

TOGETHER THEN...

TOGETHER NOW

BETWEEN THE LINES

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Chapter 20



December 2009
Issue 131

Have a Safe & Happy Holiday Season



4 Share the
Warmth

5 Freedom Calls Video
Conference Center

8 Albany
Stand Down

President's Report

Let me start by asking everyone to keep those brave men and women and their families that were killed or wounded at Ft. Hood in your prayers.

Hope this report finds everyone well. The past month has again been a busy one for Chapter 20. On November 6th we went to Crag Hill School to talk to a 5th grade class about the Vietnam War. There were about 100 kids in attendance for our presentation that included some memorabilia from Vietnam. It's always a joy to meet with school kids and talk to them and I would encourage all of you to try it if the opportunity comes.

On November 9, Rich Isaman, Ray Melens and I attended a press conference announcing our funding of the Video Conference Center at the Library, a place that families can go and talk and see their loved ones serving us today. This project was just another way that Chapter 20 can serve veterans of all eras. I thank the LLC and the Board for



voting us the opportunity to have this center named after Chapter 20.

Veterans Day has come and gone, and I thank all of you that came to our memorial in Highland Park to remember our veterans that served us protecting our freedoms.

Veteran's Court is still moving along with great success and Chapter 20 mentors are doing a wonderful job helping our brothers and sisters get the help they need so that they can lead a productive life in the community, rather than in jail.

Chapter 20 again this year will be sending boxes to our troops serving in harm's way. Please send complete name and address for those who will be at their duty station in mid-February

because the mailing will be done in January. Please send those names to troopboxes@VVA20.org.

A couple important things I would like everyone to consider:

- Elections are coming up in April of 2010. I know this is a way off, but please consider if you would be interested in a position as an officer or board member.
- April 2010 is our annual dinner and as part of that event we hand out awards for service to the Chapter and to the community, so please look around and if there is someone you would like to see get an award, ask for the form.
- Budget time for 2010 is has come and I would ask that if you have a committee or some project you would like to have Chapter 20 fund, please see Hank Wallace for the paperwork.

In closing, thanks for your support and allowing me to serve as your President.

Ken Moore, President
Vietnam 1966-67
US Army Cavalry

POW-MIA

Joe Peck, Chairperson

Being that this is my first official report as the new POW/MIA Chair for Chapter 20, I hope I can meet the challenges and expectations this job will carry. We will surely miss Gail as our previous chair person, especially with her passion and knowledge of the POW/MIA issues at hand today. We all wish her well on her retirement. She has definitely earned it. I know she will always be there for me and hopefully have answers for my thousands of questions that will pop up on an hourly basis.

The Department of Defense has released 3 more names as being recovered and identified bringing the total Americans missing and still unac-

counted for to 1,728. They are as follows:

W02

Kenneth Leon Stancil, USA, from Chattanooga, TN. Listed as KIA/BNR in South Vietnam on Dec. 28, 1965. His remains were recovered Apr. 4, 2009 and identified June 1, 2009. He was escorted by the Ft. McPherson Army Honor Guard on Oct 2, 2009



W02 Kenneth Stancil



CMSGT Melvin Rash



E4 Lawrence Aldrich

on his final way home to Chattanooga.

CMSGT

Melvin Douglas Rash, USAF, from Yorktown, VA was listed as a MIA in Laos on May 22, 1968.

His remains were recovered on May 29, 2002 and identified Mar. 13, 2009.

E4 Lawrence Lee Aldrich, USA, from Ft. Worth, TX was listed as MIA in South Vietnam on May 5, 1968. His remains were recovered on Apr. 4, 2009 and identified on May 4, 2009.

Our condolences to the families of these brave men. With last month's Veterans Day memorials we must remember not only our men and

woman who have served or are serving our great nation but also all of our POW-MIA's and their loving families. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Veterans Incarcerated Committee Report

Ron Trovato

Greetings to one and all. I write this as Veterans Day approaches and I look forward to my visit with the guys in Chapter 205 at the Auburn Correctional Facility on Veterans Day. I received their "Free Fire Zone" newsletter and there is a General Membership Meeting scheduled there for November 13. Chapter 205 seems to be doing well working toward common goals and having outside supporters attend their Board Meetings. Many sincere thanks to the Crochet Squad there who continue cranking out hat and scarf sets for needy children as well as lap blankets for disabled veterans. Chapter 205's 22nd annual Christmas giveaway is scheduled for December 4 and that, as always, will be a memorable day for all the veterans there. I'd like to point out that the veterans at Auburn continue to make more and more hat and scarf sets without the benefit of any government stimulus package. Great job guys! The Oneida Active Veterans at the Oneida Correctional Facility continue to organize and move forward there. The group is seeking a qualified PTSD counselor to help with the inmate veterans who have served this country proudly in Iraq and Afghanistan. This group had 55 veterans present at their recent POW/MIA Remembrance Day and we note that the O.A.V. Color Guard did an outstanding job on this very special occasion. Tip of the hat to Wesley Dunn, G.C. Edwards and all the guys there for a job well done. They will never forget..... Chapter 563 at the San Quentin State Prison in California continues working

towards this year's motorcycle "Run to the Pen" and is designing commemorative pins that will be given out. The current budget situation in the state of Arnold is creating havoc on many of the educational programs there and we hope that this will one day be reversed. The California Department of Corrections is transferring many inmates at this time and the future of Chapter 563 hangs in the balance. Thanks to Jeff Langnese for keeping us updated and for the guys there who continue to focus on Chapter goals despite the distractions. Finally, thanks to all the guys and gals of Chapter 20 as well as all of the employees of our thrift store who worked so hard at Chapter 20's "Share the Warmth" clothing giveaway on October 25th. It was an especially smoothly run operation and all of the kids that showed up were given a toy in addition to much needed winter clothing. This is such a proud day for our chapter. Tip of the hat is also in order to our beloved president, Kenny Moore, who gave several interviews to the local media. It was his usual smoke and mirrors as he told several stem winder stories to newscasters who hung on every unverifiable word. And I thought it was only me who he manipulated. Security was so tight there that Nick DeLeo threw me out of the store twice. At least I got my toy!

Legislation for Veterans

Fred Elliott

When I started this column, I thought it would be good to follow the actions of our state legislators in the pursuit of legislation important to veterans. What I didn't realize was how little "action" there would be to pursue.

From January of 2009 until early November, the New York State Assembly has proposed 102 bills pertaining to veterans. Of those 102, two (2) have been signed into law (that's

right, two of 102 or 2% in ten months). Thirty six bills are in the hands of the Assembly's Veterans' Affairs Committee. The remaining 64 are spread across several other committees.

The New York State Senate is doing a much better job; 4% of the 77 bills proposed in the Senate have been signed into law (that's a grand total of three [3]). Thirty of the 77 are in the hands of the Senate's Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee awaiting action. That means that other Senate committees are considering the remaining forty four bills.

The Assembly's Veterans' Affairs Committee is chaired by Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat representing the 72nd Assembly District (New York City area). He's been the chair since June of 2007 according to his web page. The other 18 members of the committee are Greg Ball (99th District), Adam Bradley (89th), Daniel J. Burling (147th), Michael Cusick (63rd), Michael G. DenDekker (34th), Stephen Hawley (139th Orleans County), Donna A. Lupardo (126th), William B. Magnarelli (120th), David G. McDonough (19th), Catherine Nolan (37th), William L. Parment (150th), Audrey I. Pheffer (23rd), Addie J. Russell (118th), Michelle Schimel (16th), Mark J. F. Schroeder (145th Erie County), Al Stirpe (121st), Robert K. Sweeney (11th), and Lou Tobacco (62nd).

The Senate's Veterans', Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee is chaired by Senator Eric Adams of the 20th Senate District. The remaining 12 members of the committee are Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (15th), Darrel J. Aubertine (48th), Martin J. Golden (22nd), Joseph A. Griffo (47th), William J. Larkin, Jr. (39th), Vincent L. Leibell (40th), Roy J. McDonald (43rd), Frank Padavan (11th), John L. Sampson (19th), Daniel L.

LEGISLATION FOR VETS on page 11

SHARE the warmth



1. The line grew quickly with many arriving well before the start time. 2. People had an assortment of items to choose from – coats, gloves, hats, scarves, slacks, sweaters, boots, etc. 3. Thrift Store staff did an incredible job making warm clothing available for all in need. 4. Ahh, much warmer. 5. Sometimes it was just easy to sort while you were inside the box!

Freedom Calls

Video Conference Center

by Rich Isaman

Is someone you love serving in the military in Afghanistan, Iraq or Kuwait? You can now schedule a video conference with your soldier at the library for FREE!



The Central Library contacted VVA Chapter 20 to seek assistance in the creation of a Media Conference Center to be located at the Central Library location. The library had contacted another not-for-profit foundation called Freedom Calls, which was created once people discovered that some phone companies were charging large sums of money for people to connect and do video conferencing with their loved ones overseas.

VVA Chapter 20's BOD voted to fund the center and it is now up and functional. This will be a great alternative for local families since the nearest conference center is in Watertown, NY. The Central Library is now working with Freedom Calls to assist local military families to keep connected at no cost to the families through the Conference Center that we funded.

The room is approximately 20 by 20 feet and has flags from all the service branches, as well as the American

Flag, framed and on the walls. At the front of the room is a large flat panel wall-mounted TV with a web-

CAMPS YOU CAN CALL

Afghanistan:
Bagram Airfield

Iraq
Camp Taji
Camp Baharia
Camp Taqaddum
Al Asad Airbase
Camp Victory

Kuwait
Camp Arifjan
Ali Al Saleem Airbase

cam connection. Families can make appointments to use the service and the library staff will help them con-

nect to the overseas location where their service man or woman is located. The family in Rochester will see their loved one on the big screen and in the lower section of the screen is a small picture showing how they are located in front of the camera in case they need to move someone into the picture. The room is private, closed and could easily be used to bring several family members in to be part of the conference.

The Central Library Staff is thrilled with this added feature and all Chapter 20 members can take pride in the fact that we have once again fulfilled our Motto: 'Never again will one generation of veterans forget another.'

The Freedom Calls Center is located in the lower link level of the Bausch & Lomb Public Library Building and is available by appointment only. Call 428-8304 to find out how to schedule a call to your soldier.

New York State Awards

by Fred Elliott

Chapter 20 member, Norman Wynes of Davidson, North Carolina, after reading my previous article, "Why are you Wearing that Ribbon?", thought it would be a good idea to also write about the award available from New York State. So, thanks to Norman's suggestion, here we are.

New York State has a Medal for Merit that can be awarded to a current NYS citizen, or NYS citizen while serving on federal active duty, and a current or former full-time military person serving in the Armed Forces of the United States or allied forces for purposes other than training since April 6, 1917; Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) excepted, and who is currently serving under honorable conditions or who has been honorably discharged from active duty. Non-NYS citizens may also be eligible, see <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/awards/mfm.html>.



The award of the Medal for Merit is based on prior award of at least one of 36 federal decorations (go to <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/awards/mfm.html> for those decorations). The Medal shall be awarded only to those persons whose entire service, subsequent to the time of receipt of the citation, shall have been honorable. The Medal may be awarded posthumously to a designated survivor of the deceased. Not more than one Medal for Merit shall be awarded to any person who was previously awarded the NYS Conspicuous Service Cross.

Applications for the NYS Medal for Merit will be made by using DMNA Form 106B-R (available at http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/awards/dmna_106b-r.pdf) or by letter request to: The Adjutant General, Division of Military and Naval Affairs, ATTN: MNHS-AD, 330 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, NY 12110-3514. All requests will be forwarded with substantiating documentation such as a Form DD214. Documentation must include Honorable Discharge, list of awards/certificates/permanent orders and indicate NYS citizenship while serving on federal active duty.

The New York State Conspicuous Service Cross may be awarded to any current NYS citizen or person who was a NYS citizen while serving on federal active duty; whose entire service was honorable subsequent to the time of receipt of the citation while serving in the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard or in the Army female nurse corps, and who has received a personal decoration issued by a brigade or equivalent higher headquarters. The Conspicuous Service Cross may also be awarded to any citizen of NYS, who while serving with the allied forces, received a personal decoration published in order issued by a brigade or equivalent higher headquarters. The award of the Conspicuous Service

Cross is based on prior award of at least one of 22 military decorations. (go to <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/awards/csc.html> for those decorations) The Cross may be awarded posthumously to a designated survivor of the deceased. Not more than one Cross shall be awarded to any one person.

Applications for the NYS Conspicuous Service Cross will be made by using DMNA Form 106A-R (available at http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/awards/dmna_106a-r.pdf) or by letter request to: The Adjutant General, Division of Military and Naval Affairs, ATTN: MNHS-AD, 330 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, NY 12110-3514. All requests will be forwarded with substantiating documentation such as a Form DD214. Documentation must include Honorable Discharge, list of awards/certificates/permanent orders and indicate NYS citizenship while serving on federal active duty.

free fire zone: your letters

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Gentlemen,

On behalf of Craig Hill School I'd like to thank you for the generous donation of your time on Friday afternoon. Not only was it great to see you again, to hear your presentation, and to receive the wonderful books, but I know all of you have made a huge impression on the children at Craig Hill. You thoroughly captured the children's attention through sharing your experiences, and with the gear and visuals you brought. Overall, you all helped bring a new level of awareness and respect for our soldiers and veterans, sparked some true compassion and left a mark on the audience.

Here's an example of the evidence: As I was returning to my classroom, a little girl whom I do not know, came up to me and asked if I was the one who organized the assembly. When I replied yes, she looked into my eyes and simply said "Thank you". Wow! Guess I did my job that day!

Please pass our sincere thanks on to Dick and Ray as well. Kenny - I got the Troop Box information and have some ideas in the works. Let's keep in touch and plan on having the Girl Scout Cookies, as well as cards, for the packages. I will get information out to our families looking for soldier names as well.

Enjoy the holidays. We all have so much to be thankful for!

Warmly,
Barbara Holzmacher

Recently Discharged?

4 Steps to be on Your Way to Receiving Everything You've Earned...

- 1 Secure your discharge certificate (DD Form 214)
- 2 Enroll in VA health care within your first 12 months from separation. Steps include:
 - Visiting the closest VA facility & Veteran Service Center
 - Fill out the form (10 10 EZ)
 - Visit your nearest New York State Veterans Counselor or County Veteran Service Agency*- Before visiting, gather as much information as possible, including (but not limited to):
 - DD 214
 - Medical Records
 - Bank Account Information
 - Dependent Information
- 3 If you need help obtaining your DD Form 214, or any other necessary documents, call 1-888-838-7697 (NYS Division of Veterans Affairs), visit www.veterans.state.ny.us.
- 4 To locate a veterans counselor call 1-888-838-7697 (NYS Division of Veterans Affairs), visit www.veterans.state.ny.us.

As a veteran living in New York State you may be eligible for a variety of economic, medical and social benefits (including compensation, health care, vocational rehabilitation/training, tuition assistance for higher education and real property tax exemptions). **These benefits are NOT automatic, however – you must apply for them.**

Please watch future issues of this newsletter for more detailed information of these benefits.

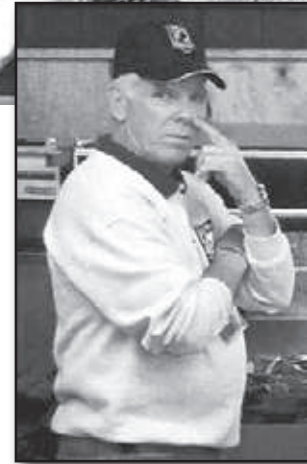
Information courtesy of NYS Department of Veterans Affairs brochure.

A Holiday Greeting from BTL



"...and laying a finger aside of his nose...[a la Santa]"

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!



roll call: b.o.d. attendance 2009

NAME	1/5	2/2	3/2	4/6	5/4	6/1	7/6	8/3	9/8	10/5	11/2	12/7
President: Moore, Ken	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1st V. Pres: Gleason, Tom	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	E	X	
2nd V. Pres: Elliot, Fred					X	E	X	X	X	X	X	
Secretary: Macaluso, Chuck	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Treasurer: Melens, Ray	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Corona, Dan	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Gatto, Valentino					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Gleason, Kathy	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	E	X	
Harkness, Joe	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lill, Max	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Madigan, Jack	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
McDermott, Jerry	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Oleksyn, Dick	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	X	
Peck, Joe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pudetti, Pat	E	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Trovato, Ron	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	E	
Wallace, Hank	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

X=Present E=Excused A=Absent

Albany Stand Down

by Jerry McDermott
photos by Valentino Gatto

The 21st Annual Albany area "Homeless Veteran's Stand-down" sponsored by the Elks Club and Vietnam Veterans Chapter #8 (as well as other various public and private organizations) was attended by Valentino Gatto and I. We went as guests of the VVA Chapter #8 to see how they coordinate this annual event. The all day event took place on Saturday, 10-03-09.

Over 270 homeless area veterans and their families were provided medical services (including seasonal flu shots, eye and dental exams, blood and HIV testing), substance abuse counseling, two hot meals and surplus warm weather clothing. Doug Williams has taken on the responsibility for managing this task for the area wide veterans' population on behalf of the Capital District Elks club. Mr. Williams has been in charge since 2001 doing this very worthy project in support of the homeless veterans throughout the Albany area.

Organizations such as the VA Stratton Hospital staff and other VA departments along with the five (5) surrounding county veterans' agencies assist in this cause. VVA Chapter 8 members assist in numerous ways from set-up to take down and anything in between, to make this a successful effort for the veterans in need.

The community support is huge, there were over 200 volunteers assisting in this effort to enhance the lives of over 270 veterans and family members who came out for some or all of what was freely available to them. Both Val and I were impressed with the commitment and dedication to the homeless veterans that the Capital District extends to our brother and sisters in need. We felt honored to have attended and witnessed such generosity for people truly in need that was provided by our fellow VVA members in the Chapter 8 and their good neighbors the Elks Club. Job well done!



L to R: John Reitano (President, Chapter 8), unknown, Al Poole (Chapter 8 member), Jerry McDermott (Chapter 20 member), unknown (Elks Club Staff), Joe Pollicino (Albany County Veterans Service Agency)



Albany Homeless Veterans & Health Screening Volunteers



More donations for the homeless provided by the Elks Club & Chapter 8 VVA



Homeless Veterans receiving clothing donations



Flu Shot Clinic, Uniform Air Force Reserve Medical Staff & Albany Homeless Veterans



End of the day brownbag sandwiches handed out to Veterans

Information from the VA on health care and from Monroe County Veterans Agency on compensation. For more information, call Ken Moore at 585-576-9000.

MORNING SESSION

- 9:00 – 9:10 AM Welcome – John Auberger
9:10 – 9:15 AM Intro - Ken Moore, Vietnam Veterans Chapter 20
9:15 – 9:45 AM Intro to VA Health Care
• Enrollment
• Pharmacy
• Other Services
9:45 – 10:15 AM Intro to VA Compensation - James Carra, Monroe County Veterans Service Agency
• Compensation
• DIC
• Death Benefits
• NY State Property Tax Exemption
10:15 – 11:00 AM Questions

AFTERNOON SESSION

- 1:00 – 1:15 AM Intro - Ken Moore, Vietnam Veterans Chapter 20
1:15 – 1:45 PM Intro to VA Health Care
• Enrollment
• Pharmacy
• Other Services
1:45 – 2:15 PM Intro to VA Compensation - James Carra, Monroe County Veterans Service Agency
• Compensation
• DIC
• Death Benefits
• NY State Property Tax Exemption
2:15 – 3:00 PM Questions

Veterans Benefit Fair

DECEMBER 5 2009 • GREECE TOWN HALL
TWO SESSIONS: 9-11 AM & 1-3 PM



Chapter 20's New Members

Please give these new members a hearty Welcome Home!

Richard DeFiore
Juil Robinson, Jr.
Wayne Young



HELP BASE

GREATER ROCHESTER

Help Base Greater Rochester

(www.hbrochester.org) is an online resource for veterans, service members, and their families in Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties. The mission of Help Base Greater Rochester is to enhance services by coordinating, mobilizing and educating the community-at-large about the issues facing veterans, service members, and their families and advocating for the necessary services to ensure that these community members can regain and maintain their physical, emotional, and economic well-being.

Vietnam Veterans of America CHAPTER 20 Car Donation, LLC



Call 224-8484

Greece Memorial Post 206

The Newest Post in Monroe County



A casual

Meeting the 3rd Thursday of the month 6:30 - 7:45 pm
at

The Legacy at Park Crescent — Mt. Read Blvd.
For details, please call 227-4383 or 225-4228.

WETZEL ASSOCIATES

Telecommunications Engineering Consultation
Business Continuity Planning

Lawrence R. Wetzel, PE

21 Bridgewood Drive Fairport, New York 14450
(585) 474-4883 lwetzel42@frontiernet.net

For more than twenty years our firm has served individuals, families and family owned businesses in the Greater Rochester community providing a full range of comprehensive legal representation and counsel.

In addition to our general legal practice we represent service members and veterans before military boards of corrections for all services.

Our practice is a disabled veteran owned business committed to serving veterans throughout our community and abroad.

- Real Estate
- Estate Planning, Probate & Elder Law
- Business & Commercial Practice
- Civil & Criminal Litigation
- Personal Injury



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U.S.S. LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

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Henrietta, NY 14467

585-334-5352

LEGISLATION FOR VETS *from page 3*

Squadron (25th), Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th), and Antoine M. Thompson (60th Niagara & Erie Counties).

I looked at both the NYS Assembly and Senate web sites and couldn't find any meaningful information about when the committee meetings are scheduled or how you could obtain the minutes of those meetings. So my suggestion to you, is that we should all write, fax, email, or call the respective committee chairman and ask about a schedule of meetings and how you can obtain minutes of past meetings. I know I'm going to.

Assemblyman Espaillat's web address is <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=072&sh=con>

Senator Adams' web address is <http://nysenate.gov/senator/eric-adams/contact>

Annual Troop Boxes Project

Please send complete name and address for those who will be at their duty station in mid-February. Boxes will be sent in mid-January. Please email information to troopboxes@VVA20.org where it will be added to the list.

hear this: news & notes

Fa La La La - Caroling Volunteers Needed

Reminder! Volunteers needed to pass out gifts and sing Christmas Carols to our veterans at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center on Sunday, December 20th, 2009 at 12:30 pm. Meet at Bldg # 5 the Auditorium, bring your voices, smiles and Santa hats from last year if you have them. Looking for 24 willing voices or more, spouses and family members welcome, no "off key" carolers will be turn away. Instruments (like guitars) welcome too! If you need directions, call me! Jerry McDermott (cell phone # 313-8188) If you can spare a few hours of your time, we can make a lot of people smile with your help.

Fit Vet Challenge Starts Soon!

Get ready for the 2nd Annual "Fit Vet Challenge" starting in January 2010, at our monthly membership meeting. All are invited to make 2010 a healthy and fit year for a worthy charity and ourselves. So splurge if you want to, but don't say you were not given fair warning to challenge each service branch for bragging rights next year. Details and a hand-out will be provided at the January 2010 meeting.

VA Consumer Council Committee

Comments from the Quarterly VA Consumer Council Committee meeting on November 4, 2009:

- Questions about VA eligibility can be answered by calling the Rochester Outreach Clinic at 585-463-2687.
- The Rochester area has shown an increase of veterans obtaining medical services. During the period from June 2008 through June 2009 the increase was

22% or an additional 1574 veterans that were newly enrolled for VA health care benefits. The combined services at Canandaigua and ROC resulted in over 28,000 visits by veterans this past fiscal year ending in September 2009. Our area VA services rank consistently in the top echelon of all national VA centers. The combined Canandaigua and ROC have maintained or increased satisfaction levels of services provided, retained and increased staffing, expanded services and continued to provide care as needed to veterans as requested. Last year the VA Veterans Service Center conducted over 50 area "out reaches" at various community events, churches, schools, colleges, and business as requested. They will be assisting our Chapter #20 efforts along with the Monroe County Veterans Agency and the Town of Greece on Saturday, December 5th, 2009 for an informational and benefits seminar at the Greece Town Hall.

Thrift Store

Support our Thrift Store — It is packed with merchandise!



Valentino Gatto

Military Flags

by Fred Elliott



UNITED STATES ARMY FLAG

Prior to 1956 the Army was the only armed service without a flag to represent the entire service. In 1955, Secretary of the Army, Wilber M. Brucker recognized the need for a flag to represent the Army in joint service ceremonies prompting him to call for the design of such a flag.

A simplified version of the United States Army Seal (in blue) became the centerpiece of the design and was placed on a white background to include a scarlet scroll with the words "United States Army" and the numerals "1775" (also in blue) displayed beneath the scroll. 1775 was chosen as this is the year the Army was created with General George Washington as Commander-in-Chief.

Army campaign streamers were then attached to the spearhead of the flagstaff. (The Army defines an official campaign as a combat action or series of actions that have historical significance or military importance to the Army and the United States.) Campaign streamers began as an idea during the Civil War when the War Department issued a directive that regiments should inscribe the names of their meritorious battles on their colors. Then in 1890, the War Department directed that regimental honors be engraved on silver rings placed on the staffs of regimental flags. Thirty years later the War Department ordered that streamers, in the colors of the campaign ribbon for each campaign in which the regiment fought, would be attached to the flagstaff. Now the Army had a way to display all of its campaigns.

The flag of the United States Army was officially adopted by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, on June 12, 1956.

OFFICIAL COLORS OF THE MARINE CORPS

Did you know that the official battle color of the United States Marine Corps is maintained by the Marine Barracks in Washington, DC? This particular barracks is known as "8th and I" within the Corps because of its street address. It is at these barracks that the Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps resides. The Color Sergeant's position was first designated in 1965 and first held by Gunnery Sergeant Shelton L. Eakin. This two year tour is open to all sergeants in the Corps as long as they are at least 76 inches tall; and they must pass a White House security check.

The battle color or flag of the USMC was first adopted on January 18, 1939. A gold fringe border is on the outdoor version of the flag while the indoor or parade flag has no fringe. In the early to middle 1800s, Marines carried a flag with gold fringe and an eagle and anchor design in the center of a white field. The legend, "To the Shores of Tripoli" was across the top until after the Mexican-American War when it was changed to "From Tripoli to the Halls of Montezuma".

Marines in the field, during the Mexican and Civil Wars, carried a flag of red and white stripes with an eagle perched on a shield of the United States and a half-wreath beneath the shield with 29 stars encircling the entire design. Then in 1876, they began carrying the Stars and Stripes with "U.S. Marine Corps" embroidered in yellow on the middle red stripe.

When the Marines landed at Vera Cruz in 1914, they carried a flag with a blue field and a laurel wreath encircling the Marine Corps emblem in the center. Above the emblem was a scarlet ribbon with the words "U.S. Marine Corps" while "Semper Fidelis" was on a scarlet ribbon below the emblem.

In 1921, orders were issued to cease using the yellow fringe and to not embroider "U.S. Marine Corps" on the middle red stripe. The following year, an order was issued retiring all

national colors from use that had the yellow fringe or wording on the flag. Then in 1925, gold and scarlet were designated as the official colors of the Corps. But it wasn't until 1939 that a new design using those colors was approved. That design is essentially the same as today's U.S.M.C. flag.

FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

Officially authorized on April 24, 1959, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the flag of the United States Navy was then introduced to the public on April 30th. This formal ceremony took place at Naval Support Facility Carderock in Maryland. This new flag replaced the Infantry Battalion flag which had been the unofficial flag of the Navy for many years.

The flag of the United States Navy consists of the Seal of the Department of the Navy in the center, above a yellow scroll inscribed "United States Navy" in dark blue letters, against a dark blue background.

According to Naval telecommunications Procedures, Flags, Pennants & Customs, NTP 13(B), the U.S. Navy flag shall be used to represent the Navy at official ceremonies, in parades, during official Navy display occasions, at public gatherings when the Navy is an official participant, and on such occasions as may be specifically authorized by the Secretary of the Navy. The USN flag shall not be used for outdoor permanent displays; no cord and tassels are authorized for use with the flag; battle streamers displayed on the flag represent both war and non-war actions involving combat.

FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

President Harry S. Truman officially adopted the flag of the United States Air Force on March 26, 1951. The flag has a blue background with the coat of arms, thirteen white stars, and the Air Force Seal. The thirteen original colonies are represented by the 13 stars. At the top of the crest there are three stars representing the National Defense Establishment (Army, Navy, and Air Force).

Inside the circle of 13 stars, is a crest with an American bald eagle, a cloud formation depicting the creation of a new firmament, and a wreath consisting of six alternate folds of silver and blue. Gold fringe borders the Indoor/Parade version of the flag while there is no fringe on the Outdoor version.

Streamers may be used to represent all the unit citations a specific unit has received. Last in precedence are unit citations from a foreign government. If it has been verified that a unit participated in a combat campaign, a streamer will be embroidered with the name and years of the campaign.

STANDARD OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

The Revenue Cutter Service first flew the Coast Guard Ensign (flag) in 1799 to distinguish revenue cutters from merchant ships. The Ensign was comprised of 16 vertical stripes, alternating between red and white with the arms of the United States as the union (upper corner) of the flag in dark blue on a white field.

The purpose of the Ensign is to allow ship captains to easily recognize those vessels having legal authority to stop and board them. This flag is flown only as a symbol of law enforcement authority and is never carried as a parade standard.

The Coast Guard Standard's origins are very obscure. One theory is that it might have evolved from an early jack. An 1840 painting appears to support this theory. In the painting, the Revenue Cutter Alexander Hamilton flies a flag very similar to that of today's Coast Guard as a jack. This flag appears to be the upper corner of the Revenue Cutter Ensign.

In 1917, an illustration shows the Coast Guard Standard as a white flag with a blue eagle and thirteen stars in a semi-circle surrounding it. The words, "United States Coast Guard – Semper Paratus" were added later. After 1950, the semi-circle of stars was changed to a circle containing the thirteen stars. The Coast Guard Standard is used during parades and ceremonies and is adorned by 34 battle streamers. By having two official flags, the standard and the ensign, the Coast Guard is unique among the armed services. (The current flag was officially adopted on January 28, 1964.)

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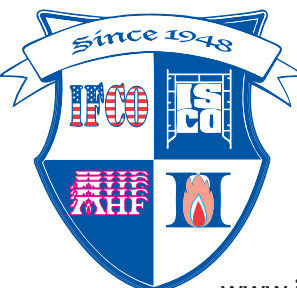


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Monroe County Veterans Service
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Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park: www.rochestervietnammemorial.org/The_Memorial.html
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Between the Lines is published monthly by Chapter 20, Vietnam Veterans of America. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Chapter 20 or the Vietnam Veterans of America, its officers, board of directors or the general membership. No subscription fee is charged for this publication, and inclusion on the mailing list is available on request. *Between the Lines* can also be viewed on the Chapter 20 website at www.vva20.org.

We welcome letters to the editor, poetry, original articles and suggestions. Submissions should include name and phone number and can be sent to *Between the Lines*, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612 or emailed to kathy14470@msn.com. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity and to not use materials we think inappropriate for the publication. Deadline for submissions for each issue is the 5th of the preceding month. Exceptions may be granted by contacting the editor.

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- 7 MON** • Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Board of Directors, 7:00pm
- 10 THU** • Membership Meeting, 7:30pm
- 12 SAT** • Hanukkah (starts at sunset)
- 16 WED** • Battle of the Bulge began
- 25 FRI** • Christmas Day
- 26 SAT** • Kwanzaa (12/26 - 1/1)
- 31 THU** • Official end of WWII, 1946

JANUARY 2010

- 1 FRI** • New Year's Day

meetings

VVA Chapter 20 Board Meetings

See page 13 for meeting attendance.

- December 7

Scheduled Membership Meetings

2nd Thursday of the Month, beginning at 7:30 pm. All meetings are held at the Ira Jacobson American Legion Post, 90 St. John's Park, unless otherwise noted.

- December 10