

# INTERCHANGE ONLINE



THE OFFICIAL ONLINE NEWSPAPER OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL

Vol. 30 Issue 02

Veteran's News that needs to be Read SUMMER 2020



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## ELECTION'S RESULTS

# CANCELLED

# DUE TO COVID19

Hopefully we will have Elections in September!

## IN MEMORIAM

### MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

VVA #20 Kuzmick, Robert P.

VVA #20 Reynell, William A

VVA #32 Riabie, Matthew

VVA #77 Beck, David Edward

VVA #77 Eggers, Dennis Lee

VVA #77 Jaeger, James A.

VVA #82 Peltzer, John

VVA #82 Terry, Paul A. — Nick Graziano

VVA #103 Miller, Francis Joseph

VVA #103 Rhode, James E.

VVA #140 Allen, Glenn Wayne

VVA #421 Rosenwald, Dennis

VVA #803 Hough, James Rober

At-Large Member Butler, Howard



Note: Some names were listed in the last issue of the VVA VETERAN



**VVA-NYSC Meeting Dates 2020**

January 24, 25, 26 2020

April 3,4, 5 2020

June, NO MEETING

September 25, 26, 27 2020

**On-Line INTERCHANGE** is the Bi-monthly publication of the VVA-NYSC. Comments and contributions are encouraged and can be sent to:

**VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM**

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Queensbury, NY 12804

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of this organization. Individuals with different viewpoints and opinions are invited to submit them to the Chapter by the **deadline** of the **Third Friday** of each month. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and reject any libelous or obscene material.

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Francisco Muñiz III



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Norbert “Butch” Steinwandel	716-857-3404	Norbert.steinwandel@va.gov

**President's Report**

Ned D. Foote

I am sitting here wondering what to write. All we have heard in past few months is Covid-19. I do not need to go into all that. You should know and know what to do. You heard it repeatedly.

As everyone is hurting and businesses may not be able to survive, we in VVA have not been immune to this virus. I will try to explain how it is affecting our organization from National to State to Chapter.

Our funding is mostly derived by our Household Goods Program that funds around 70% of our income. That business closed beginning of March and they let go 2 to 3,000 employees. Shut down the Thrift Stores. Projection is closed for at least 10 weeks. Another ten to get up and running and then who knows when they will get back to normal business. We do hope when they do, they keep working with VVA. But what that means is State Councils who receive funds from this program will not receive anymore after July. Then it goes down to our chapters who have been receiving funds will not either.

At the National level we have been able to keep our staff intact, albeit working from home. They have submitted for the Stimulus funds and that is looking good to receive 8 weeks of payroll. Then I think we operate on hope.

As chair of the Finance Committee we submitted our budget for FY21 before the pandemic which was passed by the BOD. We have been tasked to come up with modifications and amended budget using the worst-case scenario. We will present this in July to the BOD but back to hope. And hope we will not need to present this bare bone budget. So, we will see.

So how does this virus affect NY Council? Chapters? Administratively Chapters have not been able to meet. SC has not had meeting and our next schedule meeting is September but who knows.

Our Constitution says Chapters must have elections in April. State Council elections come in June. It cannot be done but we have options. The officers and directors will need to stay in place until elections are held. The constitution also says your election reports need to be in by July 15<sup>th</sup> but no one will be suspended because of the situation we are in. Now you ask how about Finance Report. There is absolutely no reason a chapter cannot send in that report. Over the years we have made it so easy that you do not need your treasurer to fill out. No figures are needed. The 990n you do online does not ask any income or expenses if your income is less than \$50,000 which I believe all chapters fall into that. Also, when you go to VVA.ORG for VVA finance report that goes with your 990n it only asks for chapter info and FEIN number. AND no signatures required. So, anyone can do this. So, let us get this in to National and State Council. You all are just sitting around as you cannot go out so please do this little thing.

Now State Council end. We have been losing funding sources now for over a year and it is starting to rain on our rainy-day funds. As I reported before, the funding, we received from NY State we did not receive last year. We are supposed to receive this year, but we go back to that hope word I used so we cannot depend on that. Our foundation we set up years ago to work with a tele marker for funds have closed shop last year and we no longer receive funds which amounted  $\frac{3}{4}$  quarters of our payroll. When this happened, a decision was made that we can no longer keep accepting new claims. Dee and Butch up in Buffalo who handles VVA claims for us have been working at the max.

**(Continue on pg. 5)**



## New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation

We provide grants to Vietnam Veterans of America-New York State Council, (VVA-NYSC) a veteran's service organization that advocates for legislation at the State and Federal level of government to provide housing, education, health and mental care services to veterans and their families.

We provide funding for VVA-NYSC Veteran's Service Officer program that assist veterans with their military disability compensation and pension claims from the Veterans Administration.

We advocate for better Federal and State veteran's benefits and veteran preferences in government employment. VVA Chapters within New York State, assist widows, widowers, and orphans of our veterans. The organization organizes programs that enrich the lives of Vietnam veterans, as well as veterans from past, current wars, and their families.

We have an active Agent Orange committee that helps Vietnam veterans receive up to date information on prostate cancer, diabetes, and other chemically-related diseases.

We have an updated database of agencies that provide:

- Listings of Veteran Job Fairs offered by county or veteran service organizations;
- Counseling for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
- Outreach programs that support returning veterans' reentry into civilian life;

For disabled veterans, this can be even more difficult than a tour of duty.

We do this all year long, but without your gift and the gifts of other supporters, nothing can be done to help those that are so deserving of it. However, we have much more to accomplish.

We, the New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation, have a mission to keep advocating for and helping these veterans. We ask you to join us in our mission to provide assistance, guidance, training, and education to all veterans of past, present, and future military conflicts.

So let us continue to work together to ensure our national heroes receive everything that they are entitled to receive for their sacrifice and service to our nation.

President Francisco Muñiz III

Vice President Ned D. Foote

Treasurer Grant T. Coates

Secretary Nick Valenti

Directors Sam Hall

Stan May

You can send your tax deductible donation, to the extent allowed by law, directly to the Foundation at NY Vietnam Veterans Foundation, 48 March Lane, Westbury, NY 11590-6302.

**NOTE:** The Foundation has lost its fundraising contract and is in need of funds to support our Service Officer's Program. Please send donation to the above address.

(Cont. from pg. 4)

As you know for a claim that we get through our County Service Officers could take up to 5 years or more to be settled. That decision did not come easily just as we had to make the extremely hard decision to close our NY Office when Ben became ill.

I sent letters to our County Service Officers in November advising them of our intentions and they would need to start using another organization to file claims with. We would still be working the cases we have now, which we have over 700 in the appeal process. January 1 will be the start. They in turned ask for an extension to give more time to be credentialed with another organization which I granted providing they stop sending new claims which they complied. April 15<sup>th</sup> was new date and I sent them notice that their credentials will be revoked. Now to emphasize, NO Veteran will be hurt by this. Same thing we had in NY Office. There are many organizations, VFW, American Legion, DAV, and NY Veterans Services are there to file claims. Again our 700 plus claims are still being processed. It does free up some work for Dee and Butch and they can spend time to prepare a claim for hearings. It will be better for our Veterans to have their full attention as they have the time better used.

So, they are still working full time meaning we still need to pay them. So, our expenses are still there, and we are good for few more years but more if we find new sources, but we will need to tighten up. Not having an April meeting and June helps. Not Having a Leadership Conference also helps. So, we will be looking at other areas because we need to and have the obligation to service our Veterans especially with claims that we have.

Changing gears, a little. Chapters 60 and 537 are now closed. Aging issue as no one wants to step up to run a chapter. This is not new as we have now closed around 5 chapters in past 3 years. I do see a few more going that route.

So, stay safe and check on your Veteran friends so we can all come out of this pandemic and get back to what the new normal will be.

#### **URGENT MESSAGE:**

Since many Chapters are closed and we are not having a State Council meeting this is a great time for Chapters to continue doing their servicing the veterans within their communities.

These are uncertain times and I know we are all developing new strategy, as we spent more time at home and practice social distancing.

This is a good time to lend any help needed to your family members, neighbor and a hand to any senior veteran within your community.

As Vietnam veterans we are strong and we have faced adversity in the past as wars and local major events such as 9/11, storms, hurricanes and blizzards and together we will face coronavirus with strength and a share sacrifice..

Call or E-mail your veterans in your Chapters and keep in touch and in helping them survive during these difficult times. Go food shopping or bring a hot meal to those who are shut in their homes.

If you need help call the VA hotline or any support groups within your counties:

If you need help call the VA hotline or any support groups within your counties:

Health Care: 1-877-222-VETS (8387); Veterans Crisis Line - 1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255); Women Veterans Hotline 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636) (Continue on pg. 10)

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT Ted Wilkinson—Chair



NYSC Membership Affairs Committee  
Roster and Roll Call  
Summer 2020

	Chapter	District	2020 Attendance			1-May-20	28-Feb-'19	Current	Delegate Increase
			25-Jan	4-Apr	26-Sep	Members	Members	Delegates	
0	0	AT LARGE				956	864	9	
1	8	ALBANY	E	X		65	64	2	
2	11	SUFFOLK	S			516	472	11	1
3	20	ROCHESTER	W	X		628	619	13	
4	32	QUEENS	S	X		236	239	5	
5	49	WESTCHESTER	E	X		357	328	8	1
7	72	BROOKLYN	S	X		194	192	4	
8	77	BUFFALO	W	X		681	672	14	
9	79	GLEN FALLS	E	X		72	76	2	
10	82	NASSAU	S	X		317	331	7	
11	85	ONEONTA	C	X		41	42	1	
12	103	SYRACUSE	C	X		200	196	5	1
13	126	MANHATTAN	S	X		109	111	3	
14	140	ORANGE COUNTY	E	X		127	121	3	
15	193	WARSAW	W	X		149	138	3	
16	268	NIAGARA COUNTY	W	X		117	108	3	
17	333	ROCKLAND	E	X		207	211	5	
18	377	FINGER LAKES	C	X		94	85	2	
19	421	STATEN ISLAND	S			266	261	6	
20	459	DUNKIRK	W			47	46	1	
21	480	OWEGO	C	X		79	83	2	
23	541	PUTNUM/DUTCHESS	E	X		36	31	1	
24	704	AUBURN	C	X		47	49	1	
25	803	ELMIRA	C			238	219	5	
26	827	HERKIMER	C			22	24	0	
27	865	JAMESTOWN	W	X		151	159	4	
28	869	DUTCHESS/COLUMBIA	E			32	32	1	
29	896	ENDICOTT	C			43	43	1	
30	944	UTICA	C			151	139	3	
31	978	FREWSBURG	W	X		35	27	1	
		<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>21</b>		<b>6213</b>	<b>5982</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3</b>
		<b>EASTERN DISTRICT</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>896</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>
		<b>SOUTHERN DISTRICT</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>1638</b>	<b>1604</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>
		<b>CENTRAL DISTRICT</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>915</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>
		<b>WESTERN DISTRICT</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>1808</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>

Each Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) vote for its first 25 members. A Chapter which has fifty (50) members shall be entitled to a second vote at the Convention. For each full block of fifty (50) members thereafter, the Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) additional vote. In the event that a Chapter shall have less than twenty-five (25) members, the chapter shall receive no vote, but the members thereof shall be included in the number of non-affiliated members for representation by the State Council, as set forth by VVA Constitution. Chapter delegates to the convention must be selected from the Chapter membership or from the membership of the state in which the chapter is located.

Updated 02.28.2019

(Continue from pg. 6)

We appreciate and thank the membership committee for all the help and hours of work. and especially **Charlie** for his unending dedication.

All chapter election reports must be sent to **National AND State Council** (same with finance reports)

Twenty-three (23) of the thirty-one (31) VVA chapters attended at least one (1) out of the four (4) New York State Council meetings during 2019.

Nineteen chapters attended every council meeting: Thank You

*11 Suffolk County, 20 Rochester, 32 Queens, 49 Westchester, 72 Brooklyn,  
 79 Glens Falls 85 Oneonta, 77 Buffalo, 126 Manhattan, 103 Syracuse,  
 193 Warsaw 480 Owego, 704 Auburn, 140 Orange County, 377 Finger Lakes  
 140 Orange County, 268 Niagara County, 865 Jamestown, 978 Frewsburg.*

Eight (8) chapter did not attend any 2019 State Council meetings.

Each chapter shall elect delegates to the state council, and these delegates shall represent the chapter on all matters to come before the state council. Chapters shall be responsible for ensuring the attendance of at least one delegate per chapter at not less than one half of all of the meetings of the state council during the preceding twelve months, and the unexcused absence of at least one delegate from such meetings of the state council during the preceding twelve months may be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action against the chapter, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the National Disciplinary Policy, adopted by the Corporation.

**Constitution of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Amended 07/18/2019**

**Article II Section 3 Subsection A-2**

**Top VVA Chapters by Membership**

Rank	Chapter	State	Members	Rank	Chapter	State	Members
1	0172	MD	1006	15	0137	TX	405
2	0203	TN	888	16	0628	WV	400
3	0862	PA	851	17	0941	ND	389
4	0154	MI	806	18	0751	OK	370
<b>5</b>	<b>0077</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0049</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>357</b>
6	1036	FL	633	20	0012	NJ	352
<b>7</b>	<b>0020</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>628</b>	21	0047	CA	275
7	1067	AL	628	22	0227	VA	328
9	0391	CA	593	23	1078	TN	319
10	0451	MD	553	<b>24</b>	<b>0082</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>0011</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>516</b>	24	0267	MI	318
12	1054	SD	506				
13	0317	MO	428				
14	0299	IL	406				

(Continue on pg. 8)

**VVA NATIONAL**

	Mar '19	Mar '20	% +/-
Yearly Growth:	84,	86,955	+3.17%

	Feb '20	Mar '20	% +/-
Monthly Growth:	86,725	86,955	+0.31%

**VVA NEW YORK**

Ye	Mar '19	Mar '20	% +/-
	6,027	6,216	+3.13%

Monthly Growth:	Feb '20	Mar '20	% +/-
	6,195	6,216	+0.3%

**AVVA NATIONAL**

	Mar '19	Mar '20	% +/-
Yearly Growth:	10,131	10,476	+3.41%

	Feb '20	Mar '20	% +/-
Monthly Growth:	10,396	10,476	-0.77%

**AVVA NEW YORK**

	Mar '19	Mar '20	% +/-
Yearly Growth:	687	683	-0.9%

	Feb '20	Mar '20	% +/-
Monthly Growth:	678	683	+0.7%

**Top VVA Chapters by Membership**

Rank	Chapter	State	Members	Rank	Chapter	State	Members
1	0172	MD	1006	15	0137	TX	405
2	0203	TN	888	16	0628	WV	400
3	0862	PA	851	17	0941	ND	389
4	0154	MI	806	18	0751	OK	370
5	0077	NY	682	19	0049	NY	357
6	1036	FL	633	20	0012	NJ	352
7	0020	NY	628	21	0047	CA	275
7	1067	AL	628	22	0227	VA	328
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11	0011	NY	516	24	0267	MI	318
12	1054	SD	506				
13	0317	MO	428				
14	0299	IL	406				

**STAY HOME**

**STOP THE SPREAD**

**SAVE LIVES**



(Continue from pg. 8)

## POW/MIA – VETERANS INITIATIVE

1) To Date: Missing 1,587

- o 1,587 Americans are listed by DOD as missing and unaccounted.
- o No identifications have been announced since 18 July 2019.
- o Accounted: 996 since 1975.
- o 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975
- o Total 1,059
- o Recovery Locations: Vietnam 727, Laos 287 Cambodia 42, PRC 3

2) Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, DPAA has terminated all missions to include DPAA's 4 recovery teams (RT) and 2 investigation teams (IT); and Partners' 2 RTs and 2 IT's, effecting missions in Kiribati, the Philippines, Poland, and Vietnam.

Other than a privately-funded underwater investigation off the coast of Latvia, there are no other field missions in the world.

DPAA's 6 RTs and 1 IT, affecting missions in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Laos, and the United Kingdom have been cancelled.

DPAA has postponed 9 RTs and 5 ITs; and Partners' 5 RTs and 9 ITs, affecting missions in Austria, Cambodia, Germany, Guam, Italy, Kuwait, Laos, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Poland, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Sweden, and Vietnam.

## Secretary's Report

Francisco Muñiz, III

I would like to thank all the committees, officers and Chapter leaderships for sending in their report in a timely manner, especially during these stressful time.

The next DEADLINE for the FALL edition for the On-line Interchange will be on September 20. Please forward your reports to be published in the INTERCHANGE to the following E-mail only: [VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM](mailto:VVAINTERCHANGE@AOL.COM). Do not send reports to the secretary's E-mail address! Thanks!

I thought that we will have a meeting in September due to this COVID 19 pandemic. But we will keep positive about this saturation. If not we will go electronically on ZOOM!

Remember to honor our deceased veterans on Memorial Day in a safe manner. See if this link works:



VID-20200428-WA0021 (1).mp4

(Continue on pg. 11)

(Continue from pg. 5)

### VVA - NYSC - How to Protect Yourself

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

#### Know How it Spreads

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Take steps to protect yourself - washing hands with soap and water

#### Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

#### Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

#### Take steps to protect others

Stay home if you're sick

Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.

#### Cover coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

Throw used tissues in the trash.

Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

#### Wear a facemask if you are sick

If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. Learn what to do if you are sick.

(Continue on pg. 11)

**(Continue from pg. 10)**

If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

**Clean and disinfect**

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

**To disinfect:**

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

**Options include:**

Diluting your household bleach.

To make a bleach solution, mix:

5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water           OR

4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Please Note this is not meant for Drinking!

**Alcohol solutions.**

Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.

Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants.

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens pdf icon[7 pages]external icon claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

**(Continue from pg. 9) Secretary's Report**

**E-mail received by State Council President Ned Foote:**

Subject: Dee Garcia

Mr. Foote,

My name is Brian Burgstahler. I had the pleasure of working with Dee who processed my claim for a disability percentage increase. She came highly recommended, so that's why I reached out to her. Her customer service is second to none. She is a true professional and is very passionate about helping veterans. At the beginning of the process she mentioned that I should be able to increase my percentage from 70% to 100%. Well, I received a call from her today informing me just that. I was floored. I never thought I would see it. I just wanted to reach out to you and tell you something that you probably already know. Every organization should have a Dee Garcia in it. She is the best.

Best Regards,    Brian

**Treasurer's Report April 2020**

Nick DeLeo – Chair

Due to the pandemic New State Council will be losing Household Goods Program income in about 4 months and if it returns it will be in March of 2021. This also affects the 10 Chapters that are in this program that was already facing strong competition from businesses supporting not-for-profits in New York. In the western part of the state the partner company Savers has decided to cease picking up household goods without an adequate explanation for stopping.

A second source of income from the Vietnam Veterans New York State Foundation has ended as well due to the for profit company soliciting donations for this 501- (C) 3 organization had closed before the Covid-19 shut down. There are adequate funds in reserve to allow monthly payments to the State Council through early 2021. These are both major sources of income.

In 2019 New York State decided to not provide funding for the State Council and the amount requested at \$50,000.00. Fortunately President Ned Foote was able to secure \$25,000.00 from the state through a member grant in the NYS Assembly. Due to the current economic condition it's highly doubtful VVA New York State Council will receive funding in 2020. Part of this issue is the fact both chambers in the legislature and governorship are controlled by one political party.

In January 2020 President Foote informed all county Veteran Service Agencies using VVA New York State Council as power of attorney for VA claims the organization can no longer accept new claims due to the length of time to adjudicate. This process can be up to 8 years or longer. In April 2020 Ned Foote contacted these agencies to tell them VVA NYSC accreditation ended. The Director of the Monroe County VSA accused Ned of abandoning veterans and as a Marine he doesn't leave veterans behind. This is astonishing to me after he defended Ned Foote at a legislative breakfast in January 2020 when I informed politicians about the loss of NYS funding.

VVA New York State Council Office at the Buffalo Regional VA building has been on reduced capacity due to social distancing. Ned has been diligently working to secure funding from the federal government through the Paycheck Protection Plan that will provide a grant that doesn't have to be repaid provided no employees aren't laid off. As usual he had to jump through hoops to provide pertinent data. It will provide funding for about 3 months to meet expenses.

There will be areas of savings for the State Council since there will only be 2 meetings in 2020 after the April meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic. The June meeting was previously cancelled due to a scheduling problem with Tioga Downs Casino Hotel personnel. No doubt it would have been cancelled due to uncertainty with continued social distancing in June 2020. VVA National has cancelled the Leadership and Education Conference in July 2020 and this will be another significant cost savings for the organization. I hope everyone stays healthy and safe during an unprecedented time in history and we don't lose too many of our rights and liberties.

**AVVA Report**

Kathaleen Penfield

CANCELLED  
DUE TO COVID 19

We will have our Annual Elections at the same time that the VVA-NYSC will be holding theirs. Make sure that your delegates attend this April meeting.

## OP-ED

**Coping During Uncertain Times**

by Nick DeLeo

It has been an interesting month since the stay at home executive order was issued by Cuomo on March 16<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent unnecessary travel ban on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Due to the age of our VVA membership we're considered one of the more vulnerable groups for social distancing.

On March 6<sup>th</sup> my wife Donna and I traveled to Silver Spring, MD to visit our daughter Barbara to celebrate her 45<sup>th</sup> birthday. On the 8<sup>th</sup> I returned to West Henrietta, NY since I had payroll to complete that week and to attend the Chapter 20 Candidates night on the 12<sup>th</sup>. This meeting was cancelled due to a directive issued by Monroe County Executive on groups more than 10.

My planned return to Silver Spring was on March 20<sup>th</sup> to celebrate our granddaughter Ava's 8<sup>th</sup> birthday that was on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Due to Cuomo's travel ban we had to return on the 22<sup>nd</sup> before 8:00 PM when it took effect. Also, Barbara requested one of my shotguns out of a concern for what may happen if there was a closure of everything with close proximity to Washington D.C.

Donna and I have been participating for the past 3 years in a VA program known as Gerofit for veterans and significant others over 65. On March 9<sup>th</sup> the VA gym was closed and one of our trainers provided a link to an online portal to participate in floor exercises in a veteran's home. It follows the usual schedule of M, W, and F from 8:30 AM to 9:15 AM. I lift free weights before and after floor exercise. At 10:00 AM they conduct another more strenuous floor exercise for any veteran on the same days as Gerofit. It's a total of 2 ½ hours and is my normal routine.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays we do tai chi with a DVD provided by the VA after this class was cancelled on March 12<sup>th</sup>. It's tai chi for those with arthritis and is a good compliment to my weight training. Also, on these 2 days we practice yoga that's a program offered by Warrior Salute, an organization for veterans in the Rochester, NY area. We walk 3 miles every day.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> I delivered canned goods, packaged rice and packaged beans to the Veterans Outreach Center after they requested these non-perishable food for local at risk veterans. I donated funds to VOC since they have furloughed most of their staff during this pandemic although they have personnel answering phones and online inquiries from veteran clients.

Donna has been making facemasks for Joanne Fabrics and has completed 30 in addition to providing 25 to neighbors, our mechanic and Barbara's work colleagues. She also has made donations to a couple local charities during the past month since were pretty much isolated. We're doing yard work, take turns cooking dinner and go grocery shopping every 10 days.

My usual State Council Treasurer duties have continued during this time with payroll, payroll taxes and all remaining responsibilities. We keep in touch with our grandchildren and family members through texting, email, and Facetime. Our son Tony and his girlfriend Christy went to Japan in early February for 4 weeks and then to Australia to travel with friends from Germany for about 6 weeks. They were scheduled to return to Washington, D.C. on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, but this flight was cancelled. Tentatively they're scheduled to return on May 4<sup>th</sup>. This could change.

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This unprecedented time seems eerily familiar to the late 1960's through the early 1970's when veterans regardless of their duty location were shunned by the general public and mocked by the media and Hollywood. As such Vietnam veterans I believe have a much better time coping with these stay at home and social distancing directives issued from all levels of government.

As usual legacy media and a vast majority cable outlets have a much needed desire to place blame on the current administration for their lack of concern after this novel Coronavirus first appeared in December 2019. For the record I didn't vote for Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton. I voted for Libertarian Gary Johnson since both major parties had very suspect candidates. I'm a registered Independent with no party affiliation and therefore cannot vote in primary elections.

There have been numerous failures by the Chinese, World Health Organization, our intelligence services and both major political parties for basically being asleep at the wheel when this virus reared its ugly head in Wuhan, China. From December 2019 through early February 2020 one political party was consumed with a partisan impeachment effort that was a major distraction. When the President issued a travel ban against China on January 31<sup>st</sup> the opposition party and their allies in the legacy and a majority of cable media claimed it was racist and xenophobic.

Part of the problem with understanding what happened in Wuhan, China was a lack of HUMINT or human intelligence on the ground after it first appeared in November 2019. This was also in addition to the obfuscation and malfeasance by the Chinese ruling communist party to prevent the world from knowing the actual source of this deadly virus. It was accepted by a majority in the media it came from a so called "Wet Market" in Wuhan selling live and dead wild animals.

Losing our intelligence capabilities in China happened between 2010 and 2013 when practically all of our HUMINT in this communist nation was wiped out through hacking of their emails, smart phones and social media. If they took out one of our satellites it would be considered an act of war. It placed the United States at a distinct disadvantage. China has been able to exploit their despicable practices without concern for value of human life the throughout the world.

In early March Senator Tom Cotton, an Iraq veteran, said it was possible this virus may have come from a research laboratory in Wuhan. This was widely panned as a right wing conspiracy by the legacy media and those on the left. It has become increasingly a clear probability of an accidental release of Covid 19 from this virology laboratory in Wuhan. China must pay for its gross negligence along with the World Health Organization for the worst worldwide pandemic in the last 100 years. China must be required to pay reparations to all countries and should become a pariah nation for their lies to the world. They're on a 100 year plan to rule the world.

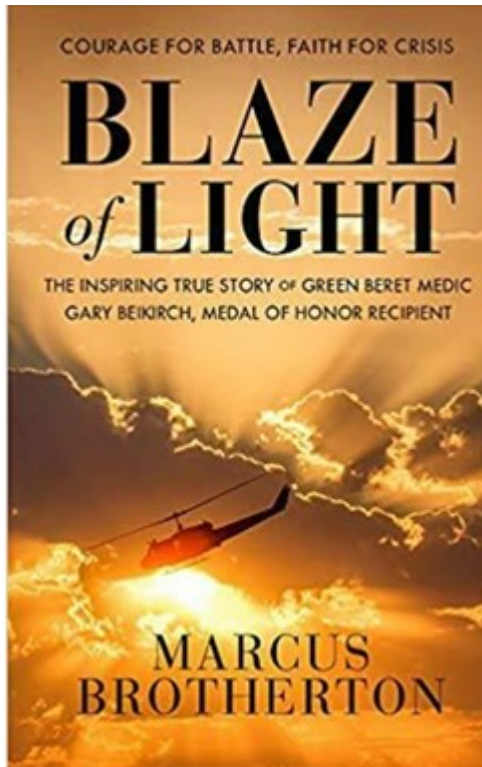
It's time for globalists in the United States and throughout the world to understand China is not to be trusted with their theft of intellectual properties and shoddy manufacturing of medical equipment and critical medications. There must be a bipartisan effort to reign in this rouge communist nation and to move all manufacturing, production, and supply chains of medical equipment and medicines back to the United States to avoid another future catastrophe.

**Admiral McRaven Leaves the Audience SPEECHLESS**

<https://youtu.be/TBulGBCF9jc>

## Book of the Month **Blaze of Light** by Marcus Brotherton

We usually do not advertise books as many are out there but we make an exception to this one. A great story and a must read. Many of us know Gary Beikirch but may not know his story. He is a VVA member from our beginning and you might not know Gary was the first President of VVA-New York State Council. The book can be purchased at Amazon.com.



The Inspiring True Story of Green Beret Medic Gary Beikirch, Medal of Honor Recipient

Courage for Battle, Faith for Crisis

I really knew nothing about the Vietnam War when I started this book. I did know it was a controversial war in the US, but other than that, not much.

Gary is a Green Beret medic, committed to the Montagnard people he was there to protect. They became his friends and he loved them. When April 1, 1970 dawned and the siege of Dak Seang began, Gary was all in. Even though he was badly injured himself, he persisted in being dragged around in the midst of the battle, to help others who were injured. What he saw and what he endured was unimaginable. This is not a spoiler, it's in the prologue of the book.

But this doesn't end up being Gary's biggest battle, he has his own internal demons to fight and they are determined to win. I don't want to give more of the story away, but to say this, Jesus gave him the answer to his hurts and struggles, but it wasn't an instant change. It still took time and grace.

I was appalled at the way Vietnam vets were treated; again I think this is pretty common knowledge, but to hear someone's personal experiences, it is really sad. It doesn't matter what my own feelings are about something another person did, they still deserve respect and kindness. And as an army man, Gary didn't have control over where he went and what wars the army was involved in and yet the vets were the ones who were treated so disgracefully.

This was just a really compelling story that pulled me in and held me to the last page. First, the gripping tale of Vietnam and then Gary's own personal battles, it was all engaging and gripping and I would recommend reading the book. I want to end with a quote from Gary at the end of the book.

"My story is God's story, this medal is not about me. This medal is about him. Without God's grace, I wouldn't have been able to survive Vietnam. Without his forgiveness in my life, I wouldn't have been able to live with myself. Without his love, I wouldn't have healed from my wounds. This medal is ultimately about him, and I wear it for his honor."

I received this book from Waterbrook Multnomah and NetGalley and was not required to write a positive review. All opinions expressed are my own.

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**Medal of Honor Recipient  
Sergeant Gary Burnell Beikirch**



Date of Birth: August 29, 1947

Born: Rochester, NY

Still Alive

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Gary Burnell Beikirch, United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Detachment 8245, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, in action against enemy aggressor forces at Dak Seang, Republic of Vietnam, on 1 April 1970. Sergeant Beikirch, Medical Aidman, Detachment B-24, Company B, distinguished himself during the defense of Camp Dak Seang. The allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of an intense, devastating attack launched by the enemy from well-concealed positions surrounding the camp. Sergeant Beikirch, with complete disregard for his personal safety, moved unhesitatingly through the withering enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first aid to their wounds and assisted them to the medical aid station. When informed that a seriously injured American officer was lying in an exposed position, Sergeant Beikirch ran immediately through the hail of fire. Although he was wounded seriously by fragments from an exploding enemy mortar shell, Sergeant Beikirch carried the officer to a medical aid station. Ignoring his own serious injuries, Sergeant Beikirch left the relative safety of the medical bunker to search for and evacuate other men who had been injured. He was again wounded as he dragged a critically injured Vietnamese soldier to the medical bunker while simultaneously applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to sustain his life. Sergeant Beikirch again refused treatment and continued his search for other casualties until he collapsed. Only then did he permit himself to be treated. Sergeant Beikirch's complete devotion to the welfare of his comrades, at the risk of his life are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.

**Presented at the White House by President Richard M. Nixon on October 15, 1973**

**Company Detachment 8245**

**Regiment 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne)**

**Division 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces**



**MESSAGE FROM VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA NATIONAL OFFICE**

As a nation we are being collectively challenged by the widespread and heartbreaking effects of COVID-19. I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy, please know that VVA is committed to helping veterans and their communities in these uncertain times.

The COVID-19 virus poses an immense threat to people who are over the age of 70 and—due to toxic exposures such as Agent Orange—many Vietnam veterans have multiple chronic medical issues which makes them susceptible to severe complications or death.

VVA continues to aggressively advocate on behalf of veterans, veteran's homes, and veteran's medical centers. In response to the chaos of the current pandemic, I am personally holding the administration accountable for the mental health and financial security of disabled veterans who are staying at home to limit exposure.

VVA members, I know you agree that America's veterans deserve the best America can give them.

When you make a special contribution to VVA in their honor, you'll be helping us continue to provide the many essential programs and services to support and improve the well-being of all veterans and their families.

Our loyal members and supporters have always demonstrated their commitment to veterans of all generations—I know you will continue to stand with us during the difficult days ahead.

May God bless you and America.

John Rowan  
VVA National President

**Who comes up with these ideas! Not available in the market. Don't try it!**



**STAY HOME**

**STOP THE SPREAD**

**SAVE LIVES**

## Southern District Report

Joe Ingino

### VVA Chapters #11, #32, #72, #82, #126, #421

Senator Chuck Schumer contacted National President John Rowan and myself, to talk about the four presumptions that are related to Agent Orange. Bladder cancer, hypertension, hypothyroidism and parkinsonism. We spoke about them.

The VAVS meetings were because of the Coronavirus. My Veterans Advisory Board Meetings for Nassau and Suffolk Counties until further notice. Long Island Cemetery Meetings also have been cancelled. All chapter meetings are cancelled. The Vietnam Veterans State Council meeting also cancelled.

Northport VA Hospital cancelled many clinic appointments. Appointments will be on the phone or Telecare. Stony Brook Veterans Home also cancelled their meetings because of the virus. All meetings will be Schue led down the road.

I received a call from the Lindenhurst Kiwanis Club, about being honored along with all the Veterans from Lindenhurst in a Hometown Heroes Banner Program.

I hope things start getting back to normal soon, so we can have our meetings.

**Keep in your prayers all who died from the virus. God Bless America and our Troops**

### VVA Chapter #11 Report—Suffolk County

Clarence Simpson

Chapter 11, nothing to report.

### VVA Chapter #32 Report

VVA Chapter 32 has continued to serve the community during the lockdown, Chapter 32 has had success with Zoom Software and holding virtual board meetings.

Chapter 32 has donated food to two police precincts in Queens. The 104 PCT in Glen-dale/Ridgewood/Middle Village and the 112 PCT have both received Sandwiches do-nated by the chapter (See attached Photos)



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We encourage all chapters to try to use On-line services to continue limited operations.

In December of 2019 Chapter 32 Dedicated the Queens Vietnam War Memorial. At-tached pictures and a History of the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial

### 104th PCT



### 112th PCT



## HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL

In 2006 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 32 Queens's president Pat Toro had an epiphany.

As Chapter 32 President he traveled all over the Borough visiting different war memorials. He realized that there wasn't one specific Vietnam Veterans War memorial for Queens. One that would encompass the whole borough From Bayside to Laurelton, Springfield Gardens to Ridgewood. Most of the neighborhoods had their own monuments, the one in Rosedale being the first and therefore the oldest. He wanted one memorial that would list all of the fallen in one place.

Pat brought it up at several meetings when the chapter headquarters was in Glendale. The membership was generally receptive to the idea, the only qualm being, were we prepared and able to take on a project of this magnitude? We'd already hosted "The Moving Wall", a scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans memorial in Washington D.C., at Cunningham Park and later at Juniper Valley Park. Both tremendous successes.

So we began planning. We needed support from the people and the politicians. Pat began visiting City Councilmen at their offices. With the assistance of James McClelland and Tony Nunziato and Vic Mimoni they cobbled together an organization titled "Friends of the Vietnam Wall". They sold ball caps and along with Pat talked up the Memorial to anyone who would listen.

Melinda Katz, then a councilmember, got us a grant to get things started. In the interim, life got in the way; Pat was elected Southern District Director of the Vietnam Veterans of America. So the project wallowed in limbo for a number of years. Pat Was diagnosed with a rare blood cancer caused by Agent Orange Exposure. He passed away in July of 2014. I visited with him shortly before he passed. We spoke of many things regarding chapter 32 business among them this memorial. Literally the last thing he mentioned to me was "Get this done!"

Paul Narson was Chapter President at that time and it's to his credit that Chapter 32 got back at work on the Memorial. When he decided not to seek re-election, I took the job. Memorial Day of 2015 Melinda Katz, by that time Borough President of Queens, announced that the project was to be fully funded by the Borough of Queens.

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We began meeting with The Parks Department about design and construction of the Memorial, at first in “The Arsenal” in Central Park and then at “The Overlook” in Forest Park. Among those at those first meetings Denise Mattes, Frank Varro (?SP).

Dorothy Lewandowski and Joanne Amagrande, from Parks. John Rowan National VVA President, Chapter 32 founding member, Don Fedynak and myself past president of chapter 32 and treasurer of the chapter Paul Feddern and James McClelland. We decided at those meetings to seek design ideas from chapter 32 members. We decided to incorporate design elements from Don Fednyak and Paul Narson. The design was to be two semicircles and a map of Vietnam in the center.

### **VVA Chapter #72 Report—Brooklyn**

Danny Friedman—President

There is not a whole lot to report. Our members are staying home and/or very carefully venturing out while observing appropriate protocols. Although we have not been able to engage in our usual fund raising activities, we are supporting the staff at the Brooklyn VA Hospital by providing meals. We are also conducting wellness checks of members via Email and telephone.

I just heard a new song by the Rolling Stones: “We are Ghosts Living in a Ghost Town”. I sure hope it doesn’t come to that but sometimes it sure feels like that some days. I hope you and your families are well and staying safe. If any of you need anything please let us know. All is good here. We had a virtual Chapter Board Meeting this month and it worked out well. We have cancelled our May General Membership Meeting but we are looking into having a virtual one. The Brooklyn Memorial Day Parade has been cancelled as well as all other Memorial Day activities throughout the city. We are also looking into how we can honor our fallen virtually. Richie will be sending out info on all this as soon as he can. There was a VAVS telephone meeting with the Brooklyn VA Director Martina Parauda which several of our Board participated. Brooklyn VAMC is basically an all COVID-19 ICU. About one third of the patients are nonVets. They have received a boost of extra staff from other VAMC’s. They have rapid tests for patients with symptoms with results in about an hour. They report PPE is in good supply but the nurses’ union say something different. We are sending meals for the staff every two weeks. They have been well received and we will continue this as long as it is needed. We are also looking into buying them PPE. To be able to do this we need your help. Please send any donation you can to Richie’s home address (287 Slater Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10305-4045). Many of you should have received you stimulus checks from the federal government. It is based on your 2018 tax returns. If you don’t file tax returns but receive VA Comp or Pension you should be receiving them soon. The same goes for Social Security recipients. There may be a second round of payments but that hasn’t been allocated yet so stay tuned. This crisis will not deter us from our mission: “Never again will one generation of Veterans turn their backs on another”. We will continue to look out for each other and our fellow Veterans from all generations. These are trying times or sure but we will get through this and come out the other end hopefully with a greater appreciation for one another and our sense of purpose. Although some of us may be deeply hurt by this horrible virus we re-main here for you. God Bless and keep you and your loved ones safe. I hope to see you all on the other end of this.

### **1st Vice President’s Report**

Bill Miller

With all the media focused on the pandemic I really don’t think I can or even would want to add my thoughts, so let’s mention some alternatives to today’s world. Now is a good time to reconnect with old friends we have served with in the past. There is a website called Together We Served. It is a secure virtual base for all Veterans. The main purpose of the site is for renewing or replicating that spirit of

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comradery and brotherhood we once shared with fellow Vets. Membership includes only active serving and Veterans providing a safe and secure platform to engage with other Vets in a social networking environment. There are forums to encourage informal discussions similar to that old barracks banter we once shared. You will find military humor, lively debate and even those with similar hobbies and interests. The feeling of locating a long-lost buddy is something that is great to experience. I think you will find it easy to do with the Veteran Locator. The site will match your military service information on your page with service member's information from all other TWS members. A really cool thing is each Veteran's page displays your photo in uniform, rank, insignia, medals and awards, badges and unit patches as worn. You can find names, dates and locations of boot camp, training schools and unit assignments as well as combat and non-combat operations participated in. Now I can only assume others have uploaded information and photographs so you can view it. The site uses a step by step interview called Service Reflections to capture information. This is a site to honor our legacy. [www.togetherweserved.com](http://www.togetherweserved.com). Take a look.

"Thomas P. Coughlin Memorial Chapter 72, Brooklyn. New York Buys Lunch for Hero Health Workers at Brooklyn VAMC every other Friday"



### VVA Chapter #82 Report Nassau County

Steve Bonom—President

It is my unfortunate duty that I announce the passing of long time life member Nicholas Graziano.

Nick was one of the most active members in our chapter. Nick was instrumental in the creation of the Vietnam monument and the creation of the Walls of Honor that continues to grow year after year. Nick was the past president of the Nassau County Veterans Monument Fund.

Nick passed away on May 7th at the VA Hospital at Northport where he has spent the last several months.

On Monday May 11 Nick's body will be at the Lieber Funeral Home, 266 Central Ave, Valley Stream, NY

No viewing at the funeral home. The casket will be brought out to the hearse and veterans in attendance will offer a hand salute then service will be immediate from the funeral home to Holy Rood cemetery on Old Country Road, Westbury, NY.

May He Rest In Peace

**Stay safe**

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### VVA Chapter #126 Report – Manhattan

Joe Graham - President

#### Message from Commissioner Hendon: VA Encourages Telehealth to Promote Safety

Dear Veteran Community,

As New York City plateaus after reaching it's projected peak of the novel coronavirus pandemic, social distancing is more important than ever to ensure the safety of you and your loved ones and to help continue the downward trend of new cases in general.

For this reason, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has boosted it's telehealth offerings. Further, the VA is encouraging Veterans who have non-critical needs to consider scheduling a video visit or utilizing one of its other distance services.

However, if you feel seriously ill, then first and foremost, please contact your doctor or medical provider to see what they recommend. If it is an emergency, then please call 911.

Like non-VA hospitals, VA in-person services have been impacted by COVID-19. They have responded accordingly to save lives and protect Veterans.

Local VA hospitals are currently available for emergencies and urgent ongoing treatments such as dialysis and chemotherapy. To reduce exposing Veterans to COVID-19 and to respect social distancing, the VA is requesting that Veterans call and/or use telehealth services instead of visiting VA hospitals.

### Eastern District Report

Sam Hall

VVA Chapters #8, #49, #60, #79, #140, #333, #537, #541

#### VVA Capital District Chapter #8 Report.

John Reitano - President

Not much to report being the last meeting was in January. Elections for chapter officers was held by email & phone. All officers remained the same with exception of 1 new BOD member. Emil Baker was replaced by Kevin Brennan.

Chapter 8 Pres. Ray Sestak & secretary John Reitano have been in contact with Nick Valenti with feedback on CSCP Resolution GA-21. Results...65 chapter members. 27 no response, leaves 38 total queried or 58.4% of total members. Of those 38, 33 want last man standing 87%. The remaining 13% are: 3 for merge with VFW or American Legion. 1 for rename. 1 Undecided.

Many cancellations due to COVID 19. A very quiet St. Patrick's Day. Albany Parade cancelled. 27 March 2020 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans reception at Stratton VAMC Albany was cancelled.

Easter and Passover were enjoyed with small family gatherings sitting 10 feet apart. With May coming up many Memorial Day Ceremonies may be cancelled. Hoping that doesn't happen. We all could use a

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parade and a BBQ!!

**Hope we can all get back on track. Wash your hands and keep your distance, so we can all get together again!!**

### **VVA Chapter #140 Report**

Dan Daly (President)

Dear Members of Chapter 140,

Hope all Members and their families are doing well and staying safe. It's been a long time since we had a meeting, but being safe is #1 for our Members. I am sure we are all keeping busy with things at home that we have put off for a long time, well it's time to "get r done". God Bless each and everyone of you and if you need to call, even just to bullshit, please do so, I would enjoy the call.

God Bless,

### **VVA Chapter #333 Report—Rockland County**

Roy Tschudy – Vice President

Good Day To All!

It is my hope that each and everyone of you along with family are in good health and has not been effected from this deadly virus that has decimated many families all over the County, State, Country and World. Refraining from activities that may infect any of us and maintaining good sense responsibilities such as social distancing, washing hands, along with wearing face masks when needed out in public (Gloves also!) will enhance our chance of remaining healthy.

Recently, our Chapter endeavored to distribute face masks to Chapter 333 members in the parking lot of Kearsing Edwards Post 1600, President Jimmy Hennessy (A very special Thank You Jim!) and I contacted Chapter members via phone for said distribution. Howard Goldin and the Members of the order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) also did the same for that elite membership in an orderly manner.

This course of action is a direct result of caring for one another and the same as many years ago in a place named Vietnam, watching a "Brother's" back, still today for tomorrow and the next day's after, always at the ready to help. Maintaining a professional organization as Chapter 333 has been since it's inception, needs the cohesiveness and continued cooperation of communication between us, as best we can. So, I ask each of you to send an email to the members whom I have emails of just to simply say "Hello, how are you?" Also, letting us know exactly how YOU ARE DOING!

Are any in need of something that for some reason you cannot have or get? Are you a little depressed and just want to converse with another one of us or more? Don't be shy or stubborn, well on second thought I don't know of any who are SHY but I believe that most if not all of us are a bit STUBBORN. So, I ask that you may take a little time away from your inbound activity of "whatever," to let us know how you are and ask how the next fella is. Please be well, God Bless and use the good sense that our wives have and wish that it was ours!

## Central District Report

Nick Valenti

VVA Chapters #85, #103, #377, #480, #803, #827, #896, #944

The President of our New York State Council is trying to elicit responses from all Vietnam Veterans Chapters statewide on the topic of “Changing the Name of Vietnam Veterans of America.” To that end, an email was sent out to all Chapters in New York State asking for responses from the membership on that particular topic. So far about half a dozen Chapters have responded. Some in great detail on how their membership feels. We are hoping to get more New York State Chapters to share the desires of their respective members.

The Chapters in Central District include: Oneonta Chapter #85, Syracuse Chapter #103, Finger Lakes Chapter #377, Owego Chapter #480, Cayuga County Chapter #704, Elmira Chapter #803, Herkimer Chapter #827, Endicott Chapter #896 and Utica Chapter #944. As I said earlier, some have already responded and I want them to know that it is very much appreciated. When you get a chance call or email the veterans in your respective Chapters. You can pass on their thoughts to me at [nickvalenti46@yahoo.com](mailto:nickvalenti46@yahoo.com). We need to all work together to get through these challenging times.

The 2020 Coronavirus has thrown a lot of us a curve ball. We can't just wish things away. By working together, we will come to resolutions on Name Change; Elections (Chapter and State Council); Dissolution; and whatever else gets thrown our way.

Just to give everyone a quick peek on how to handle Chapter elections, here is what the National Secretary for VVA has put out in an email with respect to the options open to Chapters. Each Chapter needs to decide what option works for them. You can (1) Hold your meeting and the elections as long as there is a quorum and your local, state and federal laws allow such a meeting during this public health emergency. Make sure you have a sign in sheet and can verify attendance and voter eligibility. (2) Cancel meeting due to a public health emergency and hold the elections at the next meeting. If election is delayed the current officers will continue to hold office until the election is completed. (Article 3, Section 6, Paragraph B). Each Officer shall hold office until his or her successor is elected and has qualified. If a current officer does not want to continue in that office until the election can be held, he or she can resign. If the president resigns the VP will take over. The other offices can be filled at the election. (3) If neither one of these is appropriate for your chapter contact Leslie DeLong at: [ldelong@vva.org](mailto:ldelong@vva.org).

Women Veterans have achieved great successes in the military. They are helping to shape the future. In 2000, they were only 4% of the Veteran population. By 2040, women will be approximately 18% of the Veteran population. We need to be sure we are reaching out to these veterans and informing them of the Health Care Benefits they have earned and its availability.

The primary care the VA provides includes services for acute and chronic illnesses, preventive services, and gender specific care. Care that goes beyond primary care includes: Mammography; Gynecology; Military sexual trauma-related care and Military and environmental exposure.

Women Veterans can apply for VA health care enrollment and other Veterans benefits by completing VA Form 1010EZ. To complete the form:

Apply online at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov)

Visit, call or write to any VA Health Care facility or Veterans benefits office

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Call the VA Health Benefits Call Center toll free at 877-222-VETS (8387)

Get more information online about VA benefits at [www.vba.va.gov](http://www.vba.va.gov)

Get more information about VA eligibility at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/)

Call the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN (829-6636)

Once a woman veteran has access to the VA Health Care System, she will find that some 144 hospitals, 1,221 outpatient clinics, and over 300 Vet Centers will be available. She isn't limited to just one hospital or clinic to receive care in the United States.

### WOMEN VETERANS RESOURCES

VAeBenefits: Learn more about Medical benefits packages and Eligibility information:  
<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/benefits>

1-800-983-0937

VA Health Benefits: <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>

1-877-222-VETS (8387)

Housing Assistance: For immediate emergency shelter 1-877-4Aid-Vet (24- (3838)

Dept. of Veterans Affairs <http://www.va.gov/WOMENVET/>

-Center for Women Vets: 1-855-829-6636

Veterans Benefits Admin. Helps you locate site closest you:

Locator: <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=3>

Vet Centers: 1-877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 press 1

Make the Connection. Connecting Veterans with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their health, well-being, and everyday lives:

<http://www.MaketheConnection.net>

Retirement and Financial Literacy Education Programs. <http://www.va.gov/ohrm/worklifebenefits/rflep.asp>

1-844-698-2311

**“Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”**

**New York Vietnam Veterans Foundation: Francisco Muñoz III**

We would like to thank the membership of VVA-NYSC who have sent in donations to the Foundation to help with keeping up with the work we are doing.

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## VVA Chapter #377 Report

Gary Napieracz - President

Military Patches Donated On February 12, 2020 members of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 377, from Dryden, New York, met with Peggy Vestal, from Groton, New York Army Reserves from 2006-2010, to thank her for her donation of military patches, a box filled with patches that were handed down from her Dad. These are just a few that were donated to us, and now donated to the Living History Museum in Homer, New York. Chapter members were Fred Youngs Jr, Mike Portzline, and Gary Napieracz.

## Groton Cycle Center

My name is Don Titus. My dad, of the same name, was a Korean War veteran in the US Army and an exceptional man. Although I am not a veteran, his profound legacy gives me the desire to give back to those who are both personally and through my business, Groton Cycle Center.

Roughly 3 years ago, while attending various motorcycle events, I noticed that many disabled veterans would attend but had no means of riding on a motorcycle because of physical impairment or simply a lack of a license/motorcycle; that gave me an idea to correct that problem. I wanted to use my own motorcycle and develop a sidecar mount that I could use to give rides to those without their own means.

I planned, originally, to build the project myself but quickly realized the scope and concluded that I needed help both with cost and time restraints. I approached the head of a local organization, VETSAR, Norm Stitzel with the idea I had, and it was an instant match made in heaven.

Norm quickly put together the details of the project and formed a committee of like-minded people to help with the fund raising, website development, and operations management. Contributors to the project include: Norm Stitzel (VETSAR), Don Titus, Kyle Titus, Loraine Titus, William Walsh, Doug Hagin, Sandy Hagin, Kelsey Hagin (EC Cooper Insurance), Sons of Sam Motorcycle Club (Fingerlakes Chapter), Ron "Sniper" Seeley, Southern Hills Posse Motorcycle Club, Logan Wannall (Epiq Auto), Scott Hare (Armor 1), Norm Smith, and Ron "Scruffy" Duvall. Groton Cycle Center was primarily responsible for transforming my 1985 Harley Davidson FXRT to accommodate a sidecar,

thanks to William Walsh and Dick Linn. Both William and Dick were pivotal in the presentation and operation of the project. The sidecar was then modified by both Ron Seeley and Ron Duvall to a "clam-shell" style with an opening top to accommodate disabled riders more easily.

Logan Wannall painted both the motorcycle and the sidecar. And finally, Mark Duncan of Mark's Glass, created and applied the emblems, decals, and tributes. I really cannot emphasize the time and energy these individuals put into this project as purely volunteers; it could not have come to fruition without them all. I would also like to recognize Groton Cycle Center for purchasing the materials, Sons of Sam Motorcycle Club for fund-raising like the consummate supporters they are, as well as all the individual patrons who donated to the cause.

**Editor's Note:** Unfortunately, I was not able to use the photos they sent!

### "What do you have to lose?" Just your LIFE!

A new study has found that hydroxychloroquine, an antimalarial drug recommended by President Trump as a possible treatment for the coronavirus, does not help patients hospitalized with COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

The research, which followed 1,376 patients suffering from symptoms of the coronavirus at New York-Presbyterian and Columbia University Irving Medical Center in Manhattan, found that 60 percent of those who were given [hydroxychloroquine](#) within 48 hours of being admitted were found to be more severely ill than those who did not take the drug.

**Western District Report****Mike Walker****VVA Chapters #20, #77, #193, #268, #459, #865, 978**

When I was thinking about what to write about at this time. We all know what is going on in the country, state and locally. It's sad to hear the Household good program has halted, putting national and the state council to have financial problems.

I know chapters that have elections in April did have them because of the state not allowing more than 10 people together at one time. I sent out an email to the chapters here and the all the ones that responded said they are OK but bored also heard from one to not starting meetings till next year. Without knowing what is going to happen, we will address this when we can get together.

**So remember to use social discipline, wear a mask and wash your hands.**

**Government Affairs Report**

Joe Ingino

**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR: CBOC Closure**

Dr. Antonio Sanchez MD, MHSA, FAPA, FACHE

Northport Medical Center Executive Director

Good morning, everyone. As we all know, COVID-19 is a serious illness and, while the vast majority of cases can be managed from home with basic quarantine measures, some still require hospitalization. To best serve our veterans who require direct patient care, we are temporarily suspending service in our community clinics. This will allow us to shift resources to the main hospital in Northport, where we have the ability to provide life-saving services to our veterans in greatest need.

Right now, it is vital to help our communities reduce the spread by remaining focused and disciplined in our social distancing, self-isolation, and proper handwashing. Additionally, we have been transitioning non-emergent appointments to telephone and virtual visits when at all possible.

Veterans who wish to schedule a telemedicine appointment or speak to their physician should contact our call center at (631) 754-7978. Services in our community clinics will resume once operations return to normal.

**This is the current operational status of the hospital and our community-based outpatient clinics:**

- All facilities remain open but most services provided have been by telephone or Telemedicine.
- All qualifying appointments are being transitioned to telephone or [VA Video Connect](#).
- All visitation is temporarily suspended. There will be no exceptions for palliative or hospice care. Only those with a valid appointment will be granted access to our facilities.

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### IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR VETERANS:

#### If you have or need an appointment:

- Call your health care team to decide if you require an in-person visit.
- Discuss your scheduling and telehealth options.

#### If you are feeling sick:

- Call your health care team to decide if you require an in-person visit.
- Discuss what next steps are appropriate for your specific medical situation.

#### If you have general questions:

- Consult the special COVID-19 information page from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Or, visit the COVID-19 page from the VHA.

**If you have a medical emergency:** Call 911

If Veterans need to reach the VA for any reason and the facility telephone system is currently out of service, please call **1-800-507-4571**.

National VVA President Rowan, SDD Joe Ingino, & Senator Schumer at a Press Conference seeking support for the ‘presumptive condition’ Agent Orange exposure./



Senator Chuck Schumer contacted National President John Rowan and me, to talk about the four presumptions that are related to Agent Orange such as Bladder cancer, hypertension, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

### VVA Calls on President to Reverse the VA’s Removal of the “48-Hour Review Policy”

(Washington, D.C.)--On April 7, the Department of Veterans Affairs informed Veterans Service Organizations of an April 1 policy change ending the "48-hour review policy." The discontinued 48-hour review policy allowed for a window of two days for the veteran service officers to review the veteran’s disability claim for accuracy prior to sending it to the veteran.

"While every other governmental body in the nation is working hard to ensure that Americans are spared undue hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Veterans Affairs is doing just the opposite, making this damaging policy decision amid the chaos of the pandemic" said John Rowan, Vietnam Veterans of America National President.

### Report on Stony Brook State Veteran Nursing Home

April 17, 2020 Fred S. Sganga, FACHE

Dear LISVH Family Member:

With the week coming to a close, we wanted to update you on the current situation at the

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Long Island State Veterans Home. We are now on Day 38 of our fight against the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and all the complications it brings to those of us in a long-term care setting.

As of this writing, 57 residents have tested positive for the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Fiftyfour are here at the Veterans Home and three are receiving treatment at Stony Brook University Hospital. Currently, there are five residents considered PUIs and are awaiting test results. On a positive note this week, seven veterans returned to the Home from Stony Brook University Hospital. While we still anticipate many recoveries, the timeframe for those we care for will take longer than the average population.

We sadly report that 32 residents have passed since the beginning of the outbreak on March 10, 2020. A majority of these veterans had multiple comorbidities, which likely contributed to their demise due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Our staff continues to deeply grieve the loss of our veterans, all beloved members of the LISVH community. As we continue to have our national freedoms, we know that none of this would be possible without the valor and courage of those who chose to define our great nation throughout history.

It is important to realize that this pandemic brings new medical challenges to our staff every day. With new demands and new protocols occurring hour-to-hour, we are responding rapidly. We are working hard to stay ahead of the curve and address the most pressing issues. In an effort to control the spread of the virus, we have made a number of room changes. We have done this to appropriately cohort residents, as well as the staff that cares for them. Since the beginning, we have made major efforts to prevent the spread of this obscure and highly contagious virus.

Since the first day of this outbreak, we are very proud of all of our staff. They have all responded valiantly to the task at hand and have stepped up regardless of their job title. As you know, we have an amazing staff of 675 full-time, part-time and per-diem employees. As of today, there are 37 employees who are currently positive for novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Since the beginning, 46 have test negative for the virus. Also, seven employees are considered PUI and are awaiting results at home. Staffing levels still have not been impacted due to employees testing positive for the virus. Thank you again for all your ongoing support of our caregivers.

Also, we can report that we remain in good standing with our current levels of personal protective equipment. We have had some major deliveries throughout the week and all employees have what they need to protect themselves during their shift. Earlier today at his daily press conference, Governor Cuomo revealed that nursing homes and assisted living facilities remain the most vulnerable places for the novel Coronavirus. We know this and you know it as well. That being said, we will continue to fight this pandemic and always be forthright with information.

Many of you have called us and we are happy to respond, always providing the latest information. In closing, we hope you and your family remain safe in your homes. We have all witnessed firsthand the outcome of this pandemic. Be assured, we will continue to fight.

### **Veterans Incarcerated And In The Justice System Committee Report**

Nicholas C. Valenti, Chair

The Auburn Correctional Facility, in Auburn, New York will hold their 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Give-Away on Friday, December 4, 2020. The program was first reported to have begun in 1991. However, it appears they really got their start in 1989. Begun by the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #205

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they have successfully donated canned goods to food pantries and local Community Centers for decades. They continue to move forward donating to numerous agencies supplying support for the less fortunate. Their commitment and determined efforts to make an impact in the community outside the confines of the prison walls is shown by their desire to remain relevant to today’s societal needs.

The following Special Event dates for Veterans Group of Auburn 2020 is a continued legacy for the 30 years of continuous work by the efforts of the former Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #205.

MONTH	DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	WHERE
March	Friday	13th	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement
May	Monday	25th	8:30 AM	VIGIL Memorial Day	Chapel
June	Friday	5th	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement
September	Monday	7th	8:30 AM	VIGIL Labor Day/ POW/MIA DAY	Chapel
	Friday	11th	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement
November	Wednesday	11th	8:30 AM	VIGIL Veterans Day	Chapel
December	Friday	4th	8:30 AM	Give-A-Way	School Basement
	Friday	11th	7:00 PM	GMM	School Basement

So good to see the work of Chapter #205 continue in their absence.

**VVA NEWS UPDATES**

**Some Retirees Have Already Been Pushed to Off-Base Providers in Tricare Shift**

Military retirees receiving care on bases nationwide are being quietly shifted to off-base civilian providers in a transition that has been taking place since at least 2018, Military.com has learned.

That's independent of a plan outlined in a recently obtained memo that would close 38 treatment facilities to all but active-duty patients.

The changes detailed are a part of a review of military hospital operations and a system consolidation under the Defense Health Agency ordered by Congress in 2016.

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/13/some-retirees-have-already-been-pushed-base-providers-tricare-shift.html?ESRC=dod\\_200214.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/13/some-retirees-have-already-been-pushed-base-providers-tricare-shift.html?ESRC=dod_200214.nl)

**It's Official: Troops Get Another Big Pay Raise in 2021 Budget Request**

The proposed [military pay](#) raise for fiscal 2021 in the Defense Department's budget request, released

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Monday, is 3%, the second-highest pay raise for troops since 2010.

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/10/its-official-troops-get-3-pay-raise-2021-budget-request.html?ESRC=dod\\_200214.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/10/its-official-troops-get-3-pay-raise-2021-budget-request.html?ESRC=dod_200214.nl)

### Special Forces Soldiers Killed in Afghan Firefight ID'd, Given Bronze Stars and Promotions

Army Sgt. 1st Class Antonio R. Rodriguez (left) and Army Sgt. 1st Class Javier J. Gutierrez (right) died Feb. 8, 2020 from injuries sustained during combat in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.



Killed in the fight were Sgt. 1st Class Javier J. Gutierrez, 28, of San Antonio, Texas, and Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Rodriguez, 28, of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Both were assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of [Eglin Air Force Base](#), Florida.

Rodriguez and Gutierrez were both posthumously promoted from the rank of staff sergeant and awarded the Bronze Star and the [Purple Heart](#), U.S. [Army](#) Special Operations Command Lt. Col. Loren Bymer said in a released statement.

### Air Force Issues New Guidelines for Beards, Turbans and Hijabs

Airmen will be allowed to wear up to 2-inch beards under a new [Air Force](#) guidance that outlines grooming standards for religious accommodations.

The updated grooming policy, published Friday, also allows members of the Sikh faith to wear turbans and Muslim women to wear hijabs.

Airmen must have religious or medical exemptions to grow beards, the policy says.

The guidance for beards grown under a shaving waiver remains unchanged: Such whiskers must not be trimmed to give a sculpted appearance and cannot exceed a quarter-inch in length, the updated policy states.

The Air Force is following the lead of the [Army](#), which in 2017 became the [first service to allow Muslim and Sikh soldiers to wear head coverings and beards](#) in line with their religious beliefs. A similar accommodation was extended later to Norse pagan service members.

### QUOTE OF THE YEAR

"We have the best testing in the world." "Could be that [testing's, frankly, overrated](#). Maybe it is overrated." It's about bad-looking numbers, not just critically important information. "We have more cases than anybody in the world, but why? Because we do more testing," If we didn't do any testing, we would have very few cases." "We are back, vaccine or no vaccine." "We're opening our country. People want it open. The schools are going to be open," Kids don't get this virus.

Question: Would this individual send his child to school?

**The Wall Song**<https://youtu.be/6y64zTRlrmo>**Hallelujah Veterans Version**<https://youtu.be/msYPbjFC50w>**The Eagle Cried ~ Vietnam Veterans Tribute**<https://youtu.be/Ehbc1zU1BwQ>**We Are Doctors Who Study Trauma. Here's How To Cope With The COVID-19 Crisis.****By Lucy McBride, M.D. and Roxane Cohen Silver, Ph.D., Guest Writers**

A patient calls in a panic. She was diagnosed a week ago with COVID-19, and her shortness of breath has been escalating at home. She is no longer allowed to visit her mother, who is dying in a nursing home. By video conference, we determine that her breathlessness likely stems more from her anxiety than the virus itself. Instead of sending her to the ER, I practice breathing techniques with her to calm her surging adrenaline and elevated blood pressure — and it helps.

A week later, her breathing and blood pressure are improved, but the evening news triggers a new tidal wave of dread. Traumatic images flood her thoughts as the grim reality of post-pandemic life (and perhaps another outbreak in winter?) sets in. Will work, school, relationships and even grocery shopping ever feel safe? The shortness of breath returns.

Over a month into the pandemic, we recognize this as a mental health crisis. It's called trauma.

We are experiencing collective trauma unlike anything previously experienced in America in our lifetimes. It is devastating to our individual and shared well-being. The virus' invisibility, asymptomatic spread and ubiquity are uniquely terrorizing. The absence of safe spaces, the possibility of another mass outbreak, and the tragic realities broadcast into our living rooms promote further fear.

And just when we most need our normal coping strategies like exercise, sports and congregating with friends to manage stress and loss, they are severely constrained for our own — and others' — good.

But naming this disaster as a collective trauma helps introduce a set of specific recommendations for coping — now, and for the long haul. ...

First, let's explicitly recognize that our mental health not only *informs* our physical health — it defines our health and humanity. Addressing mental health in the doctor's office is not a luxury; it is essential for optimizing patients' health.

Let's also acknowledge that feeling intermittently (or constantly) on edge, worried or sleepless are normal "fight-or-flight" reactions to this trauma. We are not going crazy. We are simply coping with a new reality — whether we are sick or not. We can also help ourselves by developing adaptive coping strategies like limiting media exposure, avoiding mistruths, and practicing breathing, yoga or meditation. Asking for help is crucial for some, and can add structure and support to the coping process. Virtual social connections — whether it's a weekly online happy hour with friends or joining a support group — can help us make sense of this crisis...After all, how could a blood pressure reading possibly measure all we've been through? [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coronavirus-trauma-how-to-cope\\_n\\_5ea6fab7c5b6ad9bacf331e1](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coronavirus-trauma-how-to-cope_n_5ea6fab7c5b6ad9bacf331e1) to view entire article. Printed with permission.



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