delays and why the VA Secretary is asking for more studies. Finally, a House of Representatives action to present a law to address the long overdue discussed A/O presumptives of bladder cancer, hyperthyroidism, Parkinson’s and hypertension. As always, read and pass it along to others who may benefit.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jerry McDermott,
Chair Health Affairs

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**Depression & Anxiety Disorders**

**Solving Them in Veterans**

Between 2000 and 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported a 327% increase in anxiety disorders among military members. A recent study suggests that this may be due to the discovery of a so-called "worry gene." Researchers from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and the University of California in San Diego analyzed the genes of 200,000 U.S. veterans and identified six genetic variants linked to anxiety — a discovery that may help explain why anxiety and depression often go hand in hand. The study authors hailed their finding as "the richest set of results for the genetic basis of anxiety to date." But leading psychologists say that while genes may load the gun, it's most often environment that pulls the trigger on mental health disorders.

According to Mental Health First Aid, 20 veterans die by suicide each day. Over 30% of active duty and military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have a mental health problem requiring treatment, but only half of these returning veterans receive the care they need. "We should spend as much money on helping these veterans re-enter their civilian lives as we do in training them for the military," Dr. Terry Lyles, Ph.D., an internationally recognized expert on dealing with trauma and stress, tells Newsmax. "The study points the finger at genetics on why our military personnel have mental health issues. However, we basically all have the same genetic patterns but when threatened with violence, danger, and combat stress, we release levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, that drains our bodies of the natural resources to deal with that constant bombardment."

"Cortisol literally eats serotonin, the hormone that helps regulate mood and social behavior. So, when these veterans are subjected to constant threats, improper nutrition, lack of sleep, and sunlight — it's no wonder they become rewired to exhibit anxiety and depression." Lyles, known as America's "Stress Coach," uses highly specialized techniques to help veterans and other individuals such as the rescue workers at Ground Zero and those in the tsunami-torn area in Asia to help channel mental negativity and chaos into more productive and positive pathways.
Dr. Lois Mueller, a clinical psychologist from Tampa who worked at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Outpatient Clinic for 10 years, tells Newsmax, that people with a genetic predisposition toward anxiety will have a 10-fold increased risk of developing a mental disorder when being placed in a combat situation where people around you are wounded or dying.

- "Whatever they came with genetically was certainly affected by their environment," she says. "The proof of impact of combat would be to compare vets before being in the military and five years after combat. Don't forget, a lot more were traumatized not only by combat itself but also by associated military duties such as picking up and bagging bodies or delivering the folded flags to mothers here in the States.
- "My experience with vets with PSTD is very often people who were calm and worry-free prior to combat ended up anxious and fearful after leaving the military. Early treatment can make a difference but length of exposure to combat can make it very difficult to eliminate the problem. We are still learning about treatment techniques."

[Source: NewsmaxHealth | January 24, 2020 ++]

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**VA Presumptive AO Diseases**

**Update 30: H.R.5610 | Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act**

After the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) signaled that it would not cover several diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange for at least a year – if at all, Representatives Josh Harder (CA-10) and Pete Stauber (MN-08) introduced the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act, which would require the VA to cover the conditions. Currently, Vietnam Veterans with specific health care problems developed as the result of exposure to Agent Orange during their service get “presumptive” access to benefits at the VA. However, some health problems, which have been linked to Agent Orange exposure are not covered. The VA’s decision to ignore the results of real scientific evidence and wait on the outcome of other studies means dragging out care for over 83,000 Vietnam Veterans struggling with bladder cancer, Parkinsonism, hypertension, or hypothyroidism who must struggle without the benefits they deserve for at least a year.

“These guys have waited for over 40 years for the benefits they earned and should have been getting decades ago,” said Rep. Harder. “No more studies. No more excuses. Everyone seems to think this is the right thing to do except for some Washington bureaucrats – it’s time to stop playing games and give our vets the benefits they earned.”

“When our servicemembers join the armed forces, they make the ultimate sacrifice – they put their lives on the line for the security of our nation and the safety of our families. It is only fair that we care for these servicemembers when they return home,” said Rep. Pete Stauber (MN-08). “Vietnam veterans have long been suffering from health problems as a result of Agent Orange exposure. That is why Congressman Harder and I introduced the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act, which adds Parkinsonism, bladder cancer, hypertension, and hypothyroidism to the list of presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, so that our veterans can access the healthcare and disability benefits they rightfully deserve. I’m proud to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on this important issue.”

“It has been over three years since the National Academies reported their findings in 2016 and VA has taken no action. Veterans with terminal illnesses such as bladder cancer cannot continue to wait on VA’s needless delays, as they need access to VA health care and benefits now,” said Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans (DAV). “On behalf of DAV and our over one million members, all of whom were injured or made ill during wartime service, I write to offer our support for Representative Harder’s legislation that would include additional presumptive diseases for Agent Orange exposure.”

The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act would simply add the four conditions to the presumptive list to ensure qualifying veterans get automatic access to benefits. The bill has been endorsed by Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Fleet Reserve Association. Although the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) has found a link between these four conditions and exposure to Agent Orange, the VA has claimed there is not sufficient scientific evidence to justify adding the conditions to the list. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie recently told Senators the decision on whether to add the conditions wouldn’t come until at least “late 2020.” However, last year, the VA told Congress a decision would be made by July 2019. Former VA Secretary David Shulkin attempted to add these four conditions to the presumptive list in 2019, but records obtained by Military Times and Freedom of Information requests indicate that Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director and White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney intervened to prevent the addition of these conditions over cost concerns.
Representative Harder previously introduced a House Resolution alongside Senator Sherrod Brown to encourage the president to add the conditions to the presumptive list. In addition to introducing the bill and resolution, Rep. Harder, along with House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (CA-41) wrote a letter directly to Mick Mulvaney demanding that he stop his campaign to prevent these veterans from obtaining health care coverage for their conditions. In June, President Trump signed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act into law, legislation Rep. Harder cosponsored and voted to pass through the House of Representatives. The new law will guarantee that Navy Veterans get the same access to coverage for Agent Orange-related health conditions as their counterparts who served on land. Following the law’s passage, Rep. Harder held a workshop to help dozens of area veterans apply for their new health care benefits. [Source: Rep. Josh Harder | Press Release | January 15, 2020 ++]

VA Presumptive AO Diseases
Update 31: Veterans Affairs Leaders Disagree with Scientists’ Findings

Department of Veterans Affairs leaders disagree with scientists’ findings that link Agent Orange exposure to more diseases Congress has pushed VA to cover. That decision could provide disability benefits to tens of thousands of veterans and their families, to the tune of $15.2 billion. In a report sent to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees 27 JAN and obtained by Connecting Vets, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said his experts disputed the findings of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM).

NASEM scientists previously determined that there is evidence connecting bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson’s-like symptoms to exposure to the toxic herbicide. But Wilkie said VA experts “noted significant concerns and limitations” with NASEM scientists’ findings, alleging that NASEM included “no definitive causal links” between the toxin and the four diseases in their findings. Wilkie specifically mentioned that two of the four illnesses -- bladder cancer and hypertension, or high blood pressure -- have “many alternative risk factors” such as diet, tobacco use, genetics, age and race. NASEM scientists also used members of the Army Chemical Corps for its “most rigorous study,” which “does not necessarily reflect the experience of the general population of veterans deployed to Vietnam” because the Chemical Corps were known to have a higher exposure to Agent Orange, Wilkie said in the report.

The cost to extend VA benefits to cover those illnesses would likely run from $11.2 billion to $15.2 billion, depending on a pending court decision. Wilkie and VA previously said the agency has no plans to decide on the four diseases until the completion of VA’s own in-house studies, the results of which aren’t expected to publish until late this year at the earliest.

“The soonest the secretary would be able to consider adding any new presumptive conditions is in late 2020,” the report said. Those studies are:

- **The Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study:** A study that began in 2014 to analyze overall health of Vietnam-era veterans, including a survey of 45,000 randomly selected veterans of the 9.9 million who served from 1961-75. The survey was fielded in 2016-17 and the results “are now being analyzed and prepared for submission to peer-reviewed literature in 2020,” Wilkie wrote previously.

- **The Vietnam Era Mortality Study:** An analysis comparing overall mortality and specific causes of death between Vietnam theater and era veterans to standard U.S. civilian deaths. That study is expected to be completed and available for peer review and publication in “late 2020,” Wilkie wrote.

On 28 JAN, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), one of the loudest critics of VA’s delayed decision, accused VA of denying scientific evidence. “For far too long, the Trump administration has failed to acknowledge the tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans who, as a result of their service, are continuing to suffer the detrimental effects of Agent Orange,” Tester said in a statement to Connecting Vets. “Instead of justice, these veterans have been subjected to unwarranted delays, and are consistently denied access to the critical care and benefits they desperately need. This report is particularly troubling because the administration is denying the overwhelming scientific evidence that has already been put forth, and is instead changing the rules by seemingly forcing veterans with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinsonism, and hypertension to meet a different — perhaps unattainable — standard. For these veterans and their families, this is absolutely unacceptable.”

Two years ago, then-VA Secretary David Shulkin decided to add more diseases to the VA’s list of health concerns that qualify a veteran for Agent Orange disability benefits. According to documents obtained by a veteran through the Freedom of Information Act and provided to Connecting Vets, White House officials stood in Shulkin's way expressing concern about the cost of covering additional diseases and requesting more research. Military Times first reported on the documents.
Earlier this year, Veterans Health Administration acting head Dr. Richard Stone told Congress VA "hoped" to make a decision on those illnesses "within 90 days," which was previously reported by Connecting Vets.

Expanding the list at https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/related-diseases of health conditions presumed to be caused by Agent Orange exposure could provide disability pay and health benefits to more than 83,000 veterans. Repeated attempts by Connecting Vets to get an update from VA officials on whether the department had a forthcoming decision have been consistently met with the same statement: "VA has no announcements on Agent Orange presumptive conditions at this time."

[Source: ConnectVets.com | Abbie Bennett | January 28, 2020 ++]

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**VA Prostate Cancer Program**

**Update 17: African American vs. White Counterpart Survival Rates**

When it comes to prostate cancer, African American men have similar survival rates to white counterparts if they have equal access to healthcare, a new study suggests. Earlier research has found African Americans are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer as whites, and the reasons may include diagnosis when the disease is more advanced as well as differences in medical care. But the new study, which followed more than 60,000 men with prostate cancer getting care from the U.S. Veterans Administration Health System, found African American men did not have more advanced disease at diagnosis and did not die earlier than white men, researchers reported in Cancer.

“Throughout the U.S. population, African Americans usually have worse outcomes with prostate cancer,” said the study’s senior author Dr. Brent Rose of the University of California, San Diego. “The hypothesis has been that the disease is just biologically more aggressive in African American men.” “Our study suggests that is not a foregone conclusion,” Rose said. “There’s something about the way the VA medical system reduces disparities seen in normal healthcare that suggests that equal outcomes could be created with smart policy decisions.” That doesn’t mean there are no biological differences between blacks and whites when it comes to prostate cancer, Rose said. “African Americans are more likely to get prostate cancer than whites: one in eight versus one in twelve. And they tend to get it three to four years younger for reasons we have no idea about.” Nevertheless, Rose said, when African Americans get good access to care and prompt treatment, disparities in survival disappear.

To determine whether access to healthcare might play a role in the disparity in survival between blacks and whites, Rose and his team analyzed information on more than 20 million veterans who receive care through the San Diego VA’s healthcare system. They focused on 60,035 men diagnosed with prostate cancer between 2000 and 2015, 30.3% of whom were African American and 69.7% were non-Hispanic white. Half of the men were followed for nearly six years, and some were followed for as long as 10 years. Overall, there were 3,067 deaths from prostate cancer in the group, 848 among African American men and 2,219 in non-Hispanic white men.

Contrary to the situation in the general population, African American men in the VA were not diagnosed with later-stage cancer than their white counterparts, although they did get diagnosed at a younger average age: 63 versus 66 years old. The rate of prostate cancer death over a 10-year span among black men was slightly lower than the rate among whites: 4.4% versus 5.1%. The new results are very good news, said Dr. Ashutosh Tewari, chairman of urology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. “When you find the cancer at the same stage, you can have the same survival outcome,” Tewari said. “This is important news.”

Nevertheless, it doesn’t solve the problem in the general population, Tewari said. “Many more African Americans are still dying from prostate cancer,” he said. Researchers need to find a way to diagnose prostate cancer earlier in African American men in the general population, Tewari said.

[Source: Reuters | Linda Carroll | January 27, 2020 ++]
THE FEBRUARY WEIGH IN PARTICIPATION was half of those who weighed in for January. 20 members participated in February, however only 18 qualified vs 41 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, 18 members weighing in at 187.25. 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!!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># members</th>
<th>Average Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>145.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>189.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>206.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>208.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>187.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Membership Update
Mike General Membership Chair

Chapter 20 Membership currently is at 617 members and AVVA is at 40 members as of 11/30/19. Membership has been growing slow (only 2 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 5 members who did not renew this last month and 3 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Application</th>
<th>(bold fields are required.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, State, Zip Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Phone, Ext.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Phone, Ext.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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.
Membership Request

I am asking all members of Chapter 20 to send me (via E-Mail [mwgeneral@aol.com]) your current:

1. Name
2. Address
3. Phone Number

This step is necessary so My Roster and National’s Roster can be updated.

Please Renew Your Membership on time!

Mike
This is the seventh in what we hope will be an ongoing series of stories of our fallen 280 brothers. This series was suggested by Bruce VanApeldoorn. The idea is to write a story about one of the Brothers that will be published in the BTL and submitted to the Living Wall site, www.vvmf.org. If you would like to submit a story, please send it to vietvet6748@gmail.com.

Name: L/Cpl. David C. Crane
Location on Vietnam Memorial, Washington, DC: Panel 50W Line 48
Location in Vietnam Memorial, Highland Park, NY: Bollard #162
Branch of Service: U.S. Marine Corps
Date of Birth: 08/18/1947
Date of Death: 08/02/1968
Awards: Purple Heart medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Good Conduct medal, Vietnam Campaign medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Gallantry Cross, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal and Vietnam Service medal
L/Cpl. Crane was assigned to Mobile Training Team 2, 1st Civil Affairs Group, Combined Action, III MAF. Recorded circumstances attributed to: "Died through hostile action, explosive device". Incident location: South Vietnam, Quang Ngai province.

In the main entrance of Greece Olympia High School is a display of Honor for those from the High School who have made the ultimate sacrifice. During the Vietnam War six former students, five Marines and one Army, are recognized. David C. Crane is one of those brave former students.

While reviewing the Virtual Wall it seems that in the last few years quite a few of the current students of Greece Olympia have left comments. Some brief and some like the following:

"Remembering An American Hero
Dear LCPL David Chauncey Crane, sir

As an American, I would like to thank you for your service and for your sacrifice made on behalf of our wonderful country. The youth of today could gain much by learning of heroes such as yourself, men and women whose courage and heart can never be questioned.

May God allow you to read this, and may He allow me to someday shake your hand when I get to Heaven to personally thank you. May he also allow my father to find you and shake your hand now to say thank you; for America, and for those who love you."
With respect, and the best salute a civilian can muster for you, Sir’’
It is comforting to know that even with over 50 years passing that the High School’s Students still recognize the sacrifice of their fellow Students.
Data collected by Bruce C. Van Apeldoorn Sr. – Greece Olympia Class of 1967
Ron Trovato presented Chapter 20 with the Frank Wiletto Award. The award was given to the Chapter by the Native American Group at Attica Correctional Facility for the Chapters excellent community service.

Ron Trovato and Tony DeBellis show the Chapter members a painting of Ken Moore. The painting was painted by an Attica inmate to show his appreciation of the work and dedication Ken gave to the veteran inmates. The painting was then presented to Kens wife Sandy Moore.
50/50 Drawing winner, Nick Deleo

Flag drawing winner, Gary Anderson
Chapter 20 Committee Members - Part 2

Hank Wallace, Chapter VP, Marching Committee

Ron Trovato, Incarcerated Veterans Committee

Joe Peck, Pow/Mia Committee

Ken Allocco, Speaker’s Bureau Committee
Since Viet Nam Veterans are all eligible to apply for the Honor Flight Program, and many have already attended, we will be adding a page dedicated to the Honor Flight Program when new information is received. We will be publishing the Welcome Home flight schedule starting with the first one in 2020. If you haven’t already attended a Welcome Home event you should treat yourselves to a heartwarming experience, one you will never forget. I’ve posted pictures of Chapter 20 members who have attended Mission 69, this past October. We will also publish events that the Honor Flight committee will be attending and hope that you will support their efforts. If you haven’t yet applied for your Honor Flight, please do so at the Honor Flight site below.

**WELCOME HOME (MISSION 70) INCOMING RECEPTION**

- SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 11am AT THE ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**HONOR FLIGHT EVENTS**

- MARCH 7TH - FUND RAISER AT KNUCKLEHEAD CRAFT BREWING, 426 RIDGE ROAD, WEBSTER, NY

- MARCH 20-21ST - TABLE SET UP AT THE ROCHESTER HOME SHOW

Photos of Chapter 20 members returning from Mission 69, October 20, 2019

Regards,
Jerry

January 13, 2020
Valentino Gatto, President of Chapter # 20, Vietnam Veterans of America, representing over 620 members, plus spouses and family members, from the greater Rochester, NY area. We deeply appreciate the efforts by NY Senator Schumer to resolve the latest VA stonewalling for timely answers for the addition of bladder cancer, Parkinsons-like symptoms, hypothyroidism and hypertension to the presumptive list associated with exposure to Agent Orange defoliation used during the Vietnam War and other locations housing military installations. We want to know why.

Why Are We Still Waiting?

Why, are so many Vietnam Veterans who honorably served this great nation, still waiting for services, treatment and a decision that defies any reasonable justification.

Why, since the studies and conclusions have been thoroughly reviewed and accepted by the National Academy of Medicine are so many Vietnam Veterans still waiting for a decision on four presumptive health issues related to over 20 million gallons of tactical herbicide containing dioxins and toxins commonly known as Agent Orange. Why, since the former Secretary of VA, Dr. David Shulkin, in November 2017 made the decision to grant the above-mentioned presumptive, are Vietnam Veterans still waiting for a decision by the Veterans Affairs. Yes, sometimes things do move slowly in government, but the War in Vietnam has been over since 1975, some 45 years ago! How much longer should these veterans wait for a decision? Does waiting for answers and action need to take 2 years, 5 years or 50 years? It is time for the VA and Office of Management and Budget to act.

If those individuals who are continuing to delay these decisions were in our boots, wouldn’t they too have liked a faster and quicker resolution to these health issues? Ask yourself, the right thing to do may not be the easiest thing to do, but it is still the right thing to do!

Why are we still waiting? Do the right thing!
“What Gary Beikirch did to receive his medal is unforgettable.”
—GARY SINISE

After dawn the siege began. It was April 1, 1970, and Army Green Beret medic Gary Beikirch knew the odds were stacked against their survival. Some 10,000 enemy soldiers sought to obliterate the twelve American Special Forces troops and 400 indigenous fighters who stood fast to defend 2,300 women and children inside the village of Dak Seang. For his valor and selflessness during the ruthless siege, Beikirch would be awarded a Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest and most prestigious military decoration.

But Gary returned home wounded in body, mind, and soul. To find himself again, he retreated to a cave in the mountains of New England—where a redemptive encounter with God allowed him to find peace.

New York Times bestselling author Marcus Brotherton chronicles the incredible true story of a person who changed from lost to found. Gripping and unforgettable—and written with a rich and vivid narrative voice—Blaze of Light will inspire you to answer hurt with ingenuity, to reach for faith, and to find clarity and peace within any season of storm.
VVA Grassroots/Legislative Coordinator Advocacy – new online program Voter Voice Legislative Action Center, which has replaced CapWiz. The new online site https://vva.org/what-we-do/veterans-advocacy/legislative-action-center/ will allow you to:

- Sign up for Alerts
- View Alerts
- Find Legislation
- Find Politicians
- Sign a petition
- View VVA Legislative Campaigns
- Take Action
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Board Meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 3, 2020</td>
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<td>April 7, 2020</td>
<td>April 9, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5, 2020</td>
<td>May 14, 2020</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 Benefits Line
http://www.va.gov/womenvet
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
Contact Information

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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  pefrose@gmail.com  738-6138 c

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
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 Batavia  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.rocketsvietnammemorial.org/The_Memorial
VVA New York State Council
 www.nyvietnamesvets.org
Honor Flight
 www.HonorFlightRochester.org

VVA Chapter 20  585-482-7396
P.O. Box 12580  www.vva20.org
Rochester, NY 14612

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 www.rocketsvietnammemorial.org/The_Memorial
VVA New York State Council
 www.nyvietnamesvets.org
Honor Flight
 www.HonorFlightRochester.org