

AT EASE



Vietnam Veterans of America Central New York Chapter #103
P.O. Box 675, Liverpool, NY 13088
www.cnyvva103.org

February 2008

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER #103
P.O. BOX 675. LIVERPOOL, NY 13088
(315) 458-1323
WWW.CNYVVA103.ORG

2008

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SYRACUSE VET CENTER
478-7127

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1-800-827-1000

The website of the New York State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America is

Sue Doan, our State Veterans Counselor, has the following address:

Sue Doan
State Veteran Counselor
State Office Bldg. 4th Floor
333 E. Washington Street
Syracuse, NY 13202

If any veteran has a question or problem that needs to be addressed, give Sue a call at 428-4046 at the State Office Building. She helped many veterans last year, especially through referrals from members of this chapter. The Iraqi/Afghan vets we've helped send to her are very thankful to Sue for watching out for them.

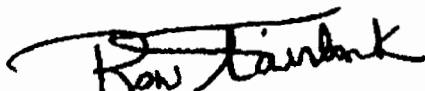
Plans have been firmed up for our annual installation dinner. Our Keynote speaker will be the newly appointed Director of Veterans Affairs in Albany, Col. James McDonough Jr. (Ret.). Dick, Gordy and I met him several weeks back at a Network meeting in Canandaigua. Granted he is a newbie but in talking with him, he seems determined to make a difference and being new he brings with him some fresh ideas and enthusiasm. The dinner will be held again at the Elks Lodge, Liverpool. Cash bar opens at 1800 Hrs. with free appetizers, followed by dinner at 1900. Prices remain as last year, \$20.00 for members, and \$25.00 for spouses and guests. **Contact Dick Madden at 635-2019 to make reservations.**

Next time you are up to the V.A. stop by and get checked out on the **self serve kiosks** across from Security. Swiping your ID card like at an ATM or Wegmans it asks your age, and brings up your personal data, you can verify all is correct or let them know you need to correct something. It automatically checks you into your first clinic appointment to give you a leg up on being seen, (recommend you still let them know you are there when you get there just to be sure the first time or two.) It also prints out data on your first appointment. There will be people there to walk you through the process for the next few weeks—they will insure any corrections you need to make are handled right then also.

It was good to see some new faces and a real treat to see Grady Clark a long time missing member at our last meeting. I met 4 members I hadn't talked with previously—certainly hope they come back again.

I have been asking for some volunteers to help with the T.V. program, but so far just one guy has stepped up—that is not enough. I need at least 2 more to provide some back-up for our long time regulars. When someone is ill, out of town or has another commitment on our night at the studio we have are forced to cancel everything since Time Warner requires we must have a full crew of 8 present. Last month we had to shuffle John Lamanna from his regular position to that of Director—since our Director was out sick, fortunately I was able to limp along to do John's regular job so we could keep going. This month we are in DEEP trouble since John, the Regular Director and our Sound Board guy Bob Goettle are all unavailable. If we are to continue the T.V. program guys you need to raise your hands and we'll get you trained, so you can help out.

For the good of the Chapter,



Ron Fairbank

VVA CHAPTER #103 AWARD NOMINATIONS

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR: An individual who has shown exceptional commitment and courage in making the local community a better place to live.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD: A member who has worked for the good of the organization, in the organization, and in the local community.

CORPORATE SUPPORTER OF THE YEAR: A business entity that has demonstrated outstanding support for Chapter 103 through donations of time, manpower, money, goods or services.

GRUNT OF THE YEAR: A member of Chapter 103 who has exhibited workhorse efforts on behalf of the organization beyond the call of duty.

HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR: An individual or non-member who has contributed to Chapter 103 or the veterans' community in a manner that has enhanced the quality of life for veterans' and their loved ones.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTER OF THE YEAR: An individual or non-member who has contributed greatly to Chapter 103 in one form or another.

PAST PRESIDENT'S AWARD: Award given to the President of Chapter 103 in appreciation of his/her efforts during the past year.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD: An award given by the President of VVA Chapter 103 pursuant to the criteria established by the President.

VIETNAM VET OF THE YEAR: An In-country Veteran, who is a member, who has brought credit to and enhanced the image of the Vietnam Vet in the Chapter 103 geographic area.

VETERANS ADVOCACY AWARD: This award is presented to any governmental organization, governmental employee, political leader, or an elected official in the Federal, State or Local Level, who has shown demonstrable leadership in promoting veterans' needs, causes, or concerns.

Exemplary Service Award

This Award is presented to any individual, group or organization that has long shown outstanding, consistent service and exemplary sacrifice of both time, effort or talent in providing the means to aid Chapter 103 of the Vietnam Veteran's of America in reaching the noble goal of developing programs, activities or experiences that provide assistance in improving the lives and spirit of Veterans and their families.

VVA Chapter # 103 Awards 2008

Citizen of the Year: Nicholas J.Pirro, 704 N. McBride St., Syracuse, NY 13203

Community Service Award: William Molloy, 4108 Makyas Rd., Syracuse NY 13215-8708

Corporate Supporter of the Year: Next Generation Vending and Food Service, One Mount Pleasant Road, Canastota , NY 13032

Grunt of the Year: Paul J.P. Dufault, 414 Garden City Dr., Mattydale, NY 13211-1416

Humanitarian of the Year: K. Sue Doan, NYS Div. of Veterans Affairs, 333 E. Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13202

Individual Supporter of the Year: Raymond Simcuski, One Mount Pleasant Rd., Canastota, NY 13032

President's Award: Raymond M. Rinaldi, North Area Athletic and Education Center, 507 Pond St, Syracuse, NY, 13208

Vietnam Veteran of the Year: Peter A. Bronstad, 2812 State Route 174 Marietta, NY 13110 and Gordon C. Lane, 133 Blanchard Blvd., Syracuse NY, 13209

Veterans Advocacy Award: Dr. Eugene Tinelli, Syracuse VAMC, 800 Irving Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210

The annual VVA Installation and Awards dinner will be held on April 12 at the Liverpool Elks Lodge. Cocktails at 6pm will be followed by dinner, with the installation and awards to follow. The cost is \$20; \$25 for nonmembers. Tables of ten can be reserved for \$200 for members; \$250 for nonmembers. For information/seating arrangements call Dick Madden at 635-2019.

Subj: **PTSD%20a%20Risk%20Factor%20for%20Long[1]**
 Date: 2/19/2008 8:59:51 AM Eastern Standard Time
 From: [redacted]
 To: [redacted]
 CC: [redacted]

Please note that Dr. Boscarino is a life member of VVA



PTSD a Risk Factor for Long-Term Disease

Wednesday, February 13, 2008; 12:00 AM

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 13 (HealthDay News) -- People with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are as likely to have long-term health problems as people with other common, chronic disease risk factors, a new study suggests.

The findings, published in the current edition of *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, come from examining the health status of 4,462 male Vietnam-era veterans 30 years after their military service.

Exposure to trauma has not only psychological effects, but can take a serious toll on a person's health status and biological functions as well, Joseph Boscarino, senior investigator with Geisinger Health System in Danville, Pa., said in a prepared statement. "PTSD is a risk factor for disease that doctors should put on their radar screens."

The study finds that PTSD was just as good an indicator of a long-term health status as having an elevated white blood cell count, which can indicate a major infection or a serious blood disease such as leukemia.

Veterans with high erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR), which indicates inflammation, were also at risk. There was a similar finding for a possible indicator of serious neuroendocrine problems.

While these disease markers are measured with a blood test, PTSD is commonly measured with a psychological test or a mental health examination.

"As the conflicts in the Middle East continue, we're seeing a new wave of our service members who have post-traumatic stress," Boscarino said. "If we don't get these personnel help earlier, our research shows that they may experience more serious health problems down the road."

Almost anyone who experiences a traumatic event can experience PTSD, meaning accident and disaster victims are also predisposed to the biological risk factors associated with PTSD.

Although therapy doesn't necessarily have to be extensive, Boscarino said it should occur shortly after the traumatic event. Early treatment may be critical to avoidance of depression, he added.

News Flash



VVA National President states historic increase is appreciated but VA funding needs fixing

Vietnam Veterans of America
PRESS RELEASE
IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 2008

No. 08-01
Contact:
Mokie Pratt Porter
301-585-4000, Ext. 146

Historic Increase in VA Healthcare Funding Is a Start, But the System Still Needs Fixing
(Washington, D.C.) – “Vietnam Veterans of America applauds Congress for making good on its promise by adding \$3.7 billion in needed funds to the veterans healthcare budget,” said John Rowan, national president of VVA. “We applaud the President for authorizing the expenditure of these funds, albeit on an ‘emergency’ basis.

“We are not pleased that for three and a half months into the federal fiscal year the VA budget has been in limbo. Nor are we pleased that this added funding, as an ‘emergency’ appropriation, is not to be part of the base budget. This could have negative consequences for FY 2010,” Rowan said.

“Although both sides of the aisle in Congress have been cool towards instituting a system of assured, guaranteed funding for veterans healthcare, VVA believes the current method of funding is broken, and a new means of funding, one that would assure a timely and reliable funding stream, must be debated and enacted,” Rowan added.

“We will continue to work with our fellow veterans’ service organizations in the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and with key members of Congress to craft a solution to this long-troublesome issue,” Rowan commented.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”

News Flash



House Veterans Affairs Chairman

NEWS FROM...
CHAIRMAN BOB FILNER
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

335 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

<http://www.house.gov/veterans>

For more information contact
Kristal DeKleer (202) 225-9756

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 17, 2008

Washington, D.C. – House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) provided the following statement on the release of additional veterans' funding:

“I applaud the Administration’s formal budget request for the additional \$3.7 billion in veterans’ funding provided by Congress. With the release of these funds, Congress has provided the largest single funding increase in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“The 2008 budget sends a clear message to America’s servicemen and women that this Congress recognizes that the cost of war includes the health care and benefits for our veterans. We fought hard to provide a much-needed increase in funding for veterans’ programs and Democrats will remain steadfast in fighting for the dollars our veterans need.

“After years of neglect, this Congress vowed to make available the resources needed to provide the benefits and services that our veterans have earned – and this Congress has kept its promise.”

News Flash



Department of Veterans Affairs FY09 Budget request \$94 billion for Veterans

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
News Release ·
(202) 461-7600

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2008

VA Requests \$94 Billion for Veterans in FY '09 Budget

Peake: VA Will Provide Timely, Accessible and High-Quality Care

WASHINGTON – Honoring the nation's commitment to care for the newest generation of combat veterans and service members from other conflicts and eras, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake announced today President Bush is seeking a budget of \$93.7 billion in fiscal year 2009 for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), with health care and disability compensation receiving most of the funding.

If Congress accepts the White House's budget request, VA's budget would be \$3.4 billion more than the current spending level and nearly double the budget in effect when President Bush took office seven years ago.

"This budget builds on VA's past successes in providing veterans with timely, accessible delivery of high-quality benefits and services earned through their sacrifice and service in defense of freedom," Peake said.

The FY '09 budget proposal calls for \$47.2 billion in discretionary funding, mostly for health care. It also would provide \$46.4 billion in mandatory funding for compensation, pension, educational assistance, home loan guaranties and other benefit programs.

Peake said the budget proposal will provide funding to ensure high-quality care to VA's highest priority patients -- veterans of the Global War on Terror, those with service-connected disabilities, lower-income veterans, and veterans with special health care needs.

Under the new budget, VA will strengthen its collaboration with the Department of Defense (DoD) for world-class health care and benefits to veterans, service members and their families, including progress toward the development of secure electronic patient health care records that can be used by both departments.

This proposed budget will also allow VA to continue implementing the recommendations of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (Dole-Shalala Commission). Peake said the commission's report provides "a powerful blueprint to move forward with ensuring that service men and women injured during the Global War on Terror receive the health care and benefits necessary to allow them to return to full and productive lives as quickly as possible."

The budget request includes:

- \$1.3 billion to meet the health care needs of an estimated 330,000 veterans returned from service in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- \$3.9 billion for mental health services;
- \$762 million for non-institutional long-term care; and
- \$1.5 billion for prosthetics and sensory aids.

The President's budget request contains \$252 million devoted to research projects focused specifically

on veterans returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan. This includes research in traumatic brain injury, polytrauma, spinal cord injury, prosthetics, burn injury, pain, and post-deployment mental health. A major challenge in improving the delivery of compensation and pension benefits is the steady and sizeable increase in workload. The volume of claims is projected to reach 872,000 in 2009 – a 51 percent increase since 2000. VA will address its ever-growing workload challenges by acquiring greater access to DoD's online medical information, by working to reduce the Department's reliance upon paper-based claims folders and by aggressively hiring new staff. By the beginning of 2009, VA expects to complete a two-year effort to hire 3,100 new staff.

The President's budget request includes \$181 million in operations and maintenance for the National Cemetery Administration, a 71 percent increase from the resources available to the Department's memorial program when the President took office.

The budget request includes an additional \$5 million to begin interment operations at six new national cemeteries -- Bakersfield, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Columbia-Greenville, S.C.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Sarasota, Fla.; and southeastern Pennsylvania.

The President's 2009 budget would provide more than \$2.4 billion for the Department's information technology (IT) program. This is \$389 million, or 19 percent above VA's 2008 budget, and reflects the realignment of all IT operations and functions under the control of the chief information officer. The proposal contains \$93 million to uphold VA's cyber-security program to support the commitment to make the Department the gold standard in data security within the federal government.

VA continues to take aggressive steps to ensure the safety of veterans' personal information, including training and educating employees on the critical responsibility they have to protect personal and health information.

Highlights of the VA budget are available on the Internet at:

For the latest news releases and other information, visit VA on the Internet at

To receive e-mail copies of news releases, subscribe to VA's list server at:



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
3300 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO
1650
Ser N751/5U930233
22 AUG 2005

Dear Mr. Harris,

Thank you for your continued outstanding and professional efforts in representing our Vietnam veterans.

In my letter to you dated 7 March 2005, I encouraged you and your constituent members to design a commemorative device that recognized the courageous efforts of our "Brown Water Navy" veterans and captured the spirit and historic significance of the period in question.

A review of your commemorative device design has been completed by members of the Department of the Navy's Board of Decorations and Medals, the Navy Uniform Board, the Assistant for Legal and Legislative Matters for the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and members of my office. It has been concluded that since the design you submitted is clearly distinguishable from warfare insignia currently in use by active duty personnel, the DoN has no objection to the design. Therefore, your association may commercially produce this commemorative insignia and all veterans meeting your qualification standards may procure it. However, the U.S. Navy cannot endorse the device due to the fact that the Department of Defense and its service components cannot legally endorse private organizations or their products.

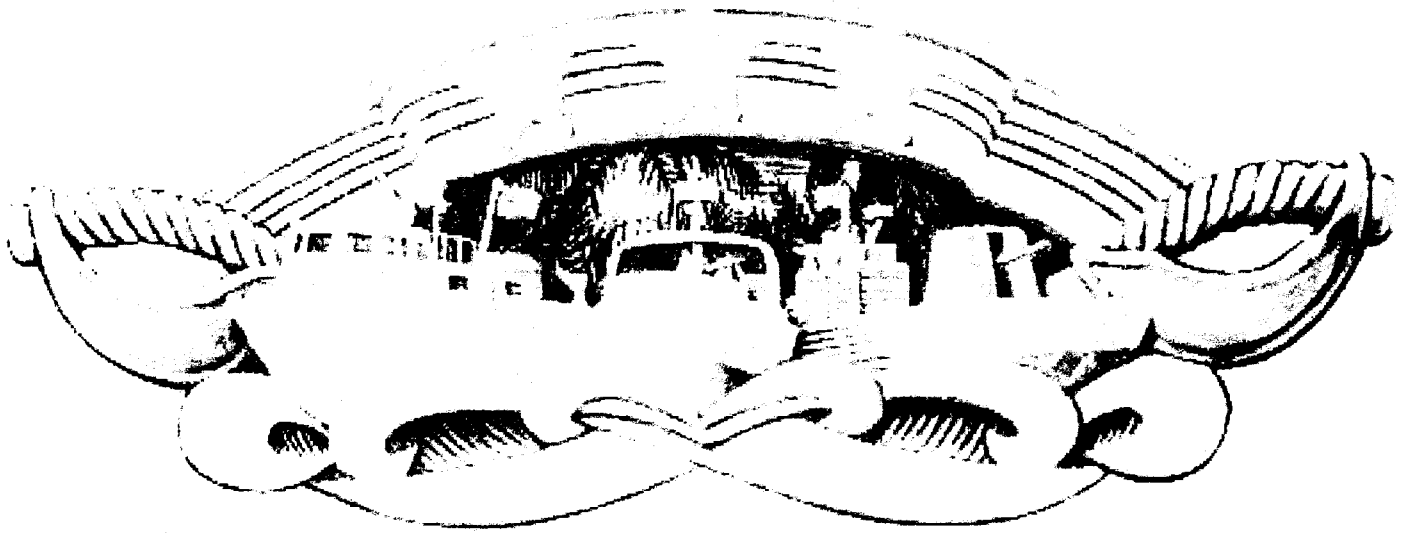
Again, thank you for affording the Navy the opportunity to review your proposed commemorative insignia. Your efforts on behalf of our veterans are greatly appreciated, and I wish you fair winds and following seas as you go forward in your endeavor.

Sincerely,

G. C. NASH
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps
Director, Expeditionary Warfare
Division (N75)

Michael A. Harris
Mobile Riverine Force Association
106 Belleview Drive
Conover, NC 28613-8951

Copy to:
NEDDX WASHINGTON DC
PBK Forces Veterans Association Inc.
Swift Boat Sailors Association
OPNAV (N090, N1310)



T. Wilson

Army Blocks Disability Paperwork Aid at Fort Drum

by Ari Shapiro



Former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, who co-chaired President Bush's commission on veterans' care, says the whole disability rating system is broken and needs to change. Getty Images

, January 29, 2008 · Army officials in upstate New York instructed representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs not to help disabled soldiers at Fort Drum Army base with their military disability paperwork last year. That paperwork can be crucial because it helps determine whether soldiers will get annual disability payments and health care after they're discharged.

Now soldiers at Fort Drum say they feel betrayed by the institutions that are supposed to support them. The soldiers want to know why the Army would want to stop them from getting help with their disability paperwork and why the VA— whose mission is to help veterans — would agree to the Army's request.

'A Worn Pair of Boots'

One disabled soldier, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he fears retaliation from the military, says it feels like a slap in the face.

"To be tossed aside like a worn-out pair of boots is pretty disheartening," the soldier says. "I always believed the Army would take care of me if I did the best I could, and I've done that."

At a restaurant near Fort Drum, the soldier described his first briefing with the VA office on base. According to the soldier, the VA official told a classroom full of injured troops, "We cannot help you review the narrative summaries of your medical problems." The official said the VA used to help soldiers with the paperwork, but Army officials saw

soldiers from Fort Drum getting higher disability ratings with the VA's help than soldiers from other bases. The Army told the VA to stop helping Fort Drum soldiers describe their army injuries, and the VA did as it was told.

It's unclear why the Army wanted to stop the soldiers from getting help with the disability paperwork. Cynthia Vaughan, spokeswoman for the Army surgeon general, says the VA was not doing anything wrong by helping soldiers at Fort Drum.

"There is no Army policy on outside help in reviewing and/or assisting soldiers in rewriting their narratives during the 10-day period which they have to review them," Vaughan says.

She says the officers who asked the VA to stop helping Fort Drum's soldiers were part of what the Army calls a "Tiger Team"— an ad-hoc group assigned to investigate, in this case, medical disability benefits.

According to Army spokesman George Wright, the Tiger Team thought the VA should not be helping soldiers with their medical documents. The Army delivered that message to VA officials in Buffalo, N.Y., who went along with the request, even though the VA's assistance complied with Army policy.

The Army declined to provide any information about the Tiger Team members' identities or their motivations in asking the VA to stop reviewing the soldiers' paperwork. However, private attorney Mara Hurwitt points out that the Army has a financial incentive to keep soldiers' disability ratings low.

"The more soldiers you have who get disability retirements, the more retirement pay is coming out of your budget," Hurwitt says.

Qualified to Help?

Another question is why the VA would go along with the Army's request.

Tom Pamperin, deputy director of the VA's compensation and pension service, believes VA officers are not qualified to help with soldiers' disability paperwork.

"We do not train our employees in the intricacies of the Defense Department's disability evaluation system, so we would feel that it would be inappropriate for our employees to apply VA standards to a Defense Department process," Pamperin says.

But Hurwitt argues the VA is more equipped than anyone to help soldiers with their paperwork.

"VA counselors understand the disabilities, what the different kinds of conditions are, how they should be properly described in the paperwork," Hurwitt says.

She points out that VA officials have to look at a soldier's medical history anyway to counsel him or her on VA benefits, which are separate from Army benefits.

"Really what it comes down to is you're just helping the soldier get what he's entitled to under law," Hurwitt says.

System 'Unfair'

This is just the latest in a string of controversies about disability payments for injured veterans.

Former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, who co-chaired President Bush's recent commission on veterans' care, says stories like this one show how the whole disability rating system is broken and needs to change.

The system is "fundamentally unfair," according to Shalala, "and that's the point about the need for reform in the system. It has to be reformed for everyone."

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VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER #103

P.O. BOX 675
LIVERPOOL, NY 13088

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Veterans must provide evidence of service (DD214 or Equivalent)

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And say "HI" to Bill Martin!



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★ AT EASE ★

VVA Chapter #103 holds its meetings at American Legion Post 188, 205 Cypress St., Liverpool, NY on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Directions: From Heid's Corners, follow signs to Rt. 370 (2nd Street). Take first left past Washington Park. The Post is on your right side, across from the park.