



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
FAX: (518) 270-2956

Volume 2, Issue 5
MAY 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

County Executive
Robert M. Reiter
Director

Gerald B.H. Solomon

Saratoga National Cemetery

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for any morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the Armed Forces and veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Their spouse, un-remarried widow or widower, minor children and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children are also eligible for burial. Eligible spouses may be buried, even if they predecease the veteran. Also eligible for burial are members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, the Army and National Guard, and the Reserve Officer Training Corps who die while on active duty for training or performing service or who have 20 years of service in reserve components of the Armed Forces creditable for retired pay. Unmarried, adult children of eligible active duty members or veterans if they become permanently incapable of self-support because of physical or mental disability incurred before

attaining the age of 21. Special documentation is required to establish eligibility.

The foregoing summarizes the criteria for the majority of those eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. Other groups associated with the armed forces, such as the World War II Merchant Marines, have recently been identified as eligible for burial benefits. Please see the cemetery director for criteria which are more detailed and may specifically address your eligibility questions.

For further information, contact:

Gerald B.H. Solomon

Saratoga National Cemetery

200 Duell Road

Schuylerville, NY 12871-1721

(518) 581-9128

Lifeline and Link Up Help to Pay the Phone Bills

For more than 20 years, New York has helped eligible low-income consumers with their monthly local telephone bills. The Lifeline program, which is applicable to a consumer's local telephone charges for either a flat rate service or a message (per call) service, erases the Federal subscriber line charge (about \$6.50 per month). Generally, a Lifeline customer is charged \$1.00 a month for message service and \$2.00 a month for a flat rate service, which includes a usage charge and allows for unlimited local calls.

Eligibility for the Lifeline program is based on a customer's enrollment in or income-eligibility for the following government assistance programs: Food Stamps, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Family Assistance, Medicaid, Safety Net Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran's Disability Pension or Veteran's Surviving Spouse Pension.

Consumers can apply for Lifeline by either contacting their local telephone company or their local Social Services Office.

Another helpful program, Link Up, provides assistance for the installation of new telephone service. This program covers most of the cost of installing local phone service to a home but does not cover the costs of wiring inside the home beyond the first wire and jack. Customers who qualify for Lifeline also qualify for Link Up.

For more information, please go to **www.lifeline.gov**

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

The original intent of Memorial Day is to honor and remember soldiers who died in the Civil War. It is now observed as a National Holiday on the last Monday in May.

Many Americans have lost sight of the significance of this day to our Nation. Instead of using Memorial Day as a time to honor and reflect on the sacrifices made by Americans in combat, many Americans use the day as a celebration of the beginning of summer.

Today, we find our Country at War, once more. I hope this Memorial Day, that everyone, all across American makes time to attend a parade, speeches, and ceremonies to honor those who paid the ultimate price on behalf of the Nation. Our Nation pays its respect to military men and women, known and unknown. Americans know that freedom is both precious and costly, and that those who expect to enjoy the blessings of freedom must, at times, engage in battle to protect it.

Look in the Upcoming Events section of this newsletter for the parades and

ceremonies listings in your area.

Talking about parades, Sunday, June 10th, is Troy's Flag Day Parade. Rensselaer County Veterans will once more have rides available for those veterans who can not march, and we will march as a unit. Meet us in the upper parking lot of the County Office Building, near the flag pole, at noontime. We will take care of the transportation from there to the parade route and back.

Yours in Patriotism,

BCB

Flag Etiquette

The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitar-

ies, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President; ten days from the death of

the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associated Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. The flag shall be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day, unless that day is also Armed Forces Day.

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event .

- May 6...Ale House 2nd Annual Striped Bass Tournament in conjunction with City of Troy, Sunday, from 7 am to 4 pm , for more info 272-9740
- May 14...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Sgt. Eric W. Morris, US Army, KIA Iraq**
- May 18...Support Our Troops Rally at the 112th St. Park in Lansingburgh, start time Noon
- May 21...Medal Presentation at the North Greenbush American Legion Post #1489 at 6:30 p.m., come and join us to honor some of our own
- May 24...Town of Schaghticoke Memorial Day Parade, kick off 7 p.m.
- May 28...Memorial Day— **OFFICE CLOSED**
- May 28...Averill Park Memorial Day Parade, step off at 10 a.m.
- May 28...Veterans of Lansingburgh 11th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.
- May 28...Poestenkill Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11 a.m.
- May 28...North Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 1:00 p.m.
- May 28...Village of Nassau Memorial Day parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.
- June 9...Town of Brunswick's 200th Anniversary and dedication of the new Brunswick Veterans Memorial Park, 1:00 p.m.
- June 10...Annual Troy Flag Day Parade, marches wanted to walk with the Rensselaer County Veterans, please call us if interested @ **270-2760**
- June 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Francis Brown, US Navy, KIA USS Liberty**
- June 16...17th Annual Viet-Nam Veterans Get-Together, in Boonville, NY, from noon till ?, ceremony of remembrance 3 pm **SHARP**
- July 4...Independence Day — **OFFICE CLOSED**

VETERANS NIGHT AT "THE JOE"

Friday, July 6, 2007

Game Time: 7pm

Gates Open: 6pm

\$4 per Veteran or \$7 with a food voucher that includes a hotdog, chips and soda

*pricing is with grandstand ticket



Contact your ValleyCats Group Representative at (518) 629-CATS for details!

Troy Flag Day Parade



MARCHERS WANTED

June 10, 2007 Annual Troy Flag Day Parade

Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency

Is looking for Veterans to march with us in the parade

If you are interested please call our office for details

At (518) 270-2760

Military Medal Presentation for Local Veterans

Please come and join us to honor some of our local area Veterans, in a special ceremony on May 21, 2007, 6:30 pm at the North Greenbush American Legion Post #1489, located on Main Avenue in Wynantskill.

We will be presenting some local area Veterans with their military awards, medals and decorations in this special ceremony.

Some of the veterans being honored will be presented with their Purple Heart and Bronze Star, just to name a few, in a formal ceremony, which is the policy in Rensselaer County, so that we can show our gratitude and honor to all those who served to protect and defend our freedoms and in honor of our great nation.



Rensselaer County Veterans Van Transportation Guidelines

- Reservations have to be made five (5) business days prior to scheduled medical appointment, by verbally contacting our office via the telephone. The sooner you book your ride the better the possibility that you will secure your reservation for your transportation needs. If you call and get our voicemail, please leave you name and date and time of your appointment, but we advise that you call our office the following business day to confirm receipt of your message. Also, advising our van drivers of your appointment does not put you on the schedule; you must call the office personally. Calling on a Friday for a Monday appointment does not count as a (5) five business day notice and therefore we may be unable to accommodate your need for transportation.
- There is no charge for this service; however, this service is for non-driving veterans only. If you drive and are going in for a medical appointment which requires that you do not drive, then we will transport you in. We only transport for morning appointments.
- Riders must be able to access the vehicle (in and out) without assistance. We do have a wheelchair accessible van, if you need this type of accommodation, you must let us know at the time you schedule your ride.
- Our drivers are **NOT** required to give personal assistance such as carrying packages from the vehicle into a home. They are also totally forbidden to transport your medical prescriptions. If you need prescriptions, you must ride the van to the VA medical facility to pick them up yourself.
- It is NYS policy to wear a seat belt while in a motor vehicle, therefore we do enforce this law.
- All schedule trip are round trips. Pleas advise at the time of scheduling if you require a one-way trip.
- Cancellation due to weather conditions will be at the discretion of the Veterans Service Agency. You will be notified of cancellations.
- Loss of transportation privileges may result if you are repeatedly not available when the van stops to pick you up; you are not ready when the van is ready to leave the VA or if your language and/or behavior are inappropriate.
- If you are not ready to board the van by 12:30, the drivers will page you. If you do not respond to the page within 5 minutes (either by arriving at the van or verbal contact with the driver), the van may leave without you and you will have to secure your own ride home. After verbal contact with the driver, they will not wait more than five minutes.
- If you are experiencing incontinence, we will expect that you are properly prepared to ride our vehicles without causing a problem, i.e. incontinence clothing additions, etc. The drivers are not allowed to deviate from the scheduled route to accommodate you individual needs.
- In the event of an individual emergency arises, both 911 and the person you designated as you “emergency contact person” will be contacted. Your transportation with us for the remained of the day will be cancelled.
- **NO** food or drink is allowed on the van.

New York State Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

New York State Small Business Development Center (SBDC), University of Albany, offers no cost, one to one counseling assisting start-ups or existing businesses to develop business plans, obtaining and identifying marketing research demographics, assist in applying for financing, and many other essentials to operating a business in today’s competitive world.

With the number of military personnel returning from overseas increasing every day, these individuals want to use their military experience and prior experiences to start a business or resurrect the business they left for their active duty tours. SBDC also assist businesses that have lost these valued employees due to the guard and reserve call-ups. This is where the SBDC and the Small Business Administration (SBA) can help in informing the veteran of what is

available to offset some of the financial losses.

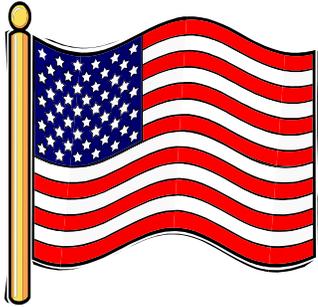
The local office of the SBDC covers 11 New York counties in and around the capital region area. The SBDC has 23 offices through out the state, so all veterans (who do not have dishonorable discharges) are eligible for this assistance.

The Veteran Business Outreach Coordinator/Advisor at the local office, here in Albany, is Howard Wildove. He is a retired USAF Lt. Col. Who currently works for the New York State SBDC, University at Albany. His job is to assist all veterans seeking to start their own business or those who have existing businesses and require some form of assistance. He is available for presentations and/or counseling sessions for any eligible military veteran or his/her family member who wants to learn more about what the SBDC can do for them and their business.

Please do not hesitate to contact him at (518) 485-7702 with any questions or requests.

You may also retrieve more information from the SBDC website at: <http://www.nyssbdc.org>





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JUNE 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
Joseph W. Cybulski
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Alternative Veterans' Exemption Partial Exemption from Property Taxes in New York State

Van Transportation...

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- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for any morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760



The alternative exemption provides a property tax exemption of 15% of assessed value to veterans who served during wartime and an additional 10% to those who served in a combat zone. The law also provides an additional exemption to disabled veterans equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings. The application form for the alternative exemption is RP-458-a; it must be filed with your local assessor.

The alternative exemption is also applicable only to general municipal taxes and not to school taxes or special district levies. Unlike the eligible funds veterans' exemption, however, the alternative exemption is limited to the primary residence (including, at local option, cooperative apartment) of a veteran, and is not based on eligible funds.

Eligibility: What does the law mean by a "period of war"?

The exemption is available to veterans who served on active duty in the US armed services during the Persian Gulf Conflict (on or after August 2, 1990); Vietnam war (December 22, 1961- May 7, 1975); Korean war (June 27, 1950—January 31, 1955); World War II (December 7, 1941—December 31, 1946); World War I (April 6, 1917—November 11, 1918); the Mexican Border Period (May 9, 1916—April 5, 1917) or the Spanish-American War (April 21, 1898—July 4, 1902). The dates of the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the Persian Gulf Conflict are prescribed in the State law, while the dates of the other

wars are derived from federal law. Also eligible for the exemption are certain individuals who served during World War II in the US Merchant Marines and persons who served overseas in a civilian capacity during World War II either in the American Field Service under the United States Armies and the United States Army Groups or as a flight crew and aviation ground support employee of American Airlines' contract with the Air Transport Command.

May a veteran who did not serve during a "period of war" qualify for the exemption?

Yes, a veteran who is a recipient of an Armed Forces expeditionary medal, a Navy expeditionary medal, a Marine Corps expeditionary medal, or a Global War on Terrorism expeditionary medal may qualify.

If the qualifying veteran is deceased, can the alternative exemption still be granted?

Yes, provided that the title to the property is in the name of the veteran's unmarried, surviving spouse, who continues to use the home as the primary residence. A veteran who also is the unmarried surviving spouse of a qualifying veteran also may receive any exemption to which the deceased spouse entitled. In the event that both husband and wife are deceased, the exemption can be continued for the veterans' dependent mother, father, child or children under 21 who have legally received the property and who use it as their primary residence.



MARCHERS WANTED

For the Troy Flag Day Parade.
More info please call Rensselaer County Veterans at 270-2760

A Message From Our Director

Hello All -

We are all hearing about WWII veterans' passing at a rate of over 1500 a DAY! Well, our other veterans' are passing way too fast also. This past month we lost Ed Patrick of the Veterans of Lansingburgh and RJ Carr of the Dickerson VFW Post. Both men were involved in our monthly Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony and will be missed by all. If you should run

into a member of their family or a member of their post, remember to thank them for their services.

We need to show more sympathy for these people. They travel miles in the heat, they risk their lives crossing a border, they don't get paid enough wages, they do jobs that others won't do or are afraid to do, they live on crowded conditions among people who speak a different language, they rarely

see their families, and they face adversity all day, everyday. I'm not talking about illegal immigrants; I'm talking about our Troops. Doesn't it seem strange that the politicians are willing to lavish all kinds of social benefits on illegal's, but don't support our Troops, and, they are now threatening to defund them? What's going on here???

Yours in Patriotism,
Bob

The History Of Flag Day

The Fourth of July was traditionally celebrated as America's birthday, but the idea of an annual day specifically celebrating the Flag is believed to have first originated in 1885. BJ Cigrand, a schoolteacher, arranged for the pupils in the Fredonia, Wisconsin Public School, District 6, to observe June 14 (the 108th anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes) as 'Flag Birthday'. In numerous magazines and newspaper articles and public addresses over the following years, Cigrand continued to enthusiastically advocate the observance of June 14 as 'Flag Birthday, or 'Flag Day'.

On June 14, 1889, George Balch, a kindergarten teacher in New York City, planned appropriate ceremonies for the children of his school, and his idea of observing Flag Day was later adopted by the State Board of Education of New York. On June 14, 1891, the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia held a Flag Day celebration, and on June 14th of the following year, the New York Society of the Sons of the Revolution, celebrated Flag Day.

Following the suggestions of Colonel J. Granville Leach (at the time historian of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolu-

tion), the Pennsylvania Society Colonial Dames of America on April 25, 1893 adopted a resolution requesting the mayor of Philadelphia and all others in authority and all private citizens to display the Flag on June 14. Leach went on to recommend that thereafter the day be known as 'Flag Day', and on that day, school children be assembled for appropriate exercises, with each child being given a small Flag.

Two weeks later on May 8th, the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution unanimously endorsed the action of the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames. As a result of the resolution, Dr. Edward Brooks, then Superintendent of Public Schools of Philadelphia, directed that Flag Day exercises be held on June 14, 1893 in Independence Square. School children were assembled, each carrying a small Flag, and patriotic songs were sung and addresses delivered.

In 1894, the governor of New York directed that on June 14 the Flag be displayed on all public buildings. With BJ Cigrand and Leroy Van Horn as the moving spirits, the Illinois organization, known as the American Flag Day Association, was organized for the pur-

pose of promoting the holding of Flag Day exercises. On June 14, 1894, under the auspices of this association, the first general public school children's celebration of Flag Day in Chicago was held in Douglas, Garfield, Humboldt, Lincoln, and Washington Parks, with more than 300,000 children participating.

Adults, too, participated in patriotic programs. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, delivered a 1914 Flag Day address in which he repeated words he said the flag had spoken to him that morning: "I am what you make me; nothing more. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself." Inspired by these three decades of state and local celebrations, Flag Day—the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777—was officially *established* by the Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson on May 30, 1916. While Flag Day was celebrated in various communities for years after Wilson's proclamation, it was not until August 3, 1949, that President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating **June 14th** of each year as **National Flag Day**.

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event .

June 9...Town of Brunswick's 200th Anniversary and dedication of the new Brunswick Veterans Memorial Park, 1:00 p.m.

June 10...Annual Troy Flag Day Parade, marches wanted to walk with the Rensselaer County Veterans, please call us if interested @ 270-2760

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July 4...Independence Day — **OFFICE CLOSED**

July 6...Veterans Night at The Joe, gates open at 6 p.m. game time 7 p.m., \$4 per veteran or \$7 with a food voucher, more info call 629-CATS

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August 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.

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BLIND ANNUITY

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VETERANS NIGHT AT

"The Joe"

Friday July 6, 2007

Game Time: 7pm

Gates Open: 6pm

\$4 per veteran or \$7 with a food voucher that includes a hotdog, chips and soda

pricing is with grandstand ticket

Contact you ValleyCats Group Representative at (518) 629-CATS for details!

WHAT IS BLIND ANNUITY?

New York State pays annually to eligible blind veterans and eligible unremarried spouses. The blind annuity—paid in monthly installments (\$91.94 per month—2007 rate) - is administered by the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs. Statue provides for an annual cost of living adjustment.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during specified wartime periods and who were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, and

- Who meet the New York State standards of blindness
- Who are now, and continue to be residents of and continuously domiciled in New York State. (The continuous domicile requirement does not apply to annuitants whose claims were approved prior to June 1, 1958.)
- The annuity also is payable to unremarried spouses of deceased veterans who were receiving annuity payments (or were eligible) at the time of death, and are residents of and continuously domiciles in New York State.

WHAT MILITARY SERVICE QUALIFIES?

Must have 90 days active duty for other than training purposes. Less than 90 days is acceptable if discharged for a service-connected disability. Active duty wartime service beginning, ending or during, the following periods is required:

World War I: April 6, 1917—November 11, 1918

World War II: December 7, 1941—December 31, 1946

Korean War: June 27, 1950—January 31, 1955

Vietnam War: February 28, 1961—May 7, 1975

- **Lebanon: June 1, 1983-December 1, 1987**
- **Grenada: October 23, 1983-November 21,1983**
- **Panama: December 20, 1989-January 31, 1990**
- **Persian Gulf: August 2, 1990-End of Hostilities**
- Requires award of expeditionary medal for such services

WHAT CONSTITUTES LEGAL BLINDNESS?

Legal blindness is defined as a vision impairment where visual activity is at 20/200 or less in the better eye with best spectacle correction or where there is a restriction of the field vision to an angle of 20 degrees or less.

A person with 20/200 visual acuity can see at 20 feet what a normally sighted person can see at 200 feet.

WHAT RESTRICTIONS EXIST?

The permanent residency requirement must be met (see section "Who is Eligible")

When an annuitant is under the complete care of certain government agencies, further payment may be barred, after a certain period of time, for the duration of the confinement.

HOW TO APPLY?

Call 1-888-VETS NYS (1-888-838-7697)

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

There are some important words that are burned deeply into the minds of everyone who served in uniform for our country. It matters not if they are active duty or retired military, or those veterans who answered the call to arms for a few months or years of their lives. Everybody recalls, "In order to make sure moral is high with those who wear the uniform today, we must keep our commitment to those who wore the uniform in the past. We will make sure promises made to our veterans will be promises kept."

Boy how I wish this was true....The

back log at the New York regional Office has grown by over 10% this year. Our veterans' are waiting longer and longer for their claims to be acted on. Look out if you do a "Notice of Disagreement", they are taking well over two years.

The staff in New York has lost 60 people through retirement since the 1st of the year. They have been allowed to hire 24, and need to train them, and you do the math. The back log will be getting longer.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs policy of giving two years medical for returning military who have served less than four years ac-

tive duty is a problem. Many who have returned from the war have tried to return to their lives and jobs, only to find that they are having trouble (PTSD). This is showing up after the two year window and the VA does not have to treat them medically. We have to put claims in to make this service connected, as we all know this in itself can take years. In the mean time the veterans receive no medical care from the VA. What's wrong with this????

Yours in Patriotism,

Bob

Attorneys For Veterans

Legislation takes effect.....

A new law is now in effect, which allows accredited attorneys and agents to charge fees for services provided after a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) has been filed with the VA Regional Office in the case.

The agent's or attorney's fees must be reasonable. Fees may be used on a fixed fee, an hourly rate, a percentage of benefits re-

covered, or a communalization of such bases. Fees that do not exceed 20 percent of any past-due benefits are presumed to be reasonable. However, agents and attorneys may charge more than 20 percent for their services.

If you believe that your agent's or attorney's fee is unreasonable or excessive, you may contact the Office of General Counsel, (OGC) at the following address:

**OGC (022D)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420**



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August 18...China Beach, starts at 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Donations are: 5 & under FREE, 6-12:\$5, ADULTS \$15, Couples \$25- more info 465-6829



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AUGUST 2007

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PENSION WITH MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTAL AID & ATTENDANCE

PENSION: Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income, and who are age 65 or older, or, if under 65, who are permanently and totally disabled. Veterans who are more seriously disabled may qualify for Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits. These are benefits that are paid in addition to the basic pension rate.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Generally, you may be eligible if:

- you were discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, *AND* you served at least 90 days of active military service 1 day of which was during a wartime period. If you entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally you must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty (There are exceptions to this rule),
- Your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law (The yearly limit on income is set by Congress), *AND*
- You are age 65 or older, *OR*, you are permanently and totally disabled, not due to your own willful misconduct.

As you can see, there are a number of criteria that may affect your eligibility to pension benefits. If you are unsure if you meet all criteria, we encourage you to contact your local Veterans Service Agency. Please note that if your income appears to be near the maximum, you can claim un-reimbursed medical expenses to lower your countable income. These are expenses where you have paid for medical

services or products for which you will not be reimbursed by Medicare or private medical insurance.

WHAT IS COUNTABLE INCOME: Income received by the veteran and his or her dependents, if any, from most sources. It includes earnings, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business.

WHAT IS NET WORTH: The net value of the assets of the veteran and his or her dependents. It includes such assets as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds and any property other than the veteran's residence and a reasonable lot area.

WHAT ARE AID & ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND BENEFITS:

- **Aid & Attendance (A&A):** is a benefit paid in addition to monthly pension. This benefit may not be paid without eligibility to pension. A veteran may be eligible for A&A when:

1. The veteran or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran, requires the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting himself/herself from the hazards of his/her daily environment, *OR*,

2. The veteran or surviving spouse is bedridden, in that his/her disability or disabilities requires that he/she remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment, *OR*,

(continued on Page 2)

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for any morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760



CHINA BEACH LZ-14
Help Celebrate 25 years
Saturday, August 18th
11am - 7pm
Local 190 Laborers' training
Center
666 Wemple Road, Glenmont
More Info: 465-6829

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

I would like to tell all of you about a monthly ceremony that we have for deceased veterans. This ceremony is called the Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony and is conducted every second Monday of the month.

One deceased veteran is chosen monthly and a ceremony is held in his/her honor, were we reflect on their personal life, as well as their military career.

The family is presented with a flag that has been flown over the nation's capital in memory of the veteran, and then we fly that

flag over the County Office Building for 30 days in honor of the veteran. At the conclusion of the 30 days, the flag is returned to family.

The family is also presented with proclamations and a pamphlet that includes the bio on the veteran being honored.

This is a very honorable ceremony and a very fitting one for a person who served their country unselfishly.

There are guideline to submitting a deceased veteran to be honored:

- 1) The must have be discharged under

- 2) Must have resided in Rensselaer County during some part of their life to have a connection to the county;
- 3) Can only be honored once;
- 4) Must have been deceased at least one year prior to being honored.

We are in need for applicants and a asking you if you know of anyone whom should be honored, to please call our office for more information and to request an application.

Yours in Patriotism,
Bob

PENSION WITH MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTAL AID & ATTENDANCE

(continued from Page 1)

3. The veteran or surviving spouse is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity, *OR*,

4. The veteran or surviving spouse is blind, or so nearly blind as to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

- **Housebound:** Is paid in addition to monthly pension. Like A&A, Housebound benefits may not be paid without eligibility to pension. A veteran or surviving spouse may be

eligible for Housebound benefits when:

1. The veteran or surviving spouse has a single permanent disability evaluated at 100- percent disabling *AND*, due to such disability, he/she is permanently and substantially confined to his/her immediate premises, *OR*,
2. The veteran or surviving spouse has a single permanent disability evaluated as 100-percent disabling *AND*, another disability, or disabilities, evaluated as 60-percent or more disabling.

However, you cannot receive A&A and Housebound benefits at the same time.

A veteran or surviving spouse can also apply for A&A if they are a resident in an

Assisted Living Facility . These benefits are also available to an eligible veteran's un-remarried surviving spouse.

If you believe that you or someone you know is entitled to the above explained benefits, please call our office and we will provide you with the necessary paperwork and help assist you in applying for these benefits.



LOCAL MILITARY NEWS: Capital Region residents will be among the more than 1,700 NY National Guard soldiers heading to Afghanistan in 2008 to train Afghan troops and police.

The Department of Defense is expected to announce soon the deployment of the Syracuse-based 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for service in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, state National Guard officials said in a press release.

The unit's troops will leave their civilian jobs and mobilize for training in late September, and deploy abroad over the following six months, according to the statement.

"This will be the largest single federal deployment of the NY National Guard personnel sine 2003," said Major General Joseph Taluto, state adjutant general commander of the NY National Guard.

Those deployed will include soldiers from New York City, the Hudson Valley, the Capital Region, the North Country and central and western New York. As head of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII, their mission will be to train, mentor and support the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event .

August 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **PFC. George H. Mosher, USMC, WWII KIA**

August 15....Veterans Night at River Front Park in Troy, start time 6 p.m., event to include the 42nd Infantry Division Band from West Point

August 18...China Beach, starts at 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Donations are: 5 & under FREE, 6-12:\$5, ADULTS \$15, Couples \$25- more info 465-6829

September 10...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **PFC. James H. Westbay, US Army, WWII**



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 9
SEPTEMBER, 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO, County Executive

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
Fax: (518) 270-2956

CHAMPVA (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs)

CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program in which the VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. The program is administered by Health Administration Center and their offices are located in Denver, Colorado.

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for any morning medical appointments.
- * Call our office for more details...270-2760



- Services offered...**
- Compensation: service-connected.
 - Pension: non-service connected.
 - Death Pension
 - Federal Grave Markers
 - VA Insurance Claims
 - Medical Van Transportation

Due to the similarity between CHAMPVA and the Department of Defense (DoD) TRICARE program (sometimes referred to by its old name, CHAMPUS) the two are often mistaken for each other. CHAMPVA is a Department of Veterans Affairs program whereas TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. In some cases a veteran may look to be eligible for both/either program on paper. However, if you are a military retiree, or the spouse of a veteran who was killed in action, you are and will always be a TRICARE beneficiary, you can't choose between the two.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, you cannot be eligible for TRICARE/CHAMPUS and you must be in one of these categories:

1. The spouse or child of a veteran who has been rated permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability by a VA regional office, or
2. The surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service connected disability, or
3. The surviving spouse or child of a veteran who was at the time of death rated permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability, or
4. The surviving spouse or child of a military member who died in the line of duty, not due to misconduct (in most of these cases, these family members are eligible for TRICARE, not CHAMPVA).

A word from our County Veterans Director.....

Hello All-

It's hard to believe that fall is coming already! We will once more be having the "Stand Down" on October 13th at the Colonie BPO Elks. If you are interested in volunteering to help out at some point during the day, please call our office and give us your information, this is a very helpful program for our homeless veterans or at risk veterans and their families.

Every once in awhile some of the bills passed in Washington need to be praised! The passage by unanimous consent of bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans' and servicemen and women not in uniform to salute the flag. Under current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states those veterans' and servicemen and women not in uniform should place their hand over their heart. This bill allows "The salute as a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service". Veterans and service members continue repre-

senting their military service even when not in uniform, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. This legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and service members alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at ballgames, parades, and formal events. This is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain role models to other citizens. All who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to all".

Yours in Patriotism,

BOB

JOIN US FOR THE UNCLE SAM PARADE...



September 8th and 9th Troy will celebrate Samuel Wilson's birthday (9/13/1766). This event includes a graveside ceremony at Oakwood Cemetery at 10:00 am. and brunch at 11:00 am on Saturday at the Veterans of Lansingburgh (\$15.00 donation). On Sunday the festivities begin with a parade at 1:00 p.m. followed by family fun and entertainment in Knickerbacker Park and an 8:00 p.m. fireworks show.

Our Veterans Office always participates in the parade. It is our desire to have a large representation of Rensselaer County Veterans. If you would like to join our marching contingent, (line-up at noon) you may contact our office for more details.

Upcoming events...

mark your calendars

- September 1-3...Schaghticoke Fair **COME VISIT OUR BOOTH!** (Office Closed on 9/4)
- September 8..... Uncle Sam Gravesite Ceremony at 10:00 a.m. (line-up 9:30) followed by Brunch at the Veterans of Lansingburgh at 11:00 am.
- September 9..... **Uncle Sam Parade** (see above article)
- September 10... **Honor-a-Deceased Veteran**—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m.
James H. Westbay, US Army, WWII
- October 8..... Columbus Day observed—**OFFICE CLOSED.**
- October 9..... **Honor-a-Deceased Veteran**—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m.
Edward F. McDonough, US Army, Korea
- October 13..... Capital Region Veteran's **Stand Down** 7 a.m.-2 p.m. at Colonie Elks



**IF YOU WOULD
LIKE YOUR EVENT
LISTED IN OUR
UPCOMING
EVENTS SECTION,
PLEASE CONTACT
AT OUR OFFICE BY
THE 15th OF THE
MONTH**

Christmas Packages for our Troops...



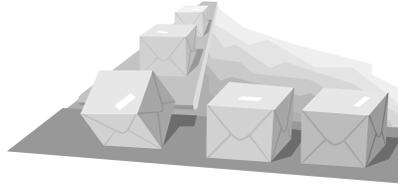
We are beginning to collect the following items to send to our troops for the upcoming holiday:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Batteries (all sizes) | Calling Cards |
| Baby Wipes | Puzzle Books |
| Magazines | Packs of Gum |
| Shaving Cream | Deodorant |
| Maxi pads/tampons | Razors |
| Toothpaste | Toothbrushes |
| Bars of soap | Lip Balm |
| Hand Lotion | Flea Colors |

Individually wrapped snacks
(nothing that will melt, exp. chocolate)

You may donate any of the above items to the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency.

If you know of deployed military personnel that you would like to receive a package, please contact our office with their full mailing address.



Deadline for receiving items is
OCTOBER 26, 2007

Important Documents:

Those seeking a VA benefit for the first time must submit a copy of their service discharge form (DD-214, WDAGO 53-55, NAV PERS 53-55, Report of Separation or Certificate of Military Service), which documents your service dates and character of discharge, along with personal identifying information: name, date of birth and service number. The veteran's discharge form should always be kept in a safe and secure location accessible to the veteran and next of kin or designated representative.

Place Your Ad...

Our 9th Annual Veterans Day Breakfast will be held on November 11th. You may place your ad in our program at the following rates:

- Full Page.....\$100
- 1/2 Page.....\$ 60
- 1/4 Page.....\$ 30
- Booster.....\$ 10

Please send your ad layout and payment by **October 19, 2007**. We need



this lead time in order to get the program "press" ready and would appreciate it if every effort would be made to adhere to this deadline.

Please make your check payable to the Rensselaer County Veterans Fund, 1600 Seventh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180.

If you have any questions you may contact our office at 270-2760.



MEDAL CEREMONIES...

Several times a year Rensselaer County host a medal ceremony for veterans who never received the medals that they earned while honorably serving their country.

It is an honor to be able to present these military decorations and awards to those who sacrificed unselfishly. You may contact our office to initiate an order for your personal or a family members medals. When they arrive, we will present them to you at the next ceremony.

CAPITAL REGION VETERANS STAND DOWN

Saturday, October 13, from 7:00 am until 2:00 pm will be the annual Veterans Stand Down for veterans who are homeless or at risk of being homeless and their families.

Free help will be available for employment, food, clothing, medical screening, legal assistance, as well as information on programs and services. Day care will be available throughout the day.

This event will take place at the **Colonie BPO Elks, 11 Elks Lane, Latham, NY.**

If you are interested in going and can not get transportation to the Stand Down, you can contact your local Veterans Service Agency to inquire about transportation at the following county VA numbers:

- Albany..... (518) 477-7713
- Columbia..... (518) 828-9511
- Rensselaer..... (518) 270-2760
- Saratoga..... (518) 884-4115
- Schenectady.... (518) 377-2423
- Washington..... (518) 746-2470

**Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
Fax: (518) 270-2956**

Message from our County Executive...

Kathleen M. Jimino

We owe a tremendous debt to the men and women of our armed forces who have through their service to our nation, defended the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. Unfortunately, many of our veterans suffer from injuries or health problems due to their service to our nation, and while some injuries heal, others do not. In recognition of the sacrifices made by our veterans, benefits and services programs are available to help them upon their return home and throughout their lifetime.

Often times, veterans will inform me of problems they have encountered applying for the benefits they are due based on their service to our nation and without hesitation I direct them to our County's Veterans Service Agency. There, veterans will find the information and assistance to help ensure they receive the benefits they are rightfully due from their service to our nation.

And while some service related health problems do not appear until long after their service has ended, I again urge our veterans to reach out to us when a health problem arises as the problem or condition may be recognized by the federal government as resulting from the veteran's military service thereby entitling the veteran to assistance for the problem.

Our goal is to make sure that all of our veterans get the benefits to which they are entitled. It is just one small way we can say thank you for all they have done for us.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino

Free Veterans Day Car Wash

For the third consecutive year Hoffman's Car Wash is inviting all active duty and former members of the military to have their vehicle (or vehicles) washed free of charge on Veteran's Day!

The only requirement is that the person coming through the car wash let the employees know that they are either active duty or former military. There is no need to show any type of identification-they will take you at your word.

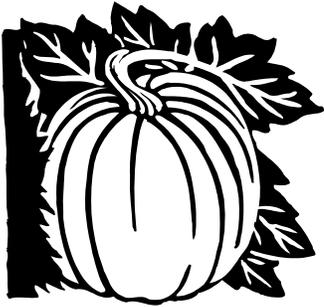
RETURNING MILITARY PERSONNEL: ASK YOURSELF TWO QUESTIONS...

- Were you injured while deployed?
- Did your injury result in any of the following?



- ▶ Seeing "stars", being dazed or confused?
- ▶ Not remembering the injury?
- ▶ Being "knocked out"?
- ▶ Having a headache or dizziness?
- ▶ Irritability?
- ▶ Decreased concentration or feeling disoriented?
- ▶ Ringing in your ears?
- ▶ Sensitivity to light and noise?
- ▶ Feel like you're losing it?

You may have traumatic brain injury. Get help at 1-800-228-8201. Brain Injury Association of NYS 10 Colvin Ave., Albany, NY 12206-1242 (www.bianys.org)



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
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Veterans Service Agency
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Volume 2, Issue 10
October 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

County Executive
Robert M. Reiter
Director

Eligibility for New Improved Federal Death Pension

VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service.

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible, spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-support because of disability before age 18.

The veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge. Longer periods of service may be required for veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, or October 16, 1981, if an officer. If the veteran died in service but not in the line of duty, the death pension may be payable if the veteran had completed at least two years of honorable service.

Children who become incapable of self-support because of a disability before age 18 may be eligible for the death pension as long as the condition exists, unless the child marries or the child's income exceeds the applicable amount.

A surviving spouse may be entitled to a higher income limit if living in a nursing home, in need of the aid and attendance of another person or is permanently housebound.

PAYMENT: The death pension provides a monthly payment to bring an eligible person's income to a level established by law. The payment is reduced by the annual income from other sources such as Social Security. The payment may be increased if the recipient has unreimbursed medical expenses that can be deducted from countable income.

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for *most* morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760.



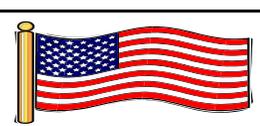


VETERANS STAND-DOWN
Saturday, October 13, 2007
8 a.m.—1 p.m.
At the
Colonie BPO Elks #2192
11 Elks Lane, Latham, NY




CORRECTION
In our June 2007 newsletter, the highlighted benefit of the month was the *NYS Veterans Tax Exemption*, we erroneously put the Vietnam War start date as *December 22, 1961-May 7, 1975*; this date was changed last year and is now recognized with a start date of *February 28, 1961-May 7, 1975*.

TIME CHANGE
For the Capital Region Stand-Down, the time is now *8 am—1 pm*, on October 13, 2007 at the Colonie Elks, 11 Elks Lane, Latham, NY



9th Annual Veterans Breakfast
Sunday, November 11, 2007
8:30 am-11:30 am
Noontime Medal Presentation Ceremony
Free Breakfast at the Brunswick Elks
665 Brunswick Rd, Eagle Mills
(Free to all Veterans & Immediate Family Members only please)

For more information, please call 270-2760

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

I can not believe it is October already! The change is in the air and soon we will be wondering when summer is coming. On October 20th, I will be off on a return trip to Vietnam, this trip will have many changes with it. After 36+ years things are sure to be different. My return will not be until November 7th, so I will have much to share in the December newsletter.

I plan to participate in healing (for my-

self), reconstruction and restoration, and I could use your help. I will be donating a water buffalo to a very poor and needy family outside of Da Nang. (\$600.00) Also I want to help raise money to build a nursery/kindergarten school in the Mekong Delta. Anyone who would like to help out with donations please contact me. I will also be looking for school supplies and children's clothing (small sizes), used or new, as long as there are in good condition. The ages of the children are 3-7.

Never regret a day in your life. Good days give you Happiness, Bad days give you Experiences, both are essential to Life. Keep going, Happiness keeps you Sweet, Trials keep you Strong, Sorrow keeps you Human, Failure keeps you Humble, Success keeps you Growing.

Yours in Patriotism,

Bob

New York State Access Pass

An Access Pass permits residents of New York State with a permanent disability, as defined for veterans as :

-Certification from the US Veterans Administration, the NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs or your local County VSA, stating that as a veteran of a war of the United States and having a 40% or greater service-related disability or are eligible for an allowance by the Federal Government for the purchase of an automobile.

These eligible veterans qualify for free use of parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and His-

toric Preservation and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

The pass holder may have free use of facilities operated by these offices, for which there is normally a charge-for example, parking, camping, greens fees and swimming.

The Pass, however, is not valid at any facility within a park operated by a private concern under contract to the State, or for a waiver of fees such as those for seasonal marina dockage, for a group camp, for reservations of a picnic shelter, for performing arts programs, for consumables (i.e. firewood,

electric, or gas), for campsite/cabin amenities, or for fees related to campsite/cabin reservations and registrations.

To qualify for an Access Pass, an applicant must be a resident of NYS, must provide proof of disability, in the form of certification from the appropriate agency or by a physician, and must provide a recent photograph that will be affixed to the Access Pass.

If you believe you qualify for this Pass, please feel free to contact our office at 270-2760, and we will help you to obtain the necessary documentations and Access Pass application.

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event .

October 8...Columbus Day observed—**OFFICE CLOSED**

October 9...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m., **Edward F. McDonough, US Army, Korea**

October 13...Capital Region **Veterans Stand-Down** 8 a.m.—1 p.m. at the Colonie Elks

November 6...Election Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

November 11...Veterans Day

November 11...Veterans Day Walk in Troy, meeting at Troy City Hall at 9 am

November 11...Rensselaer County WWII Memorial Kick-Off Fundraiser at the Veterans of Lansingburgh 12 p.m.-6 p.m., \$15 admission

November 11.....Free car wash at Hoffman's Car Wash for all veterans

November 11....Free Veterans Day Breakfast at the Brunswick Elks, 8:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m., medal presentation at Noon

November 12...**OFFICE CLOSED**— in observance of Veterans Day

November 13...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m., **Thomas F. Callahan, US Army, WWI**

November 22...Thanksgiving Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

November 23...**OFFICE CLOSED**



Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 11
NOVEMBER, 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO, County Executive
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner
Robert M. Reiter
Director

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
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Veterans' Day Events...



JOIN US!!

**In a SALUTE
to Veterans.**

There are several events happening in Rensselaer County to show our appreciation to our Veterans for their sacrifices to preserve both our nation's and our individual freedoms. Please make every effort to join us in recognizing those who served.

On Sunday, November 11th, Veteran's Day all veterans and their immediately family members are invited to our annual **breakfast at the Brunswick Elks** (Route 2) from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. This is a free breakfast sponsored by the Hon. Kathleen M. Jimino, Rensselaer County Executive and the Rensselaer County Veteran's Service Agency. The breakfast will include a noontime **Medal Presentation Ceremony** where we will be presenting medals to some of our local veterans.

Also on Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11th, is the

annual **Memory Walk** in Troy sponsored by the Veterans of Lansingburgh. The walk begins at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall and visits each of Troy's memorials (World War II, Korean and Vietnam). The Veterans of Lansingburgh hosts refreshments at their post following this event.

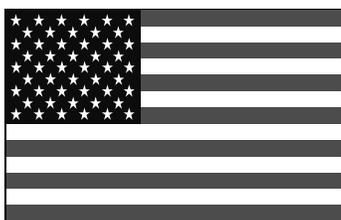
Also on November 11th, the Rensselaer County WWII Memorial Committee will be having a kick-off fundraiser at the Veterans of Lansingburgh from 12 p.m. until 6 p.m., the admission/donation fee is \$15.

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for **most** morning medical appointments.



OUR VANS WILL BE OFF THE ROAD DECEMBER 24th-December 28th FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE.



Services offered...

- Compensation: service-connected
- Pension: non-service connected
- Death Pension
- Federal Grave Markers
- VA Insurance Claims
- Medical Van Transportation

WWII Veterans Trip to View the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. :

As the average age of our WWII veterans reaches 85 years old many will be unable to see first hand the recently erected WWII Memorial in Washington D.C. in honor of their service and sacrifice.

To remedy this efforts are underway to start a movement to give all WWII Veterans of Rensselaer County an opportunity to fly to Washington D.C. to view their WWII National Memorial, which was finally completed and

dedicated in May Of 2004. A planning committee is being formed and the goal is to make the first "Rensselaer County Patriot Flight" in 2008.

Chartered "Patriot" flights will take the Veterans and health guardians on a one-day excursion from Albany International Airport, leaving early morning and returning by 6 pm the same day, at no cost to the Veterans. Upon arrival in Washington D.C., the veterans and

their health guardians will be met by motor coaches, taken to lunch and then transported to view the WWII Memorial.

The plan is that there will be **NO COST** to any WWII Veteran. The amount needed to be raised per veteran is approximately **\$400**. Private donations from WWII veterans will NOT be accepted

For more info please contact Bill Peak @ 279-4908 or Sue Aluck @ 283-2395.

Message from our County Executive...Kathleen M. Jimino:

The freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been paid for with the sacrifices of the men and women of uniform who through their selfless acts have defended our freedoms from threats in every corner of this world. Throughout our Nation's history, members of our Armed Forces put their lives on the line to defend the principles of freedom the United States of America represents.

As we approach Veterans Day

and participate in the ceremonies honoring our heroes I ask that we remember and honor all those who have served our nation. I am also hopeful that we can all take a moment to think of the soldiers currently serving in hostile territory and those soon to be deployed there, and pray for their safe return home. As the stories of their heroism and dedication inundate us we must also be mindful of their families left here at home and the sacrifices they make day in and

day out as they await the return home of their sons, daughters, husbands and wives.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino
 Kathleen M. Jimino



USPS Military Pack

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has a program for military family members and friends to supply them with packaging materials to send to troops overseas.

Call 1-800-610-8734 and select option #1, then hit #1 again. Ask them for the "Military Pack"/ They will send you 8 boxes, tape, packaging material and labels. They will also give you an I.D.

number so if your supply runs low, you just call them up and they'll send you more supplies.

The materials take about four to ten days to receive. Since most places charge you for the box, tape, filler, labels and everything else—this should help save some money. For more information on mailing items to Service Members, visit the UPSP FAQ page.

Merchant Marine Bonus

On July 18, 2007 Governor Eliot Spitzer signed into law, legislation authorizing a one time bonus payment of \$250 to Merchant Marines who were not otherwise eligible for the WWII bonus.

This bonus is for the veteran or unremarried spouse. No monies shall be paid before April 1, 2008 (the money was budgeted for next fiscal year). Residency requirement is the veteran must have lived on NYS 6 months prior to enlistment.

For more information, please contact the NYS DVA at 474-6114.

Upcoming Events...



Call our office by the 15th of the month to list your event

November 6...Election Day—REMEMBER TO VOTE!!! (office closed).

November 11...Veterans Day

November 11...**Veterans Breakfast and Medal Presentation Ceremony 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m..** (see feature story).

November 11...Veterans Day Memory Walk in Troy, meeting at Troy City Hall, 9 a.m. start time.

November 11...Rensselaer County WWII Memorial Committee kick-off fundraiser (see feature story).

November 11...Free car wash at Hoffman's Car Wash for all veterans.

November 12...Veteran's Day observed (office closed).

November 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Thomas F. Callahan, US Army, WWI**

November 22 & 23...HAPPY THANKSGIVING—Office Closed

December 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Richard O. Gross, US Air Force, Vietnam Era**

December 25... Christmas Day (office closed).



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
FAX: (518) 270-2956

Volume 2, Issue 12
DECEMBER, 2007

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

County Executive
Robert M. Reiter
Director

New York State Oral History Program:

New Program—Old Virtues

Established by Governor Pataki on Veterans Day, 2000, the New York State Veteran History Program involves professional military historians using the latest digital technology to preserve the story of New York's Veterans—in their own words—now and for all generations to come.

The program is concentrating on the state's sizable World War II Veteran community; however, they are also collecting the experiences of veterans of all periods and services.

The people within the Division of Military and Naval Affairs are proud to be part of this Gubernatorial initiative, providing the historical and administrative support. Funding and technology assistance are provided by the Governor's Office for Technology. Working together with the Division of Veteran Affairs, these state agencies are dedicated to realizing the Governor's intent to save the thoughts and experiences of the state's veterans, not just because these are important parts of the state and national history, but also because they are valuable lessons in the values that made New York the Empire State.

Each interview conducted enters an individual veteran's experiences into the permanent public memory of the state and nation, and builds a collection of irreplaceable value that scholars, students, and family members will wish to use for years without end.

Using the inherent advantages of the digital technology involved to go further than just gathering and storing these memories and prepare visual presentations from the basic materials that brings the veteran's stories directly into the schools and homes of their fellow New Yorkers.

How the Program Works

Each veteran who desires to participate are asked, as a first step, to complete a veterans questionnaire. The information entered on this form not only helps the historians prepare for the interview— it also helps you get ready to be interviewed. The modern version of a form in use since the Civil War, it becomes part of the permanent record along with the actual interview itself. For more information on the questionnaire, please see below.

The completed questionnaire, when received, is the cue to call you and arrange for an interview.

Depending on your preferences and availability, and the availability of the historians you will be offered one of four choices:

- A video interview at their facilities in the Capital District (available Monday thru Fridays).
- A video interview at a veterans or military installation or event nearer to your home (dates vary).
- An audio interview, by telephone (available Mondays thru Fridays).
- A self-interview packet which includes instructions on how you or a friend or family member can conduct an interview.

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Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for any morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760

NOTE:

IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OUR VANS WILL BE OFF-ROAD FROM DECEMBER 24 THROUGH December 28 SERVICE WILL RESUME ON Monday, December 31.



Get more from your Medicare

1-800-846-5553
TTY/TDD 1-877-247-6272

WellCare is a health plan with a Medicare contract

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All tapes are stored in a digital format. The use of digital formats ensures that the veteran’s recollections and experiences will be preserved for generations to come.

All video and audio media (regardless of method of collection) will be catalogued, summarized, transcribed whenever feasible, and placed into protective storage. Catalogue information will be made as widely available as possible, and the interviews made available to the general and academic community, subject to any limitations placed on their use by the individual veteran.

When specifically authorized by each veteran, copies or portions of the interviews may be shared with other research institutions or school and university programs.

Contact Information

Phone: You can call **518-581-5116** and provide the operator with your name, address and phone number information to register for the New York State Veteran Oral History Program. You will be sent a veteran’s questionnaire to complete. In the event all operators are busy you will be able to leave a voice message for a return call.

Email: Please email int-Historians@ng.army.mil for more information.

If you would like to spread some holiday cheer and the spirit of Christmas this holiday season, please consider making a donation to one of the more than 300 nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping our troops and their families listed on the “America Supports You” website, at www.americasupportsyoud.com

Other organizations that offer means of showing your support for our troops or assist wounded service members and their families include:

- <http://www.usocares.org/>
- <http://www.4.army.mil/ocpa/tooursoldiers>
- <http://www.redcross.org>

For individuals without computer access, please contact your local military installation, the local National Guard or military reserve unit, they may offer the best alternative.



A Message from our Director:

I believe it is time for all of us to learn some prevention in regards to what seems to be a current chronic problem amongst our veteran community—suicide. Lately in the news there has been information about Veterans committing suicide at a rate of over 120 per week. This is a fact, of the ones reported. In the past month, our office alone has had two veteran clients commit suicide.

Did you know that male veterans are twice as likely as civilians to commit suicide. 13.5% of all Americans report a history of suicide ideation or suicidal thinking, 4.6% report attempts, 3.9% have made plans, in 2003, 31,484 suicide deaths (reported) vs. 17,732 homicide deaths, with the majority involving firearms.

Look for the warning signs: *threatening to hurt or kill ones self* taking or writing about death or dying *hopelessness* rage, anger or seeking revenge* acting reckless or doing risky activities* feeling trapped—like there is no way out* increasing alcohol or drug abuse* withdrawing from friends and family* anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time* dramatic changes in mood* no reason or purpose for living.

If you see any of the above, please refer the individual for mental health treatment.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the staff at Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency!

2008 VA Compensation Rates for Single Veterans		
10%	=	\$117
20%	=	\$230
30%	=	\$356
40%	=	\$512
50%	=	\$728
60%	=	\$921
70%	=	\$1,161
80%	=	\$1,349
90%	=	\$1,517
100%	=	\$2,527

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event.

December 7...Pearl Harbor remembered

December 10...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Richard O. Gross, USAF**

December 25...Christmas—**Office Closed**

December 24 – December 28...**no van transportation** (see front page)

December 31... Van schedule resumes

January 1...Happy New Year— **Office Closed**

January 14...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Delford R. Hilton, US Army, Korea**

January 21...Martin Luther King Jr. Day—**Office Closed**