

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER #103
P.O. BOX 675. LIVERPOOL, NY 13088
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2008

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SYRACUSE VET CENTER
478-7127

BUFFALO REGIONAL
OFFICE
1-800-827-1000

Website of the New York State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America is www.nyvietnamvets.org.

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. We helped many veterans last year, especially through referrals from members of this chapter. The Iraqi/Afghan vets we've helped are very thankful to Sue for watching out for them.

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**Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration**

Communications & Outreach Support Division (41C2)
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 481-6240
FAX (202) 273-9008
www.cem.va.gov
public.inquiry@va.gov

Presidential Memorial Certificates

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is a gold embossed paper certificate inscribed with the veteran's name that bears the President's signature. It honors the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

HISTORY

This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents.

ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program through the National Cemetery Administration.

ELIGIBILITY

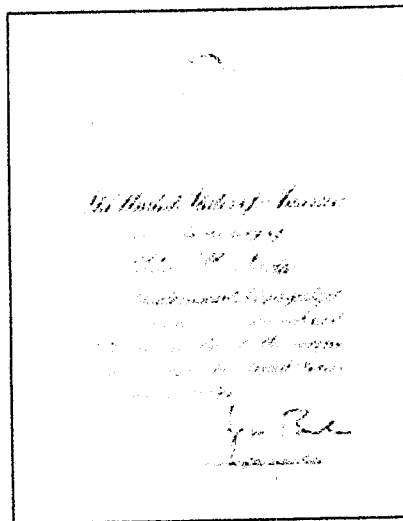
Eligible recipients include the deceased veteran's next of kin and loved ones.

REQUESTS

A copy of the deceased veteran's military discharge document along with a copy of the death certificate must be provided when requesting a PMC. Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may request a PMC in person at any VA Regional Office, by U.S. mail or by toll-free fax. A request form is available on the National Cemetery Administration website, www.cem.va.gov.

By Mail:
Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

By Toll-Free Fax:
(800) 455-7143



Presidents Message-September, 2008

The storage container we've been renting to hold our State Fair materials and the remaining items from our museum has been discontinued. We now have a permanent storage shed located at Bill Martin's store which was purchased by and for the chapter through the foundation. The monthly rental charges have been bleeding the treasury long enough.

The Chapter's lease arrangement for the hot dog cart at the PSB initiated in July continues to provide a weekly leasing fee. While there have been some attempts to challenge our right to do this and some harassment of our operator by the other hot dog cart vendors we have prevailed. Based on conversations with our operator he may well decide to work with us again next season. Thanks to Gordy Lane for his help in dealing with the bureaucracy in the various city agencies that needed explanations to quell their objections, and to Dave Holihan for his counseling on how to approach things.

The 2008 State Fair is behind us! It was a long 12 days, but the good news is we made a little more profit than in the past 2 years. Again this year Paul Dufault, Jim Edick and Rich Sperry opened our booth each of the 12 days and remained until relieved by the night shift volunteers. Of course Billy Martin again devoted a number of nights there, and Pete Bronstad. Dick Madden gave his fair share, Kurt Noll, Bob Dixon, Mike O'Hara and 2 "new" names—Larry Twiss and Dave Giarrusso who gave us 2 nights each. Some others that pitched in were Kelly and Alisha Benack and Donnie. Also we had Associate members Donna Madden and Carol Lazarus and myself to round out the various nights. Others, Marty Goettsch and Reggie Rawls volunteered but I couldn't schedule them as both work on weekends as required by their jobs. Let's not forget the set-up and teardown guys: Gordy Lane, Don Benack, Pete Bronstad, Billy Martin. Everyone needs to say thanks and show some appreciation to these folks who gave up their time to support the chapter during the Fair—it takes 5-6 people a day to keep our booth going, and each of these people deserves a big thank you from all of us.

Lastly, our Honor Guard needs serious help from the members. We were down to four and now just Reggie, myself, and Bob Goettel. Cliff our long time Honor Guard Commander has decided to resign completely from the chapter for personal reasons. We all owe him and his wife Bonnie a very big thank you for their faithful support and all the hard work they contributed to the chapter over the past several years. As it stands now, Reggie may decide to become the next Commander, but without a few more bodies to fill out the ranks—we don't much have of an honor guard for him to command. So if you are interested and can fit into some BDU's we'd really welcome you to the Honor Guard. Contact me or Reggie.

On the same note of help wanted—the War Memorial could use 2-3 of us to fill out their group of tour guides. The group escorts local school kids through our War Memorial and explains the various displays, portraits, and name listings on the walls. Call me for more.

Handwritten signature of Ron Fairbank.



Department of Veterans Affairs suicide panel completes first draft
VA Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

VA Suicide Prevention Panel Completes Draft Report Group Lauds VA's Comprehensive Strategy

WASHINGTON (Sept. 9, 2008) - A blue-ribbon panel has praised the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for its "comprehensive strategy" in suicide prevention that includes a "number of initiatives and innovations that hold great promise for preventing suicide attempts and completions."

Among the initiatives and innovations the group studied were VA's Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-TALK. The lifeline is staffed by trained professionals 24 hours a day to deal with any immediate crisis that may be taking place. Nearly 33,000 veterans, family members or friends of veterans have called the lifeline in the year that it has been operating. Of those, there have been more than 1,600 rescues to prevent possible tragedy.

Other initiatives noted included the hiring of suicide prevention coordinators at each of VA's 153 medical facilities, the establishment of a Mental Health Center of Excellence in Canandaigua, N.Y., focusing on developing and testing clinical and public health intervention standards for suicide prevention, the creation of an additional research center on suicide prevention in Denver, which focuses on research in the clinical and neurobiological conditions that can lead to increased suicide risk and a plus-up in staff making more than 400 mental health professionals entirely dedicated to suicide prevention.

With the praise, the panel also recommended a mixture of more research, greater cooperation among federal agencies, and more education for health care workers and community leaders to further strengthen and share VA's ability to help veterans and their families.

"Every human life is precious, none more than the men and women who serve this nation in the military," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "The report of this blue-ribbon panel, and other efforts underway, will ensure VA mobilizes its full resources to care for our most vulnerable veterans."

Called the "Blue Ribbon Work Group on Suicide Prevention," the five-member group was composed of suicide prevention experts from VA, the Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute of Health, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The group was created by Peake and met June 11-13, 2008.

*Design a study that will identify suicide risk among veterans of different conflicts, ages, genders, military branches and other factors. VA has committed to work with other federal agencies to design such a study within 30 days.

*Improve VA's screening for suicide among veterans with depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). VA is in the process of designing a new screening protocol, with pilot test undertaken during the fiscal year quarter beginning Oct. 1, 2008.

* Ensure that evidence-based research is used to determine the appropriateness of medications for depression, PTSD and suicidal behavior. VA's is providing written warnings to patients about side effects, and the Department's suicide prevention coordinators are contacting health care providers to advise them of the latest evidence-based research on medications.

* Devise a policy for protecting the confidential records of VA patients who may also be treated by the military's health care system. VA is already developing a plan to clarify the privacy rights of patients who come to VA while serving in the military.

*Increase research about suicide prevention. VA has announced several funding opportunities this year for research on suicide prevention and is developing priorities for suicide prevention research.

* Develop educational materials about suicide prevention for families and community groups. VA is examining the effectiveness of support groups and educational material for the families of suicidal veterans, and producing a brochure for the families of veterans with traumatic brain injury about suicide, which will be available within 30 days.

* Increase training for VA chaplains about the warning signs of suicide. VA offices responsible for chaplains and mental health professionals are studying ways to implement this recommendation, with a report due by Nov. 1.

* Develop a gun-safety program for veterans with children in the home, both as a child-safety measure and a suicide prevention effort. A VA directive establishing the program is being developed, with full implementation expected during the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2008.

VA is the nation's largest provider of mental health care. More than 17,000 mental health professionals, including dedicated suicide prevention coordinators in each of VA's 153 medical centers, are available to care for veterans. The Department's mental health program this year is funded at more than \$3 billion.

NEWS FLASH!

Due to the high cost of maintaining the copier to produce the newsletter this will be the last printed newsletter the chapter will put out. The leasing fee for the copier and the cost of the toner cartridges made it too costly to continue to put together printed copies. Don't worry, though, because you'll still be able to access all that's going on with the chapter by visiting the chapter's website at www.cnyvva103.org. Updates will be posted monthly.

So, for those advertisers wishing a refund please call Ron Fairbank at 515-5986.

Next month we will be sending out a postcard reminding everyone to check out the website!



WWW.CNYVVA103.ORG

Incoming News

August 2008

At NY Airport, a Room for the Troops

From military.com July 15, 2008, *Associated Press*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Weary Soldiers traveling through Syracuse's airport will soon have a special room to pass the time while waiting for rides and flights - thanks to some local veterans. Hancock International Airport officials will establish a special hospitality room at the airport, which is frequently used by Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division who are stationed 75 miles to the north at Fort Drum.

"These guys put their lives on the line, and they sometimes find themselves stuck here for hours and hours, with nothing to do, no place to go. We just didn't think that's how our military men and women should be treated," said Loren Davies, a former Marine who spent nearly nine years working at the airport. The "Gregory J. Harris Military Courtesy Room" - named to honor a Marine listed as missing in action in Vietnam - will open July 29. While spokesmen at airports in Albany, Buffalo and Rochester said they go to great lengths to accommodate the needs of military travelers, the Syracuse airport is apparently the first in upstate New York to have a hospitality room exclusively for their use.

The room - a converted lost baggage claim office - won't be anything fancy, said Davies, 66, the commander of the Chittenango detachment of the Marine Corps League. It will be furnished with some comfortable furniture. Free snacks, bottled water and soft drinks will be provided. Maybe even razors, shaving cream and toothbrushes so travelers can freshen up. Eventually, Davies said he hoped to have a computer set up in the room so traveling military personnel can use the Internet. "The only requirement is that they be active duty or active reservists - Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen. We don't care if they're being deployed or just traveling," Davies said.

Davies came up with the idea, along with friends Leroy Bowen, an Army veteran who still works at Hancock, and Gene Leimer, a former city policeman and retired Navy submariner. Working at the airport, Davies and Bowen said they were troubled by the way Soldiers had to sleep on the airport floor, using their backpacks for pillows, or curl up uncomfortably on hard benches. Because it's a smaller airport, with no flights coming or going between midnight and 5:30 a.m., restaurants and newsstands close down by 9 p.m., or so, added Syracuse Aviation Commissioner Anthony Mancuso. Airport employees, and even city police, often volunteered to run out for coffee and doughnuts for the Soldiers. But Davies felt there ought to be a permanent, reliable service. The plan was embraced by Mancuso and Syracuse Mayor Matt Driscoll. Last week, the Syracuse Common Council approved renting the room to Davies' group for \$1 a year.

"It's a place where they can go with their buddies, guys with the same interests. It gives them a little privacy, a place to rest, relax. We think it will work out well," said Mancuso, a veteran of the Navy Reserve.



Questions and Answers About Pre-Registration Program

What is the purpose of VA Pre-Registration Program?

The Pre-Registration Program is a program that allows you to update your current address and insurance information. Getting your correct information in our records helps us improve customer service to you when you call us to ordering prescriptions, getting insurance, contacting you by phone.

Will VA ask for this information?

You will either receive a call from a VA employee working in the Veteran Contact Center or staff will ask you to check our next appointment.

Can you

have had an appointment in the last six months, call the Veteran Contact Center at 1-888-823-9656. The staff will be happy to update your information for you.

What will I need to tell them?

- ✓ Your address
- ✓ Phone numbers (home, cell and work)
- ✓ Insurance information
- ✓ Next of kin
- ✓ Emergency contacts
- ✓ Place of employment

We will not ask you:

- ✓ Social Security number
- ✓ Mother's maiden name
- ✓ Date of birth
- ✓ Place of birth

How will I know if the phone call I receive is really from a person working in the Veteran Contact Center?

The person calling will say they work for the Veteran Contact Center. The caller will also remind you of your upcoming appointments. Other callers would not have this type of information. If at any point you are not comfortable with the phone call, you may hang up. You can also call the Veteran Contact Center's toll-free number to verify the program and provide your updated information.

comfortable with the phone call, you may hang up. You can also call the Veteran Contact Center's toll-free number to verify the program and provide your updated information.

Does the Pre-Registration Program replace the regular admission process I go through at the Medical Center?

No. It is only used to get basic information.

How often does VA need to update my information?

If you have an appointment coming up, and if your information has not been updated within the last six months, you may get a call from the Veteran Contact Center.

What are the benefits of the Pre-Registration Program?

We will have up-to-date information. This helps us should we need to get in touch with you. We need your correct address. If we have a wrong address, your prescriptions may be returned to us. By providing this information before your appointments, it may shorten your waiting time. The call from the Veteran Contact Center will also remind you about your upcoming visit. When you keep your appointments, it helps everyone.

It can help the hospital or clinic collect money from insurance companies. Insurance reimbursements can also be used to offset your co-pays. This money will be used by your medical facility to provide better service to you.

VA HEALTH CARE

Fact Sheet 164-2
March 2008

Enrollment Priority Groups

Priority Group	Definition
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 50% or more disabling • Veterans determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 30% or 40% disabling
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans who are Former Prisoners of War (POWs) • Veterans awarded a Purple Heart medal • Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty • Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 10% or 20% disabling • Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits from VA • Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonservice-connected veterans and noncompensable service-connected veterans rated as 0% disabled by VA and whose annual income and net worth are below the VA national income threshold • Veterans receiving VA pension benefits • Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World War I veterans • Compensable 0% service-connected veterans • Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki • Project 112/SHAD participants • Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Veterans discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, who were enrolled as of January 28, 2008 and veterans who apply for enrollment after January 28, 2008, for 5 years post discharge ○ Veterans discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, who apply for enrollment after January 28, 2008, until January 27, 2011
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans with income and/or net worth above the VA national income threshold and income below the geographic income threshold who agree to pay copays
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans with income and/or net worth above the VA national income threshold and the geographic income threshold who agree to pay copays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Subpriority a: Noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and who have remained enrolled since that date ○ Subpriority c: Nonservice-connected veterans enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and who have remained enrolled since that date ○ Subpriority e**: Noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans applying for enrollment after January 16, 2003 ○ Subpriority g**: Nonservice-connected veterans applying for enrollment after January 16, 2003

****Note:** Veterans assigned to Priority Groups 8a or 8g are not eligible for enrollment as a result of the enrollment restriction which suspended enrolling new high-income veterans who apply for care after January 16, 2003. Veterans enrolled in Priority Groups 8a or 8c will remain enrolled and eligible for the full-range of VA health care benefits.

October 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 US Navy Founded 1884	7	8	9	10	11 Daughters of the American Revolution Founded 1890
12 Columbus Day	13	14	15	16 VVA 103 Chapter Meeting Liverpool American Legion Post 188 7PM	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
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September 2008

